

HIDE

Episode One

(The Switch)

Created by Jennifer Nash

Written by Jennifer Nash

Jenniferenash@icloud.com

Hidetheseries@gmail.com

EXT. WEST VIRGINIA - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE: "Mason Dixon Line, 1848"

Deep in the forest near the Mason Dixon Line, a tattered group of African Americans are running for their lives. The group is comprised of two men, a young lady and two children. A young girl, 12 and a little boy, 6.

MISSY, 30's African-American, in a long dress and apron, her head wrapped in a plain, white scarf, puts a small piece of paper into her 12 year old daughter, ANNIE's hand. She prompts Annie to grab her little six year old brother, ANDRE and run ahead of her in the center of the creek. Missy points to the bend in the creek, waving them on silently but urgently before she turns to look back. Missy stays in the creek as a decoy while her children run as fast as they can in the shallow water. She reaches under her skirt to tear her blood stained undergarment off.

Dogs and men are chasing her. She throws the bloody garment as far as she can to the side of the creek, then makes a quick motion of prayer to the darkening sky before she begins to run right down the middle of the creek after her children. Dogs BARK and men SHOUT in the distance.

She slips on the slick stones and goes sprawling in the creek. From her hands and knees:

MISSY  
Run! Keep running! Hide!

The bruised sky lets out a mighty crack of thunder.

CUT TO BLACK:

TITLE SEQUENCE

SERIES OF IMAGES

SUPERIMPOSE: "HIDE" as TV snow, then dissolves into historical persecutions -- slavery, the Holocaust, etc. Finally, the images morph into a view of planet Earth, from something speeding away from it towards space as fires and explosions erupt all over the spinning planet.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

When your freedom is taken away, when you are persecuted for the color of your skin, your beliefs or gender, when the people you love are tortured and killed in front of you, the right thing to do is to fight back. And sometimes the only way to fight back is to survive...to hide.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Tree tops, with leaves just beginning to color. Establish a vast property, mostly covered in forest, but also comprised of fields, a farmhouse, and a barn.

SUPERIMPOSE: "Pennsylvania, 2018"

EXT. FARMHOUSE YARD - DAY

Bursting through the ceiling of trees, we find BOO, 12, Caucasian, strapping on her "adventure sack", a Vietnam-era, drab olive knapsack. "Smith" is embossed on the flap. She picks up a professional looking bow and arrow and heads from the front yard into

EXT. FOREST - DAY - ESTABLISHING

The afternoon sun slants in dusty beams through the leaves to the forest floor;

Boo walks quickly and stealthily through the trees.

EXT. FOREST GLADE - DAY

A rotted TREE STUMP, is in the middle of the clearing.

A "Faerie House" on the stump made of sticks, bark and moss is filled with a treasure trove of shiny objects: polished stones, crystals, colored glass, much like the treasures of a magpie's lair. Beautiful, ghostly, totally out of place.

A SHAPE circles behind the house...

The light falling upon the collection of baubles dims as a SHADOW drifts past...

A HAND moves into the house, withdraws something...

On her knees next to the house, Boo dusts a small PICTURE FRAME she has removed with her sleeve, then sets it back in its place of honor...

#### FRAMED PHOTO

Of a beautiful woman (we will come to know her as ELIZABETH, BOO'S MOTHER): mid-30s, with long, dark hair.

#### BACK TO SCENE

Boo reaches into her adventure sack. She produces tiny cakes and sets them one after another inside the house with a steady hand;

Next, a piece of old jewelry with a BRIGHT BLUE GEMSTONE is hung from a tiny hook -- a makeshift chandelier.

Boo moves to a high tree in the corner of the clearing where she has made a sturdy rope ladder. She climbs up it quickly to reach out and add a home made wind chime to an overhanging branch.

Boo cranes her neck to look above.

WIND CHIMES and other shiny objects have been hung in the branches. The chimes play a haunting melody as they sway along with the breath of the trees and prisms throw rainbows wherever their light lands.

#### EXT. FOREST GLADE - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

Boo shakes out a blanket.

Knelt on it, she produces a sandwich wrapped in wax paper and an ARMY CANTEEN from her sack, then pinches away some of the debris that has fallen onto the blanket.

#### EXT. FOREST GLADE - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

A rabbit comes fairly close to Boo's picnic blanket. Boo reaches over silently to pick up the bow and arrow on the ground next to her. She draws the bow and aims for the rabbit, then sighs, putting her bow and arrow down.

BOO

(To the rabbit) Good thing you're  
so cute.

(MORE)

BOO (CONT'D)

It's your lucky day, Mr. Bunny.  
Scram before I change my mind.

Boo throws a pebble at the rabbit to scare it away, then lays on her back to feel the sun on her face.

She closes her eyes.

Crosses her ankles.

The trees bend and whisper to each other in the wind. The moment is calm, soothing, until...

The soft CRUNCH of leaves then Boo hears the sharp SNAP of a branch from nearby. She pops into a sitting position. Her eyes and ears scan for the source of the sound...

Nothing. Only BIRDS.

Rising to one knee, and without taking her eyes off the trees, she slowly reaches for her bow and arrow.

Her hand closes around it.

EXT. FOREST - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

Alive with the sounds of BIRDS and SMALL ANIMALS,

Boo's feet crunch over the forest floor.

She keeps her eyes glued to the space five feet in front of her feet, scanning for tracks.

She halts, noticing something...

Setting the bow over her knees, she crouches to feel the damp earth with the fingertips of one hand. As her fingers read the ground, she whispers:

BOO

I gotcha.

She looks up at the path ahead and smiles.

The trees and her quarry await.

EXT. FOREST - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

A thin, rough-barked tree catches Boo's interest. She moves to it, picks at the bark, comes away with a tuft of DEER HAIR, which she works between her thumb and forefingers.

Her chin raises an inch. She senses something; the forest is watching her.

She turns...

Framed by foliage not ten meters away, a DEER peers at her with its huge dark eyes.

Entranced, she returns its look.

The deer stands stock-still apart from the occasional twitch of its ears.

With a quick inhalation, Boo rotates her head as a TWIG SNAPS in the other direction...

Nothing. Only trees.

She turns back to the animal...

...but the deer is already bounding away.

EXT. FOREST - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

Boo sidles up beside a tree;

peers around the gnarled trunk...

In the distance, a FIGURE. Indistinct, but it appears to be the size of a young girl in a long dress. The shape drifts like a ghost between the giant trees.

Boo makes to follow, but stops after a single step. Her breath catches in her throat.

The figure disappears behind a tree...and does not come out from behind the other side.

A protracted moment: Boo narrows her eyes...

...singles out the tree. No movement.

Boo, watching, listening, unnerved. Finally:

BOO

Hello?

No response.

EXT. FOREST - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

Bow and arrow gripped in both hands ready to shoot, Boo moves toward the tree which she suspects is acting as safe harbor for the apparition.

Within striking distance, she jumps, expecting to find a cowering figure-

BOO

Hah!

...but finds nothing.

CUT TO BLACK:

EXT. FARM HOUSE - DAY - ESTABLISHING

A vast property surrounded by forest is comprised of crop fields, grazing fields...

...a farmhouse...

...and a barn.

Boo moves across the field toward the barn.

INT. BARN - DAY

LEILA, 17, in a flannel shirt over a punk-rock T-shirt, jeans, work boots and gloves. She separates blocks of hay and throws them into a wheelbarrow.

Boo enters the barn.

LEILA

Where you been, slacker? I already mucked out the stalls no thanks to you. We gotta get the hay in for the horses before dark. You were supposed to help.

BOO

I was in the woods.

LEILA

At the Faerie house? Getting a little old for that, aren't you?

Boo shakes her head.

BOO  
I think I saw a girl.

LEILA  
A girl!?

BOO  
I think so.

LEILA  
You think so? How old was she?

BOO  
About my age maybe.

LEILA  
Was she alone?

BOO  
Yea.

LEILA  
If she was your age, I doubt she  
was alone. You sure you saw a girl?  
A real girl?

Boo looks down at the floor.

BOO  
I'm not sure. It was weird, Leila.

Boo looks at the ground and kicks some dirt with her shoe,  
thinking about what she thought she saw. Her face looks  
worried, maybe even scared.

BOO (CONT'D)  
I wish Dad was here...

Leila looks concerned, but shakes it off. She reaches into  
her back pocket and finds Boo's older version iPhone, tosses  
it to her.

LEILA  
Can you at least take your phone  
with you when you go out there for  
hours?

Boo pockets her phone without even looking at it.

BOO  
So you can bug me to come do  
chores? No thanks.  
(MORE)



BOO (CONT'D)

I'm not like you - I don't have to  
be glued to my phone all the time.  
I LIKE being alone.

Boo strolls off towards the farm house leaving Leila looking annoyed. Leila shakes her head and replies to the birds:

LEILA

Yea, I really look like I'm on my  
phone right now. Geez..

EXT. BARN - DUSK

Leila follows Boo across the yard toward the farmhouse. The fields around them reveal the place to be very remote: no other houses or structures of any kind in sight.

EXT. FARM HOUSE - NIGHT

As the sun dips below the horizon, lights come on from inside the farmhouse.

Through a kitchen window, Leila and Boo go about preparing dinner, washing vegetables and putting out place settings. They are by themselves.

EXT. EARLY MORNING. RURAL PAVED ROAD

We see Boo getting out of Leila's beat up car a few yards away from where a few middle school kids are getting onto a school bus. All of the kids are Caucasian. Boo hangs back until all of them are on the bus, then at the soft, prompting beep of the school bus horn she reluctantly drags herself onto the bus, sitting in the front seat by herself next to the bus driver - a middle aged Caucasian woman called MILLIE.

MILLIE

Why're you always tryin' to make me  
late, kid?

Boo smiles at her a little and shakes her head.

BOO

Sorry, Millie.

MILLIE

We'll just have to make it up.  
Here..( Handing her a donut wrapped  
in paper) ..saved one for 'ya.

BOO

Thanks, Millie. You're the best.

Almost as soon as the bus starts down the road, an Amish buggy - drawn by a horse - appears from a side lane headed right towards the bus. Inside the small buggy are an AMISH MAN who holds the reigns and a young AMISH GIRL beside him in full length dress, apron and bonnet. The road doesn't appear to be wide enough for both bus and buggy.

MILLIE

Now what the heck are they doing  
way over here?

Boo strains in her seat to see the buggy more clearly. The man is staring intently ahead at the road and horse, but the girl looks up and locks eyes with Boo.

MILLIE (CONT'D)

( To Boo ) you ever seen Amish out  
this way?

Boo can't take her eyes off of the girl.

BOO

No. Never. Well never in a buggy,  
that's for sure.

MILLIE

Well they're just gonna have to  
pull over in the grass, that's all.

The buggy does just that. Millie drives the bus slowly around them as Boo continues to stare.

EXT. FOREST GLADE - LATER THAT DAY

Trailing through the woods, Boo comes back to the Faerie House clearing. The blanket and canteen are gone; her adventure sack is still there, but has been emptied.

Puzzled, Boo looks around, scanning for the missing items. She gathers her adventure sack and moves out of the glade.

EXT. FOREST - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

Boo soon manages another glimpse of the elusive girl. She can now see that the girl is African American and wearing a long, old-fashioned dress that is torn and dirty.

She is also wearing a long apron much like the Amish girl in the buggy and a bonnet hangs around her neck. Her face is dirty, too.

Boo walks towards her but the girl, frozen in terror, finally bolts.

Boo gives chase, but is outpaced by the girl in front of her. She hears a faint THUMP as something hits the leafy forest floor.

SAME, MOMENTS LATER

Boo comes upon an old BOTTLE. She looks further ahead.

The girl has vanished.

Boo squats and picks up the bottle, turns it over to examine it. A date on the ridge of the bottle reads: "1849." The bottle looks brand new, in perfect condition.

There is what looks like a note inside. Boo upends the bottle and manages to get it out. She sets the bottle down and unfolds

A MAP

Drawn in a childish scrawl, it shows the creek and a stick figure man with a conductor's hat standing beside a red barn. It also depicts the shape of an arch (oddly out of place) on the barn side of the creek.

EXT. FARM HOUSE YARD - DAY

Leila wields an axe. She deftly chops a piece of firewood into two on a chopping block, takes the two smaller pieces, and throws them onto a woodpile. Boo runs up, excited and out of breath.

BOO

I saw her again! She's real! She's real, Leila!

LEILA

Who's real? What are you talking about?

BOO

The little girl in the forest!  
Leila, are Amish people ever black?

LEILA

Amish people? What are you talking about, Boo?

BOO

I saw the little girl again. A lot better this time! She took my blanket. I think she's Amish. But she's black.

LEILA

Why in the world would you think she's Amish?

BOO

Because she's wearing an old fashioned dress. Like they wear when we used to go buy cheese and make butter and stuff! I think she's lost..there was a buggy yesterday. Just down the road. I saw it on the bus.

Leila pauses for moment, looking at Boo like she's nuts.

LEILA

You saw an Amish Buggy on the bus...?

BOO

When I was ON the school bus - an Amish buggy came down the road!

LEILA

There used to be an Amish family around here, but now the closest ones are at least an hour away. An hour in a car, not a buggy. It's way too far to come in a buggy. And I have never seen an Amish person that was black, like, ever.

Leila scans the property with a worried look on her face. She mutters to her self..

LEILA (CONT'D)

How could they even get down here?

She shakes off the thought of a black family or little girl camping out on their property and scrutinizes her little sister.

Boo grasps the bottle in her hand, not sure she wants to show it to her doubting sister. But Leila sees the bottle and puts her hand out for it.

LEILA (CONT'D)  
What have you got here? A message  
in a bottle?

Boo relinquishes the bottle to her big sister.

BOO  
(shrugs)  
I always find stuff like this  
around here.

Leila shakes the tiny "message" out of the bottle and looks at it.

LEILA  
Did you make this?

Boo just looks at the ground.

LEILA (CONT'D)  
That's weird. Reminds me of Mom's  
art.

Sadness blankets Leila as she puts the tiny picture back into the bottle and hands it back to Boo.

LEILA (CONT'D)  
You did a nice job cleaning it up,  
Boo. You've got one big, fat  
imagination, that's for sure.

Boo starts to put the bottle in her adventure sack as Leila has one more thought.

LEILA (CONT'D)  
Did you at least bring your phone  
this time?

Boo sheepishly takes her phone out of her pocket, showing it to her sister.

LEILA (CONT'D)  
Good girl. Help me grab some wood.

INT. BEDROOM, FARM HOUSE - NIGHT

Sitting on the edge of her bed in pajamas, Boo reads a book. She quickly stows the book under her pillow when she hears the CREAK of the stairs.

Leila sticks her head into the room.

LEILA  
Hey squirt. Brush your teeth?

BOO  
Leila..I'm not a kid. You don't  
have to ask me every night.

LEILA  
I'll take that as a yes.

Leila looks around the room, taking in her mother's art on the wall and a framed photo of Elizabeth holding Boo as a baby on Boo's nightstand.

LEILA (CONT'D)  
  
You know this farm has been in  
Mom's family for like forever,  
right?

BOO  
(shrugs)  
I guess...

LEILA  
Her family used to be Amish or  
Quakers...something like that. But  
a million years ago. I think before  
the Civil War.

BOO  
Yea...?

LEILA  
Maybe your little girl is a ghost.  
But I seriously doubt she's black.  
Maybe she's a ghostly shadow...or  
something.

Boo squirms, looks out her window.

BOO  
When do you think Dad's going to  
get back?

LEILA  
Who freaking knows. Are you  
worried? About your ghost?

Boo looks thoughtful.

BOO

She took my granola bar, Leila.  
She's not a ghost. I think she's  
hungry.

Leila sits on the bed next to Boo.

LEILA

Well that was probably a raccoon.  
You know they get into everything.

She looks lovingly at Boo.

LEILA (CONT'D)

He should be back any day now. Do  
you really miss him?

Boo gets under her covers to go to bed, pulling them up  
around her tight.

BOO

He always says a couple weeks and  
it's...

LEILA

...always more. I know. I think  
these gas jobs are always longer  
than he thinks. Or something. I  
don't miss him. I don't miss him at  
all.

She kisses Boo on the forehead, and sees that Boo is sad and  
worried.

LEILA (CONT'D)

Scooch over; I'll snuggle with you  
till you fall asleep.

As Leila gets under the covers to snuggle with her sister,  
she finds the big Pennsylvania History book that Boo has been  
reading and takes it out.

LEILA (CONT'D)

What's this? What are you reading?  
Is this for school?

Boo grabs the book, stashes it on her side of the bed between  
the mattress and the wall.

BOO

Sort of. Just reading about Amish  
people. And black people. Like,  
history. Leila...I miss Mom.

LEILA

Me too, kid. I miss her every day.

Leila hugs her sister and smooths her hair.

LEILA (CONT'D)

Now go to sleep. Love you.

Leila closes her eyes and hums an old Quaker song to Boo, "Simple Gifts." The tune is soothing, but Boo's eyes are wide as saucers as the song brings tears to her eyes.

SAME, MOMENTS LATER

Boo has drifted to sleep. Leila's phone buzzes in her pocket. She checks it, smiles and sneaks out of the bedroom.

No sooner than Leila is gone, Boo's eyes start fluttering with a dream.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Boo's dream -- she is inside a beautiful leafy arbor when all of a sudden she is overtaken by some outside force. Her body is yanked from side to side. She looks as though she is in pain and then she is sucked back through the arbor and disappears.

INT. BEDROOM, FARM HOUSE - NIGHT

Boo wakes with a start. Sweat beads her brow.

INT. WEST VIRGINIA BAR - NIGHT

A seedy country bar, nearly empty of customers. A BARTENDER raises a remote and mutes the TV.

ROB SMITH, MID FORTIES, is seated at the U-shaped bar. A big man, over six feet with a beer gut and the beginnings of a beard. He's dressed in work clothes, his jacket has "Smith" embroidered on a front pocket. He's glaring at an unopened bottle of Coke standing next to a glass of ice, as if he's trying to convince himself to drink it.

BARTENDER

You sure you don't want nuthin' stronger, buddy?

ROB

I'm fine.



Sitting on the other side of the U-shaped bar, an eerie OLD WOMAN stares at him intensely. She has a coffee cup in front of her.

ROB (CONT'D)  
(muttering)  
Who the heck drinks coffee in a  
place like this? Weird old biddy.  
Gettin' the heebie-jeebies...

A tawdry-looking woman, TAMMY, FORTIES's comes in from the bathroom and sits right next to Rob, grabs a plastic ashtray and drags it in front of her as she pulls a menthol cigarette out of her purse.

TAMMY  
Mind if I smoke, hon?

ROB  
(looking at his Coke)  
No, I don't mind. You mind if I buy  
you a drink?

TAMMY  
Well that'd be real nice, sugar.  
I'm a whiskey gal, what are you?

ROB  
I'm a whiskey guy. A real whiskey  
kind of guy.

He looks casually at the old woman, still staring at him from across the bar. He jerks his chin at the bartender.

ROB (CONT'D)  
Hey, can I get a couple whiskeys  
over here?

BARTENDER  
Yeah, sure. Well okay?

The bartender limps over to set up their glasses.

ROB  
Wild Turkey if you got it. Hey, get  
that old lady whatever she wants,  
too. She's looking at me like she  
knows me.

BARTENDER  
What old lady would that be?

Rob looks across the bar...

There's no one there. No cup of coffee, either.

ROB

Hmm...better make it doubles. Guess  
I need 'em.

Rob chuckles at himself then grabs the unopened bottle of coke and puts it into his big work jacket pocket, smiles winningly at Tammy.

ROB (CONT'D)

I'll save this for the hangover.

TAMMY

Good idea, hon.

EXT. FARM HOUSE - DAY

Boo wraps some cookies in a paper napkin, puts the bottle she found in her adventure sack, looks at her bow and arrow, but decides not to take it. Instead she grabs a couple of items from the junk drawer, stuffs them into her bag and sets off.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Boo treads as quietly as she can, searching for footprints, or any signs of human life.

At the Faerie House clearing she takes a roll of TWINE out of her bag and a SWISS ARMY KNIFE. She gets busy making elaborate booby traps and trip wires all around her clearing. When she is satisfied with her work, she moves deeper into the woods.

She sees the girl; same strange old fashioned dress, still torn and dirty.

Boo holds out the cookies.

The girl looks at them as if she's starving, but decides she's more scared than hungry. She turns and runs.

Boo runs after her as fast as she can.

At the top of a ridge, Boo calls out after the little girl.

BOO

Little girl! Don't be scared! I  
have cookies!

The little girl keeps running, not even looking back, so Boo chases after her.

EXT. FOREST CLEARING - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

A makeshift ARBOR stands among the trees completely on it's own and out of place. Vines are growing up and covering the simple arch. The tangled branches supporting the arch from either side indicate something made entirely and crudely from available branches.

The little girl passes through it, with Boo close behind. As she passes under the arbor, the colors of the forest around her change. On the other side of the Arbor the forest looks like full on winter.

EXT. CREEK - DAY

Boo follows the girl down to the creek. Once again, the girl seems to disappear.

Out of nowhere, a rough-looking ROPE MAN appears from out of the brush on the other side of the creek. He has an old rifle, and is in clothes from the 1840s. A long rope loosely wrapped around his neck and shoulder. He barks at her from the other side of the creek.

ROPE MAN

Hey!

Boo stops in her tracks.

ROPE MAN (CONT'D)

You seen a negress with a couple of brats 'round here?

BOO

(in awe)

Why are you dressed like that?

ROPE MAN

Girl, you best get home before your daddy whips your hide for dressing like a boy.

Boo backs away. He's scary.

ROPE MAN (CONT'D)

Punishment for hiding niggers that don't belong to you is jail. Tell your folks.

The man stomps off on the other side of the creek.

Frozen in place, Boo watches as the man disappears among the trees. She turns her head, hearing what sounds like a HORSE making it's way away from the creek..

EXT. FOREST - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

Boo continues her search, shaken and confused. She walks along the side of the creek until - she finally hears a sound, looks up and sees the girl. (Annie)

The girl puts her finger to her lips: 'Quiet.'

Boo hears a low MOANING.

She looks beyond the girl and sees Missy, hidden by the branches of a fallen tree. She is wearing an old fashioned dress as well -- also torn and dirty and blood stained. She is holding a little boy, Andre, 6, in her arms. Andre moans softly. His garb is also torn, dirty -- and bloodstained. He is under Boo's small blanket and his leg is wrapped in bandages torn from his mother's petticoat around a makeshift splint. The woman looks caught, terrified.

Boo walks very slowly toward them.

MISSY

Please don't tell nobody. We had to run. They was beating him- I thought they was gonna kill him. His leg is hurt real bad. We don't want no trouble,...please. Please don't tell nobody.

Boo reaches into her sack and withdraws the bottle.

BOO

I found this. It dropped by my house. I think it's your daughter's.

The little girl and Missy stare at Boo and the bottle, confused. The little girl barely nods, "yes".

BOO (CONT'D)

There's a bad man looking for you, isn't there?

MISSY

I don't want to get no one in trouble, miss..

BOO

Ma'am, were you looking for a barn?  
And an Amish family?

Missy looks at Boo in her strange, modern clothes. She sure doesn't look Amish.

MISSY

I ain't no Ma'am, miss. I think you  
know what I is..  
Please...we don't want no more  
trouble, please. Please don't tell  
nobody!

BOO

My family has a red barn. Can you  
make it? It's not far. I swear to  
God we will help you.

She watches as Missy breaks down in quiet sobs.

EXT. WOODS - DAY/NIGHT

Time lapse.

EXT.DUSK FARMHOUSE

Leila is gathering up wood into a worn out carrier - loading it up as much as she can carry. The sky is turning dark with a storm coming. Leila looks off to the woods for any sign of her sister coming over the field. As she peers off towards the woods, a crack of lightening shoots through the sky and thunder follows not far behind it. Leila looks worried as she picks up the load of wood and carries it into the farmhouse.

EXT. BARN - NIGHT

Leila emerges from the barn holding a big flashlight and a baseball bat. The rain has just started to come down sideways. The wind starting to kick up. She makes her way across the giant field toward the woods.

LEILA

Boo! This is not funny, Boo! You  
have to come in! Boo!

Her voice scares the COWS and DUCKS which share the field.

EXT. FOREST GLADE - NIGHT

Leila enters the clearing and approaches the Faerie House. No sign of Boo.

As she enters into the clearing, she is caught on one of Boo's trip wires and just catches herself on a tree trunk. The flashlight goes flying.

LEILA

Damn you, you little freak!

She picks up the flashlight and rubs her ankle before looking at all the little objects Boo has left in the Faerie House, then up at the trees where the wind chimes TING wildly in the wind.

Leila reaches in to the faerie house and picks up the framed photo of the dark haired woman.

Leila loses it: she drops the flashlight on the ground and uses both hands to swing the bat and smash first the photograph and then the Faerie House to pieces.

LEILA (CONT'D)

I hate you for leaving us! I'm just a kid! I'm just a kid! It's not fair!

Leila completes her rage filled attack on the faerie house then looks into the forest, yelling at the top of her lungs.

LEILA (CONT'D)

Boo! Where are you? This is NOT funny! Please come back, Boo! Boo!

The only answer Leila receives is the wind howling angrily.

INT.NIGHT. FARMHOUSE LIVING ROOM.

Leila is curled upon the couch with her old iPhone. The television is playing a black and white movie with the sound off. Leila dials a number, shaking her head in frustration. We hear nothing. No dial tone, no message.

LEILA

(Talking to the phone) Answer your freaking phone, Boo.

Leila paces into the kitchen. Opens the refrigerator to look for a snack then closes it distractedly.

As she closes the fridge, she notices Boo's bow and arrow leaning up against the kitchen wall. Her brow furrows with worry.

With a disgusted look, she dials another number. She gets a generic outgoing message for the number and leaves a message.

LEILA (CONT'D)

Hi, dad. Umm...sorry to bother you but I think it's important. Boo's gone missing again. And..it's raining here ...um..I'm worried. Can you call me back when you get a chance? Thanks, dad.

Leila looks at her phone, tears welling up again on her swollen face.

LEILA (CONT'D)

Thanks for nothing, dad. You SUCK!!!

There is a giant crack of thunder outside and all the lights go off in the house. Leila lets out a little scream then fishes for light in the junk drawer. She lights a kerosine camp light that throws shadows over the walls, moves into the dark living room, looking at her iPhone. It's dead.

LEILA (CONT'D)

Great.

Leila moves to pick up the land line phone but is met with the sound of a downed telephone line. Leila slams the phone down then plonks down on the couch wrapping a blanket around herself.

LEILA (CONT'D)

Just freaking awesome.

Wrapped up like a burrito on the couch, Leila starts to gently cry when out of nowhere, the old radio in the corner TURNS ON by itself and begins to play a staticky version of 'Simple Gifts'.

Leila is stunned out of her crying. She sits up slowly staring in shock and disbelief at the radio. It turns off as suddenly and mysteriously as it turned on.

Leila lets out a howl to rival the storm and covers herself completely in blankets, curled up in fetal position on the couch.

INT. KITCHEN, FARM HOUSE - MORNING

The storm is over. Sun pours in through the window. All the lights from the night before have come back on as well as the television.

An old answering machine BEEPS. A message:

SCHOOL SECRETARY (V.O.)  
Hi there. This is Denise from the  
Middle School office. This is  
Bonnie's third absence in a row.  
We're going to need a doctor's note  
and a note from a guardian. Please  
bring those into the front office  
before eight a.m. tomorrow. Hope  
she's ok, hon.

Leila is listening.

Leila stares at the phone then picks it up with a deep breath and calls 911.

On the other end of the phone we hear:

911 OPERATOR  
This is 911. What is the address of  
your emergency?

EXT. FARMHOUSE - DAY

Four police cars are smushed into the long, dirt driveway and parking spaces around the farmhouse and barn. Two of the officers seem to be doing nothing more than chatting. The lights on the police cars are spinning, but the sirens are silent. DETECTIVE MIKE PENROD, 50's, Caucasian, comes out of the kitchen door to bark at the officers.

PENROD  
I asked you guys to turn the lights  
off. We don't want to scare the kid  
if she's around somewhere.

The officers just look at him.

PENROD (CONT'D)  
NOW, please.

Penrod goes back into the house letting the door slam behind him.



INT. FARMHOUSE KITCHEN - DUSK

A couple more officers are wandering through the house looking for any clues or evidence. They don't seem to be looking very thoroughly or be very concerned. Leila is sitting at the kitchen table looking scared to death. She clutches a mug of hot chocolate in a death grip. Her face and eyes are puffy from crying.

PENROD

(To officers) Did you look in the basement?

The officers nod "no."

OFFICER 1

Don't think there is one.

Penrod tries very hard to be patient with this young pup of an officer whom he clearly thinks is an idiot. He shakes his head barely and looks at Leila.

PENROD

(Gently) Where's the door to the basement, Leila?

Leila nods to a door directly behind the officers.

LEILA

It's right there. Behind them.

PENROD

Please check the basement thoroughly, gentlemen.

To Leila

PENROD (CONT'D)

Is there a food cellar down there, Leila?

Leila nods, "yes". Penrod shoots the officers a look.

PENROD (CONT'D)

Look in the food cellar, please. Look behind things.

OFFICER 1

Yes sir.

The officers disappear into the basement. Penrod sits back down with Leila at the table.

PENROD

Leila, you are not in any trouble here. Do you understand?

Leila nods "yes" but her face tells a different story.

PENROD (CONT'D)

Nine times out of ten, we find the kid close to home. She's probably with a friend or camping on the property - trying to scare you or something.

LEILA

She doesn't have any friends.

PENROD

She might have friends that you don't know anything about. Maybe even a boy. A..boy..friend.

Leila lets out a little snort.

LEILA

Ha. Not possible.

PENROD

Did she have her phone with her?

LEILA

I think so. I've looked everywhere for it. I told her to take it with her when she goes off like that. I've called her a million times. No answer.

PENROD

Okay. Did you do the...

LEILA

"Find my phone" thing? Yes. Nothing. The battery must be dead.

PENROD

Smart watch, fit bit - anything like that?

LEILA

No. Nothing like that. Nothing else.

Leila looks wretched and guilty.

PENROD

I'm sure she's fine. You said she's run away before and I'm sure this is the same thing. We'll find her. Don't worry. You have a place to stay tonight? A friend ? Don't want you out here all on your own.

LEILA

Yea. I do. Just down the road. Anyway, our Dad's supposed to be back tonight.

Penrod gets up as if to wrap it up and leave.

PENROD

That's great. OK. We'll be back in the morning if she doesn't show up tonight. But I'm betting she will. Please have your dad call me when he gets in.

The two officers come back into the kitchen from their basement search and Penrod waves them out the back door.

EXT.DUSK. FARMHOUSE

From high above the massive, lonely property we see the last two officers exit and the police cars take their leave of the farm, snaking down the long, dirt road that leads to a paved, two lane country road.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

The wind is blowing hard. Leila staples a 'MISSING' poster to an electrical post. The wind blows her long, blonde hair. Leila looks down the road, worried and sad.

Montage of all the places Boo might be.

Faerie house - desolate, destroyed, not a soul in sight.

The forest - a family of deer bound away, then silence.

The barn - empty.

Boo's room, her bed unmade and empty.

Boo's closet - wide open and empty.

Exterior shot of kids getting out of their small, rural public school. Making their way to buses and cars. All of the children are Caucasian. They are all looking at or on their phones. No Boo. Clouds pile up in the sky signaling another rain storm is coming.

EXT. EVENING. PARKING LOT OF TINY RURAL MARKET.

Rain pours down torrentially on a small, older model car. DETECTIVE SARAH GARDNER, 50's, Caucasian, inside the car, braces to get out into the rain without an umbrella. She grabs a newspaper from the front passenger seat and her purse and makes a run for the market entrance getting soaked in the process.

INT. MARKET. EVENING.

Sarah walks around with a shopping cart, shivering a little. Her hair is wet despite the newspaper "hat" she attempted to shield herself with. She stops in front of the case with milk and grabs a gallon of 2%, puts it into her cart and keeps walking. Then stops short. Looks at the milk, changes her mind. She goes back to the milk shelf and puts it back, shaking her head a little, remembering. Walks on. Remembers something else and goes back to the case for the second time. She stares at the choices and finally takes a smaller container of whole milk.

Sarah walks through the produce section and just looks at things. Sometimes picking something up, then putting it back down.

She walks through the frozen dinner section and stares at the choices unhappily, finally settling on a box of frozen spinach soufflé.

When Sarah gets to the check out lane, the young lady recognizes her. The check out girl is in her early twenties, smiling with long, blonde hair. Her name is LISA and she is clearly engrossed in her phone when Sarah reaches the grocery belt.

LISA (LOOKING UP)  
Oh my gosh, you got soaked!

GARDNER  
Oh yea. (Laughing at herself) No umbrella - I'm an idiot.

LISA  
Oh my gosh, of course you're not! I got soaked this morning.  
(MORE)

LISA (CONT'D)  
(Referencing Sarah's two items in  
the big cart) Is that all for you?

GARDNER  
Yep. Guess I didn't need a cart.

LISA  
Are you Mr. Gardner's daughter?

GARDNER  
Yep. That's me. I'm back in the  
hood.

LISA  
I'm friends with Tara from summer  
camp down here. And, y'know,  
holidays when they stayed with your  
folks. Your girls are so lucky.  
Both in college, right?

GARDNER  
Yep. Both gone. Far away. They're  
doing great. Loving it.

LISA  
Oh, that's so great. Wish I  
could've gone to college. It's just  
too darn expensive. Maybe some day.  
Ha ha, I don't have much of a head  
for tests and stuff anyhow. Your  
girls are so lucky.

GARDNER  
They are. They really are. So am I.

Sarah takes her little bag of milk and frozen dinner and  
looks out at the rain. A missing poster of Boo is plastered  
right up beside the door. Sarah decides to ask Lisa about it.

GARDNER (CONT'D)  
Oh, say - do you know this little  
girl?

LISA  
I've seen her a couple times.  
Mostly her sister comes in. You  
guys find her yet?

GARDNER  
No, not yet. Who put up the poster,  
do you know?

LISA

Beats me. I wasn't here when it got put up. I hope you guys find her.

GARDNER

We will. I'm sure we will - but do me a favor, would you? Take a shot of the poster and put it up on your Facebook page?

LISA

Yea, no problem. I'll do it right away. But, umm, only old people do Facebook now. No offense. I can Instagram it..?

GARDNER

None taken. Yes, please - Instagram, snap chat, twitter it - and anything else you guys are doing.

Lisa cracks a smile.

LISA

You got it.

Sarah Gardner ducks back out into the downpour, leaving Lisa to contemplate the missing poster for a second before she gets back to her important texting business.

INT. SARAH GARDNER HOUSE. NIGHT.

A small, rural house. The furniture looks like old people live there. Lace doilies, old furniture and too much of it. Also there are boxes stacked up in a corner of the living room, on the kitchen counters - some even partially block the entryway. We hear a key JIGGLE in the lock as if someone is having difficulty. Sarah enters with her purse, small bag of groceries looking like a drowned rat. She has to push some boxes aside to get the door closed behind her. Sarah walks into the house towards the kitchen looking around at the state of things.

GARDNER

Honey, I'm home.

There is no answer. No movement. She sighs and moves into the kitchen. Turns a light on. She sets the bag and her purse down but doesn't open them right away. Instead, she peers into an open box on the kitchen counter, digs around in it until she finds a bottle of wine. She opens the wine and pours herself a juice glass of it, calling out again:

GARDNER (CONT'D)  
Honey, I'm home!

Sarah looks around the kitchen and sees a bowl of uneaten dry cat food on the floor.

GARDNER (CONT'D)  
Darn it.

She pours a dish of the milk she bought and places it by the dry cat food. Then stabs her frozen food with the wine opener and shoves it into the microwave.

As the delectable frozen spinach is turning and heating, Sarah moves into the living room with her wine as if inspecting it. She clicks on the TV - no sound. MIKE CLARK, 50's, Caucasian and the epitome of a midwestern Anchorman is delivering the local news. She quickly clicks the channels until a black and white movie flickers light over the room. She sighs and moves to the giant, old lazy boy that is placed in an optimal TV viewing spot. Picks up an ashtray that has been emptied but not well cleaned. This gives her an idea and she goes back into the kitchen, reaches far back on the top of the fridge to find an old cookie tin. Opens it to find 2 cigars, still in their plastic tubes and a half empty box of cigarettes. Sarah opens one of the cigar tubes and inhales the smell, then puts it back, closing the tube. Then she guiltily takes one cigarette out, replaces the cookie tin, shoving it as far back on the fridge as she can reach.

Sarah moves to light one gas ring of the old stove and use it to light her lone cigarette. She goes into the living room, sits in the Lazy Boy, putting the feet up, and smokes her cigarette. She looks very small in the big Lazy Boy and very tired. She closes her eyes for a moment, but when the microwave dings it's alert, she looks into the kitchen to see a big tabby cat drinking the saucer of milk she's poured.

GARDNER (CONT'D)  
There you are, Honey. See, it's not so bad. You've got milk and a human here with you. I'm even smoking one of Opa's ciggies. It's gonna be just fine. I'll unpack one of these days...

The TV light flickers on her exhausted face and the rain continues to pour outside.

EXT. FOREST CLEARING - NIGHT

Missy and Annie are carrying Andre between them, panting and finally having to put him down for a moment to rest.

His splinted leg swings unnaturally beneath him. He tries to muffle a scream of pain as it hits the earth.

Boo has lagged behind, but now runs to catch up with the family with a makeshift gurney she's made in hand. She holds it forth to the little family.

BOO

This might help. And I can take a turn. We're almost there.

Missy looks at Boo, impressed.

MISSY

Smart girl.

Boo and Annie position Andre on the litter, made of branches, the strap of Boo's adventure bag, and some of her twine then lift him up and begin their slow journey again, Missy close behind.

#### INT. MISSING PERSONS OFFICE, PA STATE POLICE HEADQUARTERS

In a florescent lit office room, a group of detectives and missing persons specialists are convening. A white board on the wall has days crossed off, places crossed off, people listed relating to Boo's missing case.

Detective Penrod is there, his replacement officer, Detective Sarah Gardner is there, missing persons specialist, P.D. GAIL WHITE is there, a couple other detectives and young P.D. hang about, listening. Gail, a middle aged African American woman sitting behind a desk that is piled with clutter is in charge of this meeting.

GAIL

It's time to call the FBI, kids.

The room audibly sighs - different reactions from the different players. Sarah Gardner looks extremely worried. Penrod is pissed.

PENROD

Damn, damn, damn it! Damn this damn family. The dad probably has her tied up in a bar somewhere. He was supposed to be back days ago.



He looks straight at Gardner for her reaction, understanding.

GAIL

Now there's a cheery thought. The dad may be pimping out his 12 year old daughter somewhere in West Virginia?

GARDNER

He's not. I'm waiting for a call back to confirm, but we think he's in jail down there. No one to bail him out.

Penrod rubs his temples as if to stop his brain from exploding.

PENROD

That's what I'm saying. Damn this family. Of COURSE Rob Smith is in jail. He's a piece of shit loser who deserves to stay there forever. I'm telling you, he has something to do with this kid going missing. I'm telling you.

GARDNER

Well he seems to have a rock solid alibi - he's been in there for almost a week...

GAIL

More importantly the girl's been missing for an entire week now. We are over the limit - and it's your fault, Penrod. It's a good thing you're retiring.

PENROD

My fault!?? It's my fault the adult sister lied to me? Yea, I don't think so. This kid has run away multiple times before and her adult sister told me she'd been gone less than 24 hours. NOT my fault.

GAIL

(Sighs at her desk) Leila's not 18. She lied to you about that, too - but you should've caught that one, Penrod. She's got a driver's license for nut's sake. She'll be 18 in a month.

PENROD

One of the officers looked at it.  
This what you get when you hire 20  
year olds.

Penrod shoots a disgusted look at one of the young officers  
leaning against the wall. Gardner nods empathetically to that  
idea.

GAIL

Ok, ok. Well - regardless, it's FBI  
time. I'll be connecting them with  
you, Sarah, so our colleague here  
can retire and do as much golfing  
as he can stand. I mean enjoy, of  
course.

Gail hoists herself up from her desk and waves to the  
loitering P.D. and Penrod.

GAIL (CONT'D)

Please get Detective Gardner caught  
up on ALL the information she'll  
need for the FBI and get out of my  
office.

GAIL (CONT'D)

(Turning to Sarah Gardner) I'm glad  
you're here, detective.

Gail holds the door open for all of them, waving them out. As  
Penrod moves through the door, hands stuffed in his pockets,  
face to the floor, she stops him.

GAIL (CONT'D)

Bring me a hot cup of coffee in  
twenty minutes please. 4 creams, 4  
sugars. And a donut. I hate talking  
to the FBI.

Penrod gives her a WTF gesture and walks out the door looking  
very unhappy.

INT. DAY BEDROOM OF AGENTS FLETCHER'S SMART HOME.

Early morning sun barely creeps through the crack between the bottom of a white shade and the floor in an ultra modern bedroom. Classical music gently swells - acting as an alarm in sync with the shade slowly lifting up to let earliest morning sun bathe the room. We hear AGENT FLETCHER SMITH, a good looking middle aged African American man let out a deep breath and roll onto his back from fetal position as he wakes. He speaks to the room.

FLETCHER

Good morning.

A gentle female AI voice ( ALICE ) answers in French.

ALICE

Bonjour.

FLETCHER

Cappuccino please. Warm floors.  
Draw bath.

ALICE

Tout le plaisir est pour moi.

Fletcher rolls out of bed. He's wearing simple off white silk pajamas that look Asian in design. He stretches and immediately jumps down into push ups, pops off 10 quickly, then heads into his kitchen where his cappuccino is waiting for him. He holds the steaming cup and speaks again to the room.

FLETCHER

Headlines, please.

An entire white wall of the smart house begins to fill with projected images of Newspaper headlines from all over the world. They scroll down the wall quickly. Fletcher scans them as he sips his cappuccino.

We follow Fletcher into his bathroom - an ultra modern, sleek one with a giant tub that is already filled with water. The headlines are scrolling down a white wall in his bathroom. Fletcher undresses and steps into the tub facing the white wall of scrolling headlines and articles with certain lines already highlighted in different colors.

We glimpse his naked back through the steamy air. It is covered in a thick but faded cross hatch of scars. Fletcher slides into the water, placing his cappuccino on the edge of the tub so that he can sip it and read the scrolling wall.

FLETCHER (CONT'D)  
Call King, please.

ALICE  
Telephonie Corey King.

The white wall in front of Fletcher turns into a video screen where a middle aged white man pops up. He is attractive and looks like anyone's mid western suburban neighbor. He is still bleary eyed and in his robe. COREY KING starts slightly when he sees Fletcher's naked body in the tub.

KING  
Jesus, Fletcher. You can't wait  
until after bath time?

Fletcher chuckles and reaches for a black rubber Duckie which he floats over his genital area.

FLETCHER  
Sorry, King. I'm not a patient man.

KING  
Understatement. Some of us sleep  
past 5 am, too.

FLETCHER  
Since when?

KING  
(grumbling) Well it is Sunday..

FLETCHER  
Tell me what's happening.

KING  
You're on a plane to Rostraver,  
Pennsylvania in one hour. An hour  
south of Pittsburgh. A 12 year old  
girl missing for a week. You're  
staying at the Hotel Monaco in  
downtown Pittsburgh until Tuesday  
evening unless you deem the case  
needs more time. We expect protests  
in Pittsburgh this weekend after  
the Synagogue shooting, so that'll  
affect traffic..

FLETCHER  
(Interrupting) Rostraver? That's  
where she went missing?

KING

A place unfortunately called Coal Center. Rostraver is the closest landing strip.

FLETCHER

Bring up Western Pennsylvania map, please, Alice.

A detailed map of Western Pennsylvania replaces much of Quinn's image on the wall.

Fletcher's finger slowly traces the red line that separates West Virginia from Pennsylvania on the wall.

KING

Why do you always say please to your smart devises?

FLETCHER

It's a good habit. I spend a lot of time with AI's. (looking at map, leaning forward) I know this place.

( Addressing ALICE )

FLETCHER (CONT'D)

Alice, zoom in to Coal Center, please.

The map on the wall zooms in to show what appears to be vast rural properties.

FLETCHER (CONT'D)

Google Earth view, please.

The map switches to show trees, fields - it zooms in a drone shot to show country and dirt roads connecting farms, forests and fields. Fletcher sees a red barn and a creek. He leans forward intently.

FLETCHER (CONT'D)

(Quietly) I know this place..

EXT. FOREST CLEARING - NIGHT

Annie and Boo are carrying Andre on the makeshift gurney, Missy right behind them - all trying to walk as quietly as possible on the crunchy leaves and ice - when Missy stops short. She hears something in the distance behind them.

MISSY

Hush.

All four freeze in instinctive terror. They hear what sound like FOOTSTEPS of a man and a horse in the distance. Missy barely whispers under her voice.

MISSY (CONT'D)  
Oh Lord help us, help us.

Boo motions her head for Missy to come close, then hands her side of the gurney to Missy and whispers as softly as she can to Annie.

BOO  
You know where to go. I'll buy you  
some time - go as fast as you can.

Annie nods and with Missy taking the other side of Andre's gurney, she guides them towards the farmhouse as fast as they can.

Boo runs in another direction, not trying to be quiet this time. She picks up a stick and bangs it on trees and shrubs, trying to make as much noise as possible without speaking. She lets out sounds as if she's hurt.

BOO (CONT'D)  
Ahh.. ikes...

Soon we hear the footsteps behind her turn into the sound of running and horse bray.

The Rope Man quickly ties his horse to a tree and starts after Boo in a full run, tugging the big coil of rope around his shoulder into a lasso.

ROPE MAN  
I got you now! Yeeeee...!!

Boo runs like her life depends on it, ducking and darting and jumping through the trees and stumps of the forest she knows so well. She lets out little sounds of fright and continues to smack branches every which way to make as much noise as possible as she runs.

The Rope Man runs after her, panting and furious - branches slapping him in the face until he runs full into one of Boo's trip wires and falls with a thud face first on the ground.

Boo is watching from the top of a nearby tree. She watches as the Rope Man groans and rolls over slowly to reveal he has landed right on her open Swiss Army Knife. Blood pools over his hand as he pulls the knife out of his chest.

He moves to get up, but his ankle goes out from under his heavy body and he falls again - this time his head squarely hitting a large stone. He is out, cold.

Boo jumps from her perch in the tree like a nimble monkey and runs from the scene as fast as she can.

EXT. FARM HOUSE - DUSK

Detectives MIKE PENROD and SARAH GARDENER warm their hands on paper cups of coffee, standing on the porch of the farm house and looking out over the property. Five police cars are parked haphazardly around the place, and several OFFICERS are in varying stages of search and prep.

PENROD

Oh boy. Here comes the circus.

He nods to the long, dirt driveway snaking down from the main road. BLACK, UNMARKED VEHICLES are making their way towards the farmhouse.

GARDNER

I swear I don't need to see a dead body tonight.

PENROD

Very doubtful. This is the third time we've scoured the property. It's huge. Damn thing goes on forever. Kind of creepy.

GARDNER

Trees don't scare me. It's just so sad. She was twelve, right?

PENROD

Is twelve. I don't think she's dead. I think she ran away. The sister, Leila - says she's wanders off a lot. Camps on the property, stuff like that.

Penrod nods, clocking the unmarked cars as they park.

GARDNER

(groans)

You would have found her. Ugh. I don't want to do this alone.

PENROD

Oh, you're far from alone.

He nods his head toward AGENT FLETCHER. With a report folder under his arm, Fletcher approaches. Several FBI AGENTS not far behind him - in fact the place seems suddenly to be crawling with FBI. Agents getting out of cars, dogs let out - Fletcher extends his hand to Penrod, then Gardener.

PENROD (CONT'D)

Agent Fletcher?

FLETCHER

That's right.

PENROD

We've heard a lot about you. I'm Detective Penrod and this is Detective Gardner. She'll be your local contact, I'm getting ready to retire next week.

FLETCHER

Good for you. Nice to meet you both. I familiarized on the plane, but I have to ask, where's the dad?

PENROD

Yeah, he's got an alibi.

GARDNER

He's in jail. In West Virginia, got arrested the night she went missing.

FLETCHER

Bonnie's dad? He's Bonnie and Leila's biological father?

PENROD

Yep. He's a drunk. And they all call her Boo.

Fletcher looks confused.

PENROD (CONT'D)

The little girl. They all call her Boo. It's her nickname.

FLETCHER

Great. Why is this not in the report? Doesn't say why the Dad is in West Virginia...this is pathetic.



PENROD  
The dad, Rob Smith...

FLETCHER  
I have his name. At least that was included.

GARDENER  
He gets jobs on Well Pads - leaves for periods of time...supposed to be two weeks at a time.

FLETCHER  
...then spends his paycheck on booze or drugs and gets into trouble...?

The detectives nod "yes."

FLETCHER (CONT'D)  
Mom's dead?

PENROD  
Yes.  
Presumed dead. Never found a body.  
That was several years ago.

This is of great interest to Fletcher.

FLETCHER  
Why the hell is that not in this report?

Detective Penrod and Sarah look sheepishly at one another.

FLETCHER (CONT'D)  
You guys genuinely suck. A twelve-year-old girl is missing and you have all of this information that you can't manage to include in this report? This is basic stuff, detectives. You all too busy watching hockey to make the effort?

The detectives don't respond. They're taken aback at how Fletcher is speaking to them.

FLETCHER (CONT'D)  
Any other family?

PENROD  
Just an uncle that we know about.  
He's traveling in Nepal. Haven't been able to find him.

FLETCHER  
So these girls have been fending  
for themselves out here in the  
middle of nowhere?

PENROD  
The older sister is almost  
eighteen. She's got a car...

FLETCHER  
Well, where is she?

PENROD  
We questioned her already. Don't  
know where she is right now.

GARDNER  
Probably at a friend's house. She's  
probably scared to death.

FLETCHER  
I don't even want to ask you if  
she's been offered counseling,  
therapy, a safe house...?

Gardner looks at Penrod, clearly not knowing the answer to  
these questions.

PENROD  
She was offered. She didn't want  
anything. She said she had a friend  
to stay with...

FLETCHER  
This is all unacceptable. Gardner,  
please get the drunk dad here as  
quickly as you can -- he's still a  
suspect -- and find that uncle. My  
agents will help. Bunch of country  
bumpkins. Useless.

Detective Fletcher throws down his report on the porch.

GARDNER  
Yes sir.

Fletcher strolls off quickly, gesturing to the nearby FBI  
agents. Looks at his watch. He is wasting no time.

FLETCHER  
Let's search the property before it  
gets dark. I intend to find this  
little girl.

In the twilight, the detectives look out over the massive property, the barn, the fields, and beyond these, the dark, looming forest. FBI agents are starting across the field on ATV's and moving into the forest on foot, the high-powered beams of their flashlights highlighting the undersides of the treetops.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

AGENTS fifty feet apart -- some on vehicles, some on foot -- scour the area under the darkening sky. Flashlights reveal nooks, crannies, pockets under fallen trees, even a dead deer -- but nothing else.

SAME, MOMENTS LATER

Fletcher, Penrod and Gardner move together through the forest, Gardner lagging behind. She thinks she hears something and waits for the men to move ahead. She does. It almost sounds like a child WHIMPERING.

She follows the sound...

EXT. FOREST GLADE - NIGHT

The Faerie house clearing. Leila is there sitting leaned against the tree stump and crying with her arms wrapped around her knees. Completely traumatized. Gardner approaches her cautiously, taking note of the broken and odd shiny objects strewn around the small clearing. She sees one of the remaining trip wires just in time to step over it.

GARDNER

Leila..?

Leila doesn't look up. She rocks herself softly.

GARDNER

Are you Leila? Bonnie's sister?  
Boo's sister?

Leila continues to cry and rock.

GARDNER

I'm so, so sorry, honey. I know  
this is so awful for you. May I  
take you inside? It's getting cold  
and dark out here.

Leila shakes her head, "no."

LEILA  
It's my fault.

GARDNER  
Oh my gosh, honey. Of course it's not. Not in any way. Not in any way.

LEILA  
It is. I didn't believe her.

GARDNER  
What do you mean?

LEILA  
She saw someone out in the woods. I didn't believe her. And now she's gone. I can't take it. I can't take it.

GARDNER  
Who did she see in the woods? What did she say?

LEILA  
She said it was a little girl. In a funny dress. But who knows what it really was. I didn't believe her. I thought she was making it up...

As Gardner takes this in, the wind chimes blow and sing an eerie, tinkling song. Leila cries uncontrollably, but her energy is winding down.

LEILA (CONT'D)  
...now she's gone. She's probably dead. I told her we had each other...I was supposed to take care of her...

Gardner sits next to Leila and gently wraps her in a hug. She strokes her hair and rocks with her.

GARDNER  
It's not your fault, honey. It's not. Now, when you can talk... you'll tell me the whole story. We'll get to the bottom of this. We will.

EXT. FOREST CLEARING - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Fletcher and Penrod make their way deep into the forest.

Penrod sees the makeshift arbor, covered in vines and bathed in the blue-silver light of the moon. He looks at it quizzically -- it looks so out of place and if his eyes don't deceive him, the forest scene THROUGH the portal seems to be dusted in snow, unlike the forest around him.

Penrod shakes his head and looks towards Fletcher to say something when his eye is drawn back suddenly by a strange sound and a bright blue light sweeping suddenly across the forest.

He and Fletcher look at the arbor to see Missy's slave family just entering the arch, Missy and Annie carrying the little boy between them. They freeze in the arbor, frozen, in shock. The sounds of agents, DOGS, ATV's and a HELICOPTER BEAMING LIGHT DOWN INTO THE FOREST are frightening and strange.

Penrod stares at them as though they are ghosts, not knowing what to make of this scene.

Fletcher, however, moves towards the little family with purpose. He moves quickly, not one bit confused or surprised. He goes directly to Missy and looks her in the eyes.

A moment of recognition. Or possible recognition. Fletcher looks like someone Missy knew and trusted. He takes Andre from her arms and barks orders to nearby agents.

FLETCHER

Penrod; agent. Come help with these children. This child is wounded. Get him down to the EMS. Now!

Fletcher hands little Andre to Penrod and guides Annie toward a female agent as the closest agents hustle to their aid from their positions. The forest is suddenly filled with agents pointing flashlights and yelling communications to one another in the light of this discovery.

FLETCHER (CONT'D)

He needs a blanket, detective, and medical attention.

As Penrod takes Andre, two agents with barking dogs break through the trees, the dogs bare their teeth and bark at Missy. Missy lunges forward, unable to contain herself.

MISSY

No! Don't take my babies! Don't take them! Please don't take 'em!

PENROD

No one's taking your children, ma'am.

Missy is crossing into the realm of hysterical as her children move away from her in the hands of strangely dressed men and the vicious looking barking dogs come nearer.

Penrod is beyond baffled at this bizarre scene, but moves into action instinctively as Fletcher speaks to Missy:

FLETCHER

We're taking you all together. No one is taking your children away. I promise.

He gently but firmly takes Missy by the shoulders and turns her to look directly in her eyes. She is clearly at her breaking point, sobbing and exhausted. He then turns her to follow her children and the agents with his arm tight around her shoulder.

FLETCHER (CONT'D)

Come on, Missy. We're all going together. Going to get your boy help.

They follow Penrod and the other agents quickly in the direction of the farmhouse.

At the edge of the woods, agents zip up on ATV's to carry the injured children, Missy and agents across the fields to the waiting EMS truck, police cars and unmarked vehicles. The helicopter flies away.

Two young EMS workers stand at the ready with the back of an ambulance open and waiting, but before anyone can make sense out of the confusion, Penrod turns to see Agent Fletcher, with his driver's help, steer Missy and her children into the back of his unmarked SUV. Missy is sobbing and clutching her children desperately.

As Fletcher quickly shuts the back door on the little family he makes eye contact with Penrod.

FLETCHER (CONT'D)

Better this way. Meet at the hospital.

Penrod seems put off by this unusual move when Fletcher does something even more unusual. As he is about to step into the driver's seat of the unmarked car, he tosses his walkie talkie to Penrod.

FLETCHER (CONT'D)

Head's up!

The unmarked car splashes in the mud to get around the parked police cars and zooms off down the long driveway as EMS, police and agents move towards their cars and agents continue to trickle out of the woods on foot and ATV's and onto the field towards the farmhouse.

Back in the forest we see two of the last agents making their way back to FBI "basecamp".

All of a sudden a huge noise echoes through the forest from the direction of the portal arbor. It is so deep and loud it shakes the forest floor. Dogs begin to whimper and birds fly out of the forest cawing. The agents look back to see only a faint blue light. AGENT 1 looks at his partner and shrugs.

AGENT 1  
Fracking...

AGENT 2 nods in agreement as they leave the forest.

Back at the portal, Boo, is standing in a daze, seemingly frozen in place at the center of the portal. She is terrified as the noise becomes louder and blue light bathes the portal and surrounding trees -

Then with a huge sucking sound, Boo is pulled violently backwards through the portal, screaming - disappearing into the black night. The portal slams shut, then goes dark and quiet.

The arbor stands empty. The leaves growing around and over it have turned black - as if burned. The forest that is seen through the portal is no longer winter - it matches the rest of the forest as "normal". No sound of anything.

Above the empty and dark portal, a full moon shines down upon the forest.

Snow begins to fall...

A tinny, distant, echoing rendition of 'Amazing Grace' is sung by a little girl.

THE END. CREDITS.