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TITLE

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EXT. WOODS - EVENING

6 friends sit around a campfire drinking cheap beer and smoking cigarettes. They are celebrating the last day of School in the only way they know how and are regaling each other with stories from the years gone by. GEORGE, a confident boy, is just beginning a personal favorite of his.

CHARLIE

Not this one again.

George shrugs off the comment.

GEORGE

Fuck off, it's a funny story...

He takes a drink of his beer.

GEORGE (cont'd)

...Where was I?

ANNA is the first to answer. She is a good looking girl who seems to radiate happiness and confidence which infatuates the boys around her. She is sat in the arms of HENRY, her boyfriend.

ANNA

You and Charlie were going to take a piss.

GEORGE

Yeah (laughs) right... so we're walking down James' garden, bear in mind I've been to James' house a lot so I know that there's this pond right in the middle of his garden, so yeah me and Charlie are walking along all merry like, and cause it's pitch black the pond is completely invisible. I'm fucking plastered at this point so I just presume Charlie knows to take this little path round the side of the pond but as we're chatting away this bloody idiot just drops out of sight and all I hear is this like big splash...

The group begins to laugh, Charlie is shaking his head but a wry smile spreads across his lips as he takes a drag of his cigarette. George is now acting out the carnage he is describing with his arms, he is a born storyteller.

GEORGE (cont'd)

... so I look down and Charlie's gone and walked straight into the pond... he got his torso onto the path but the pond's lined with plastic, or some shit, so his little legs are just thrashing about for like a solid 5 seconds or something and he's freaking out.. And I'm just stood there in absolute tears, like literal tears, thought I was gonna be sick from laughing so hard, nearly fell in the fucking pond myself.

George and the others are really laughing now, even charlie. Despite hearing the story countless times before it still makes them laugh like the day it happened, almost getting funnier over time.

GEORGE (cont'd)

(Calming down)

...My favorite thing about that story though, is that we never did end up having a piss in the end, just went straight back inside. Reckon Charlie wet himself from the shock.

He lets out another little chuckle before going back to his drink.

HENRY

What about you?

GEORGE

(still laughing)

What..?

HENRY

Why didn't you go for a piss?

GEORGE

(Lets out a wry smile)

I told you I was laughing hard.

The others let out a disgusted groan.

We slowly turn to the opposite end of the circle where a small boy is sat watching the group, he has not laughed this whole time, only being able to force a bemused smile when it seemed appropriate - BEN

BEN

(V/O)

I don't know why she insisted that I come along to this... Thing. Guess she likes having me around, doesn't make her feel so bad.

JAMES, the final member of the group, is still feeling the effects of George's story, it is his favorite of them all.

JAMES

(Failing to subdue
his laughter)

Ah fuck me... Oh my god... Fucking hell

He composes himself enough to form an understandable sentence.

JAMES (cont'd)

Right who's next?

Everyone looks round the circle excitedly, ready for the next story. George's eyes fall upon Ben.

BEN

(V/O)

Brilliant.

GEORGE

How about you Ben? Any good stories?

Ben shuffles uncomfortably and smiles nervously. He looks around as if in thought before shrugging his shoulders in defeat.

BEN

Not really, just glad exams are over finally.

This seems to please the boys.

JAMES

Fucking ay brother.

CHARLIE

Cheers to that!

The lads raise their glasses and begin to drink, Ben slowly nods his head, relieved. Anna is less satisfied by this answer though.

ANNA

That's not true. We have loads of good stories Ben.

BEN

(V/O)

Here we go.

Anna smiles brightly at Ben, he struggles to force a smile back at her.

ANNA

Ben and I were best friends when we were little, and I mean properly close, almost inseparable and we used to spend a lot of time up here in the woods playing hide and seek, I was never very good at it but Ben was brilliant, especially at hiding, he seemed to be able to just disappear. so we were playing one day and I'd been looking for him for what felt like hours and I was starting to get a little bit worried that I'd never find him but then I hear this screaming from down the hill so I run towards it and I see Ben underneath this tree with his foot caught in one of the roots, this little spider had crawled onto his face and he was desperately trying to get it off...

She mimes the action while faintly laughing. Nobody else is invested in the story save for a couple of smiles but Anna carries on regardless.

ANNA (cont'd)

...After he got it off I asked him if his leg was okay and it turned out he'd been stuck there for almost an hour without saying anything but the second he saw that spider, that was it.

Anna is the only one laughing, the others have no connection to the story. Ben is only getting increasingly more uncomfortable, he hates talking about himself.

Henry is the only one not even smiling, he is just looking at Ben. Ben catches his eye and he snaps out of it.

HENRY
I think it's my turn.

The group relaxes again.

HENRY (cont'd)
My favorite story from school is about when I first met Anna.

The boys react exactly the way you would expect a group of 17 year old boys to react to even the slightest hint of emotion. Anna is touched by the sentiment.

JAMES
Not this shit again.

George mimes throwing up. Charlie just laughs to himself while taking a drink of his cider.

Ben is stone faced, he is holding back anger.

HENRY
(Talking over the chatter)
But, because you guys are still children and cannot seem to handle adult emotions, I'm not gonna tell a different story.

Laughter

HENRY (cont'd)
You guys remember that one time we were all at Olivia's house and we went out to the...

Henry's words fade into white noise, we are now hearing Ben's thoughts again.

BEN
(V/O)
He loves that fucking story, he can't seem to remind people enough of how he met this nerdy little girl and turned her into the 'popular' girl she is now.

We are in Ben's eyes, he can't take his eyes off of ANNA.

BEN (cont'd)

(V/O)

*But he always misses out a key part
of that story whenever he tells it -
he misses out me.*

The anger in Ben's eyes is slowly spreading to the rest of his face

BEN (cont'd)

(V/O)

*He misses out the part where he tore
apart our friendship, the part where
he stole her from me. I don't know
who I hate more, him for taking her
from me or her for letting it happen.
But I don't blame her, she now lives
this perfect little life with her
perfect man and their perfect friends
and every once in a while she'll
remember that weird kid she used to
hang out with and'll invite me out to
listen to stupid stories about her
new life and she'll tell stupid
stories about the life she abandoned
and act as if she remembers and cares
about me still.*

A single tear rolls down Ben's face.

BEN (cont'd)

(V/O)

*I'm not afraid of spiders. She always
changes the story to make it funnier,
more innocent. In reality I was
crying long before the spider came
anywhere near me. I used to think she
missed out that part because it was
too depressing, but over time I've
realized she's just forgotten.*

Ben pushes his fist across the underside of his nose.

BEN (cont'd)

(V/O)

*Fuck her, Fuck Henry, Fuck the lot of
them.*

In his anger one of Ben's thoughts slips out.

BEN (cont'd)

Fuck.

Henry suddenly stops his story and the group all stare at Ben.

CHARLIE
You alright mate?

Ben stares blankly at him for a second.

BEN
Wood.

HENRY
You what?

BEN
We need more wood... For the fire.

Henry looks down at the fire and nods in agreement.

BEN (cont'd)
I'll get some.

Ben quickly stands up and disappears into the forest.

CHARLIE
Is he alright?

ANNA
(Visibly Concerned)
Yeah, he's fine.

Henry reaches onto his rucksack behind him and retrieves a can of beer.

HENRY
He just needs to relax a bit. He can have one of my cans when he gets back.

ANNA
He doesn't drink

JAMES
(Matter of fact tone
of voice)
Is that cause of his dad?

The group enters an awkward silence. Anna looks at him, furious.

ANNA
What is wrong with you?

JAMES
I'm just saying.

ANNA
It has nothing to do with his dad okay? He just doesn't like alcohol, is that such a problem?

JAMES
Sorry

ANNA
He's just a bit uptight because he doesn't know you guys very well.

GEORGE
Not to sound rude, but why do you keep inviting him out with us?

ANNA
(Angry)
What?

GEORGE
Don't get me wrong he seems alright but he's clearly not enjoying himself.

ANNA
He's my friend.

JAMES
I never see you guys talking at school.

HENRY
Shut up James.

ANNA
(Defensive)
You don't have to talk all the time to be friends.

GEORGE
But even when you're together, like today, he doesn't say shit he just sits there looking like he's about to burst into tears or go all psycho on us, creeps me out. He's a weird kid.

Anna is too angry to respond.

HENRY
Have some sympathy man, his mum's...

ANNA
Shut up!

JAMES
What happened to his...

ANNA
I said shut up!

Silence

ANNA (cont'd)
...What the hell is wrong with all of you? Since when did you get so heartless? (beat) He's my friend and if I want to invite him out, I will. And if any of you have a problem with that you can fuck off.

Silence.

GEORGE
I...

ANNA
(To Henry)
And don't ever bring up his mum again.

CUT TO:

EXT. FURTHER INTO THE WOODS - NIGHT

Ben is trudging through the forest, he breathes heavily as he holds back tears.

BEN
(V/O)
I know they're talking about me, 'The weird kid that never speaks', 'the weird kid who doesn't drink or smoke because he's so afraid of turning into his father' (pause) I can already hear her telling more stories. Handing out my most cherished memories to strangers like tossing rubbish into a bin, she no longer cares about those moments; to her they are just stories.
(MORE)

BEN (cont'd)

*My life is just a funny tale she
tells to impress her boyfriend - that
bastard.*

Suddenly an image of a dead Henry across the screen. We flash to a wider shot where we see Ben's silhouette in the foreground holding a knife. We suddenly cut back to Ben who has stopped walking and stands in shock of what he has just envisioned. He slowly looks down to the hand in which the knife was in but sees only a twig. He examines the twig with a childlike fascination.

ANNA

Ben!

Ben is suddenly pulled from his trance by Anna as he appears from the trees behind him.

ANNA (cont'd)

You Okay

BEN

Yeah

Anna smiles sympathetically

ANNA

Me and Henry were planning on going up to the house if you wanted to join us.

BEN

(V/O)

I can't think of anything worse than being alone with those two, not like this.

BEN (cont'd)

What about the others?

ANNA

They had to go home

Silence

ANNA (cont'd)

You wanna come?

BEN

(V/O)

No

BEN (cont'd)

Okay

Ben starts to walk back the way they came. Anna stops him by grabbing his arm, he quickly pulls away but turns to face her, his face a picture of suppressed sadness.

ANNA

I didn't mean to make you uncomfortable Ben. I just thought you'd like to come out with us, I feel like I never get to see you anymore.

BEN

Been busy revising.

ANNA

I know, but...

Ben continues walking

BEN

You coming?

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

We hear a key being turned in a lock and the three teenagers enter the house. Anna and Henry enter first, energetically. Ben enters slowly behind them, letting his eyes take in the house.

Anna rushes to the living room with Henry in tow.

HENRY

When did you say your grandparents get back?

ANNA

Not sure, Sometime in August I think. But, for the time being, we've got the place to ourselves.

She elegantly collapses into a sofa and starts laughing. Henry rushes to join her on the sofa.

Henry begins kissing Anna on the neck.

ANNA (cont'd)

(Laughing)

You're so drunk.

Ben wanders into the room and notices Henry and Anna on the sofa. He stops and watches them with a growing fury. Henry notices Ben.

HENRY
What are you looking at?

An image of Henry drenched in blood on the living room floor flashes onto the screen.

BEN
Nothing.

As Ben walks into the kitchen we hear the conversation behind him.

ANNA
Don't be rude!

HENRY
He was staring at us like some pervert.

ANNA
Henry!

Ben freezes. An image of himself standing over Henry with a bloody knife flashes across his mind. He smiles to himself and continues into the Kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Ben is sat at the Kitchen table, staring into the distance. Anna enters.

ANNA
Hey, I'm sorry about Henry. He's just pissed.

BEN
It's fine.

Anna goes over to a cupboard and gets out a glass.

ANNA
He didn't mean what he said earlier.

BEN
I know.

Anna goes over to the tap and starts running it, checking the temperature.

ANNA
You want something to drink?

She starts filling up the glass

BEN
I don't drink.

ANNA
I mean water.

Anna turns off the tap and walks over to Ben with the glass.

BEN
Oh, No I'm okay.

Anna puts the glass in front of him, he smiles and drinks.
Anna turns to look at the kitchen.

ANNA
Seems, like forever.

Ben does not respond.

ANNA (cont'd)
(Clarifying)
Since we've been here.

Ben looks somber

BEN
I loved this place.

Anna smiles.

ANNA
Me too.

They both sit in a comfortable silence.

ANNA (cont'd)
You remember that one time...

BEN
I remember. (pause) I remember.

Anna smiles again.

ANNA
I'm going to put the fire on, I won't
be a second.

Ben smiles to himself as Anna leaves. He takes another drink of water, smiling to himself as he looks at it.

Henry suddenly staggers into the room. He is clearly very wasted. Ben's smile disappears.

HENRY
You're a weird kid Ben.

Henry crosses to the fridge and gets himself a beer. He chuckles to himself

HENRY (cont'd)
Not much of a talker are you?

Ben doesn't respond. Henry comes over and stands across from him. Ben remains sitting.

HENRY (cont'd)
Look man, I'm gonna level with you. I know you have a problem with me and Anna...

Henry waits for a response which never comes, he continues.

HENRY (cont'd)
...I don't know if you're trying to get with her or something but you gotta get over her man. I know you two were close when you were little and everything but that was a long time ago, she's grown up mate, she's not your little childhood friend anymore.

Ben struggles to hide the emotion from his face.

HENRY (cont'd)
I get it mate it's shit, but shit happens, that's just life, People move on, make new friends. (pause) You should try it sometime, making new friends, then we can all go our own separate ways and she can stop stressing about you... (pause) She does care about you y'know, she really worries about you. And that's not fair is it? You're not her problem. I understand all that shit with your mum fucked you up...

Ben suddenly goes very stiff.

BEN
(Stammering)
She... She told...

HENRY
What?

BEN
She told you about..?

HENRY
She told? Yeah she told me, and she told me about me about your dad as well. So I know you've got it shit but...

His words fade into the background as Ben slowly stands and goes to leave the kitchen. We see Henry in the background saying something but we cannot hear him. Anna comes to the kitchen, she sees the look in Ben's eyes.

ANNA
Ben...

BEN
I'm going to the toilet.

Ben pushes past her and rushes to the stairs. He gets to a long corridor and slowly makes his way down it. His head is spinning as he troubles to fight back the tears that are trying to get out.

INT. KITCHEN

Anna watches Ben go up the stairs. She rushes into the Kitchen to confront Henry who rushes over to her and embraces her in a hug, she tries to push away but is unable.

ANNA
What happened?

HENRY
You heard him, he's just going to the toilet.

Anna pulls away from Henry.

ANNA
He really didn't look okay, did you say something to him.

HENRY
Nothing happened, he's fine.

INT. BATHROOM

Ben stares at himself in the bathroom mirror, finally allowing the tears to come. We cut between shots of a dead Henry and Ben clawing with his emotions, he is broken.

INT. KITCHEN

Anna begins to leave the kitchen.

ANNA
I'm going to check on him

Henry grabs her arm, stopping her from leaving.

HENRY
Oh come on, stop worrying about him.
He's a big boy.

ANNA
You don't know him.

She pulls out of his grip and leaves.

HENRY
I spoke to him.

Anna freezes.

ANNA
What?

HENRY
Had a man to man.

ANNA
What did you say?

HENRY
I told him what he needed to hear.

ANNA
(Upset)
Henry...

HENRY

I told him the truth. I told him what you should have time him years ago if you weren't so fucking afraid of hurting him!

ANNA

Fuck you.

She leaves

Another vision Henry's dead body flashes onto the screen.

INT. BATHROOM

Ben struggles to pull himself together. He again stands over the sink but now looks into a broken mirror. He looks down at his hand and we see he is holding a knife, one we saw in the kitchen.

INT. HALLWAY

Anna slowly walks along the hallway. Her face a picture of guilt and concern. We see she is walking towards the bathroom door

We smash cut to a tracking shot behind Ben as he walks towards Henry, still in the kitchen, holding the knife. As Ben raises his arm to strike we cut to

INT. BATHROOM

Ben stares at the knife in his hand. He takes one last glimpse of himself in the mirror and turns to face the door. He reaches for the handle but stops just before he takes hold of it. He takes a deep breath, steadying himself. Just as he commits himself to what he is about to do the door swings open from the other side.

Anna and Ben stand for a second, staring at each other. Ben holds back the tears he thought he had gotten rid of. Without saying a word, Anna embraces him.

BEN

Don't...

Ben pushes the girl off him.

ANNA
(fighting back tears)
Ben...

BEN
(Anger building)
Don't...

ANNA
Ben, I'm sorry.

BEN
(Struggling with his
words)
Don't fucking say that.

ANNA
I don't know what Henry said to you
but he's really drunk, don't listen
to him.

BEN
You told him...

ANNA
(Concerned)
What

BEN
(The tears begin to
flow)
You fucking told him.

ANNA
Ben I'm so sorry I didn't know what
to do. I had to tell someone I
couldn't just...

BEN
-You promised me... I trusted you.

ANNA
I was upset, I wasn't thinking.

BEN
I needed you.

Silence, Anna fights back tears.

BEN (cont'd)
She died Anna, she fucking died.

ANNA
Ben...

BEN
I needed you there, I needed you so
badly and you just disappeared.