

SCRIPT TITLE

Written by

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Based on, If Any

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TEASER

EXT. WOODS - DAYBREAK

A thick mist fills the area. VALLA (30) squats next to a small hole. Her long black hair is caught in the breeze. Valla sinks her hands into the damp earth. She carefully places a clump of dirt in a bucket next to her.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Valla gathers herbs and berries. She pulls notebook from jacket and scribbles notes next to hand drawn pictures. A shadow rushes towards her from the mist. Valla closes her eyes. She turns to the shadow and raises her hand. It dissipates into her. Valla sways. She steadies herself on a nearby tree.

EXT. VALLA'S HOME - EVENING

Smoke rises from a lone log cabin situated between two towering oak trees. Valla walks around the home sprinkling a yellow powder. She stops in front of a sapling weeping willow and caresses its leaves. She plucks a leaf and nervously rushes inside. Valla yanks the curtains closed. Lights flicker on throughout the house.

INT. VALLA'S HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

Painted symbols cover the window above a farmhouse sink. Valla moves around the kitchen. She mixes herbs and turns them into a powder. She turns to the wood burning stove and sits a kettle atop it.

INT. VALLA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM T- NIGHT

Modest furniture fills the room. A cup of tea sits on the coffee table. Valla enters with a shawl draped over her shoulders. She sits on the couch, takes up the tea and leans back.

KNOCK, KNOCK. Valla takes a deep breath and walks to the door with tea in hand. She sits the tea on the table by the door and peeks out the window.

CHIEF HARRIS (O.S.)
It's an emergency.

VALLA
Who is it?

CHIEF HARRIS
The Tsosie boy.

Valla's shoulders sink and she tosses the shawl aside.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

Valla and CHIEF HARRIS (60) walk along the moonlight road towards a group of houses. A shadow passes behind them. They both slow down and look behind them.

CHEIF HARRIS
The spirits are restless.

VALLA
We all are.

Valla reaches into bag slung across her chest and pulls out flashlight. She flips it on and shines it ahead of her.

EXT. TSOSIE HOME - NIGHT

Chief Harris holds screen door open for Valla. She nods and steps up into the house. The screen door creaks as Chief Harris allows it to close behind him.

INT. ENTRY WAY/HALLWAY - NIGHT

MOANS and CHANTING are heard in the distance. Cheif Harris leads Valla down hall. Family photos cover the walls. Photos of JEREMIAH TSOSIE (12) in a headdress and traditional clothes performing fill a side table.

Light spills into hallway from door at the far end of the house. Chief Harris pushes door open allowing the CRIES and MOANS to fill the hallway.

INT. TSOSIE HOME - JERIMAIH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

ELDERS surround the bed. Chief Harris moves into room and places his hand on JOSEPH TSOSIE (30's) back. MAPLE TSOSIE (30's) kneels next to the bed. Joseph turns and stares at Valla still in the hallway.

JOSEPH
Can everyone give us a moment with
the Chief?

Everyone clears out. Maple grips Jeremiah Tsosie's hand. He lies in the bed covered in sweat. Jeremiah shivers and MOANS.

VALLA
I need the room.

MAPLE
What can she do?

CHIEF HARRIS
Maple, we discussed this.

Joseph pulls Maple to her feet and out the room. Chief Harris nods at Valla and closes the door behind him.

VALLA
Who are you?

Door eases open a crack. Shadows encircle and swirl around Valla. Maple gasps. Valla swings around and SLAMS door.

INT. TSOSIE HOME - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Chief Harris stands in front of the Joseph and Maple blocking the door. Joseph takes Maple's stand hand and squeezes it. ELDER BAKER (60's) pushes his way to Joseph.

ELDER BAKER
She shouldn't be here. There is a reason she's not apart of the community.

CHIEF HARRIS
Tell that to the boy.

Silence fills the air. Maple steps forward and puts her ear to the door. A blood curdling SCREAM rings out.

MAPLE
Jeremiah!

Maple reaches for the door knob but Chief Harris grabs her.

CHIEF HARRIS
She did not choose to be what she is. We may not like it but she is his only hope.

Silence returns and Joseph pulls Maple into his arms. Suddenly the door opens, a weary Valla steps through the door. Chief Harris, steadies Valla. Joseph and Maple rush in.

Jeremiah sits on edge of bed smiling.

VALLA

I need to return home.

People reenter room as CHEIF Harris helps Valla down the hallway. Maple rushes after them.

MAPLE

What you do is not natural. You don't belong here.

Chief Harris opens his mouth. Valla shakes her head at him. She straightens her body and smiles at Maple.

MAPLE

Thank you. I wish we could repay you or offer you some solace.

The Women stare at one another then Maple turns and walks away. Valla stares after her. Chief Harris pulls Valla towards the door.

VALLA

Thank you Cheif, I have it. They need you.

Valla exits, leaving Cheif Harris behind.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

EXT. VALLA'S HOME - NIGHT

Valla approaches her home. A shadow passes behind the curtain in the living room. She hesitates as she turns the door knob and steps inside.

INT. VALLA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Valla enters to find MARCUS (30) sitting on her couch in an expensive suit and a grin.

VALLA

It's a comfortable couch, isn't it.

MARCUS

Who would have thought? You have great taste.

VALLA

Would you like some tea?

Valla moves towards kitchen.

MARCUS

Thank you.

Valla prepares tea.

VALLA

Sugar or honey.

MARCUS

Sugar, please.

Valla spoons sugar in tea and carries cup to Marcus. She sits across from him.

MARCUS

None, for you.

VALLA

The only thing I desire is sleep.

Marcus smiles, sips tea and leans forward.

MARCUS

Your own blend?

Valla nods. Marcus finishes tea and sits cup on the coffee table between them.

MARCUS

You're different than I expected.

Valla shrugs.

MARCUS

You find a strange man in your home and offer him tea. Amusing, you're not afraid.

VALLA

You're not worthy of my fear.

MARCUS

Congratulations.

(beat)

I assume your temperament is due to a recent victory with a patient.

VALLA

How can I help you?

MARCUS

I think I can help you or we can help each other.

VALLA

Why would I need any help?

MARCUS

Let's not pretend you're not tired of this game of hide and seek especially when your energy is waning.

VALLA

Your people don't help anyone. You only know how to take.

MARCUS

It's something we're working to change. We want you to be apart of it. That would benefit us both.

Marcus pulls phone from inside jacket pocket and lies it on coffee table. Valla presses play. TRUDY (late 30's), struggles against arm and leg restraints. Her hair is matted and her clothes are worn and dirty. She SCREAMS. Valla stops video.

VALLA

This proves my point.

MARCUS

All attempts to help her have failed. That is for her protection. Last week she was found unconscious on the floor bleeding out after eating herself.

VALLA

And what do you think I can do?

MARCUSS

Don't be modest. You're work is legendary, even if mysterious.

VALLA

I cannot help you.

Marcus takes up his phone and stands. He lies a business card on table that reads: GOOD HOPE MENTAL INSTITUTION, MARCUS EVANS, CHIEF OF STAFF.

MARCUS

If you change your mind. Enjoy your evening and well deserved rest.

Marcus exits. Valla takes cup and sits it in the sink.

INT. VALLA HOME - BEDROOM - DAY

Valla stuffs clothes and items in bag. She opens vent and pulls out small mahogany box and carefully sits it in bag.

EXT. RESERVATION - NIGHT

Marcus walks to black SUV sitting on side of road, next to a sign that reads: Proud home of the Lumbee tribe. Marcus opens door and slides inside.

INT. MARCUS'S CAR - NIGHT

Marcus pulls out phone and snaps a photo of sign and texts it. Phone rings.

MARCUS

I apologize, sir. I don't think I did anything to sway her.

(beat)

Of course, I'm headed back tonight.

(MORE)

MARCUS (CONT'D)

(inhales as if annoyed)

If you'd give me more information
maybe I can find another candidate.

(pauses and looks around)

I didn't mean to overstep. Yes sir.
Goodnight.

Marcus hangs up, losses tie and drives off.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

EXT. WOOD - NIGHT

Valla runs through woods. Her heart pounding and heavy breathing ringing in her ears. Footsteps pound behind her. She runs faster.

VALLA
It's not real.

Yells, foot steps, dogs barking and gun shots fill the air. Tears stream down Valla's face as she pushes herself to run faster.

VALLA
(panting)
No...

INTERCUT WITH:

FLASHBACK EXT. WOOD - EVENING

SUPERIMPOSE: 1830 Trail of Tears

YOUNG VALLA (18) runs in the middle of a group of YOUNG MEN and WOMEN from a group of WHITE MEN. Their long hair catching the wind as they weave between trees. They dodge bullets and dogs. A Young Man running next to Young Valla is tackled by a dog. Young Valla looks back as the Young Man SCREAMS.

Valla trips over log and falls into tree. Valla wraps arms around herself and stares up at moon.

VALLA
I have to go back.

Valla's breathing slows, she stops and leans against a tree and stares at her house in the distance.

INT. LYFT CAR - DAY

Valla sits in back of car with her hands neatly in her lap. She stares out window. DRIVER (40's) stares at Valla in the rear view mirror.

DRIVER

It's good you came in the morning.
We're expecting bad weather later.

Valla nods politely.

DRIVER

Weird, it doesn't snow like this,
this late in the season.

Valla bites her lip and turns her attention to the window.

DRIVER

There's not much out here.
Except...

VALLA

The institution.

DRIVER

(laugh)
You're not a patient are you?

VALLA

Not any more.

Driver grips wheel and stares at road ahead.

EXT. LYFT CAR - DAY

Car picks up speed as it continues down long winding road. A few sparse trees dot the landscape.

EXT. GOOD HOPE - DAY

A stone building raises up behind a set of iron gates. The plaque on the gate reads: GOOD HOPE MENTAL INSTITUTION - Where Hope is Found. Lyft car pulls through gates and stops just short of the stairs.

The back door swings open and Valla step out with a bag in hand. She stares up at the building.

Car backs up and speeds off.

INTCUT WITH:

SUPERIMPOSE: 1832

A stage couch pulls up to a newly built Good Hope. The plaque on the building reads: GOOD HOPE MENTAL INSTITUTION - Where Medical Advancement Reins.