

Corren

by

Rachel Cabrera
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EXT. GUATEMALAN CLOUD FOREST - DAY

There are MOUNTAINS before us, vast and thick with vegetation. We move above them, following fingers of gray mist as they descend from the stone peaks and sift through the green valleys like ghosts.

TREES RUSTLE softly. Distant sound of RAINFOREST BIRDS.

SAMNAH (V.O.)
En otro tiempo, en el momento de las cosas antiguas, habia' un gran reino que gobernaba sobre las montañas.

SAMNAH (SUBTITLE)
Long ago, in a time of ancient things, there was a great kingdom that ruled over the mountains.

We move through the dense underbrush, over roots and vines, and the moist, fern covered limbs of ancient trees. All are veiled in mist.

SAMNAH (V.O.)
Ellos aprendieron los movimientos del cielo y la magia de la tierra y velaban el equilibrio entre los espíritus benévolos y las cosas oscuras que entran en este mundo.

SAMNAH (SUBTITLE)
They mastered the motions of the sky and the magics of the earth and kept watch over the balance between the benevolent spirits and those dark things that enter this world.

There are ruins here; Bits of crumbling wall and stelae nearly hidden from view by moss and soil.

SAMNAH (V.O.)
Pero, un gran acto de la maldad de los humanos destruyó el imperio y expulsó a los espíritus de las guardianes de la maya a lo lejos de la selva.

SAMNAH (SUBTITLE)
But, a great act of man's wickedness destroyed the empire and drove their guardian spirits away into the farthest reaches of the forest.

We draw closer to the base of a large tree. The massive roots curl and intersect around a dark knothole.

We move closer and closer towards the opening. The air is still and silent.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAMNAH (V.O.)
Allí, dormían, medios
olvidos mientras el pueblo
se disperso dentro de las
montañas y la grandeza de
la que una vez se desvaneció
en lo mito y la memoria.

SAMNAH (SUBTITLE)
There, they slumbered, half
forgotten, as their people
scattered into the mountains
and the greatness that once
was vanished into myth and
memory.

JARRING ROAR as a dark shape suddenly bursts across our
view.

CUT TO:

INT. LAURA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

LAURA RODAS (8) wakes up suddenly in her bed, sweating. She
is a young, indigenous Mayan girl, with thick black hair,
dark skin, a petite body and an innocent face.

Her older sister ISOL (10) is asleep beside her. They share
the same small bed.

Laura hears a soft TAPPING noise from the other room.

LAURA
(whispering)
Papá?

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Laura tip toes out of her room and down the hallway to
investigate. The building is a rural mud-brick farm house-
small, cramped and old.

Laura passes her mother's room and pauses for a moment in
the doorway. CAROLINA (30) is asleep, still in her work
hose and uniform.

INT. KITCHEN- CONTINUOUS

Laura enters and discovers the source of the noise. The
front door is rattling in its frame.

She opens the door.

It is pitch black outside. On their small property she can
see a one room wood shack with wrap-around porch and beyond
that the edge of the forest.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LAURA
 (whispering)
 Papá?....Papá is that
 you?.....Papá?

There is no answer, only the sound of BLEATING GOATS and
 RUSTLING TREES.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Laura stands in the open doorway of the kitchen, watching her grandmother, SAMNAH (60), talk to a village woman on the porch of the little wooden shack across the way. She is a crone like old woman with long black hair and weathered tan skin. She mumbles words in k'iche, gestures a lot with her hands when speaking, and wears a traditional mayan huipil.

Samnah places her hands on the village woman's shoulders, closes her eyes and begins to whisper something. She then hands the woman an onion. Laura looks on, fascinated.

ISOL is eating breakfast at the kitchen table.

CAROLINA is scrambling about getting ready for work. She is dressed in a more modern way -functional working dress and low pumps-both old and cheap. Though she bears a strong expression, the veins on her ankles bulge from being on her feet too long and she rubs her wrists out of weariness.

The RADIO plays in the background.

RADIO ANNOUNCER
 ...government special forces have
 been spotted in the La Gomera
 Region after insurgents ambushed
 and killed 20 of their soldiers
 this past Tuesday. Citizens are
 advised to avoid the highland
 roads, especially those leading
 into city centers where there have
 already been several deaths from
 Kaibile and Guerilla cross fire...

CAROL
 Laura, go sit at the table, please.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Laura sits next to her sister. Carol puts a pot of water on the stove for coffee as she runs back and forth between the kitchen and her bedroom.

RADIO ANNOUNCER

.....eight men reported missing in
Dos Erres believed to be.....

Laura perks up to hear the report but Carol returns and switches off the radio.

LAURA

Hey! I want to hear. Maybe they
know what happened to Papá.

Carol reaches for the coffee tin and finds it empty. She slams it down on the counter and curses.

Samnah grunts in amusement. She has joined them in the kitchen.

SAMNAH

(to Carol)

You must stop your bitterness mija.

Samnah takes a seat next to Laura, grasping her shoulder affectionately.

SAMNAH (CONT'D)

You are too negative. The spirits
feed off of such energy. That is
why you have your troubles...

CAROL

I have troubles because I work
myself to death to put food on my
table and you are handing it off to
random strangers to rub on their
feet and cure warts.

SAMNAH

Doña Rosales did not have a wart.

Samnah leans in towards the children with a scandalous smile.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SAMNAH (CONT'D)

(whispers)

Her husband is sleeping with
another woman.

The girls laugh.

CAROL

And the coffee?

SAMNAH

I gave some to Ramon Serna to
sprinkle around his property. He
and his wife have been quarreling.
It will keep away any bad spirits
they might attract...

Carol pours herself some water instead.

CAROL

I'm really getting sick of this.

SAMNAH

If it will make you happy, I will
replace everything. I'll take the
children into town.

CAR HORN sounds off-screen.

A dilapidated jeep stops outside the house with several
woman sitting in the back. Carol leaves to catch her
carpool to work without hugging anyone goodbye.

EXT. RURAL DIRT ROAD - DAY

Samnah walks with the children into town.

A QUETZAL perches itself on the branch of one of the trees
lining the roadway.

SAMNAH

Look mijas.

Laura and Isol catch up to their grandmother and watch as
the bird flutters through the canopy.

SAMNAH (CONT'D)

You know, the quetzal used to sing
so beautifully... a long time ago.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAMNAH (CONT'D)

But it has been silent ever since
the Europeans came to the forests
and conquered our people.

ISOL

How do you know?

SAMNAH

Well, my mother told me. And her
mother told her. I suppose that's
how we remember these things.

(To Laura)

And now you girls can keep
remembering.

Laura smiles.

Isol rolls her eyes. Bored, she picks up a branch with some
leaves attached to the end of it and starts drawing lines
in the dirt with it.

SAMNAH (CONT'D)

They are the keepers of everything
good in this world. It's good luck
to have seen one so close.

As Laura stares above her looking for another glimpse of
the quetzal, Isol sneaks forward with her stick and brushes
the back of Laura's neck with its leaves. Laura jumps.

SAMNAH (CONT'D)

Come on girls.

Samnah begins to sing softly in k'iche as she walks on.

They pass an INDIGENOUS FARMER (40) on the road carrying
sacks of grain and animal feed. He greets them and moves
on.

EXT. SMALL FARM HOUSE - DAY

The farmer returns to his property.

He drops the heavy sacks and washes his face by a water
pump, then fills two metal pails with feed and walks around
to the back of the property.

He pauses as he rounds the corner.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

All of his chickens are dead, mutilated in their pen. One lone chicken is clucking hysterically against the fence.

The farmer follows a trail of gore away from the coop and discovers his mule dead on the ground, its stomach ripped open.

EXT. AGUACATAN MARKETPLACE - DAY

Aguacatan is a rural village of small rundown houses and shops packed closely together, and flanking a small marketplace at its center where vendors sell colorful woven goods, produce, and livestock. The people here look grim, wary, and impoverished.

Laura keeps close to her grandmother as they push through the crowds.

Samnah shops among the vendors. She handles the produce, mumbling, passing it between her hands, sniffing it, and putting it aside.

SAMNAH

These onions have no soul.

Isol wanders off to a nearby stall. A woman is seated at her loom, weaving a colorful blanket. An array of little, hand made, WORRY DOLLS are spread out along her mat. Isol picks one up and turns it over in her hands.

Laura, intrigued, walks next to her.

WEAVER

That doll is very special.

Laura and Isol look up.

WEAVER (CONT'D)

If you tell her what you are scared of and place her underneath your pillow, she will take away whatever it is that frightens you.

ISOL

(to laura)

You would need a hundred of them.

Laura gives her a mean look and turns, about to stomp off. But Isol grabs her shirt and pulls her back.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She hands a coin to the woman and gives the doll to Laura. Together, they walk back to their grandmother, but not before she gives Laura a little playful push.

There is a sudden commotion.

Across the way, Laura sees the farmer they passed on the road shouting at another man, JAIRO (38), as he exits a stall selling raw tobacco leaves.

Jairo is tall, unkempt, and uses his long messy hair to obscure his face in public. He wears three long quetzal feathers tied around his neck with a black cord.

The crowd averts their glances and murmurs suspiciously. Laura cannot make out the farmer's words, only that he is yelling.

LAURA

What's going on?

Isol leans in close to Laura's ear.

ISOL

The waya man must have gobbled up
someone's kids.

Laura looks frighteningly at Jairo and pulls herself closer to her grandmother. He has a mysterious and dangerous air about him.

Samnah gets a look at who is fighting.

SAMNAH

Stay here.

She pushes her way through the crowd to get to the quarreling men.

Samnah walks up the farmer and pushes her knobby finger into his chest.

SAMNAH (CONT'D)

I have a bone to pick with you
GUSTAVO. I prepared a draft for you
weeks ago to cure your impotency
and you have yet to pay me!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

She accuses him loud enough for others to hear. The nearby crowd snickers.

The farmer leaves, embarrassed and flustered.

The grandmother looks around, giving the eye to any nosybody still lingering about.

Laura watches her grandmother and Jairo talk with one another. She can not hear what they are saying. She watches as Jairo leans in and tells Samnah something. Her grandmother's expression falls. Samnah looks suddenly very serious and concerned.

Samnah returns to Laura and Isol and ushers them home very quickly.

SAMNAH (CONT'D)

Come on mijas.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Laura and Isol are washing dishes in a basin of water, splashing each other playfully with the soapy rags. The moment Samnah eaves the room and is out of ear's reach, Isol starts to tease Laura.

ISOL

...and when he gets a whiff of you.
He can't stop hunting you. He'll
climb into your room at night

LAURA

Stop it Isol...

Laura stops washing and walks away to collect more dishes from the kitchen table. Isol follows, raising her arms and pretending to stalk her.

ISOL

He carries you off into the forest
so your parents can't save you.

LAURA

I said stop!

ISOL

And then... when he has you all
alone..... He eats you!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Isol jumps at Laura but she moves out of the way quickly.
Isol starts to laugh.

LAURA
It isn't real...

ISOL
Of course it is. What do you think
happened to all those people on the
radio. They said they went missing,
but everyone knows what happened to
them.

Laura pushes Isol.

LAURA
Stop it Isol. It isn't true!

ISOL
It's why all those people are
disappearing. It probably got dad
too. Why else hasn't he come back?

LAURA
He could be lost...the radio said
that...

ISOL
...or dead. It must have heard Mamá
and Papá fighting...Tita Samnah
says that's what attracts them.
It's probably coming for us next.

LAURA
No!

Carol comes home from work, exhausted. Laura runs to her.

LAURA (CONT'D)
Mamá!

Laura grabs hold of her mother's waist.

Isol looks pleased with herself.

Carol looks shocked and worried something serious has
happened.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CAROL
What's going on?

LAURA
(desperately)
Please let me stay with you
tonight. The waya man will come
after me. Please!

Carol sighs with frustration and walks off, impatient and tired.

CAROL
Laura, please...

Carol shrugs off her coat and steps out of her pumps, then moves around the kitchen trying to make herself a plate of food. Laura follows at her heels, begging loudly.

Samnah comes running into the kitchen.

SAMNAH
What's going on? Why are you
crying?

Laura keeps clinging to her mother.

LAURA
Please don't leave me alone. I
don't want him to get me. I don't
want to disappear like papá.

CAROL
(To Samnah)
This is why I don't want you
telling them any more of your fairy
tales, mother! (To Laura) Stop
crying!

Laura begins to weep, following her mother around the room

SAMNAH
I don't tell them fairy tales.

Carol slams the cabinets and dishes out of anger as she handles them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

CAROL

You fill their head with all of these ridiculous stories. They can't even tell the difference anymore...

SAMNAH

I raise them the same way I raised you! And you would do well to remember my lessons, mija! Perhaps things would go differently for you.

LAURA

...please mamá!

Laura gets under her mother's feet. Carol stumbles, dropping the ceramic plate which shatters and sends food all over the kitchen floor.

CAROL

Laura!

Carol grabs Laura by the shoulders out of frustration.

CAROL (CONT'D)

I said enough! I don't want to hear any of this nonsense anymore! Do you understand?

Carol gets a rag and cleans up the mess.

CAROL (CONT'D)

Go to bed, both of you.

Samnah comforts Laura and leads both girls out of the room.

EXT. FARM HOUSE -NIGHT

Gustavo the farmer sits on his porch with an old rifle in his hand. He stares out into the darkness.

His last chicken begins clucking wildly again. He runs around to the back of the house to investigate.

The chicken is fluttering around the pen. But there is nothing there.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Gustavo tenses, holding his weapon a little closer and listening.

Something GROWLS behind him.

He turns ready to shoot but is attacked by a force we do not see.

CUT TO:

INT. SAMNAH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Samnah wakes suddenly in her bed, sensing a disturbance.

EXT. SAMNAH'S PORCH - CONTINUOUS

Samnah wraps a shawl around herself and walks out onto her porch. She squints her eyes and focuses on the darkness, but hears and sees nothing.

The goats shift in their pen, restless.

Samnah goes back into her home, looking very concerned.

EXT. BACKYARD - MORNING

Carol walks around to the back of the property to fetch some eggs.

She finds two dead chickens torn apart in their pen. The rest of the birds are crowding inside the coop. She moves closer to investigate and finds that a section of the wire fence had been bent open.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Carol, Samnah, Laura and Isol are sitting around the table eating breakfast in silence. Carol massages her brow between bites of food.

CAROL

I want you girls to keep an eye on the animals while I'm at work. A fox broke through one of the fences last night and killed a few chickens. I'll ask one of my co-workers to come mend it over the weekend.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Samnah drops her fork forcibly at the news.

SAMNAH

Mija. This is what I have been warning you about... I have been sensing this spirit for some time now.

Laura immediately looks horrified by her grandmother's suggestion.

CAROL

Please mother, not again. It's just an animal.

SAMNAH

No, Carol. There is something evil at work here.

LAURA

Mamá! Please don't make us do it.

CACOPHONOUS SHOUTING as both start begging rapidly for Carol to reconsider.

CAROL

Enough! Both of you!

Laura and Samnah quiet.

CAROL (CONT'D)

This is my house. Laura, you do as I say. We can't afford to lose anything else...

EXT. FRONT PORCH - DAY

Laura and Isol watch their mother get picked up by her carpool and leave for work. The moment that the jeep disappears from view, Samnah goes into her house and then emerges with a large cloth sack. She bends over and begins sprinkling a trail coffee grinds on the ground, waddling in a large circle around the property.

ISOL

She's crazy.

EXT. FARM - AFTERNOON

Laura and Isol play outside on the farm, within the confines of Samnah's circle. They carry a metal shovel and rake to chase away any animals that get onto the property.

Instead, they are using it to hit fruit down from a tree and to throw over their shoulder and play soldier.

INT. COFFEE FACTORY PRODUCT LINE- AFTERNOON

Carol stands at a factory belt alongside scores of other woman sorting coffee beans for quality. Her hair is tied back with a handkerchief. A little further down the line, a woman breaks out into tears. Carol looks up and watches two of the girls beside her attempt to comfort the crying woman.

WOMAN

He's dead. I know he's dead. They
took him! They shot him! What have
we done? What have we done/

She continues rambling hysterically about disappearance and the war.

The women implore her to calm down and be quiet.

Carol glances from the woman to the floor manager leaning over the second floor railing to monitor their work, then to the various guards stationed around the floor of the factory. The crying woman has caught their attention ,too.

Carol quickly turns her eyes back to her work.

EXT. COFFEE FACTORY LOADING DOCK - AFTERNOON

Carol helps fill, seal and load bags of coffee beans onto a group of old jeeps and trucks parked at the mouth of the factory garage. The work is tiring and backbreaking.

A bell RINGS, signaling lunch.

Carol stops what she is doing, stretches her back and walks off towards the dining hall.

INT. COFFEE FACTORY DINING HALL - AFTERNOON

Carol sits quietly by herself, eating her lunch. Groups of workers are huddled into small groups talking rapidly.

The discussion from the group beside Carol starts to get heated as they discuss liberal politics and outrage at the government's violent campaign against their people.

Another female worker, RIGOBERTA, sits down next to Carol and begins to eat her lunch. She leans over to her.

RIGOBERTA

Do you hear this?

CAROL

They shouldn't be talking this way.
They don't know who's listening.

Carol's eyes scan the room again, falling on the floor manager, the guards, the other workers.

RIGOBERTA

You don't think....

CAROL

If the government starts to suspect
insurgents in our village they will
come with soldiers.

She looks at one of the protestors.

CAROL (CONT'D)

They'll bring them down on us.

EXT. FARM - DUSK

Laura and Isol are laughing and chasing one another around the far side of the yard. Isol runs ahead.

LAURA

Wait for me! (Laughs)

Isol keeps running down hill towards the edge of the property that borders the forest. Laura stops.

LAURA (CONT'D)

Isol!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ISOL
What? Come on!

She kicks the coffee sprinkled dirt.

ISOL (CONT'D)
There's nothing here! Besides I
have something cool to show you.

LAURA
What is it?

ISOL
I won't show it to you unless you
come.

Isol turns and runs towards the forest. Laura takes a
moment to make her decision, than chooses to follow Isol.

They laugh together as Laura tries to catch up.

LAURA
Wait for me.

Isol runs ahead into the trees and hides, leaving Laura
alone in the silent wooded area. She watches Laura struggle
to find her.

LAURA (CONT'D)
Isol?

Isol smiles deviously as Laura's expression changes from
playful to frightened.

LAURA (CONT'D)
Isol? Where are you?

INT. KITCHEN - DUSK

The dilapidated truck drops Carol off at her home. She goes
inside, kicks off her pumps and lowers herself achingly
into one of the kitchen chairs.

Samnah arrives with packages of food from town.

SAMNAH
You're home late.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CAROL
Where are the girls?

Carol looks and sounds exhausted.

SAMNAH
They were playing outside when I
left.

Samnah quickly pulls two empty cans of coffee from the cupboard, and replaces them with full ones from her groceries.

Samnah starts to cook dinner, slicing and peeling potatoes. She watches her daughter.

Carol massages her forehead, then drags her hand down the front of her face, looking like she has a world of worry on her mind.

Samnah puts down her knife and walks over to her daughter. Standing behind her, she places her hands lovingly on either side of Carol's face and kisses the back of her head.

Carol raises her hand to her mother's and pats it gently.

SAMNAH (CONT'D)
Go get undressed.

EXT. WOODED AREA - NIGHT

Laura is searching for Isol around the woods surrounding the property. It's getting darker and every small noise seems to make her panic.

EXT. FARM - NIGHT

She breaks through the edge of the forest and scans the farm in front of her for a sign of her sister. She is panting from her search efforts and from nerves.

Laura takes one last looks around her. She looks as if she might start to cry.

A twig snaps behind her. She gasps, turning slowly to face the forest. She holds her self very still, waiting to hear or see something in the shadows.

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CONTINUED:

ISOL

Gotcha!

Isol jumps out suddenly behind Laura, grabbing her by the shoulders.

Laura screams and flails her arms angrily at Isol, falling backward onto the ground from the momentum. Isol skips away from her, laughing hysterically.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

Something watches the girls from a distance, hidden among the shadows and underbrush.

EXT. FARM - NIGHT

ISOL

Aw. Did you think the Waya man got me?

LAURA

Shut up Isol!

ISOL

(in a sing song voice) He's coming for you too.

LAURA

I said shut up!

Laura grabs her shovel and holds it threateningly at Isol. It only makes her laugh harder.

As Isol continues to taunt Laura, the silhouette of a huge black creature about the size of a bear appears behind her, stepping out of the shadows. Laura freezes. Her eyes wide, her lip trembling. She can not speak or move. Her hands are gripping the shovel so tightly that her knuckles are white.

ISOL

It's coming for you... and me... and mamá.... and everybody. And then we'll disappear, just like him.

The creature snarls and lunges forward at preternatural speed.

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CONTINUED:

Isol's high pitched SCREAM pierces the darkness.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Carol enters the kitchen, dressed in fresh clothes, her hair down and wet from bathing.

Samnah is cooking tortillas on the heated comal. She pauses and turns towards the window, sensing something amiss. Carol walks up beside her, rubbing her hands on her mother's shoulders affectionately.

CAROL
Is dinner ready?

Samnah's attention returns.

SAMNAH
What?....oh, yes....

Carol opens the front door a foot.

CAROL
Girls! Come in and eat!

She leaves the door slightly ajar for them and starts to set the table.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

Isol is whimpering, her body lying bloody and limp on the ground at the creature's feet.

The beast is wolf like, with elongated, snarling jowls, piercing red eyes, and ragged, mangy, black fur over grey, wrinkled skin. The ground it steps on begins to smoulder on contact. It is the CADEJO.

Laura is frozen in fear as she watches it turn from her sister's body and faces her. It ROARS

A queztral swoops down past the Cadejo.

A moment later a huge spotted Jaguar, nearly twice its natural size, bursts through the trees and tackles the Cadejo onto its side.

The Jaguar and the Cadejo battle furiously with one another in a swarm of claws of gnashing teeth.

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CONTINUED:

The jaguar roars horribly and rushes forward for another attack but the Cadejo evades it, sending the jaguar tumbling into the underbrush.

Laura GASPS.

The Cadejo GRUNTS and turns its head, its attention quickly refocused onto Laura.

She regains her senses and starts to run back uphill towards the farmhouse. The creature bounds after her.

Laura drops her shovel and crawls under the foundation of a wooden shed. From beneath it she can see the Cadejo's feet.

The Cadejo slows its pace as it passes the building. It sniffs the air, huffing and hissing like a angry bull, drawing dangerously closer to Laura. It shoves its snout as far as it can reach beneath the shed.

Laura throws her hands over her face, cowering. The Cadejo grunts, blowing clouds of dry dirt into the air around Laura's head.

It pauses. And then quickly withdraws.

Laura hears the POUNDING of its feet on ground as it bounds away.

Laura peeks out from between her fingers and, realizing she's alone, quickly wiggles out from beneath the shed, heaving with panic and fear. She frees herself from the crawl-space, pushing herself to her knees.

There is a LOW GROWL from above her. She cranes her head.

The Cadejo is perched on the roof of the shed, ready to strike. The creature pounces, knocking her to the ground. It swipes at her but she rolls to the side and evades the blow. On her back, she watches as the Cadejo rears backwards, ready to descend on her again. She throws up her arms and SCREAMS.

Just before the creature's jaws reach her face, the giant jaguar pounces onto the Cadejo's back, digging its teeth and claws into the Cadejo's mangy flesh. The jaguar tears into its neck, pulling away a large piece of flesh. The Cadejo cries out in pain and retreats back into the woods.

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CONTINUED: (2)

The jaguar turns to face Laura, blood dripping from its jaws.

She screams, quickly takes hold of her metal shovel, and whacks the Jaguar in the head, slicing open the left side of its face.

Laura drops the shovels and bolts towards her home.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Samnah and Carol hear high-pitched SCREAMING approaching from a distance. They rush immediately onto the front porch.

EXT. FRONT YARD - NIGHT

CAROL

Laura!

Samnah and Carol run, terrified, towards the frightened girl. Laura runs into her mother's arms, screaming and crying hysterically.

She is covered with dirt and spots of gore.

CAROL (CONT'D)

Oh my god.

She grasps her daughter tightly.

CAROL (CONT'D)

What happened? What happened!

Laura's voice is unintelligible through her tears. Carol and Samnah are pale in the face.

Carol pulls her daughter away from her body, holding her head tightly in her hands, pleading with her.

CAROL (CONT'D)

Tell me what happened!

Carol shakes her, her voice shrill like a mad woman.

CAROL (CONT'D)

Please!

Samnah comes closer to them.

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CONTINUED:

SAMNAH

Where is Isol?

Samnah takes Laura into her arms as Carol stands and starts running as fast as she can in the direction that Laura came from.

CAROL

Isol!....ISOL!!!! (gasp)

Carol stops dead in her tracks as she sees Jairo walking towards the property holding Isol's limp body in his arms.

She runs to him, petting her daughter's hair. They bring Isol quickly into the house.

As Jairo passes, he and Laura meet eyes. She notices the fresh, bleeding gash that crosses the left side of his face from his ear to the corner of his mouth.

INT. CAROL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jairo carries Isol's body into the room. Samnah and Carol follow.

JAIRO

I was on the road when I heard the screaming.

Jairo lays Isol down on Carol's bed. Her eyes are open and she is breathing, but she doesn't move or speak. She has wounds on her legs and her stomach. The blood leeches out through her dress.

JAIRO (CONT'D)

I found her like this... near the forest. Something must have attacked her.

Samnah and Carol clamor around her. Samnah starts to pray. Laura is still shaking from the trauma, holding herself tightly as if she was cold. She walks slowly into the room and looks up.

Isol's eyes are eerily focused on Laura's. Laura shudders.

CAROL

I have to get help.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Carol bolts from the room.

SAMNAH

Carol! Wait!

Jairo runs after her.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Jairo places a hand on Carol's shoulder before she can open the door. She pulls away harshly and turns on him, staring him down like a frantic, wild animal.

Jairo withdraws his hand slowly, trying to appear nonthreatening.

JAIRO

(Calmly)

Whatever did this to your daughters
is still out there. I'll come with
you.

Carol pulls a coat around herself roughly and runs out onto the porch. Jairo follows.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

Carol and Jairo sprint across the farm and down the road to a neighboring property. Carol bounds up the porch steps and starts banging on the door of the small wooden farm house.

CAROL

Salou! Hello?

She pounds her hand desperately against the door.

CAROL (CONT'D)

Salou! Wake up!

A light turns on in the home. SALOU (65) answers the door holding an old shot gun. His WIFE (54) follows behind him. Carol pushes past them into the house.

CAROL (CONT'D)

I need your radio.

Salou and Jairo meet eyes. Salou frowns and holds his shot gun prominently in front of him. Jairo glares and stays outside.

INT. CAROL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Carol sits at the foot of her bed, watching DOCTOR RIERA (50) nurse Isol's wounds. Isol is staring up at the ceiling and mumbling nonsense.

DOCTOR

When Salou radioed me so late, I expected something terrible...I didn't realize how terrible. Your daughter is very lucky. Her wounds are deep. A few hours more and she would have all but bled out.

Carol appears exhausted but holds herself calm and alert. Her voice comes out low and controlled.

CAROL

What happened to her?

The doctor gestures for Carol to come closer and pulls up one of the bandages on Isol's leg. The cuts in her flesh show the shape of a large row of teeth. Carol closes her eyes and swallows.

DOCTOR

This was an animal attack. Most likely something in the canine family ... a wolf, a coyote, wild dog. People in the town let their animals run loose a when they do not have the food or shelter to care for them properly. They breed and grow feral. There have been similar attacks like this before.

Carol looks skeptical.

CAROL

....a wild dog?

DOCTOR

The marks are a bit larger than one might expect. What did your other daughter have to say?

CAROL

She won't speak about it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Isol cries out, convulsing slightly on the bed. Carol grips her ankle. Isol calms but continues babbling.

Doctor Riera dips a white rag into a basin of water sitting on the floor beside Carol's bed. He wrings out the excess water and then lays it out on Isol's forehead.

Carol frowns, resting her forehead in her hands.

CAROL (CONT'D)

This doesn't make any sense. What about her fever, she's burning up and whispering to herself like she's losing her mind.

Carol gets up and starts to pace at the foot of the bed. The Doctor begins to pack his things.

DOCTOR

Wild animals often carry bacteria in their mouths. Her wounds don't show any immediate signs of infection, but that would explain the fever. I can not rule it out as a possibility without first testing her blood and I do not carry the type of equipment to do so.

Doctor Riera stands, looking very concerned. He faces Carol, placing a hand on her shoulder.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

...and considering the savagery of the attack and your daughter's mental stateit is possible that the animal may have been rapid.

Carol throws her hand over her mouth, trying to hold in any tears.

A door CLOSES off-screen, followed by the sound of booted FOOTSTEPS crossing the wood floor out in the hallway.

Doctor Riera's attention suddenly shifts as he looks over Carol's shoulder. Carol turns to see what he's staring at.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

It is Jairo. His hair is tied back, revealing the now cleaned wound across his face. He has removed his shirt and holds a wet, bloodied wash rag in his hands.

Jairo meets the doctor's eyes as he passes by the doorway. The doctor's body tenses. Jairo pauses, then walks on past them into the kitchen.

Doctor Riera steps closer to Carol.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
(lowered voice)
Another man was attacked recently under similar circumstances. I inspected the body. He owned a small farm not too far from here.

The doctor inclines his head towards the hallway.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
They say he quarreled with that man.

CAROL
But you said it was an animal attack.

DOCTOR
Yes.....but the Waya can take many forms.

Carol laughs out of disbelief. She crosses the room and places her hands on either side of the bed to steady herself.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
How is it he happened to come upon your daughter?

Carol doesn't turn to look at him.

CAROL
Thank you for coming Doctor. I'm sorry we woke you so late.

The doctor opens his mouth to say something but thinks better of it. He removes a cord from his neck, upon which dangles a small ceramic cross, and places it on the side table next to the bed. He leaves the room.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

The front door CLOSES.

Samnah enters the bedroom moments later, drying her hands on a rag.

SAMNAH

I drew Laura a bath. What did the doctor have to say.

Carol crosses the room to the bureau, picks up the cross, and throws it forcefully against the opposite wall.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Samnah follows Carol out of the bedroom.

SAMNAH

You can't go Carol!

CAROL

My daughter needs a real doctor. A hospital.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Laura sits in the center of a metal wash basin in the bathroom. Her knees peek just over the bath water as she hugs them to her chest. She can hear her mother and grandmother arguing as they pass by into the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Jairo is standing in the kitchen, looking out of the windows at the darkness beyond, keeping watch.

Carol and Samnah enter.

He turns. Carol strides up to him.

CAROL

Do you have a jeep?

JAIRO

Yes. But its been out of gas for quite some time.

CAROL

We can pick up gas in town.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Carol puts on her coat and opens the door, waiting in the doorway expectantly for Jairo to follow her. He watches her shaking nervously, trying to hold her composure.

Jairo gets up calmly from the chair.

JAIRO

Where are you planning to go?

CAROL

To San Benito. They have a hospital.

Jairo stands there, watching her.

Frustrated at their silence and lack of action, Carol stomps her foot and raises her voice.

CAROL (CONT'D)

I have to take her to a doctor! I can't carry her there!

Laura opens the bathroom door and peaks out into the kitchen.

JAIRO

It's very dangerous.

CAROL

She's dying!

SAMNAH

Mija, you heard the reports. There are kaible checkpoints all along the roads, they are stopping everyone coming from this area.... It would be suicide...

Carol huffs and leaves the house.

Samnah walks up to Jairo and touches his hand.

SAMNAH (CONT'D)

Please. She doesn't understand.

Laura sees the curious exchange and slowly closes the door.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Jairo quickly catches up to Carol. She is striding down the road carrying two empty plastic containers for gas.

JAIRO
Your mother is worried about you.

CAROL
Than she should understand what I'm doing.

JAIRO
You won't get very far. They'll stop you for questioning. They always stop the women for questioning...

CAROL
I've dealt with men like that before. There is not much else they can do to me.

JAIRO
And if they shoot you? They'll leave your daughter there. Or shoot her too. These people have no sympathy for children.

Carol turns around and furiously stares him down.

CAROL
Don't you dare. You know nothing about what a person will risk to save someone they love.

She turns from him angrily and starts forward again.

JAIRO
Don't be a fool.

He grabs her by the shoulders.

CAROL
Let me go!

She gets away but manages only a few steps before he grabs her again. She tries to pull out of his grasp but he holds firm, turning her to face him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She starts to wrestle against him but he gives her a shake and speaks very close to her face.

JAIRO

Think of your other daughter! What will she do if you get yourself killed?

Carol slowly calms. There are tears of frustration in her eyes.

CAROL

What do I do?

JAIRO

There is a party camp north of here, they keep to the mountains where they have their weapon caches. They are bound to have a field hospital. They fight for us. I'm sure there is some there who can help your daughter.

CAROL

How far is it?

JAIRO

A day's hike, two maybe? They are constantly on the move. The roads in the mountains are impassible by jeep, you have to go on foot and Isol cannot be moved in her condition. I'll leave tomorrow and bring someone back here to help your daughter.

CAROL

Will she last that long?

JAIRO

How long with they last without you?

INT. LAURA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Laura is lying in her bed, dressed in a cheap, white linen nightgown. She is curled up under the covers. Her bed looks very big and empty now without her sister sleeping beside her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

There is a soft KNOCK at the door. Laura's mother enters. Her face has softened.

She sits down beside Laura on the bed, pushing her hair behind her ear. Her voice is soothing and quiet.

CAROL

How are you feeling?

Laura doesn't answer.

CAROL (CONT'D)

Do you want me to stay here until you fall asleep?

Laura nods her head. Carol settles in beside her.

LAURA

I'm sorry.

CAROL

Why are you apologizing, none of this is your fault.

LAURA

I ran away. I left Isol behind.

CAROL

You couldn't have done anything mija. I'm just thankful you both weren't hurt.

Carol strokes her cheek lovingly. Laura cuddles closer to her. Carol holds her and rocks her lightly. She stares off into the room, with her child in her arms and a world of worry in her eyes.

LAURA

Are you scared mamá?

CAROL

Yes. Very scared.

LAURA

You don't look scared.

CAROL

I'm terrified. But I can't run away.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

She down looks at Laura.

CAROL (CONT'D)
I have too many reasons to stay.

LAURA
Was papá scared? Is that why he ran
away?

Carol sighs exhausted.

CAROL
Yes Laura...your father.....your
father was scared.

Carol kisses Laura's forehead and tucks her in under the
blankets before she leaves the room.

Laura listens to her mother's footsteps down the hallway.

She turns on her side and tries to fall asleep.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

JAIRO
(Off-screen)
How is she?

CAROL
(Off-screen)
Scared.

CAROL (CONT'D)
You can stay tonight if you need to
rest.

JAIRO
Thank you very much. I'll leave at
day break.

CAROL
Why are you helping us?

JAIRO
Your mother has been very good to
me in the past. She worries about
you. And your children.

Samnah exits Carol's bedroom and enters the kitchen.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CAROL

Isol?

SAMNAH

She's quieted down now.

Carol nods her head and rubs her arms out of nerves, not quite knowing what to do with herself.

JAIRO

You should rest.

Carol continues to stare past her mother into her bedroom where Isol lies sleeping.

SAMNAH

He's right mija.

Samnah goes to Carol and places her hands on her arms, rubbing the tension from her body.

SAMNAH (CONT) (CONT'D)

Go lie down for a bit. I put down a cot for you in the back room. Don't worry. We'll keep an eye on her.

Carol nods her head, physically and emotionally exhausted.

She faces Jairo.

CAROL

Thank you.

Jairo nods his head. Carol leaves the room.

A DOOR CLOSES off-screen. Samnah waits a moment before turning to Jairo.

SAMNAH

Are you sure you know what you're doing?

JAIRO

Its the only way I know of to help your granddaughter.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SAMNAH

Those that have been handled by the Cadejo have only three days before the poison in their wounds kills them.

JAIRO

He'll be back before then.

Jairo goes to the kitchen window and stares out into the darkness.

SAMNAH

Not tonight. But once you leave for Isol's cure, he will try again, yes. He will not stop until he finishes what he started. And he still wants Laura.

A quetzal roosts in the window. Jairo opens the window pane and lets it perch on her arm.

The quetzal flies and perches it self on top of the door frame. It lowers its head and pecks its leg until it starts to bleed, allowing a few drops to fall upon the wood before returning to Jairo's side.

Jairo smooths the birds feathers.

JAIRO

The Cadejo cannot enter the house now. Ah Cuxtal will circle the property until I return. As long as she stays inside, she will be safe.

Samnah bows to the bird.

SAMNAH

Thank you.

The quetzal flies from the house.

INT. LAURA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Laura shifts on her bed, unable to fall asleep. She leans over and takes out her worry doll from under her bed. She holds it in her hands and whispers to it in the darkness.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Laura
(softly)
Make it go away. Make it go away.

Outside her window, she sees the light turn on in her grandmother's house. She can make out the outline of a male figure, Jairo, moving within the house.

She sits up in bed, takes a look at her bedroom door, then turns back to her window.

EXT. FARM - NIGHT

Laura crawls, barefeet first, out of her bedroom window, stretching to touch her toes to the ground.

She walks slowly around to the front of the house.

Laura can see Samnah and Carol sitting with Isol. Her mother is applying fresh compresses to Isol's forehead.

Something watches Laura from a distance.

A wind blows. Some of the goats shift in their pen, BLEATING. The only light comes from the house and the glow of the moon. Laura can see the ground in front of her but the edges of the property are a wall of shadows.

She jumps and jerks her gaze at every small noise, checking her surroundings. Her breathing is quick and nervous.

She hugs her arms around herself and starts walking briskly towards her grandmother's house. Half way across the field, she gives into her tension and runs the rest of the way.

EXT. SAMNAH'S PORCH - CONTINUOUS

Laura tags her grandmother's porch like it's home base, hugging one of the wooden beams that holds up the awning. She's panting.

She regains her breath and inches towards the door. Her toes enter the beam of light spilling out from inside the house through the space beneath the front door.

BOOTSTEPS against wooden floors can be heard on the other side, crossing from one side of the room to the other.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Laura presses her hands against the wood and slowly lowers her ear to the door. SHIFTING objects, and the CLANKING of dishes signal movement from inside the house.

JAIRO

What are you doing here?

Laura gasps and turns.

Jairo is standing outside on the opposite end of the porch. His voice is deep and quiet, like a great predator trying not to startle its prey.

Laura looks confusingly from the door to him and back.

JAIRO (CONT'D)

You sneak out of the house alone...
at nightafter all that's
happened... ...you are much braver
than your sister made you out to
be.

LAURA

You heard her say that? You heard
her making fun of me? But that was
when...

BEAT

Jairo is caught off guard without an explanation. His expression falls, his eyes darken. His voice is like the beginning of a growl.

JAIRO

You shouldn't be here.

Laura is wide eyed and frozen to the spot, like a tiny animal afraid to flinch and attract her predator's attention.

Jairo paces forward towards her. She retreats back a few steps. Instead of continuing forward, he turns and goes back inside the house.

The light from inside illuminates his face as he steps over the threshold. Laura notices the wound on his face once more. It's already healing.

Unnerved, but curious, she follows him inside.

INT. SAMNAH'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Samnah's home is a small, one room building with plaster walls. In the far back is her grandmother's cot and some shelves with jars of herbs and balms. A colorful woven cloth is hanging from the back wall. The front of the room is the cooking area. There is a small table and some small wooden benches, as well as a traditional comal for cooking. A wood fire is burning beneath it. Some chiles, garlic, and a small terra cotta sun sculpture hang from ropes tacked to the wall.

Laura watches Jairo move about the small house. He takes out a tin cup and a wooden spoon.

LAURA

Are you staying here?

JAIRO

Your mother and grandmother were kind enough to offer me a bed for the night when I refused to see Doctor Riera myself.

Jairo sits down on a low stool in front of the wood stove. He throws a tortilla, some dried meat, and chiles onto the comal. They start to sizzle.

Jairo catches Laura looking at the cut on his face.

JAIRO (CONT'D)

Your mother says you wouldn't tell her what happened to you and your sister tonight. Perhaps it was too dark?

LAURA

I won't tell her anything.... if you don't want me to. She wouldn't believe me anyway.

JAIRO

What did you see that I wouldn't want you to tell her.

LAURA

They think it was a animal that attacked Isol. But it wasn't an animal. I don't know what it was.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LAURA (CONT'D)

It attacked us. I....I ran away.
And I got away because... because
you fought it.

Jairo passes his hand by the scar on his face and gestures towards Laura.

JAIRO

You're welcome.

He goes back to cooking, picking up the tortilla with the tips of his fingers and flipping it over.

LAURA

My mother keeps telling us not to
listen to Tita Samnah's stories.
But they're real ... aren't they?

JAIRO

Your grandmother is one of the few
people who still believes in such
things.

Laura takes a few steps into the house and stands near Jairo as he cooks.

LAURA

What attacked my sister? Isol said
that the waya man would come for us
and take us away...was that ...was
that the...

JAIRO

No. The waya is something the
villagers have created for
themselves so they can cope with
times of war. Its easier to explain
away such horrible things as the
work of a devil, than to believe a
human being responsible.

LAURA

The people in town are afraid of
you. But, my Tita Samnah trusts
you. She likes you.

JAIRO

You're grandmother doesn't scare
easily.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Jairo smiles. His teeth are slightly longer and sharper than a normal human, almost catlike.

LAURA

If you're not the Waya what are you?

JAIRO

My kind were worshiped in our time, Naguales created by the God Texcatilopoca to act as defenders of the people. But they have forgotten such things. They are overwhelmed with mistrust and suspicion.

Laura sits down on the floor.

JAIRO (CONT'D)

It's what drew him here. The spirit you saw tonight. The Cadejo. It feeds on fear, lives to demoralize its victims. That's why he revisits them. Leaves signs that they have been marked for death. No human who faces it survives.

Laura's eyes fall, she stares blankly into the smoldering fire.

LAURA

Is my sister going to die?

Jairo pokes at the coals. Laura looks up at him.

LAURA (CONT'D)

Can you help her?

JAIRO

I can hold him off. But the power of the black Cadejo goes far beyond my own. The only spirit that would know how to heal his victims, or if that is even possible, is the white Cadejo. But he hasn't been seen in many years. Not since before your grandmother's time.

Laura looks pleadingly at Jairo.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

LAURA

But he can help. You can find him?

JAIRO

I have an idea of where to look.

Jairo removes the food from the comal, pushing it onto a tin plate.

LAURA

Will you go?

Jairo looks up from his meal. He finds Laura looking up at him.

Jairo stands and walks to the door.

JAIRO

Go back to bed. I'll keep watch until you're back inside.

Laura gets up and walks out onto the porch.

EXT. SAMNAH'S PORCH - CONTINUOUS

Laura stops at the bottom of the porch steps. She looks to her right and left and then turns back to Jairo.

He nods his head 'ok'.

Laura runs back to her house.

INT. LAURA'S BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

OFF-SCREEN YELLING and LOUD BANGING from the kitchen. It wakes Laura.

She sits up in bed. It's very early, the sun hasn't risen completely yet. A MAN'S VOICE rises above the others.

She recognizes it.

LAURA

(whisper)

Papá.

Laura jumps out of her bed and runs out of her bedroom.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LAURA (CONT'D)

Papá!

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

LAURA

Papá!

Laura's father, RAPHAEL (44,) stands alone in the kitchen. He is tall, thin, and European looking, much fairer skinned than Laura and her mother. There is stubble on his cheek and his thin, graying hair is combed back behind his head, exaggerating his receding hairline. He looks a decade older than his actual age.

Laura runs to him and throws her arms around his hips, burying her face in his stomach.

He stumbles a bit as she hugs him, his balance shaky. He rests one hand on her shoulder, another on the table to right himself. His eyes are partially lidded, red, and watery. He's been drinking.

Laura is crying she is so happy.

LAURA (CONT'D)

(muffled)

Papá, I knew you would come back. I knew you didn't run away. You're here to help us.

Carol is yelling off-screen, growing louder as she enters the kitchen.

CAROL

Hijo de Puto! Pendejo Pedo!
Chingado!

Carol exits her bedroom, carrying a pile of men's clothes in her hands. She bounds to the doorway and tosses the clothes off the porch, a slur of curses flying from her mouth.

CAROL (CONT'D)

VETE AL CARAJO!

Raphael peels Laura off of him and starts rummaging around in the kitchen, opening drawers and cupboards, pulling out jars and dishes that fall and break on the floor.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Carol bounds back inside the house and into her bedroom.

CAROL (CONT'D)
(from the other room)
What kind of man leaves his family
like this? You could care less what
kind of danger we're in. Your
daughters almost died! Your child
is lying inches from her grave and
you show up here asking for money!

Laura looks at her father. Her face reads of disbelief.

LAURA
You came back to help us didn't
you?

Carol returns with another load of clothing in her hands.
She sees Raphael pull a can from her kitchen cupboard.

CAROL
What are you doing?

She drops the clothes on the floor and strides up to her
husband grabbing the can with her right hand and his wrist
that holds the wad of money with the other.

RAPHAEL
(drunken roar)
This money is mine! I am your
husband!

CAROL
No! Don't you dare!

She wrestles with him. He is stumbling under her efforts in
his drunken stupor. He drops the money and wrenches his
hand free of Carol's grasp with a sudden burst of force.

He backhands her across the face. Carol falls sideways to
the floor from the force of it. Raphael picks up the money
from the floor and walks out of the house.

Laura runs to the doorway.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - CONT

Raphael strides towards his jeep. Samnah, having heard the commotion, comes running out of her house to see what's going on. She heads towards them.

SAMNAH
Carol? Carol!

Jairo follows her out onto the porch. Raphael stops when he sees Jairo.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - CONT

Carol pushes past Laura in the doorway and heads towards her husband, reeling furiously.

CAROL
Give it back! You son of a bitch,
give it back!

Raphael turns to face Carol, striding towards her in a rage.

Carol lifts her fists to hit him but he quickly grabs her by the arms, pinning them to her side. He shakes her furiously.

RAPHAEL
You brought another man into our
house? (shakes her) Huh?

LAURA
Stop!

Laura runs down from the porch crying.

Carol winces from the pain, but her anger drives her to still try and fight him.

Laura tries to wedge between them. She throws herself around her father's waist.

LAURA (CONT'D)
Papá. Please! Stop! Help us!

He can't deal with both of them so he pushes Laura away from him, hard. She falls, still begging for him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Samnah rushes forward and holds her away from them, comforting her.

Raphael grabs Carol's smaller wrists in one hand and pulls them down so she can't hit him. He points his other finger at Jairo.

RAPHAEL

Are you fucking him?

He yanks her arms. Carol spits into his face. His eyes bulge with fury and raises his hand to strike her again.

Before he can make impact, he is thrown down onto the ground. Jairo has him pinned beneath him. Jairo pulls the money from Raphael's pocket and tosses it away from him.

Laura is crying against Samnah's bosom.

Jairo stands.

Raphael pushes himself up and eventually stands. He is huffing angrily but Jairo is clearly bigger and stronger than he is. Raphael turns to Carol.

RAPHAEL (CONT'D)

You whore-

CAROL

(cuts him off)

Get off of my property! Get out of here! GO!

Raphael gives Jairo one last standoffish glare and heads towards his jeep. Laura struggles against her grandmother as he gets into the front seat and starts to drive away.

LAURA

Nooo!

She shakes Samnah off and goes after her father.

EXT. ROAD - CONT

Laura runs after her father's jeep.

LAURA

Papá! Wait!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

But he quickly gathers speed and is gone, his tires churning up clouds of dust on the road.

LAURA (CONT'D)

Papáaaa!

Laura stops running.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - DAY

Carol, Jairo, and Samnah watch as Laura walks back towards them. Carol rubs her forehead, looking as though she doesn't know what to do or say to her daughter.

CAROL

Laura-

Laura storms past her and into the house.

Carol looks at her mother, not knowing what to do, then back at the house. She throws her arms down, exhausted.

CAROL (CONT'D)

Fuck!

INT. FARMHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Laura tromps through the kitchen towards her room. She hears Isol murmuring and pauses in the doorway of her mother's bedroom.

Isol babbles softly, her hands curled up weakly on her chest, her brow furrowed and her body jerking with small spasms. Laura takes a few steps into the room and touches Isol's ankle. Isol quiets down a bit.

LAURA

(whispering)

Isol. Isol can you hear me.

Laura looks up. She can see outside through her mother's small bedroom window. Carol and Samnah are talking to Jairo. He bows his head to them and leaves, making his way towards the road into the mountains.

LAURA (CONT'D)

(whispering)

Isol. I'm sorry I ran away before.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LAURA (CONT'D)

But Papá is too scared to help
us... so I will.

Carol and Samnah enter through the kitchen. Laura exits
Carols bedroom.

CAROL

Laura.

Laura turns and heads to her room, shutting the door. Carol
looks tired and defeated.

INT. LAURA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Laura is already climbing halfway through her window, a
small bag on her back. She seats her self on the ledge and
hops down.

EXT. ROOF OF FARMHOUSE - CONT

The quetzal sees Laura leave the property and begins to
flutter wildly, unable to call out.

Through the window, we see Isol lying in the bed and Samnah
tending to Carol's bruised face.

The quetzal flies in frustrated circles around the house.

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD - DAY

Raphael speeds down a dilapidated village road in his old
jeep, nursing a bottle of tequila he pulls from the
passenger seat.

Suddenly a huge shape steps out and blocks the road.
Raphael swerves suddenly to avoid hitting it.

The jeep turns too sharply and topples over into a brush
filled ditch.

Dazed, Raphael manages to get free and stumble out of the
vehicle, cursing whatever animal had crossed the road. He
pulls his belongings from the overturned car and starts
pushing at the jeep's side in a futile attempt to get it
turned back over.

Raphael hears rustling behind him. He pauses and turns.
There is something moving through the brush in front of
him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Nervous, he pulls a small pistol from his pocket. His hands are shaking as he aims the gun at the moving mass in the bushes. He squints his eyes to focus in his drunken state.

He inches forward, closer and closer to the forest's edge and cocks the safety on his weapon.

A small brown RABBIT bursts out of the brush causing him to jump out of shock.

Raphael curses, regains his composure, then lifts his gun and blows the rabbit away.

He pushes back his hair from his sweaty brow and turns back to his car. The Cadejo is perched atop the overturned vehicle, teeth bared. Raphael barely has time to scream before it sets upon him.

EXT. MOUNTAIN TRAIL- DAY

Jairo walks determinedly up the road. His boots crunch through the rough earth and plant debris creating a constant rhythm.

Laura is quietly following him, keeping her distance. Every once in a while she crouches low in the overgrowth and stones lining the road, afraid that he might hear or spot her. She develops a rhythm to her stalking of walking and hiding.

Jairo learns rather quickly that Laura is following him up the old trail. His nostrils twitch as he picks up her scent. He continues to walk on.

An old drainage ditch follows the path up the road for about 30 yards. Laura follows in Jairo's path for a bit and then dips into the old ditch, disappearing from sight. She waits a beat then starts to pull herself up and resume following him.

But he isn't ahead of her any longer.

JAIRO

This sneaking about is becoming a bad habit of yours.

She jumps and turns, discovering him standing a few feet behind her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LAURA

I'm coming with you.

He moves towards her, gliding over the boulders and wood debris like a nimble cat until he has backed her up against the wall of ditch. He stops and crouches down towards her, inches from her face.

JAIRO

Where I am going is no place for a little girl.

He is clearly trying to intimidate her, his tone cold and harsh.

Laura swallows down her nervousness and furrows her brow, staring at him like a stubborn child.

LAURA

Papá is too scared to help us. I'm not.

JAIRO

Really? Have you ever been into the cloud forests before?

LAURA

N-no.

JAIRO

I cannot be responsible for taking care of you. Its too dangerous.

LAURA

You're just trying to frighten me.

JAIRO

You should be frightened.

LAURA

I'm not! I'm going to help my sister. Mamá doesn't understand, and papá-

JAIRO

You? Help her? You didn't do much to help her last time. You couldn't even try. You froze. I could smell the fear on you, the cold sweat.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Jairo gets very close to her and cocks his head.

JAIRO (CONT'D)

You reminded me of a rabbit...that
look they get when they are
cornered and... know they are about
to die.

They are nearly nose to nose. Laura looks at him defiantly.

LAURA

I'm not going to get scared this
time.

Jairo backs away a little, looking her over, then lunges
towards her suddenly as if he was going to attack.

She gasps and shrinks back immediately... but all Jairo
does is hop over her and out of the drainage ditch. He
continues up the road.

Laura looks shaken and full of doubt. She peaks over the
edge of the ditch at Jairo's retreating form, then looks
down the road, back towards home.

Her face turns resolute again.

Laura pulls herself out of the ditch and continues to
follow Jairo up the trail, keeping a few paces behind him.

Jairo can hear her footsteps and knows she's following. He
doesn't look behind him or try and convince her to go back
again, but he doesn't slow down and wait for her either.

Jairo's eyes dart from side to side, securing their
surroundings as they continue up the trail

INT. CAROL'S BEDROOM - EARLY EVENING

Carol sits on the edge of her bed, holding Isol's hands.
Isol cries out suddenly as if she was having a nightmare.
Carol squeezes her hands tighter and smooths the hair from
her forehead tenderly. Her whimpers and convulsions calm
for the moment.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Carol enters the kitchen looking exhausted.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Samnah is cooking a large pot of soup on the stove.

Carol leans against the kitchen wall but winces and quickly withdraws, massaging her arm. There is a large hand-shaped bruise above her elbow.

Samnah notices and starts to stir the pot.

SAMNAH

It will be ready soon.

They are both somber and quiet as Carol sets out two bowls on the table.

SAMNAH (CONT'D)

Is Laura not eating?

CAROL

She hasn't come out of her room all day. (beat) She's furious with me.

SAMNAH

She's in pain, mija. These things are not easy for a child's eyes.

Samnah hands Carol a third plate.

SAMNAH (CONT'D)

Ask Laura to come for dinner.

Carol goes to Laura's door. She knocks tenderly.

CAROL

Laura. Are you hungry?

Beat.

CAROL (CONT'D)

Laura, come and have some dinner. Please.

Beat.

Carol touches her forehead to the door and SIGHS.

CAROL (CONT'D)

I'll leave something on the table for you. In case you get hungry.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

She turns away and heads back to the kitchen.

EXT. RAINFOREST- EARLY EVENING

Jairo and Laura continue to slowly make their way through the forest. Jairo clears away the vines ahead of him with his machete.

The path is more overgrown here and Laura is having a harder time keeping up with him, tripping over roots and stones that she can't make out in the growing darkness. Her pace is slowing out of exhaustion.

Jairo catches a glimpse of her looking tired and struggling in his peripheral vision. They have been walking all day and he could continue walking...

JAIRO

We'll camp here for the night.

Laura walks the few feet she needs to catch up with him and collapses onto a fallen tree trunk, muddy, sweating, and out of breath.

EXT. RAINFOREST - NIGHT

Jairo and Laura have made a small camp in the forest.

Laura sits very close to the campfire, keeping warm and away from the shadows.

Jairo hacks away at some nearby vines and branches, tossing the wood into the fire.

Laura watches him. She notices the cut on his face is completely healed.

Jairo catches her staring and frowns. She looks away quickly, averting her eyes to the ground.

LAURA

So where do we find the white
Cadejo?

Jairo looks sternly at her. Another interruption.

LAURA (CONT'D)

Why can't we use the roads?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JAIRO

The soldiers keep to the mountain trails. The less we are noticed the better.

LAURA

Once, before Tita Samnah came to live with us...there were soldiers in our village. Papá had gone away again. Mamá hid us in a cupboard when they came to the house...

Laura's eyes drop to her feet. She turns over a mossy stone with her foot, lost in thought. Her eyes move from the rock to the campfire then to Jairo's pack lying open beside her.

Laura notices something shiny and black peaking from the bag and stares at it curiously.

Jairo finishes stoking the fire and sits down beside her. He opens his bag and takes out the object - a hand carved, shiny, black dagger.

LAURA (CONT'D)

What is it?

JAIRO

Sharp.

Laura looks away again, feeling reprimanded.

Jairo's constant frown softens the tiniest fraction. He hands the blade to her carefully. Laura takes it in her hand, running her finger on the flat, glass like surface.

JAIRO (CONT'D)

It's made from obsidian. The maya believed it to be a substance of the Gods. It rises from the underworld as lava, cools, and turns black... no evil can touch it.

Laura grips the blade and holds it up in front of her, catching the light from the campfire in its reflective surface.

JAIRO (CONT'D)

Keep it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Jairo gets up quickly and continues to chop down vines for fire wood on the far side of the camp.

EXT. RAINFOREST - LATER THAT NIGHT

Laura is curled up and sleeping on a soft bed of earth near the small fire. She holds her worry doll in her hand, stroking it idly with her fingers while she dreams.

Jairo is sharpening his machete and tending the fire.

Something watches them from a distance, hidden among the forest undergrowth.

Jairo's ears twitch, sensing its presence. His body goes very still as he listens.

The forest is full of sounds, INSECTS, a DISTANT CRY OF A NOCTURNAL BIRD, the CLICKING OF TREE FROGS.

The Cadejo lies in wait no more than half a mile away, crouching in the shadows. Jairo is facing the other direction, his back to the beast.

It is pitch black here in the forest. A stray beam of moonlight cracks through the canopy above, illuminating bits of the Cadejo's face, the front of his snout and his front paws. There are angry wounds across its body.

Jairo crouches low to the ground and breathes in long and deeply, trying to pick up the scent of any surrounding animals.

Suddenly, Jairo stands quickly and turns in the Cadejo's direction. He sets his legs apart, arms at his sides, and stands very straight and tall. He begins to speak, his voice barely above a whisper.

JAIRO

You are still injured my friend. I
can smell the wound. This is not
your fight tonight.

Jairo shifts into his Jaguar form and begins to circle the edge of the camp, pacing its boundary in a show of strength.

The cadejo's gaze falls on Laura, then moves to Jairo. It lets out a low growl.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Jairo lies down beside Laura, like a guard.

The Cadejo GRUNTS.

The tall grass and vines sway as if touched by a gust of wind as the Cadejo disappears into the night.

As Jairo lowers his head to rest, a FRUSTRATED ROAR rings through the forests, echoing in the mountains as if from a great distance.

EXT. MOUNTAIN RIVER BANK - DAY

Two Kaibile jeeps are stopped by a river in the mountains. It is secluded and quiet here save for the sound of BIRDS and INSECTS.

INT. BACK OF JEEP - CONTINUOUS

A soldier sits in the canvas-covered flat back of the second vehicle, manipulating some communications equipment. He is Yucef (27) and wears a set of headphone attached to the equipment.

A STATIC VOICE comes through the radio and announces some geographic coordinates which the soldier quickly jots down and marks on the map in front of him.

EXT. MOUNTAIN RIVER BANK - CONTINUOUS

A second soldier exits from the first vehicle, swinging the harness of his rifle over his shoulder. It is MARIANO (30). He passes by the second vehicle, patting the metal side of the jeep twice to get his companion's attention.

Mariano signals that he is leaving and walks away from the vehicles to the river bed about 50 yards away. He climbs atop the large rocks that line the river bed and follows them out into the deeper end of the pool of water. He removes his weapon and places it next to him on the rock, followed by his harness and vest.

Mariano reaches his hand into the river and splashes some water onto his stubbly face and neck.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

We pull back and are suddenly watching him from the opposite side of the bank. The water directly in front of us is rippling as if something has just been tossed in.

Mariano removes his cap and dips it into the water, using it as a kind of washcloth to scrub his face and squeeze cooling water on his chest and back.

He wrings out his cap and flattens it out on the rock next to his rifle, then leans over the edge of the rock, getting his face very very close to the water's surface.

He scoops water up with both of his hands and splashes his face one, two, three times, taking a loud gulping breath between each. He gives his head a quick shake from side to side, throwing drops of water from his hair. Mariano leans over once more towards the water.

Two animalistic arms with elongated paws and black fur over gray mangy skin burst out of the water, snagging the soldier off the rock and pulling him beneath the river in a flash of a second.

INT. BACK OF JEEP - CONTINUOUS

Yucef continues to take down coordinates.

BANG. The sound of something heavy landing on a metal surface.

Yucef whips off his headphones and flies out of his chair, as the jeep shakes and bounces on its axles. He turns and heads to the back of the vehicle, taking hold of his automatic rifle.

SOLDIER

Mariano!

EXT. MOUNTAIN RIVER BANK- CONT

Yucef runs to the front of the vehicle, turning 360 degrees with his weapon raised to secure the area.

SOLDIER

Mariano!

The Cadejo jumps out onto the top of the jeep and roars.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Yucef spins, crouches down on his knee and starts shooting off automatic rounds.

The Cadejo leaps left, then right onto the roof of the other vehicle, evading the barrage of gunfire. He lunges forward.

The soldier screams and keeps shooting. The Cadejo takes the gunfire to his stomach and chest. But it isn't enough and he lands on top of the soldier, wrapping his jaws around his face.

INT. BACK OF JEEP - CONTINUOUS

Close up on the communications desk and equipment.

A STATIC CRACKLING continues through the radio headphones.

A moment later a sickly, wet POPPING and CRACKING, of joints separating and skin peeling.

A demonic looking hand reaches into the frame. It continues to transform until it looks almost human, wrapping unnaturally long, bony fingers around the base of the microphone. The skin is wet, gray and mangy with pronounced veins and tendons.

It lifts the microphone out of frame. The radio wire swings back and forth. A rough voice begins to speak.

CADEJO

Captain?

RADIO

Yucef. What were those shots?
What's...

CADEJO

We have been ambushed.

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD - DAY

LAURA

I thought you said we couldn't stay
out on the roads.... that someone
might see us.

Laura and Jairo are climbing up the winding trail.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JAIRO

It has become the less dangerous option.

Jairo's stride is much larger than Laura's. She has to run every few minutes to keep from falling behind.

LAURA

Will that Cadejo come back?

JAIRO

He is too wounded to fight me now. But he will heal eventually. He will be furious that I have interfered.

LAURA

How did you know to help us that day.

JAIRO

I recognized the signs... what was happening in the village. I started patrolling at night, trying to predict his next move. I saw two girls playing at the edge of the forest, at night. I smelt your fear... I knew he would not be able to resist.

He turns to her.

JAIRO (CONT'D)

You made it all too easy for him.

Laura slows her pace, her face overwhelmed with guilt.

Jairo stops and looks back at her. He is clearly not used to interacting with children. He walks to her.

JAIRO (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. I understand what it means to see someone we love being hurt... and we are unable to do anything to stop it.

Laura starts to cry softly.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JAIRO (CONT'D)

For centuries, I have watched as my people were slaughtered... I do what I can, but even I can't change the course of human intention...

Jairo puts a strong hand on her shoulder, encouraging her to stand taller.

JAIRO (CONT'D)

You came here to help your sister... and to keep your mother and grandmother safe. That is very brave. I have seen grown warriors afraid to pursue such a quest.

Laura looks up at Jairo.

A high pitched WHIZZING pierces the air.

A hole explodes through Jairo's shoulder, splattering Laura's face with a spray of blood.

A split second later, another wound tears through Jairo's hip. He spins from the second blow as the bullet passes through him and hits the tree behind Laura, passing only inches from her head.

Laura opens her mouth to scream but a furred hand quickly covers it. A second pair of furry arms hooks her beneath her underarms and yanks her up into the canopy, feet kicking.

EXT. CANOPY - CONTINUOUS

When Laura opens her eyes, she finds herself in the company of two large howler monkeys, one black, one beige.

The dark monkey has its arms and legs wrapped around her, keeping her from speaking or escaping. Her eyes are wide with panic as she whimpers against the palm clamped tight against her mouth.

The beige howler monkey parts a group of branches and looks down.

CLANKING EQUIPMENT, POUNDING BOOTS, and LAYERED VOICES signal a small group of soldiers approaching quickly from a short distance.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The beige monkey turns to Laura, lifts a finger to its lips and mouths "shhhhh". Laura's eyes bulge and she freezes instantly.

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Below, Jairo is trying to pick himself off the ground. He lifts a hand to cover the wound on his hip but the contact causes him to collapse and curl in on himself in pain. He braces himself with his uninjured arm and begins to drag himself away from the road towards the forest, breathing heavily through clenched teeth.

A group of eight kaibile soldiers quickly surround him. They are dressed in full camouflage. Some have painted faces, well suited for jungle warfare. Two of the soldiers raise their weapons at Jairo.

A higher ranking officer pushes through the group. It is Captain Bonalde (30). He is a tall man with a thin moustache and full uniform.

Bonalde nods his head to the other two soldiers. They step towards Jairo. One quickly grabs the machete from the strap on Jairo's back and tosses it aside. The other uses the butt of his gun as a lever to turn Jairo over onto his back, digging into the wound on his side in the process.

JAIRO

Ach!

The soldier raises the barrel of his rifle to Jairo's face, using the tip to tilt his face upwards. The Captain steps forward.

CAPTAIN BONALDE

What village are you from? Our supply convoy has been ambushed by indigenous insurgents in this area.

Jairo clenches his jaw, his nostrils flaring with each painful, inhale of breath.

The Captain nods again and the soldiers begin to search Jairo, pulling what they can find on his person. They remove some loose coins, a knife, a canteen of water, and a small cloth bag filled with raw tobacco leaves.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Jairo's eyes begin to flutter closed as he grows weaker. He is losing blood and is in great pain.

One of the soldiers picks up the bag of tobacco and hands it to the general who turns it about in his hand. Printed on the small sack is the painted name of the local tobacco vendor from the village market.

CAPTAIN BONALDE (CONT'D)

You're far away from Aguacatan.
Where were you heading my friend?

Jairo has already passed out.

CAPTAIN

Ruano! Berrieza! Get him up.

Two more soldiers step forward and lift Jairo's unconscious body off the ground and carry him off. The rest of the soldiers follow.

The Cadejo crouches in the tall grass a few yards away, watching the whole event. He looks at the unconscious Jairo, then to the canopy where he knows Laura is hiding, alone. His snarling jaws are almost smiling as he slinks away into the shadows of the woods.

Captain Bonalde remains behind for a few moments, toeing the forest debris around the area where Jairo fell, covering the blood stains and making sure they left nothing behind.

One of Laura's worry dolls is sticking out of the brush.

Bonalde bends and picks up the child's toy, a confused, curious expression on his face. He looks around him, then looks up, surveying the canopy.

EXT. CANOPY - CONTINUOUS

Laura and the two howler monkeys are quiet and unmoving, camouflaged by the trees.

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Captain Bonalde pockets the doll and follows his men out of the cleared path and into the woods.

EXT. CANOPY - CONTINUOUS

MARCHING BOOTS and VOICES OF SOLDIERS fade into the distance.

The dark howler monkey, JUNB'ATZ slowly loosens his grip around Laura. The beige monkey, CH'OWEN climbs to a higher branch and parts the branches.

CH'OWEN
Well, they've gone.

LAURA
You can tal--

Junb'atz quickly wraps his legs and arms around her again, muffling her exclamation.

JUNB'ATZ
(softly) Must you do that Ch'owen.
They aren't that far off. Couldn't
break it to her gently. Always have
to put on a show.

CH'OWEN
Oh stop worrying Jun'batz, you're
scared of your own shadow.

Their expressions and small gestures are incredibly human.

Ch'owen travels down the tree branch and sits in front of Laura. He holds out his hand.

CH'OWEN (CONT'D)
Allow me to introduce myself. My
name is Ch'owen.

BEAT.

Junb'atz's eyes dart nervously back and forth between Ch'owen and Laura.

JUNB'ATZ
...Oh!

He removes his hands from Laura's mouth.

LAURA
I'm Laura.

BEAT.

Ch'owen looks at Junb'atz who realizes he is still holding onto Laura. He lets go, and she tentatively raises her hand to shake Ch'owen's.

Junb'atz climbs onto a branch over Laura's head and plops down in front of her, next to Ch'owen.

JUNB'ATZ

Yes well, we knew that already, didn't we. (To Laura) Jairo said you would be coming.

Laura's expression sobers.

CH'OWEN

Yes but she deserves a proper introduction doesn't she?

Laura touches her hand to her face. Her fingertips come away with blood.

Ch'owen notices Laura's expression.

CH'OWEN (CONT'D)

Don't worry yourself over Jairo. He'll heal very quickly, I assure you.

JUNB'ATZ

It will take more than a few bullets to kill that one.

LAURA

I don't understand.

CH'OWEN

Surely you know what Jairo is.

JUNB'ATZ

We can not be killed by anything man made. We'll regenerate ourselves in a day or so. Only something of the spirit world can cause us any real harm.

Laura's hand trails to her pocket where she can feel the weight of the obsidian blade beneath the cloth.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ch'owen and Junb'atz continue to bicker.

LAURA

How do you know Jairo?

CH'OWEN

He called on us as guides. You wish to contact the white Cadejo, do you not?

Laura nods her head.

LAURA

Are you.....are you naguales too?

JUNB'ATZ

(To Ch'owen) Did you hear that? You'd think Jairo would have the decency to mention us to the girl.

Junb'atz climbs up higher into the canopy and starts moving through the trees in the direction of the mountain.

Ch'owen smiles at Laura and holds out his hand.

CH'OWEN

No my dear. We are something different altogether.

Laura takes his hand. He pulls her up, effortlessly onto a higher branch.

Together the three start to move up the mountainside using the long, sturdy clutter of branches to cross from tree to tree. Ch'owen helps Laura find her balance as she goes.

LAURA

So, if you aren't naguales, what are you?

CH'OWEN

We are the ancient keepers of art and history, twin spirits of the maya peoples.

LAURA

Twins? I know this story. My Tita Samnah told it to me.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LAURA (CONT'D)

She used to say my sister and I
could learn a lesson from you on
how to get along.

Junb'atz laughter is heard from above. Ch'owen looks up at
his twin, annoyed.

CH'OWEN

It must be so overwhelming to find
out such things are true. But I
have to say you're handling it very
well. Eighty years ago or so, give
or take a decade, Junb'atz decided
to ask this goat herder for
directions. ...shock nearly killed
him.

JUNB'ATZ

Well if you hadn't gone down near
the villages and gotten us lost in
the first place I wouldn't have had
to ask, now would I?

LAURA

You know where to find the white
Cadejo?

JUNB'ATZ

Obviously.

CH'OWEN

Ignore him.

JUNB'ATZ

Deep in the forest there grows the
great world tree... with its
branches in the heavens and its
roots in the underworld. If the
white Cadejo still dwells in this
land, that will be where you may
contact him.

Laura looks down at the plummeting distance between her and
the forest floor.

LAURA

(nervously)

Wouldn't this be faster on the
ground?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

CH'OWEN

We know what follows you. It will
be safer for all of us in the
canopy.

On cue, Laura slips, losing her footing and falling between
the tree branches.

Ch'owen and Junb'atz have a grip on her arms and the back
of her shirt before she even opens her mouth to gasp.

Once she is back on her feet, Junb'atz shakes his head and
starts climbing ahead of them.

JUNB'ATZ

Humans...

Ch'owen smiles and takes her by the hand as they continue
forward.

EXT. KAIBILE ENCAMPMENT - DAY

Jairo regains consciousness. He is lying outside on a muddy
patch of ground, his wrists bound behind his back, his
ankles similarly tied. He tries to roll onto his side to
sit up but after an exhaustive effort, the pain in his
shoulder is too great. The most he manages is to prop his
shoulder up against the fallen tree behind him. He takes in
his surroundings.

His captors have taken him to a kaibile outpost in the
forest. There are about 30 or 40 soldiers here in total,
several jeeps and convoys, 4 small camouflage colored tents
and one larger one.

Jairo notices Captain Bonalde enters one of the larger
tents.

There are six other men tied up beside Jairo. Half are
blindfolded. One is them is barely over sixteen years old.
Many are stained with blood or show marks of beating. One
man is sobbing quietly to himself. They are all dark
skinned, simple looking people-- indigenous farmers and
factory workers.

Captain Bonalde and three soldiers exit the tent behind an
older, larger man in a more decorated uniform. He is
GENERAL ORAMAS.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They approach the group of prisoners.

Those who aren't blindfolded stare down at the ground defiantly. Jairo looks up and meets the captain's eyes as General Oramas begins to pace back and forth in front of the men.

GENERAL ORAMAS

One of our area convoys... was ambushed in the forests, the perpetrators fled into the mountainside. We have already identified and dealt with any well known insurgents in this area. But it appears a few... have slipped through the cracks. We need you to help us correct this mistake. You have all been arrested under suspicion of treason to the Guatemalan government. You will tell us everything you know about your activities this morning, and give us the names and villages of anyone you know who toes the liberal party line. Speak up, and perhaps you can go free.

Oramas turns on his heel and marches from one end of the line to the other. He pauses in front of Jairo and then continues back in the other direction, stopping in front of the sobbing man.

GENERAL ORAMAS (CONT'D)

You!

The man jumps, shaking and sobbing beneath his blind fold.

GENERAL ORAMAS (CONT'D)

What is your name?

LUGAR

(Stuttering)

Lugar de Beleta

GENERAL ORAMAS

Where are you from?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LUGAR
(Weakly)
Please....please

GENERAL ORAMAS
What village!

LUGAR
Chajul.

GENERAL ORAMAS
The insurgents have used Chajul as
a safe haven before, yes? Are they
doing so now?

LUGAR
(Stuttering, through
tears)
Please. We haven't done anything.
Sir I swear to you, you must
believe me, please.

Oramas deholsters his pistol and presses the tip of it
right against Lugar's forehead. Lugar stiffens and lets out
a little cry at the contact.

His voice comes through high pitched and choked.

LUGAR (CONT'D)
(Begging rapidly)
I have a wife. Please. I don't know
anything about this, it isn't our
war. Please....

CLICK. Oramas removes the safety.

Lugar's begging breaks down into incoherent tearful
babbling.

GENERAL ORAMAS
Was it any of these men? Give me a
name.

Lugar's cries continue.

Oramas, frustrated, quickly points the gun at the sixteen
year old boy sitting blindfolded beside Lugar.

SHOT.

Oramas shoots the boy in the forehead. Lugar cries out.

The boy falls backwards, dead.

Lugar's body collapses forward, sobbing into his lap.
Oramas gestures with his pistol.

GENERAL ORAMAS

Bring them in one at a time.

Oramas and Captain Bonalde turn and walk back to the main tent.

Two soldiers step forward and lift the weeping Lugar by his arms, dragging his limp body towards the second larger tent.

Jairo watches as three other soldiers pick up the sixteen year old by the wrists and feet, carry him about 20 yards from the camp, and toss his body into a ditch layered with nine other bodies in various states of decay.

EXT. RAINFOREST CAMPSITE - NIGHT

Ch'owen and Junb'atz have set up a modest campsite on the rainforest floor, softening the ground with layers of palm leaves to lie on and setting a small fire at the center. Junb'atz is adding more leaves to the pile and patting it down to make a sleeping surface for Laura near the fire.

JUNB'ATZ

The canopy is not so good for
sleeping humans. You could barely
keep from falling when you were
awake.

Laura walks around the clearing. She approaches a strange shaped stone jutting from the ground at the edge of the clearing. It is overgrown with moss and lichens. She peels at the moss with her fingernails, revealing carvings. As she steps back, she realizes there are similarly shaped stone obelisks positioned around the clearing, forming a small circle.

LAURA

What are these?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JUNB'ATZ

There used to be a temple here.
Artists, scribes, emperors: All of
them would come to leave offerings
to us, hoping for inspiration and
guidance.

Junb'atz finishes making the bed and approaches one of the
stone formations. He gestures for Laura to come closer and
starts rubbing away the moss and overgrowth.

JUNB'ATZ (CONT'D)

You see?

There is a carving of the two monkey twins.

JUNB'ATZ (CONT'D)

We were worshipped as gods by our
people. Teachers of the great
architects and keepers of their
long, magnificent history. (To
Laura) Your history.

Laura looks mystified by the ornate carvings.

LAURA

What happened here?

JUNB'ATZ

Our kingdoms were destroyed, our
people were carried away to foreign
lands as slaves or scattered within
the mountains. They started to
forget the old ways. And as they
lost their faith, the spirits were
driven back into the forests and
the old temples. As mankind grew
more violent towards each other,
some of these spirits were awoken
...like the Cadejo.

Laura stares around at the ruins.

JUNB'ATZ (CONT'D)

This is a sacred site. The Cadejo
may not cross the barrier... you
will be safe till morning.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Junb'atz finishes patting down the pile of leaves for her bed.

JUNB'ATZ (CONT'D)
Do not leave the circle.

LAURA
I won't.

Junb'atz starts walking away from the campsite.

LAURA (CONT'D)
Wait! Where are you going?

Ch'owen drops down from a tree above and hands Laura a piece of fruit.

CH'OWEN
Don't worry little one. We will be
on lookout at all times.

Ch'owen and Junb'atz leap back up onto a branch and disappear into the trees.

Laura looks around nervously. She lies down and eventually falls asleep out of pure exhaustion.

EXT. RAINFOREST- LATER THAT NIGHT

Ch'owen and Junb'atz are on the look out. A strange noise reaches them in the canopy.

CH'OWEN
Check on the girl.

Junb'atz heads back towards the camp. From his perch Ch'owen can see a shadow moving in the distant forest. He quickly moves to investigate.

The Cadejo watches from below as Ch'owen leaps through the trees, away from the campsite. The Cadejo slinks away in the opposite direction.

Junb'atz drops down from the canopy to the lower branches and is heading towards Laura when a dark mass BURSTS out of the tall grass and tackles him to the ground.

EXT. RAINFOREST CAMPSITE - NIGHT

Laura shifts in her sleep, her brow furrowed as if she is having a nightmare.

INT. LAURA'S NIGHTMARE - CONTINUOUS

Laura dreams she is standing near the woods on her mother's property. Isol is teasing her again, spinning around joyfully as she taunts her.

But something is wrong.

She is ghostly pale and there is blood staining her white dress and dripping down her arms and legs. Isol turns and faces Laura, smiling.

ISOL

Run, Laura.

EXT. RAINFOREST CAMPSITE - NIGHT

The Cadejo walks to the very edge of the stone circle and watches Laura sleeping. He opens his mouth and exhales a long breath in Laura's direction.

A chilling wind blows, causing the fire to die down and Laura to shake in her sleep. The air is humming with the Cadejo's vile energy.

Its claws dig into the ground which begins to burst open as all manner of horrible creatures-- beetles, huge centipedes, and small snakes-- begin to rise up out of the soil around the campsite.

A huge brown centipede crawls out of the dirt beside Laura's sleeping body, it crawls onto her chest, across her cheek and over her forehead.

Laura begins to toss and turn as her nightmare worsens.

INT. LAURA'S NIGHTMARE - CONTINUOUS

Laura is inside the kitchen cupboard with her sister. She watches through the gap in the cupboard as two kaibile soldiers push their way into the house and start shouting at Carol. They are gathering the men from the village to interrogate but her father isn't home.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

One soldier back hands her mother across the face. Another laughs and grabs her hair, kissing her on the mouth. She wrestles against them but is subdued as another soldier kicks her in the stomach.

Carol's eyes meet Laura's.

CAROL
Run Laura.

EXT. RAINFOREST CAMPSITE - NIGHT

A terrible wind is whipping around Laura as she twists around on the ground, sweating as if she is struggling against something.

INT. LAURA'S NIGHTMARE - CONTINUOUS

The soldiers attacking Carol begin to shift and change as they beat her. Their skin is sunken and they grow thinner, like skeletal creatures, and horrible inhuman noises escape from their mouths.

Laura WHIMPERS.

All three of the soldiers turn their head sharply towards the cupboard. One of them steps away from Carol and strides forward towards the cupboard doors, throwing them open. He roars, opening his jaws impossibly wide.

Laura SCREAMS.

EXT. RAINFOREST CAMPSITE - NIGHT

Laura SCREAMS and opens her eyes.

CUT TO:

INT. CAROL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Carol wakes up with a gasp, sweating nervously. She has fallen asleep in a straight back chair at the edge of her bed. Her heart racing, she holds her chest and then touches her palm to her forehead as she tries to calm herself. She gets up and leaves the room.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

The house is quiet. Carol stops at Laura's door, she pauses but doesn't knock. She shuffles back into the kitchen to get a glass of water.

She puts the cup down and reaches for the pitcher on the counter when she notices Laura's dinner plate on the table, still untouched.

She drops the pitcher and runs to Laura's.

CAROL

Larua?

She turns the doorknob. It sticks. She gives it a little shake and the door opens a crack. She goes inside.

CAROL (CONT'D)

(scream) Laura!

SOUNDBRIDGE TO:

EXT. RAINFOREST CAMPSITE - NIGHT

Laura is crying softly, holding her knees and rocking herself.

MALE VOICE

Mija.

Laura gasps and stares turns towards the sound. The fire illuminates the ground and nearby trees but after ten feet or so, everything is in shadow, lit only by traces of moonlight leaking through the canopy above.

MALE VOICE (CONT'D)

Mija, don't let your mother see you crying.

Laura's face softens as she recognizes the voice as her fathers.

She squints at the darkness and sees the figure of a man standing on the outskirts of the campsite. It is shaped like Raphael.

LAURA

Papá?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Laura dries her eyes.

MALE VOICE

You didn't think I was going to
leave did you? That I wouldn't come
back to help your sister.

Laura picks herself up off the ground, sniffing but
smiling.

MALE VOICE (CONT'D)

Don't be a fraid, mija. Come.

He holds out a hand to her. Laura starts to slowly walk
towards him.

MALE VOICE (CONT'D)

I spoke to your grandmother. She
told me what Jairo had planned to
do. It should have been me from the
start. A father should take care of
his children...but I'm here now.
And I've found it, mija. The lair
of the white Cadejo. We can help
your sister together and then I can
come home.

LAURA

Oh papá!

She goes to him and hugs him, crossing the stone barrier.
He holds her, one arm cradling her head, the other rubbing
soothing circles on her back.

MALE VOICE

Shhhh Shhhh Shhh. Come, we'll do
this together.

He gestures ahead of him.

Laura starts walking, turning back every so often to smile
at her father. He follows behind her, leading her away from
the campsite and out of earshot from her remaining
protector.

As he passes beneath a break in the trees, the moon light
shines brightly on his face for a matter of seconds,
catching in the pupils of his glowing, blood red eyes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

It is the Cadejo.

INT. GENERAL'S TENT, KAIBILE ENCAMPMENT - NIGHT

Jairo is led into a large tent by two soldiers. They handle him roughly and sit him down on a bench, securing him to the center tent pole with rope. They leave him there alone.

Moments later, the tent flap is pulled back and General Oramas enters.

Jairo stares the general down through the curtain of his hair.

GENERAL ORAMAS

Good Evening. I am General Oramas.

Silence

GENERAL ORAMAS (CONT'D)

That's ok. I too have very little interest in such perfunctory introductions.

Oramas begins to pace slowly back and forth in front of Jairo.

There are brown stains on Oramas' knuckles and in his nail beds. He withdraws a handkerchief and starts cleaning his hands and fingers with it.

GENERAL ORAMAS (CONT'D)

What I am interested in is information.

Oramas kneels in front of Jairo

GERNAL ORAMAS

Your friends have been.... highly uncooperative.

Oramas inspects his fingertips. His hands are now clean but there are blood stains on the handkerchief.

GENERAL ORAMAS

Very disappointing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JAIRO

I have no information for you.
General.

GENERAL ORAMAS

Oh but you do.

Oramas stands and walks to a nearby table where Jairo's affects have been laid out: a machete, a sharpening stone, a drinking canister. Some loose coins, a cloth bag with tobacco leaves inside, and Laura's worry doll.

GENERAL ORAMAS (CONT'D)

What can you tell me... about this?

He takes out Laura's little worry doll that Captain Bonalde had discovered, examining it with his fingers.

Jairo remains silent

GENERAL ORAMAS (CONT'D)

You know, when Captain Bonalde passed this to me, it brought back such memories to my mind. My nanny growing up was an indigenous woman from your region. She made me and my sisters a set of these little dolls when were young. Told us that, if we were ever troubled we need just whisper our fears and worries to the little doll and...
(makes a gesture in the air)
...they would disappear. The dolls would worry for us. Children are so full of fear.

Oramas lifts the worry doll to his ear.

GENERAL ORAMAS (CONT'D)

If these dolls could speak, imagine what they would tell us-

JAIRO

Why shoot that boy?

GENERAL ORAMAS

Since the overthrow, there has been rioting in many of the villages.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GENERAL ORAMAS (CONT'D)

We are responsible for seeking out these insurrectionists and disposing of them properly. But they evade us. They know these forests because they have grown up in them, like apes. And they have many sympathizers who offer them sanctuary.

JAIRO

Your enemy is an elusive one. And you take out your frustrations on farmers and peasants. My people.

GENERAL ORAMAS

We must eliminate any trace of threat.

JAIRO

Was that boy truly such a threat to you?

GENERAL ORAMAS

To me? No. But to our government.

JAIRO

These people are not interested in politics. They are just trying to stay alive... to eat, to farm.

GENERAL ORAMAS

These mountains are swarming with indigenous villagers. They populate the forests like ants. All drones of the liberal agenda. The insurgents offer them a crumb of sugar and they will come in waves.

Oramas moves back to the table and turns the tobacco satchel over in his hand. He sees the painted label of the Aguacatan distributor.

GENERAL ORAMAS (CONT'D)

Only last week there were protests at the coffee plant outside of Aguacatan.

Jairo's eyes flinch the tiniest fraction.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Oramas turns to Jairo.

GENERAL ORAMAS (CONT'D)
You. You are from this village,
yes?

Oramas twirls the little worry doll in his fingers

GENERAL ORAMAS (CONT'D)
Do you have children there? Sons? A
little girl?

Jairo glares.

GENERAL ORAMAS (CONT'D)
No? Well that's fortunate for you.
We have been watching that area for
quite some time and the recent
protest have only confirmed our
suspicions. They found a weapons'
stow at the factory. We have been
given orders to sweep the village
tomorrow at dusk. In my opinion,
not one of them can be trusted. A
boy can carry a rifle as well as
his father, or mother, or sister...

Jairo looks at Oramas with fury and disgust.

GENERAL ORAMAS (CONT'D)
Of course, if we were given the
names of the perpetrators
involved... there would be no need
for us to intercede beyond a few
arrests.

Jairo turns his face away, refusing to talk.

Oramas places the worry doll back on the table and lifts
Jairo's machete.

He turns and places the blade perilously against Jario's
cheek, using it to turn his face to him. Captain Bonalde
enters the tent.

CAPTAIN BONALDE
General. A radio dispatch for you
sir.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

Oramas holds up his hand, asking Bonalde to wait. He drops the machete blade to the cord around Jairo's neck, lifting it to inspect the quetzal feathers hanging there.

GENERAL ORAMAS

You fancy yourself a warrior, my friend?

BEAT.

Oramas swings the machete suddenly and forcefully, driving the blade into the wooden tent pull inches from Jairo's head.

GENERAL ORAMAS

I do hope you have more to say when I return.

Oramas leaves the tent. Jairo's eyes are filled with anger. A low growl escapes his lips.

Sound of a ROPE STRAINING.

EXT. RAIN FOREST CAVE - NIGHT

The Cadejo leads Laura deeper and deeper into the forests, past remnants of ancient Maya ruins. They stick out of the ground like exposed bones.

LAURA

How much further is it?

CADEJO

Very close, little one.

Laura does not see the Cadejo smile to himself.

LAURA

How did you find it Papá? How did you know where to look?

CADEJO

Your grandmother told me... she said go to the top of the mountain where the great world tree grows...

They are soon standing before a large, gnarled ceiba tree. Its roots protrude from the ground like a giant spider, each arm thicker than the width of a grown man.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The roots are gathered around a knothole at the base of the tree. The ground drops out at the entrance, as if opening into a great underground cave.

CADEJO (CONT'D)

Here it is.

LAURA

It looks dead.

CADEJO

It isn't dead. It's sleeping. The spirits have not been contacted in many many years... so they slumber. Until they are called upon.

LAURA

Let's go wake them up!

Laura smiles at him and runs forward towards the knothole.

LAURA (CONT'D)

Come on Papá.

The cadejo watch her crawl inside.

CADEJO

Coming, mija.

He follows her through the narrow porthole and down into the cave.

INT. CAVE - CONTINUOUS

The cave is pitch black save for a few bands of light peaking through the crack where the roots of the tree have broken through to the ceiling. Laura is stumbling in near darkness.

LAURA

Hello? Helloooooooooo?

Her voice echoes from the back of the cave.

The Cadejo eyes are focused on Laura's back as he approaches her slowly from behind.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LAURA (CONT'D)
(to 'her father')
Where is he?

CADEJO
Deeper, mija. We must go deeper.

They move further down the channel.

The deeper they go, the more treacherous the cave grows. Huge stalactites hang from the cave ceiling like teeth. The stone walls and floors are slick and wet, dotted with shallow pools of cave water. Large centipedes and insects crawl about, pale and sightless.

Laura grows more nervous as she goes on, her eyes darting around her, her breathing quickening. Something isn't right.

The Cadejo inhales deeply, relishing the scent of her growing fear like a cat playing with a mouse.

Further down the channel, Laura loses her footing on a slick stone and falls into a shallow pool of water.

LAURA
Ach.

She steadies her hand on the cave wall and pulls herself to her knees. Her hand comes away from the wall with blood on it. She looks down...

In the water, and scattered around the cave rocks, are thousands of bones. Next to her in the water, a human skull stares at her with gaping eye sockets, its jaw twisted open and to the side in a terrible scream.

LAURA (CONT'D)
Papá!

She darts up and out of the water quickly and turns.

There is no one there.

LAURA (CONT'D)
Papá!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

A sinister laughter fills the cave, echoing off the walls in every direction. Laura turns in circles trying to get a sense of the direction of the voice.

She is drenched in cold water and mud, heaving out of fear. She starts running back the way she came, getting turned around in the darkness and all the different tunnels.

She crouches behind a large rock formation sticking out of the cave floor, covering her ears against the sinister laughing. The sound dies away into silence.

Laura slowly lifts her self up.

ROAR

The Cadejo, still in the form of her father, is blocking her path. Its jaws open monstrously wide as it lets out a demonic scream.

Laura screams and takes off.

The creature follows her. In this form, he is as awkward as she is navigating the slippery stones and ragged cave floor. Her small size gives her an advantage as she slips through the tiny crevices and gains distance.

The Cadejo begins to transform itself as it pursues her.

TERRIBLE, WET, POPPING NOISES as Raphael's facial features melt away and the Cadejo distorts itself in a stringy, corpse like creature.

It falls onto all fours, navigating the cave like an monstrous insect.

Laura drags herself through the cave as fast as she can, falling over debris and knocking into low hanging stalactites.

EXT. CAVE - CONTINUOUS

Laura reaches the mouth of the cave first and pulls herself out by the roots of the tree. She crawls out onto her belly, digging at the muddy ground, trying to regain her footing and run.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The Cadejo bursts out of the opening of the cave and catches up with her a few yards from the opening. He lunges at her and the two tumble through the underbrush.

SCREAMING and ROARING

LAURA

No! Noooo!

They reach a flat plateau and hit the ground hard. The Cadejo roles Laura onto her back and pins her down. Laura struggles beneath him.

With her loose hand, Laura draws the obsidian blade from her pocket and shoves in deep into the cadejo's eye. Black blood pours from the socket and the skin around it begins to sizzle.

The Cadejo rears back with the blade protruding from its eye socket, allowing Laura to wiggle free and run off. She sprints away, with the terrible screaming of the Cadejo sounding behind her.

INT. GENERAL'S TENT, KAIBILE ENCAMPMENT - DAY BREAK

Oramas returns to the tent. Jairo is slumped over, still tied to the tent pole. Oramas huffs and deholsters his pistol. He pulls the bloody handkerchief from his pocket and polishes the metal barrel as he cross the tent towards Jairo.

GENERAL ORAMAS

So, my warrior friend. I do hope,
for your sake, that you have
something to share with me.

He waits for a response. Jairo doesn't speak. Oramas lashes out and furiously whips his pistol across the side of Jairo's head, then brings the weapon down hard across his back.

Jairo rights himself and doesn't move or make or a sound, even as a trail of blood begins to trickle down from his hairline.

Oramas turns and walks back a few paces. He opens the chamber and loads three bullets.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GENERAL ORAMAS (CONT'D)

Are there many woman in your
village? Young mothers? Daughters?

Oramas smiles to himself.

GENERAL ORAMAS (CONT'D)

The men have been trekking through
these godforsaken mountains for
months now... and are starving in
so many ways.

Oramas snaps the chamber closed and turns back to Jairo.

There is no one tied to the tent pole. The rope lies in
pieces on the floor.

We track up to the general's back.

JAIRO

General.

Oramas turns, gun raised. But Jairo is too fast and sets
upon him immediately. In a split second he grabs the
general's wrist and pulls his arm in an unnatural
direction. The bones POP from their sockets and CRACK. The
general's finger convulses around the trigger and fires
continuous shots into the floor of the tent.

EXT. KAIBELE TENT - CONTINUOUS

Bonalde is looking over a map across the camp at another
tent.

He hears the shots.

Bonalde withdraws his pistol and heads toward the General's
tent. Other soldiers are arming themselves and clamoring
around.

Bonalde enters the tent, weapon raised. Oramas is sprawled
backwards over the desk, his throat torn out. His arm
dangles behind him at an unnatural angle like a broken tree
branch. Beside his ear is Laura's little worry doll.

EXT. RAINFOREST - CONTINUOUS

A large jaguar sprints down the mountain side. In the
distance, we see Aguacatan.

EXT. TEMPLE MOUNT - DAWN

Laura sprints uphill through the forest, smashing through small branches and thorny vines, cutting up her face and exposed limbs in the process. She doesn't stop running.

POUNING GROUND

The Cadejo has caught up and is bounding after her. It is shifting back into its wolf-like form.

Laura breaks through the forest and enters a clearing—a plateau perched on a steep cliff-side and dotted with crumbling Maya ruins. The largest of the structures is a large pyramidal temple, one of its sides hanging perilously over the edge of the cliff. A huge, lush, ceiba trees grow through the center of the structure, its canopy rising out from the top of it and stretching towards the sky.

Laura runs towards one of the structures and wedges herself inside one of the deep cracks, out of sight and hopefully out of reach from the Cadejo.

CADEJO

(hoarse grunting)

Running running. Always running. No
where to run. Trapped. Trapped.

The Cadejo pushes itself as far into the crevice as it can, digging with its large claws and snapping its jaws at the air, trying to reach Laura like a wolf digging into a rabbit burrow.

DEEP HOWLS, followed by THUDS

The Cadejo SNARLS and retreats from the crevice.

Chowen and Jun'batz have arrived and are driving the Cadejo back with stones.

CH'OWEN

Laura! Into the temple! Run!

Ch'owen and Jun'batz swarm onto the Cadejo, wrestling him, sinking their teeth into his back and tearing at his skin with their hands and feet. Jun'batz rips the obsidian blade from the Cadejo's bloody eye socket, causing it to rear back in pain.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Laura pulls herself out of the crevice. She grabs the fallen blade and takes off running towards the large pyramid structure. She bounds up the steps.

The Cadejo rolls, tossing Jun'batz against a heavy rock. He captures Ch'owen in his jaws, shaking his head wildly before tossing him aside.

The Cadejo spots Laura making her way up the temple stairs and goes after her.

Laura turns and sees the Cadejo pursing her. She heads towards the edge of the pyramid closest to the cliff side. The Cadejo drives her out further onto the ledge of the structure as it draws forward. She crawls along the edge of the temple wall, digging her finger tips into the loosening stones for support.

The Cadejo stalks her further onto the edge. The foundation is less steady here and pieces of the structure begin to break and crumble beneath her feet. She presses her self flat against the side of the ruins to keep from falling.

The Cadejo laughs sinisterly through its teeth as it steps out onto the ledge, closer to Laura. The sound is distorted and raw through its wolf like jaws.

Laura eyes are filled with tears of frustration and exhaustion. She looks up and around her. There is only the Cadejo and a plummeting two-mile fall to the river below.

CADEJO

(hoarse grunting)

Always running. Scared little
rabbit. Too scared to help. Sister
dying. Too scared. Too scared.

Laura turns and glares defiantly at the beast. The Cadejo is only yards away and is inching forward.

She raises her blade and takes a swipe at the Cadejo.

He easily evades her blow and LAUGHS at her attempt. She swings again, and misses once more.

Laura takes a step backwards but the structures falls beneath her foot. She quickly moves back against the wall.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CADEJO (CONT'D)
No more running. Can't run.

The Cadejo steps forward. Pieces of the structure crack under its weight. Laura watches the stones break off, bounce along the edge of the temple and disappear over the cliff. She stomps her foot down on one of the loose stones which similarly breaks free and free falls into the river.

CADEJO (CONT'D)
No more running. No place to run.

LAURA
I'm not running.

CADEJO
No place to run. Mine!

It rears back to make its final strike, letting out a terrible noise. Laura yells back and with all her might starts pulling and kicking at the loose stones, digging her blade into the cracks to pry the larger blocks loose. The stones begin to shift and slide over one another, crumbling in a chain reaction. The Cadejo loses its footing and starts clawing desperately at the temple mount. Laura continues pounding on the rocks.

The structure collapses out from under them and they both slide down the face of the temple, smashing through debris and protruding branches. The Cadejo slides closer and closer to her, snapping its jaws, trying to get to her even now as he is falling.

The cliff is a few feet away.

Laura throws her hands over her eyes.

The heavier Cadejo hits the edge first and rolls off the cliff side, Laura follows.

A ragged HOWL fades into the distance.

CUT TO BLACK.

EXT. TEMPLE MOUNT - CONTINUOUS

Laura's hands are over her eyes but she isn't falling. She slowly opens her fingers and peeks through the crack. She is suspended in mid air.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Jun'batz has hold of her under her arms, his tail wrapped around one of the protruding roots from the temple structure.

EXT. VILLAGE MARKET PLACE - DAY

The villagers of Aguacatan are going about their usual business when Jairo arrives in the village, shouting and distressed. His wounds have healed, but his clothes are still covered with his blood, he looks terrifying.

JAIRO

Everyone! You must leave! Now! They are coming to sweep the village!

Some of the villagers look fearful and begin murmuring to one another. Whether they are frightened by the warning or Jairo himself is unclear.

JAIRO (CONT'D)

Listen to me! You must leave this place! They will be here before nightfall!

Some of the villagers begin to scatter, others continue to do their business. Jairo, frustrated, grabs one woman by the shoulders and turns her to him. She cries out.

JAIRO (CONT'D)

Get out of here! Do you hear me? You have to leave!

The villagers crowd around him. He lets the woman go and turns to them once more. Salou is among them.

SALOU

Why should we believe you!

ANGRY VILLAGER

He's led them to us.

JAIRO

They found a weapons stow at the factory. I've seen the camps. They have at least 40 troops with them, they are going to burn this place to the ground. You must go.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Some naysayers continue to glare at him and continue their work. The majority of the people gather their things and leave quickly.

JAIRO (CONT'D)

Go! Head towards the valley. The insurgent camps are there, they will protect all refugees.

He gives one last glance towards the group then heads off down the old dirt road, sprinting as fast as he can towards Carol's house.

Once he clears sight of the village, he breaks into an unnatural speed and disappears from sight.

INT. SAMNAH'S HOUSE - DAY

Samnah is stoking coals beneath her comal.

FRANTIC KNOCKING.

She hurries to the door. Jairo fills her door frame.

INT. CAROL'S HOME - DAY

Carol and Jairo enter Carol's bedroom. Carol's eyes are swollen from crying.

CAROL

Laura's gone.

Jairo has a pained expression on his face, as though he wish he could console the worried mother.

JAIRO

What do you mean?

CAROL

She's run away. I can't even take care of my own children...

Carol carries Isol out of the bedroom, wrapped in a thick blanket.

Jairo takes Isol in his arms.

EXT. CAROL'S FARM - CONTINUOUS

Carol and Jairo leave the house. Samnah is waiting beside a small, mule drawn cart. Jairo lays Isol down in the cart then goes to secure the reigns on the mule.

Dozens of refugees are crossing the road and heading into the valley.

Carol and Samnah hugs each other, tightly.

CAROL

Please, go, quickly.

Samnah takes hold of the mule's reins and starts heading towards the road.

JAIRO

What about you?

CAROL

I can't leave. If Laura does come back, she'll come here. And if there's no one...

She turns to Jairo.

CAROL (CONT'D)

I have to wait for her.

Carol walks back to her porch.

JAIRO

I will stay with you.

Carol nods her head and goes back inside the house.

EXT. TEMPLE MOUNT- DAY

Ch'owen is unconscious and badly injured. Junb'atz is meticulously tending to his twin. Laura walks closer, sees the bloody wounds, and gasps.

LAURA

Is he going to be alright.

Ch'owen isn't moving. Junb'atz looks at her, then continues to dab at Ch'owen's wounds.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JUNB'ATZ
 Irresponsible ape. You always have
 to make a show. Always running
 after danger...

Though his words are harsh, his brow is furrowed with
 worry, not anger or spite.

JUNB'ATZ (CONT'D)
 Have to go playing the brave hero.

Ch'owen COUGHS, then relaxes back on the ground, his eyes
 closed.

CH'OWEN
 Oh shut it, you idiot.

Junb'atz continues to tend to him. Laura relaxes.

She turns towards the pyramidal temple.

CH'OWEN (CONT'D)
 Go.

Laura faces Ch'owen. He manages to open his eyes, half
 lidded and wincing.

CH'OWEN (CONT'D)
 We'll be fine.

INT. TEMPLE- DAY

Laura enters the temple corridor and is astounded at what
 she sees. The walls are covered in magnificent mosaics from
 floor to ceiling: figures of proud Mayan Kings, powerful
 gods, warriors returning with trophies from battle. She
 scans them in amazement as she walks on.

She pauses in front of one of the illustrations. It is of a
 Mayan warrior, holding a large obsidian blade in his hands
 and adorned with a collar of quetzal feathers. Laura holds
 her own knife in her hand.

In the wake of the image, she looks like a warrior.

Strange WHISPERS IN K'ICHE LANGUAGE sound from the hall and
 draws her attention away. They are coming from the knothole
 at the base of the ceiba tree trunk.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The tree is over 25 feet across and extends in either direction straight through the temple, the roots cracking through the foundation, the canopy bursting through the top of the structure.

The whispered chanting grows louder. A soft breeze begins to emanate from the tree. Laura watches, stunned, as the spirit of the white Cadejo leaps transparently from the womb of the tree and materializes before her. He takes the form of a pure white fox as large as a full grown bear. He meets Laura's eyes.

WHITE CADEJO

You have done battle with great evil...

Laura looks down at her blade, stained with the putrid blood of the Black Cadejo.

LAURA

Yes.

WHITE CADEJO

What is it you seek?

Laura steps forward and kneels in front of the White Cadejo.

LAURA

I've come to help my sister. She is dying. The cade---

WHITE CADEJO

I see what hunts you.

LAURA

Hunts? But I killed it! He fell from the cliff side.

WHITE CADEJO

No. He lives, still. The Black Cadejo cannot be killed. Nor can any of our spirits truly die. He and I shall always exist in the world. Light and Dark. Good and Evil. It is the actions of men that determine which shall walk, awake, and which shall slumber.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

The branches of the ceiba tree shift and sway. One branch lowers itself before the White Cadejo and unfurls a white blossom.

WHITE CADEJO (CONT'D)

Take this flower to your sister. It will cure her.

Laura steps forward and plucks the flower.

WHITE CADEJO (CONT'D)

She must consume it before the third night. By then the magic of the black Cadejo can not be undone.

LAURA

But that's tonight!

Laura bolts upright, her face distraught. The white Cadejo cocks its head.

LAURA (CONT'D)

Please. Can you help me?

WHITE CADEJO

You have proven yourself a brave warrior, little one. I will take you to her.

The Cadejo kneels down on its haunches beside Laura.

WHITE CADEJO (CONT'D)

Come, we must make haste.

EXT. VILLAGE -DUSK

Kaibile foot soldiers and jeeps arrive in the village. They are armed and in uniform.

Bonalde exits one of the jeeps and begins shouting and pointing to the soldiers who break up into small units and begin to sweep the village.

INT. HOME - CONTINUOUS

Ruano kicks down the door of a small village home and enters, followed by Berrieza and two other soldiers. The front room is empty.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ruano storms towards the back of the house, kicking through another door.

RUANO
Out of the house!

There is no one there. He comes out and kicks open another door.

RUANO (CONT'D)
Ojetes!

The room is empty. Berrieza enters.

BERRIEZA
There's no one here.

EXT. VILLAGE - CONTINUOUS

Soldiers continue to kick open doors and break windows to enter businesses and houses. A handful of men and women are dragged from their homes, all of them the naysayers who refused to heed Jairo's warning.

Bonalde strides towards the group of prisoners, nostrils flared.

CAPTAIN BONALDE
Where are the others? Who warned
you.

He grabs one of them, a feeble looking woman (40).

CAPTAIN BONALDE (CONT'D)
Answer me!

She cries out and begins to sob. He tosses her down on the floor as if disgusted.

CAPTAIN BONADLE
Round them up!

He turns away and strides away angrily.

CAPTAIN BONADLE (CONT'D)
(furious screaming)
Burn down the houses. Shoot the
animals. I want this village
erased!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The soldiers begin to set fire to the homes and crops, shooting any livestock they find.

SMALL EXPLOSION. AGITATED ANIMAL SOUNDS. GUN FIRE.

CAPTAIN BONALDE

Search everything, every farm, the roads. Find them all!

EXT. FOREST - CONTINUOUS

Laura races home on the back of the white Cadejo, her hands gripping to keep hold of him as they bounds down the mountain. Its stride is enormous, cracking through trees and shaking the ground with the impact of its paws.

A yellow glow breaks through the canopy in the distance.

LAURA

The sun is rising. We're too late.

WHITE CADEJO

No. It's not the sun.

The Cadejo breaks into an even faster, more powerful run.

Soon, a terrible roar shakes the forest around them and the black Cadejo appears, bounding after them down the mountain side. The white Cadejo lowers its head so Laura can climb down.

WHITE CADEJO (CONT'D)

Go!

Laura starts running and doesn't look back. The white Cadejo turns and braces itself.

The two beasts collide in a barrage of gnashing teeth and claws THUNDER sounds through the mountains.

EXT. CAROL'S FARM - CONTINUOUS

Carol's property is dark and silent. All of the lights are extinguished. Four soldiers appear on the road and head towards the house. They spread out across the property. One of the soldiers separates from the group and goes off towards the grandmother's house.

INT. CAROL'S HOME - CONTINUOUS

A soldier presses his face against the window, peering into the dark house. Carol is crouched low, her back against the wall, a large knife in her hand. He doesn't notice her.

Outside, GUNSHOTS, SCREAMING GOATS. BREAKING GLASS.

The soldier at the window raises the butt of his rifle and shatters the glass.

Carol is trembling, her breath shaky. She is gripping her knife so tightly her knuckles are white. She holds her ground and waits for them.

INT. SAMNAH'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The soldier walks across Samnah's wood porch and enters the house. A small pool of moonlight illuminates the entrance way and small rays from the window cut across the walls, leaving the rest of the room in deep shadows.

The soldier shouts out to the porch.

SOLDIER

There's no one here!

INT. CAROL' HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

One soldier crosses the doorway into Carol's home and begin looting the place.

Carol rises up and takes a few silent steps forward behind him. She raises the knife, gripping it against her chest.

She rushes forward with a primal yell and pounces on the soldier like a cat, stabbing him to the hilt in his lower back.

A grunt escapes his lips.

Carol withdraws her knife and drives it forward into him once more as he falls to the floor, dead, his lung pierced. She takes his weapon and runs to the back of the house.

INT. SAMNAH'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The soldier steps back into Samnah's shack and starts searching around for valuables, tipping furniture over and poking around with the end of his gun.

The only sound is the slow, soft thud of his boots on the old wooden floor and the sound of objects toppling.

SOLDIER

Indian junk.

He spots a jar of tobacco leaves on one of the shelves and stuffs his pockets with them, letting the jar smash on the floor.

The soldier stops in the center of the room and looks around disappointed. He withdraws a pack of cigarettes from his pocket and holds it between his lips as he digs for his match book. He strikes the match and lifts it to his face to the light the cigarette.

We see a flash of something standing behind him. He doesn't. It is Jairo, his face cat-like, half transformed, teeth bared.

The soldier gives his match a quick shake and extinguishes it, plunging the room back into darkness.

He takes a drag, the tip of his cigarette burning like an orange star.

EXT. SAMNAH'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

A JAGUAR GROWL.

The orange dot glowing through the window disappears.

EXT. FOREST ROAD - NIGHT

Captain Bonalde and a handful of soldiers are speeding down the road in their jeep. Two other convoys follow. In the distant hills, he can spot the slow moving trail of refugees as they flee towards the border.

EXT. SAMNAH'S PORCH - CONTINUOUS

Jairo runs out onto Samnah's porch and is about to ambush the two soldiers ransacking Carol's farm when he spots the jeep speeding off in the distance. He spots Bonalde and his eyes narrow. The men are fully armed with automatic rifles. Jairo follows their eye line straight to the refugees.

Jairo takes off at an inhuman speed towards the jeeps.

EXT. FOREST ROAD -NIGHT

CAPTAIN BONALDE

Faster! When we come alongside them, shoot to kill!

BOOM

Jairo lunges into the side of the jeep, and sends it rolling on its side. The other jeeps screech to a halt.

Jairo faces them, straightens his back and begins to shift, ready to do battle.

He growls, and attacks.

INT. CAROL'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Carol hides in the bedroom at the back of the house. She holds the soldier's pistol in her hands, pointed straight at the locked door.

INT. CAROL'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The two remaining soldiers enter the house, laughing. They see their companion dead and bleeding out on the floor. They rush in, inspecting all the rooms.

INT. CAROL'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Carol gasps as she hears them knocking down the doors of the other rooms. She pulls the safety back and tries to calm the shaking of her wrists.

A loud BANG as they begin kicking in her door.

SOLDIER

(offscreen)

They're in here!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Carol fires into the door twice.

EXT. ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Laura is sprinting down the road, panting.

INT. CAROL'S HOME - CONTINUOUS

The soldiers push through the door and overwhelm Carol.

She tosses the empty pistol aside and slashes at one of them with her knife. She misses the soldier who raises his rifle and strikes her across the face with it. She is sent flying in the wall, spitting blood from her mouth.

SOLDIER

Bitch!

She still fights, kicking and cursing as they take hold of her arms, dragging her back into the kitchen. She lands in a good blow to one of the soldier knee caps. His leg buckles and she regains her footing, and runs from them again.

They grab hold of her again. One soldiers kicks her hard in the side.

Carol goes limp from the pain. Her jaw is a bloody mess.

EXT. FOREST - CONTINUOUS

The black and white Cadejo continue their battle, knocking over trees and smashing rock in the process of their powerful display.

INT. CAROL'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The soldiers wrestle Carol onto the kitchen table where they turn her onto her stomach and start to tear at her clothes.

She realizes what's happening and starts bucking wildly.

CAROL

(desperate screaming)

No! Noooo!

EXT. CAROL'S HOUSE-NIGHT

Laura reaches the property. She can hear her mother's screams from inside the house. Two shovels are still lying on the ground where she was first attacked. She picks up the shovel and moves towards the house.

INT. CAROL'S HOUSE

Laura enters the house. One of the soldiers is pinning her mother's arms behind her back with one hand, his other hand working his pants open.

Laura raises her shovel.

The other soldier presses Carol's face against the crotch of his uniform. She struggles violently and he deholsters his pistol, digging it into her cheek and removing the safety with a CLICK.

SOLDIER

Bite me and I'll blow a hole in
your fucking face, understand?

Laura SCREAMS and swings her shovel, hard.

The metal blade slices through the first soldier's calves. He collapses like a disjointed doll.

She raises her shovel again and brings it down hard against his head again and again.

The other soldier pushes away from Carol and raises his gun to shoot Laura. Laura faces him and raises her shovel, screaming like a warrior, ready to charge him....

Jairo in his jaguar form bursts through the window and onto the kitchen floor. The soldier turns his pistol on Jairo, terrified, assessing him as the bigger threat, and begins to fire a slew of shots in his direction. Jairo evades the bullets.

Carol takes hold of a broken shard of glass that has shattered onto the table and thrusts it into the soldier's neck.

He gurgles, spitting up blood, firing off a few more rounds before falling to the floor, dead.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Laura drops her shovel and runs to her mother. They embrace each other desperately, crying thankfully in the aftermath of it all.

Jairo transforms back into his human shape.

Carol's eyes grow wide in disbelief. Her mother's tales are real.

Laura takes her mother's hand in her own, calming her.

Carol and Laura embrace again.

Laura reaches into her pocket and withdraws the ceiba tree flower.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. VALLEY - DAWN

The sky is lightening ever so slightly as a band of village refugees trek towards the valley.

Jairo and the Rodas family are all seated in the back of an ox-drawn cart, crowded with other refugees.

Isol is reclining in her mothers arms, healed, awake and alive.

Carol and Jairo meet eyes. She smiles at him. He takes her hand in his.

Their moment is interrupted as Salou pats Jairo on the back and passes him a flagon of water. No one is looking at him with fear or distrust.

Samnah sees the exchange and smiles. She turns towards Laura.

Laura is seated at the back of the cart, her legs dangling over the side, watching the sun come up. Jairo's cord of quetzal feather rests proudly around her neck.

In the distance, a large white shape breaks through the edge of the forest. It is the white Cadejo.

The spirit follows the caravan from a distance, keeping watch over the travelers as they make their journey to safety.