

Little Red

"THE HOWLING"

written by
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Produced by



in association with

The VPN

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TEASER

FADE IN:

EXT. VILLAGE SQUARE – FAE – MORNING

We open on the main square in a small village known as FAE.

On the cusp of winter, the village is covered in a fine layer of snow. Already there are melted patches where the morning sun has been shining and well-worn paths where the villagers have been walking.

Despite the early hour the village square is a hum of activity. People move between stalls selling all kinds of produce, young children hurry towards the schoolhouse with book bags slung over their shoulders, and those not in a hurry pause to talk with family, friends, and neighbors.

We focus in on an OLDER WOMAN, perusing one of the small wooden stalls. She hands over some bronze coins to the stall owner and receives a loaf of bread that she places in a wicker basket on her arm.

The older woman nods her head in thanks. We follow her as she walks out of the village square towards a quieter end of town.

As the woman turns off to the left we move past her and come to focus on a HOUSE at the far end of the road. The house is set a little way back from all the others, with an attachment on the side that looks to serve the purpose of a workshop. As we close in slowly on the house we --

CUT TO:

INT. WRIGHT HOUSEHOLD – KITCHEN – MORNING

An older, grey haired man sits at a wooden table in the small kitchen. He tinkers with an indiscriminate object in front of him, made out of odd bits of metal and wood. This man is GALWIN WRIGHT.

As he fiddles with the object a strip of metal FALLS OFF onto the table. With a sigh he leans back in his seat, defeated for now.

GALWIN

Audrey?

When he gets no reply he turns towards the kitchen door.

GALWIN

(louder)

Audrey?

When there is still no response he gets up from his chair, walking the short distance to the doorway. We follow him into the small hallway where he stops in front of a door.

GALWIN
(to the door)
Audrey, I thought you would be up and about well before now.

He is greeted by a resounding SILENCE. He knocks gently on the door before pushing it open.

GALWIN
Honestly, Audrey, you can not still be slee-

He cuts himself off. As we pan around his shoulder we see why.

The bed where Audrey should have been is neatly made up. More importantly, it is EMPTY. A longsuffering sigh escapes Galwin.

GALWIN
After so many times I should not be surprised.

CUT TO:

EXT. FOREST — MORNING

A RED-CLOAKED FIGURE moves quickly through a snow-covered forest. The figure weaves between deciduous trees with their mostly empty branches and the odd evergreen that peppers the landscape.

The figure pauses, getting their baring before heading off again in a slightly altered direction.

The red-cloaked figure darts between two small pines, JUMPS a small stone wall, and STUMBLES, right into the path of a DARK COLORED HORSE and it's RIDER.

The horse REARS BACK with a startled neigh. The red-cloaked figure FALLS BACKWARDS onto the lightly snow covered road. Their hood slips back to reveal the shocked face of a brunette haired young woman: AUDREY WRIGHT.

With a FRIGHTENED CRY, Audrey brings her arms up to shield herself from the flailing hooves as we —

BLACKOUT:

END TEASER

ROLL OPENING CREDITS

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. FOREST – MORNING

Audrey brings her arms up to shield herself from the flailing hooves, eyes screwed shut as she waits for the inevitable.

The rider of the horse, however, JUMPS out of the saddle with grace, grabbing the REIGNS and TUGGING the horse away. The rider pulls back the hood of their black cloak, revealing a middle-aged woman with dark wild hair and equally dark eyes: ETHELEND A.

When Audrey realizes she hasn't just been trampled she slowly lowers her arms.

AUDREY'S POV: We look up to see Ethelenda gently petting her horse's face, calming the animal. She turns to us, a warm smile on her face, and holds out her hand.

ETHELEND A

You should be more careful when racing through these woods. I would hate to see a beautiful young woman such as yourself come to any harm.

Audrey is still somewhat shocked.

AUDREY

Apologies. That is, I will be more careful.

(beat)

I was in a hurry to get home...

ETHELEND A

I presume you hail from the village Fae?

AUDREY

I do.

ETHELEND A

Then walk with me. I've been on the road for days with no one but my beloved horse to keep me company. It would be nice to associate with someone who can talk back for a change.

Audrey finally returns Ethelenda's smile and grasps her proffered hand. She is pulled easily to her feet and begins brushing snow off her dress and cloak.

Audrey glances over at Ethelenda as the older woman wraps the horse's reigns around one of her hands.

We drift across the horse's body. It is carrying a lot of luggage. Too much for someone making a short trip.

AUDREY

Hardly any strangers pass through these forests. Fae is so far away from the other villages in these parts. So far away from anything of interest.

Ethelenda just smiles and begins walking down the road. Audrey has to jog a few steps to catch up, her red riding cloak billowing behind her.

ETHELENDA

Oh, I doubt that is true.

AUDREY

(confused)

That there are many strangers who visit Fae?

ETHELENDA

That these forests hold nothing of interest.

AUDREY

You would be surprised. I have called these forests home since I was little, if there was anything interesting in them I am sure I would have found it by now.

ETHELENDA

(offhand)

What about the mountains?

Audrey frowns.

AUDREY

Nobody travels into the mountains.

ETHELENDA

For what reason?

AUDREY

The mountains are dangerous to pass through, and nobody lives there. We simply do not have a need to travel there.

Ethelenda hums in thought.

ETHELENDA

Well, that is unfortunate.

Audrey glances curiously at Ethelenda.

AUDREY

Why so many questions? Most would not care about the surroundings of a small village like Fae.

Ethelenda laughs and stops walking. She turns to Audrey with a small smile and Audrey relaxes slightly.

ETHELEND A

My dear, I am not like most people.

(beat)

I have heard word there is a small cottage for sale just outside of Fae. I plan to make a home here.

AUDREY

Oh.

(beat)

Oh. So all the questions...?

ETHELEND A

Simply learning more about my new home.

AUDREY

I wish you would have told me so earlier. I feel rude for being so wary.

ETHELEND A

No harm done, child.

AUDREY

Audrey. My name is Audrey. It is a pleasure to meet you...?

ETHELEND A

Ethelenda, though Ethel will suffice.

AUDREY

It is a pleasure to meet you Ethel. Let me show you to the village. It is the least I can do.

As Ethelenda and Audrey continue walking down the road we slowly begin to zoom out and up: we pull back, up over the top of the trees. In the distance we can see a SMALL VILLAGE sitting at the base of a TALL MOUNTAIN RANGE, and on that we -

CUT TO:

EXT. FAE - DAY

We open on a snow sprinkled dirt road. We pan up slowly, focusing on someone's BOOTS and following their body up to the face of a tall young man with light hair: RENWICK HILLANDER.

Renwick leans against the painted WOODEN SIGN that welcomes people to the village. He is frowning. Behind him villagers are moving about, going about their daily jobs.

Suddenly, Renwick's frown lessens and he stands up a little straighter. He's seen something.

We CUT TO a view of the road as AUDREY and ETHELEND A appear from around a bend. Audrey is talking animatedly, gesturing with her hands while Ethelenda nods along, gently leading her horse by the reins.

We CUT BACK TO Renwick as he pushes off the sign and begins walking towards the pair. When he gets close he calls out.

RENWICK

Audrey!

Audrey stops speaking and glances up at her name, only to look away sheepishly when she catches sight of Renwick. She speaks when he joins the pair of women, walking alongside as they approach the village.

AUDREY

Renwick.

(beat)

Did my father discover I was not at home?

Renwick has his eyes on Ethelenda as they walk. Ethelenda studiously ignores his staring and stays quiet as the two friends converse.

RENWICK

Apparently. What were you doing out so early?

AUDREY

Collecting wild berries.

RENWICK

And you neglected to tell your father because...?

AUDREY

(exasperated)

You know he hates me going out into the forest alone.

Renwick scoffs at her reply.

RENWICK

With good reason, mind you. I could have gone with you.

AUDREY

I believed you could do with some sleep. I know you have been working hard to help your father while your brother is away.

The trio reaches the VILLAGE ENTRANCE, signaled by a square wooden ARCHWAY that stretches across the path. From the horizontal beam hang a variety of TRINKETS created by the village children.

Audrey, Renwick, and Ethelenda continue walking towards the village center. As they pass, people stop and stare at Ethelenda. They are unused to seeing people who don't belong to the village.

RENWICK

That does not matter. I would have still gone with you had you asked-

Audrey interrupts Renwick quickly, changing the subject.

AUDREY

I am being terribly rude. Renwick, this is Ethel. Ethel, this is my close friend Renwick. His father is the butcher in the village square.

ETHELEND A

It is a pleasure to meet you, Renwick.

Renwick gives Audrey a look that clearly says '*we're not done talking*', but he nods his head politely to Ethelenda anyway.

RENWICK

The pleasure is mine.

The three leave the smaller house crowded streets behind as they reach the VILLAGE CENTER. It is still bustling with activity.

ETHELEND A

A charming sentiment, however, I believe I have taken up far too much of young Audrey's time on this morning. If one of you could send me in the direction of your village council I will go and see to my lodging.

RENWICK

The building you need is across the square.

Renwick points out the building in question. The COUNCIL

BUILDING is two levels, predominately a stone structure, and is topped with a bell tower.

RENWICK (CONT'D)

Most the council can be found there during the day. I am sure they will be able to assist you.

ETHELEND A

Thank you for your help.
(to Audrey)
And the charming company.

With another of her small, mysterious smiles, Ethelenda walks off in the direction of the building. Renwick turns to Audrey.

RENWICK

You need to go home.

Audrey sighs.

AUDREY

Must I?

Renwick turns her around, places his hands on her shoulders, and begins steering her out of the village square. He is smiling.

RENWICK

Yes. Go let your father know you have avoided being eaten by wild animals. Then, if by some miracle you are allowed out of your house, come by and meet me at my home later today.

On Audrey's laughter we-

CUT TO:

INT. WRIGHT HOUSEHOLD - KITCHEN - DAY

AUDREY stands on one side of the wooden table in the small kitchen. Her hands are clasped behind her back, eyes on the floor.

On the other side of the table stands GALWIN, angry, exasperated, and frowning at his daughter. He grips the back of the chair in front of him.

GALWIN

Do you know how worried I get when you do this, Audrey?

AUDREY

(mumbles)
You do not need to worry-

GALWIN

Of course I need to worry! How can I not, Audrey, you are my only daughter.

Audrey looks annoyed now. This is an argument they have had many times before.

AUDREY

(snaps)

And I am old enough to look after myself.

GALWIN

Maybe you are, yet you are still happy to go gallivanting around the forest like a child, without letting anyone know where you are going.

AUDREY

And if I were to tell you where I was going? You would just forbid me from leaving the house.

GALWIN

(annoyed)

And would that stop you?

AUDREY

...No.

Galwin looks at her pointedly. Audrey throws her hands up in the air, irritated.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

You always turn a small problem into a big issue.

GALWIN

This would not be an issue if you had some sense of self-preservation.

AUDREY

I always come home safe.

GALWIN

Until one day you do not. I lost your mother, Audrey-

AUDREY

(interrupting)

This is not about mother!

GALWIN (CONT'D)

I could not bear to loose you too!

They both stare at each other in a long beat of silence. Hesitantly, Galwin holds out his arms and Audrey hurries

around the table to wrap herself in his EMBRACE.

When Audrey speaks it's muffled by Galwin's shoulder.

AUDREY

Please do not be angry.

Galwin sighs but it is fond.

GALWIN

I have tried staying angry with you,
Audrey. It does not work.

Audrey laughs quietly. Galwin pulls back from the hug,
brushes some hair off Audrey's face.

GALWIN

Please, just promise me that you will
let me know where you are going. For
my peace of mind.

(beat)

And if you plan on traversing into
the forest, for my sake, can you take
Renwick with you?

AUDREY

I promise, father.

Relieved, Galwin kisses Audrey's forehead.

GALWIN

Now put away that riding cloak. I
will need your help in the workshop
today.

As Audrey moves to hang up her cloak we-

CUT TO:

INT. COUNCIL BUILDING – DAY

In a sunny room in the council building ETHELEND A sits in
a chair on one side of a table. An older man sits on the
opposite side, a little scraggly looking with a short
beard. He is the council member ALBERN.

Albern has some PAPERS spread across the table in front
of him, a magnifying glass sits off to the side.

ALBERN

And you are interested in taking up
residence in small cottage outside of
the village?

ETHELEND A

Indeed.

(MORE)

ETHELEND A (CONT'D)

I have recently decided a change of scenery was in order. I was so sick of the big town life, and when my poor husband died there was nothing tying me to our old home anymore.

ALBERN

(surprised)

You are a widower?

ETHELEND A

Unfortunately.

Albern shuffles through some of the papers.

ALBERN

I see.

(beat)

And you have means of supporting yourself? We are a small village, everyone needs a place.

ETHELEND A

I do dabble in tea making. Medicinal tea also, if the villagers are in need of such a service.

ALBERN

We already have a physician...

ETHELEND A

(reassuring)

And I do not claim to be one. My brews are an alternative relief for minor ailments at most.

ALBERN

Yes. Well, we will see about that. Now on to matters of payment for your desired land...

ETHELEND A

That will not be a problem.

Ethelenda reaches into her pocket and pulls out a large LEATHER POUCH. She drops the bag on the desk where it THUDS loudly and tips to the side. It is filled to the brim with GOLD AND SILVER COINS, some spilling out onto the table as the pouch tips.

ETHELEND A (CONT'D)

Take what is needed to cover the costs. I am sure there will be more than enough.

Albern looks at the pouch with awe and trepidation.

ETHELEND A (CONT'D)

Inherited from my late husband. I am lucky that even in death he provides for me.

Albern nods, embarrassed at being caught out.

ALBERN

Of course.

He empties half the pouch, counts out a number of gold coins and replaces the few left over.

ALBERN (CONT'D)

Everything seems to be in order. If you would follow me I will introduce you to the rest of the town council and have someone escort you to your new property. I will have the deed written and delivered to you tomorrow.

He stands, as does Ethelenda. She smiles.

ETHELEND A

Such a warm welcome. I can already tell I will be very happy in this small village. I think it has everything I am looking for.

FADE TO BLACK:

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

EXT. BUTCHERS — FAE — AFTERNOON

AUDREY sits on the steps of the BUTCHER'S PORCH. Pieces of MEAT hang from hooks along the roof's edge. There is a LARGE WINDOW with the wooden shutters pulled wide built into the side of the building. The window ledge serves as a counter. Inside, behind the window ledge, is a table on which the butcher is busy cutting meat on.

The butcher is a tall, solid man, with light hair. This is BERNARD HILLANDER, Renwick's father.

BERNARD
Renwick not back?

Audrey sighs, playing with the ears of a STRAY CAT that has walked up to her.

AUDREY
No.

BERNARD
He should not be long. He was planning on staying close to the village.

The cat rubs up against Audrey's legs, meowing pitifully. It's a skinny thing, runt of the litter that nobody wants.

BERNARD (CONT'D)
Come here for a moment.

Audrey looks confused but stands and walks to the window. Bernard gestures at a small pile of scrappy bits of MEAT with the cleaver in his hand.

BERNARD (CONT'D)
Feed that poor excuse for an animal would you? Been moping around here for an age.

Audrey smiles and picks up the meat in one hand. She returns to her seat on the steps and tosses some of the meat pieces to the cat. It chows down on them quickly.

CUT TO:

EXT. FOREST — AFTERNOON

RENWICK is moving stealthily through the forest. He wields a BOW, ARROW nocked and ready to be drawn. He is eyeing off a family of RABBITS sitting in a small clearing.

He slowly lets out a breath and DRAWS the arrow. He's just about to let the arrow loose when the rabbits STARTLE and disappear into the underbrush.

With a disappointed frown, Renwick half relaxes the arrow when he hears another noise. A RUSTLE. It's something big.

He RE-DRAWS the arrow, aiming for the direction the noise came from. Another slow breath out. The creature appears from behind a tree--

It's ETHELEND A.

Renwick quickly points the arrow to the ground, relaxing his hold. Ethelenda looks over to him, surprised.

RENWICK

I am so sorry.

ETHELEND A

Honest mistake, I am sure.

Ethelenda waves off his apology.

RENWICK

What are you doing wandering around like this? Some hunters do not have reflexes nearly as good as mine.

Ethelenda picks her way through the snow, fallen leaves, and small bushes, approaching Renwick. She has a BASKET on one arm, filled with plant cuttings.

ETHELEND A

I was just surveying my new piece of land.

Renwick looks confused. Then it dawns on him.

RENWICK

You bought the old cottage.

ETHELEND A

That I did.

RENWICK

You did not jest when you said you were searching for a new place to live.

(beat)

And that means I was hunting on you land...

ETHELEND A

Which I do not have a problem with.

(CONT'D)

ETHELEND A (CONT'D)

I am not one to hunt down my own meat when there is a perfectly good butcher in town. It is no skin off my nose if you wish to hunt in this area. Just keep an eye out for larger, more human shaped creatures. We would not want a nasty accident now, would we?

RENEWICK

You have my word.

ETHELEND A

Marvelous. I can see now why your friend Audrey wears such a vibrantly colored cloak. But I should be leaving you to your work, and I have errands of my own to run.

RENEWICK

Of course.

ETHELEND A

I am sure I will be seeing more of you, Renwick. Enjoy the rest of your day.

RENEWICK

You also.

Renwick watches as Ethelenda disappears back to the forest. After a minute he shakes his head. He slings the bow over his back, picks up his empty GAME BAG, and begins walking as we -

FADE TO:

EXT. BUTCHERS - FAE - AFTERNOON

AUDREY is still sitting on the stairs, a little more slouched than before. The CAT from earlier is curled up on the porch by her side. With a huff of breath Audrey blows some hair out of her face.

When she looks up again she grins.

AUDREY

There he is.

BERNARD looks up from his work.

Approaching the pair is RENEWICK. Audrey stands to greet him, disrupting the cat as she does. The animal, annoyed, slinks off to another corner to sit.

BERNARD

Not much luck, eh?

Renwick reaches the steps and TOSSES the empty GAME BAG through the window. His father deftly catches it. This is a common routine.

RENWICK

I was not out for very long. Just unlucky today.

BERNARD

Maybe you will be luckier tomorrow.

Renwick smiles when he finally turns to Audrey.

RENWICK

Allowed out of the house?

AUDREY

I did not sneak out, if that is what you are asking.

Their conversation is interrupted by the sound of a HORSE cantering towards them. While not uncommon in Fae it still draws their attention.

Atop the dark brown horse sits a young man. He has light hair and is of similar build to Renwick but older. This is MALVEN HILLANDER.

BERNARD

What is he doing back home? We were not expecting him for another two days.

Audrey turns to Renwick.

AUDREY

Is that true?

Renwick nods his head.

Malven pulls up the horse a couple of meters from them before climbing off. He grabs the reins in one hand and walks towards them. He claps Renwick on the shoulder.

MALVEN

Little brother. Father.

He greets his father with a wave and then gives a small bow in Audrey's direction.

MALVEN (CONT'D)

Audrey.

RENWICK

You are home early.

MALVEN

Not for good reasons I am afraid.

RENWICK

Did something happen?

MALVEN

I was hoping you could tell me.

(beat)

Has anyone strange arrived at the village in the last few days?

RENWICK

Just a woman Audrey met this morning.

Audrey gives Renwick a sharp look.

AUDREY

Ethel. She was interested in making a new life for herself in Fae, there is nothing strange about that.

Renwick focuses back on Malven.

RENWICK

Why?

Malven ignores the question.

MALVEN

Hmmm. I need to speak to the council.

Malven gives them an apologetic look. He moves to tie the horse's reins to the railing of the butcher's porch.

MALVEN (CONT'D)

I will be home for supper, father.

Barnard acknowledges the comment with a wave of the cleaver. Malven turns and begins walking towards the COUNCIL BUILDING.

Renwick and Audrey share a look before following Malven as he strikes a quick pace across the square.

RENWICK

Mal, what is happening?

MALVEN

I should not tell you. Not until I have spoken with the council.

RENWICK

That has not stopped you before.

MALVEN

Yes, and I always pay for my indiscretion when you and this one-

Malven inclines his head at Audrey.

MALVEN (CONT'D)

-go off and use the information to
get in trouble.

AUDREY

Please? Is it something bad? Should
we be worried?

Malven slows his pace, allowing Audrey and Renwick to
walk easily beside him.

MALVEN

I heard word while I was in
Cloveswich of a young man from
Briarfell who was to be hung three
days ago. Only he was not hung, he
escaped from his cell in the middle
of the night and fled.

AUDREY

Why does this concern Fae?

MALVEN

(grave)

They say he murdered his entire
family, and now he is headed here.

RENWICK

Why here?

Malven shrugs his shoulders.

MALVEN

To seek refuge in the mountains
undoubtedly, like all the others
before him.

RENWICK

(confused)

The thieves and murderers of the
mountains are just tales.

MALVEN

That may be true, but he does not
know that.

They have reached the council building. Malven stops and
turns to face the pair.

MALVEN (CONT'D)

I need to speak to the council about
gathering some of the villagers to
act as a patrol. For my sanity, can
you two not run off and play hero.
Not this time.

Malven gives the pair a stern look, lightened by his small smile, and turns back to the building. He opens the door and steps inside, leaving Renwick and Audrey to mull over this new information. Audrey glances sidelong at Renwick.

AUDREY

A little walk into the forest now
would-

RENEWICK

No.

AUDREY

(laughing)

I jest! You are so bent out of shape
today.

Renwick can't help but smile a little.

RENEWICK

And you are far too happy for someone
who heard word of an escaped murderer
bearing down on her village.

AUDREY

Well, the village is lucky we have
such strong young men to protect us
then.

She squeezes Renwick's bicep and on her mischievous grin
we-

FADE TO:

INT. COUNCIL ROOM - COUNCIL BUILDING - AFTERNOON

MALVEN is standing in front of a long table. Sitting on
the opposite side of the table are five people.

Starting on the far left is a man we recognize from
earlier, ALBERN.

The next is a woman, KENDA, considerably older than
anyone else at the table. Her white hair is pulled into a
bun and her fingers are folded together on the table in
front of her.

Sitting in the middle is the youngest of the five,
GRAYSON. He is stern-faced with dark hair that's peppered
with grey.

In contrast to him is the next man, CUTHBERT. He is
slightly chubby, older, and has a warm smile.

The last person is a woman, ROWENA. She is skinny and
sharp eyed with dark blonde hair that is only just
starting to fade into grey.

This is the COUNCIL OF FAE. A group of people assigned to looking after the village and it's people.

GRAYSON

And this murderer, Hunter Mills, has decided to come to Fae?

MALVEN

Not to Fae. I believe he is headed for the mountains and on the way there he may consider passing through Fae.

GRAYSON

I see.

Kenda leans forward in her seat, squinting at Malven.

KENDA

This man... how dangerous is he to the safety of the village?

INTERCUT WITH:

EXT. FOREST – NIGHT

A man is staggering through the forest, shrouded in shadows. His clothes are torn and hang off him. This is the fugitive, the man who has murdered his family, HUNTER MILLS.

MALVEN (V.O.)

I passed through Briarfell on my trip back. The murder of his family was... brutal. Mother, father, and siblings. All dead.

Hunter stumbles and FALLS, tumbling down a small incline.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. COUNCIL ROOM – COUNCIL BUILDING – AFTERNOON

Grayson steepled his fingers, thinking.

GRAYSON

And you have a proposition for this problem?

MALVEN

I do.

CUTHBERT

Let us hear it then, son.

MALVEN

A collection of the village men patrolling the outskirts of the village. Day and night for the next week, until this man is either caught or we can assume he has passed the village by.

INTERCUT WITH:

EXT. FOREST — NIGHT

Hunter tumbles to a stop, lying still in the snow and fallen leaves.

GRAYSON (V.O.)

(contemplative)

It is well thought out.

Hunter groans, slowly pulls himself to his hands and knees.

CUTHBERT (V.O.)

I am sure there will be plenty of volunteers.

He moves to crawl further forward and his hand SPLASHES into water. He looks down and sees a SMALL STREAM.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. COUNCIL ROOM — COUNCIL BUILDING — AFTERNOON

Grayson looks to his left and right, judging the opinions of his fellow councilors.

GRAYSON

Very well. Are you rested enough to begin gathering volunteers tonight?

MALVEN

A quick meal and I will be more than happy to help.

Rowena leans forward slightly, smirk on her lips.

INTERCUT WITH:

EXT. FOREST — NIGHT

Hunter cups some of the water in his hands and brings it up to his mouth. He DRINKS greedily.

ROWENA (V.O.)

Woe be it to any person looking to upset the villagers of Fae.

As he goes to scoop up another handful of water he catches a REFLECTION OF LIGHT on the stream's surface. He

looks up and we follow his gaze to see what the cause of the reflection is.

Standing at the top of the incline a VILLAGER holding a torch aloft walks slowly by. We focus on the villager as a RUSTLING alerts him of something. The villager holds the torch a little higher, looking down to the small stream and seeing --

Nothing.

We cut back to Hunter, now hiding behind the trunk of a tree. As the villager shakes his head and continues walking the Hunter peers up towards where the villager with the torch had stood.

After a moments contemplation he begins creeping towards the village.

BLACKOUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT. WRIGHT HOUSEHOLD - AUDREY'S ROOM - NIGHT

CLOSE UP on AUDREY'S face. She is sound asleep, but not for long.

Slowly we become aware of the sound of a RINGING BELL. It grows in volume until with a resounding CLANG it reaches full pitch and Audrey's eyes snap open. The bell continues to toll loudly outside.

Audrey tosses her covers back and gets out of her bed. She is clothed in a simple white nightgown. She hurries towards the door of her room, bare feet padding against the wooden floor as we -

CUT TO:

EXT. WRIGHT HOUSE HOLD - FRONT - CONTINUOUS

A warning bell TOLLS loudly in the night. It is mere background noise to the yelling of VILLAGERS moving hurriedly towards Fae's village square.

GALWIN stands outside his home, a hand raised to his forehead and a look of dismay on his face.

AUDREY (O.S.)

Father?

Galwin turns to find his daughter standing in the doorway of their home. She is sleepy eyed but becoming more alert with every second that passes.

GALWIN

Audrey, go back inside.

AUDREY

But-

GALWIN

(sharp)

Please, Audrey! Just go back inside.

Audrey frowns but retreats back into the house. Galwin steps onto the street and grabs the arm of a YOUNG MAN running by.

GALWIN

What is happening? Is he here?

YOUNG MAN

He broke into Mrs. Marshall's house but she ran him off with her broom, mister.

GALWIN

And he was caught?

YOUNG MAN

Mrs. Marshall screamed bloody murder but he slipped off before anyone got there. 'Tis why the bell is ringing, make sure no one is unawares so we can catch him or chase him out of town.

GALWIN

Thank you.

YOUNG MAN

I could use some help, mister. We need someone to search behind the houses at the end of this road.

Galwin glances back at his home before returning his attention to the young man.

GALWIN

Yes, of course. Lead the way.

On Galwin following the young man further down the street we -

CUT TO:

EXT. WRIGHT HOUSEHOLD - BACK - CONTINUOUS

A DOOR at the back of the Wright house CREEKS OPEN and AUDREY peers out from the small gap. She pushes the door open a bit wider then glances back into the house behind her. When she is sure there is no one to see her she slips outside. She pushes the door closed gently behind her before taking off quickly.

She rounds the corner of her home when --

BAM.

Audrey BUMPS INTO someone hurrying in the opposite direction. The figure DROPS what they were carrying, a variety of FOOD falling to the ground.

Audrey looks up and comes face to face with the fugitive, HUNTER. She breathes in sharply, ready to yell for help but he is quicker.

Hunter pushes her up against the wall of the house and CLAPS A HAND over her mouth. Eyes locked, daring each other to make the next move, they are suddenly alerted to the sound of PEOPLE APPROACHING in the street. They both turn to watch but the small group of villagers passes by. Audrey and Hunter remain hidden in shadows and are not seen.

When Audrey starts to STRUGGLE Hunter moves in closer, trying to stop of from wiggling away. We get our first good look at him, as does Audrey, and he's not what is expected of an escaped murderer. He's grimy and disheveled, but also young, just a couple of years older than Audrey, and SCARED.

HUNTER
(hissed whisper)
Please, please be quiet.

Audrey PULLS at the HAND covering her mouth but it doesn't budge. Hunter glances out to the street again and then back to Audrey. He continues to try a reason with her quietly.

HUNTER
I am not going to hurt you- well, I do not want to hurt you but I cannot let you give me away. They will kill me!

Audrey KICKS out and her foot connects with his SHIN. He hisses in pain.

HUNTER
Gah! Stop. Fine. I am going to remove my hand but you cannot yell, understood?

Audrey NODS her head. Slowly Hunter moves his hand away from her mouth and when she doesn't make a noise he relaxes somewhat.

HUNTER
Thank you, I-

AUDREY
Why?

HUNTER
I do not understand...

Audrey continues in her own hissed whisper.

AUDREY
Why should I not call for help? What are you doing stealing food?

She nudges a fallen APPLE with her bare foot.

AUDREY (CONT'D)
Why did you say you are not going to hurt me? You seemed to have no problem with it when you butchered your fami-

HUNTER

(angry)

I did not do it!

Audrey SHRINKS BACK against the wall. The fugitive looks startled at his own outburst.

HUNTER (CONT'D)

Apologies. I-

He reaches out to reassure her but thinks better of it and lets his hand drop.

HUNTER (CONT'D)

I do not mean to scare you. I just, I have not eaten, I am tired, I- I have been framed for a crime I did not commit!

Audrey gets some of her nerve back.

AUDREY

You try and fool me with lies?

HUNTER

I am not trying to fool you. It is the truth.

AUDREY

And for what reason should I believe you?

Hunter is stumped.

HUNTER

None.

(beat)

But please, hear me out.

Audrey makes no move to do anything so Hunter continues speaking.

HUNTER (CONT'D)

(earnestly)

You can call for help, I will not stop you, and let an innocent man be hung. Or, you can let me gather this food and I promise I will leave this village and never return.

AUDREY

I have no reason to trust you.

She glances out to the street and then back to Hunter.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

Go.

(beat, louder)

Leave. And make good on your promise.

HUNTER

Thank you.

AUDREY

Go!

Hunter quickly collects the fallen food and DARTS away into the shadows leaving Audrey behind. After a moment she lets out a breath and SLUMPS back against the wall, eyes slipping shut as we –

FADE TO:

EXT. FAE – DAY

AUDREY, in her signature red riding cloak, and RENWICK are walking side by side along the outskirts of the village. It is Renwick's turn to act as patrol and Audrey has decided to accompany him.

RENWICK

Where were you last night?

AUDREY

Home.

RENWICK

(surprised)

Honestly?

Audrey frowns as she glances at him.

AUDREY

Yes. Does that bother you?

Renwick laughs, amused.

RENWICK

No, I am glad. I was expecting you to be out in the middle of all the commotion but I was mistaken.

AUDREY

Father sent me back inside. I decided to go back to sleep.

Renwick glances at her with his eyebrows raised.

RENWICK

With the warning bell still tolling and people yelling?

AUDREY

I never said it was easy to fall to sleep again. So stop your prying, I am simply trying to keep my father appeased.

RENEWICK

Apologies.

They walk in silence for a moment, feet crunching in the light snow cover. They pass another PATROLMAN walking in the opposite direction and Renwick NODS to him as they pass by.

It is only when the other man is far enough away to not hear them that Audrey speaks again.

AUDREY

Did you find him?

RENEWICK

The murderer?

AUDREY

No, the Countess. Of course the murderer.

Renwick rolls his eyes.

RENEWICK

No. He slipped out of the village before anyone could find him again. Good riddance I say. As long as he does not come back.

AUDREY

That is good then. That he left without hurting anyone.

RENEWICK

We were lucky I suppose.

Audrey pulls her cloak a little tighter around herself.

AUDREY

If he is heading into the mountains, what do you think he will find?

Renwick is quiet for a moment, mulling over his answer.

RENEWICK

Truthfully? A slow and lonely death.

Audrey nods her head, agreeing as they continue walking and we -

FADE TO:

EXT. MOUNTAINS - DAY

HUNTER clammers over a ledge and onto a flat piece of rock. He stands and begins walking down a natural PATH between two high rock walls, the buffeting wind dying down as he continues further forwards.

RENWICK (V.O.)

No one could survive up there for long.

Hunter rounds a curve in the path and comes to a sudden stop. As we PAN around we see what it was that made him pause.

Nestled between two of the mountains and surrounded by wind breaking rocks is a PERMANENT CAMP. There are tents, and fires, and people.

Startled by his find, Hunter moves to take a step back. He is stopped, however, when someone lands with a THUD behind him and points a SWORD into the small of his back.

SWORD MAN

Forward, sonny. One step at a time or this blade tastes blood.

With no other option Hunter walks slowly forward. Ahead of him, in the middle of the camp, stands a tall and solid man, a number of SCARS visible on his exposed arms and face.

Hunter is nudged forward until he is standing in front of SCARRED MAN. The whole camp watches on.

SCARRED MAN

There are not many who make it this far into the mountains.

The scarred man looks Hunter up and down, assessing him.

SCARRED MAN (CONT'D)

Tell me, what has you running so far from any civilized place?

Hunter glances around nervously but the scarred man is happy to let him take his time.

HUNTER

I- I was framed. For murder.

There is a long pause before the scarred man lets out a BOOMING LAUGH. He claps his hand down onto the fugitive's shoulder.

SCARRED MAN

Framed for murder.

(MORE)

SCARRED MAN (CONT'D)

Framed for stealing. That is what we
all claim, yes?

There is some scattered laughter around the camp and
people begin returning to their tasks. They know how the
meeting goes from here on.

SCARRED MAN (CONT'D)

You need not be worrying yourself
about things like that up here, son.
Let me show you around, introduce you
to some of the people, and we will
get you set up with a job and a place
to sleep.

The scarred man wraps his arm around Hunter.

SCARED MAN

Us people, we are one and the same up
here. We look out for our own.

(beat)

For my own curiosity though, who was
it you murdered? That is, allegedly
murdered?

HUNTER

My... my family.

SCARRED MAN

The whole family?

The scarred man laughs.

SCARRED MAN

Welcome to the rouges camp, son. I
can just tell you will fit in fine.

BLACKOUT.

END OF ACT THREE

END OF EPISODE