

Little Red

"1.01 THE HOWLING"

Written by
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EVPTV
EverUpward

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TEASER

FADE IN:

EXT. FAE – VILLAGE SQUARE – MORNING

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

On the cusp of winter, the village is covered in a fine dusting 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 that are selling all kinds of produce, young children hurry towards the schoolhouse with bags slung over their shoulders, and those not in a hurry pause to talk with family, friends, and neighbors.

We focus 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 and 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's using a tool to carve details into a small wooden toy. This man is GALWIN WRIGHT.

As he works on a particularly intricate part of the toy his hand slips, gouging out a long line in the wood. 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 (CONT'D)

(louder)

Audrey?

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 (CONT'D)

(to the door)

Audrey, I thought you would be up and about well before now.

Galwin is greeted by resounding SILENCE.

He KNOCKS gently on the door before pushing it open.

GALWIN (CONT'D)

Honestly, Audrey, you can not still be slee-

He cuts himself off.

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

GALWIN (CONT'D)

After so many times I should not be surprised...

CUT TO:

EXT. FOREST — MORNING

A RED-CLOAKED FIGURE moves quickly through a snow-sprinkled 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 bearing before heading off again in a slightly altered direction.

They dart between two small pines, jump a small stone wall, and stumble--

Right into the path of a DARK COLOURED HORSE and it's RIDER.

The horse rears back with a startled sound. The red-cloaked figure falls backwards onto the lightly snow covered road. Their hood slips back to reveal the shocked face of a young woman with green eyes and brown hair: AUDREY WRIGHT.

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

BLACKOUT:

END TEASER

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 reins and tugging the horse away.

The rider pulls back the hood of their black traveling cloak, revealing a middle-aged woman with pale skin, wild black hair, and equally dark eyes: ETHELEND A.

With the threat of being trampled gone, Audrey slowly lowers her arms.

Ethelenda is gently petting her horse's face, muttering calming words to the animal. She turns to Audrey, a warm smile on her face, and holds out her hand.

ETHELEND A

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

Audrey is still somewhat shocked.

AUDREY

Sorry. That is, I'll 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.

Audrey's eyes drift across the horse's body. It is laden down with a lot of luggage, too much for someone making a short trip.

AUDREY

Hardly any strangers pass through these parts of the forest, not even traders. Fae is so far away from the other villages in these parts.

(wistful)

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 flowing behind her.

ETHELEND A

Oh? I doubt that is true.

AUDREY

(confused)

That not many strangers visit Fae?

ETHELEND A

That this forest holds nothing of interest.

AUDREY

You would be surprised. I have lived in this forest my whole life, if there was anything interesting here I'm sure I would have found it by now.

ETHELEND A

Ah, the adventurous type.

(offhand)

What about the mountains?

Audrey frowns.

AUDREY

Nobody travels into the mountains. There are safer paths to the east and west if you need to reach the sea.

ETHELEND A

The sea? No.

(beat)

Why is there no path here then?

AUDREY

The mountains are too dangerous.
Steep drops, sharp rocks, and nobody
lives there. No one would risk that
when there are easier ways to cross.

Ethelenda hums in thought.

ETHELEND A

Well, that *is* unfortunate.

Audrey glances curiously at Ethelenda.

AUDREY

You ask a lot of questions. Most
people don't 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.

Ethelenda gestures to the heavily burdened horse.

ETHELEND A (CONT'D)

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 had told me so earlier. I
feel rude for being so wary.

ETHELEND A

No harm done, child.

AUDREY

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

ETHELEND A

Ethelenda, though Ethel will suffice.

AUDREY

It is a pleasure to meet you, Ethel.
Let me walk you to the village. It's
the least I can do.

As Ethelenda and Audrey continue walking down the road we slowly 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.

EXT. FAE - DAY

A YOUNG MAN, tall and blond, leans against the painted wooden sign that welcomes people to Fae. This is RENWICK HILLANDER. He is frowning.

Behind him is the village entrance, most of the buildings hidden behind the wooden wall that borders the front of the village.

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

On the road 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.

Renwick 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 the call of her name, only to look away sheepishly when she catches sight of Renwick. He joins the pair of women, walking alongside as they approach the village.

AUDREY

Renwick.

(beat)

Did my father finally discover I was
not at home?

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

RENWICK

Apparently. What were you doing out
so early?

AUDREY
Collecting wild berries.
(beat)
For breakfast.

Renwick's expression shows great skepticism.

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. I could have gone
with you.

AUDREY
I felt you could do with some extra
sleep. I know how hard you've been
working to help your father while
your brother is away.

The trio reaches the village entrance, indicated by a square wooden archway that stretches over the path. From the horizontal beam hang a variety of trinkets created by the village children.

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

RENWICK
That doesn't 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 village butcher.

ETHELENDA
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 street behind as they reach,

THE VILLAGE CENTER.

It is still bustling with the activity of early morning trading.

ETHELEND A

Such a charming young man you are, Renwick. However, I believe I have taken up far too much of dear Audrey's time 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 members can be found there during the day. I'm sure they will be able to assist you.

ETHELEND A

Thank you for your help.

(to Audrey)

And the delightful company.

With another of her small, mysterious smiles, Ethelenda moves off in the direction of the building, her horse trailing at he side.

Renwick turns to Audrey.

RENWICK

(stern)

You need to go home.

Audrey sighs exaggeratedly.

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, *miraculously*, 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 cheerful 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 it makes me when you do this, Audrey?

AUDREY

(mumbles)

You don't 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, immature, 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)
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 concern into a big problem.

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 don't. I lost your mother, Audrey-

AUDREY
(interrupting)
This is not about mother!

GALWIN (CONT'D)
-I could not bear to lose you too!

They both glare 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 don't 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 that you will let me know where you are going.
(beat)
And if you plan on traversing into the forest, for my peace of mind, can you take Renwick with you?

AUDREY

I promise, father.

Relieved, Galwin kisses Audrey's forehead.

GALWIN

Good.

(beat)

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

INT. COUNCIL BUILDING – SIDE ROOM – DAY

In a sunny room in the council building ETHELEND A sits in a chair on one side of a desk. An older man sits on the opposite side, thin and scraggly looking with a short, wispy beard. He is ALBERN GOLDWIN, one of the council members.

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 the small cottage outside of the village?

ETHELEND A

Indeed. It has recently become apparent that a change of scenery was in order. I grew weary of a city life, and when my poor husband passed 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

And you are sure you wish to purchase this particular home and not something within the village?

ETHELEND A

I assure you, Albern, I can look out for myself. The cottage on the village outskirts is exactly what I want.

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 anyone is in need of such a service.

ALBERN

We already have a physician in residence...

ETHELEND A

(reassuring)

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.

(beat)

However, on to matters of payment for your desired land...

ETHELEND A

That won't be a problem.

Ethelenda reaches into the pocket of her dress and pulls out a large leather purse. 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 desktop.

ETHELEND A (CONT'D)

Take what is needed to cover the costs.

A sly smile plays at the corner of Ethelenda's lips.

ETHELEND A (CONT'D)

I am sure there will be more than enough.

Albern looks at the pouch with awe and trepidation.

ETHELEND A (CONT'D)

It was 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'll have the deed written and delivered to you tomorrow.

He stands, as does Ethelenda. Her sly smile returns, this time in full.

ETHELENDIA

Such a warm welcome, I simply love Fae already. I think it is *everything* I've been looking for.

FADE TO BLACK:

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

EXT. FAE — BUTCHER — AFTERNOON

AUDREY sits on the steps of the butcher's porch. Pieces of dried meat hang from hooks along the roof's edge. There is a large window, with its wooden shutters pulled wide open, looking out over the porch. The window ledge doubles as a counter. It's not the most appealing place to spend one's time but Audrey looks comfortable there.

Inside, just below the window ledge, is a table on which the butcher is busy cutting meat.

The butcher is a tall, solid man with light hair and rough stubble on his face. This is BERNARD HILLANDER, Renwick's father.

BERNARD
Renwick not back?

Audrey sighs, playing with the ears of the village CAT that sits next to her.

AUDREY
No.

BERNARD
He should be along soon. Renwick usually stays close to the village.

The cat rubs up against Audrey's legs, MEOWING pitifully. It's a skinny thing, runt of the litter that isn't as all that good at catching the mice it's supposed to .

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? S'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.

EXT. FOREST — AFTERNOON

RENWICK is moving stealthily through the forest. He wields a bow, arrow nocked and ready to be drawn. He eyes

off a family of RABBITS sitting in a small clearing.

He slowly lets out a breath and draws the arrow back.
He's just about to let the arrow loose--

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 in 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.

Ethelenda raises her eyebrows.

ETHELEND A

Honest mistake, I'm sure.

She waves off his apology.

RENWICK

What are you doing wandering around
like this? Not all hunters have
reflexes as good as mine.

Ethelenda picks her way through the light layer of snow,
fallen leaves, and small bushes, making her way towards
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.

(MORE)

RENWICK (CONT'D)

(beat)

And that means I was hunting on *your* land...

ETHELEND A

Which I have no problem with. I am not one to hunt down my own meat when there is a perfectly good butcher in the village. It's no skin off my nose if you wish to hunt here. Just keep an eye out for larger, more human shaped creatures. We wouldn't want a nasty accident now, would we?

Renwick nods.

RENWICK

You have my word.

ETHELEND A

Marvelous.

(beat)

I can see now why your friend Audrey wears such a vibrantly coloured cloak.

She grins.

ETHELEND A (CONT'D)

But I should be leaving you to your work, and I have errands of my own to run.

RENWICK

Of course.

Renwick glances at the basket on Ethelenda's arm, a particular plant cutting catching his eye.

RENWICK (CONT'D)

I hope you're not planning to eat that.

Ethelenda looks down at her basket and laughs. A real, genuine laugh. She picks up the plant cutting, holding it up between them.

ETHELEND A

This? Not if I want to wake tomorrow. It is very poisonous, which you seem to already be aware of. Though I'll guess what you do not know is, if treated just right, this plant makes the most wonderful tea.

Renwick still seems unsure, eyeing the plant cutting.

RENWICK

You'll have to forgive me if I choose to pass on that.

ETHELENDA

All the more for me then.

Ethelenda places the plant cutting back in the basket.

ETHELENDA (CONT'D)

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

RENWICK

You also.

Renwick watches warily as Ethelenda disappears back to the forest. After a minute he shakes his head, clearing his thoughts. He slings the bow over his back, picks up his empty game bag, and begins walking.

FADE TO:

EXT. FAE — BUTCHER — 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 her face lights up.

AUDREY

There he is.

BERNARD glances up from his work.

Approaching the butcher is RENWICK. 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

Wasn't out for very long. Just unlucky today.

BERNARD

Perhaps you'll 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's what you are trying to imply.

Their conversation is interrupted by the sound of a HORSE cantering towards them. While not that 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 is a couple of years older. This is MALVEN HILLANDER.

BERNARD

What is he doin' back home? Weren't expecting him for another two days at least.

Audrey turns to Renwick.

AUDREY

Is that true?

Renwick nods his head.

Malven pulls up the horse a couple of meters from the butcher's steps before climbing out of the saddle. 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're home early.

MALVEN

Not for good reasons I'm 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's nothing strange about that.

Renwick focuses back on Malven.

RENEWICK

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 reigns 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 across the village square, towards the council building.

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

RENEWICK

Mal, what's happening?

MALVEN

I shouldn't tell you. Not until I get the chance to speak with the council.

RENEWICK

That hasn't 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 cause all kinds of 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
(MORE)

MALVEN (CONT'D)

Briarfell who was to be hanged three
days ago. Only he was not hanged, 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 in cold blood, 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, hand resting on the door handle.

MALVEN (CONT'D)

I need to speak to the council about
gathering some of the villagers to
keep watch for this criminal. Can you
two please not run off and play hero.
Not this time.

Malven gives the pair a stern look 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-

RENWICK

No.

AUDREY

(laughing)

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

Renwick can't help but smile a little.

RENWICK

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 arm and on her mischievous smile we--

FADE TO:

INT. 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 with kind eyes, KENDA SUTTON, 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 BLYTHE. He is stern-faced with shoulder length dark hair, tied back in a short ponytail.

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

The last person is a woman, ROWENA PICKERING. 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 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 home. The murder of his family was... brutal. Mother, father, and siblings. All dead.

Hunter stumbles over his feet and falls, tumbling down a small incline--

INT. COUNCIL BUILDING - AFTERNOON

GRAYSON steeple his fingers, thinking.

GRAYSON

And you have a proposition for this problem?

MALVEN

I do.

CUTHBERT

Let's 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.

EXT. FOREST — NIGHT

Hunter tumbles to a stop, lying still on the ground.

GRAYSON (V.O.)
(contemplative)
It is well thought out.

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

CUTHBERT (V.O.)
I'm 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.

INT. 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.

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.

Hunter, now hiding behind the trunk of a tree, waits with held breath--

The villager shakes his head and continues walking.

Hunter peers up towards where the villager with the torch had just stood.

After a moment of contemplation he begins creeping towards the village.

BLACKOUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT. WRIGHT HOUSEHOLD - AUDREY'S ROOM - NIGHT

AUDREY lies in bed. She is sound asleep, but not for long.

Slowly we become aware of the muted 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, clothed in a simple white nightgown. She hurries towards the door of her room, bare feet padding against the wooden floor--

EXT. WRIGHT HOUSEHOLD - 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 happened? Is he here?

YOUNG MAN

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

GALWIN

And he was caught?

YOUNG MAN

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

GALWIN

Thank you.

YOUNG MAN

I could use some help, sir. 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.

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, red riding cloak over her nightdress. She pushes the door closed gently behind her before taking off quickly.

She rounds the corner of her home when--

SMACK. Audrey bumps into someone hurrying in the opposite direction.

The figure drops what they were carrying. Bread, cheese, vegetables, it all thuds onto the ground.

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

Hunter pushes her back 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 the small group of villagers but they pass by without seeing Audrey and Hunter hidden in shadows between houses.

Audrey starts to struggle and Hunter moves in closer, trying to stop her 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 he's 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 (CONT'D)

I am not going to hurt you- well, I don't want to hurt you, but I cannot let you give me away. They want to hang me!

Audrey kicks out and her foot connects with Hunter's shin. He hisses in pain.

HUNTER (CONT'D)

Gah! Stop! Fine. I will remove my hand but only if you promise me you will not yell.

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

HUNTER (CONT'D)

Thank you, I-

AUDREY

(angry)

Why?

HUNTER

I don't understand...

Audrey continues in her own hissed whisper.

AUDREY

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

She shoves him back slightly with one hand.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

Why did you say you would not hurt
(MORE)

AUDREY (CONT'D)
me? You seemed to have no problem
with violence when you butchered your
fami-

HUNTER
(angry)
I did not!

Audrey shrinks back against the wall. Hunter is startled
at his own outburst.

HUNTER (CONT'D)
I'm sorry. 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, scare
anyone. 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's the
truth.

AUDREY
Give me one reason why should I
believe anything you just said?

Hunter is stumped.

HUNTER
(resigned)
I don't have one.
(beat)
But please, hear me out.

Audrey makes no move to do or say 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
hanged. 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.

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.

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.

RENWICK

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

AUDREY

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

Renwick is skeptical, raising his eyebrows as he looks her way.

RENWICK

With the warning bell still tolling and people yelling?

AUDREY

I never said it was easy trying to go back to sleep. So stop your prying, I'm simply trying to keep my father appeased.

RENEWICK

Sorry.

They walk in silence for a moment, feet crunching in the light snow cover. They pass a 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 doesn't 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.

FADE TO:

EXT. MOUNTAINS – DAY

Steep rock faces, jagged edges, and a harsh wind lend truth to Fae's stories about the mountains above their

village. The landscape is empty until--

HUNTER clammers over a ledge and onto a flat piece of rock. He stands shakily and starts walking down a path between two high, natural rock walls. The battering wind dies down as he continues further forwards.

RENWICK (OVERLAP)

No one could survive up there for long.

Hunter rounds a curve in the path and comes to a sudden stop at the sight in front of him.

Nestled between two of the mountains and surrounded by wind breaking rocks is--

THE MOUNTAIN CAMP.

There are crude tents, a fire, and PEOPLE.

Startled by his find, Hunter begins to take a step back. He is stopped when someone lands with a THUD behind him and points the sharp end of a short sword into the small of his back.

RHETT

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 with a bald head a number of scars visible on his exposed arms and face. This is BRAXTON.

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

BRAXTON

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

Braxton looks Hunter up and down, assessing him.

BRAXTON (CONT'D)

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

Hunter glances around nervously but Braxton is happy to let him take his time.

HUNTER

I- I was framed. For murder.

There is a long pause, then Braxton lets out a booming laugh. He claps his hand down onto Hunter's shoulder.

BRAXTON

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

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

BRAXTON (CONT'D)

You need not be worrying yourself about things like that up here, son. We do not judge.

(beat)

Much. Allow me to 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.

Braxton wraps his arm around Hunter.

BRAXTON (CONT'D)

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?

Braxton laughs, the jovial sound at odds with his appearance.

BRAXTON (CONT'D)

That is, *allegedly* murdered?

HUNTER

(quiet)

My... my family.

BRAXTON

The whole family?

Braxton grins.

BRAXTON (CONT'D)

Welcome to the mountain camp, son. I can tell a young man like you will fit in just fine. Though, I must warn you, step out of line and we have no qualms about-

He draws a finger along his throat.

BRAXTON

-getting rid of a problem.

As Braxton chuckles to himself we--

BLACKOUT.

END OF ACT THREE

END OF EPISODE