

BLUE MOUNTAIN MYSTERIES

"Pilot"

Written by

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ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. APPALACHIAN HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Blue light scatters across the tops of the pines. The mountains of the Appalachian Valley stand in silhouette against a truly cosmic and starry sky.

WE PAN DOWN SLOWLY to see a curving road carved through the trees. Two lanes, no shoulder, barely paved. A country road.

A mint-green Forest Service pickup rumbles its way down the road, yellow headlights shining bright. As it NEARS US, we can hear the FAINT TWANG of a BLUEGRASS FOLK SONG.

INT. TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

The radio is at MAX VOLUME, banjo and mandolin in full swing.

RANGER BILLUPS, a sturdy man in his 50's with eyebrows rivaled only by his mustache, HUMS ALONG to the music.

The truck breaks the tree line for a moment, and in the valley below WE CATCH SIGHT of the titanic Green Bank Radio Telescope, red lights blinking like a warning beacon.

The trees return, throwing the road back into shadow.

The radio starts cutting in and out, static and a STRANGE MELODY overlapping the banjo.

BILLUPS

Aw, come on! Danggummit-

Billups fiddles with the radio dial, hunting for the signal. He looks back at the road just in time to see-

GLOWING EYES. SOMETHING IN THE ROAD.

He SLAMS on the brakes, the radio turns to STATIC.

The road ahead is clear. Through the side window he watches a deer duck into the treeline.

BILLUPS (CONT'D)

Doggone deer, I tell ya'what...

The radio CRACKLES into a HAUNTING MELODY.

Billups turns back to the wheel- and SCREAMS.

Perched on the hood of his car - wings outstretched and inhuman eyes drilling into him - is A MONSTER!

It cocks its head to the side, form shrouded in shadow except for those glowing, terrible eyes.

The monster launches into the air - soaring into the treetops, leaving Billups gasping for breath.

EXT. APPALACHIAN HIGHWAY - CONTINUOUS

Billups tumbles out of his vehicle, still shaken. His flashlight frantically searches for any sign of the creature.

He grabs his walkie-talkie as WE RISE UP through the trees.

UP, UP, UP, WE RISE above the woods once again. The gargantuan radio dish of the Green Bank Telescope is clearly visible in the distance.

BILLUPS (O.S.)
Dispatch? This is Ranger Billups.
We got ourselves a situation...

EXT. ATOP THE TELESCOPE - CONTINUOUS

A dark shape stands atop the receiver, underlit in scarlet from the blinking signal lights.

The monster OPENS ITS EYES - those massive, haunting eyes - and OUR SCREEN GLITCHES, CRACKLES, AND CUTS TO-

TITLE SEQUENCE

EXT. VILLENA HOUSE - MORNING

The weathered two-story house looks halfway between a log cabin and a mobile home. A "FOR SALE/SOLD" sign still sits in the yard, and empty moving boxes are piled by the roadside.

ISAAC (O.S.)
Over half of the state of West
Virginia is covered by the National
Radio Quiet Zone.

INT. VILLENA HOUSE - ISAAC'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

ISAAC VILLENA, fearless 11-year old and aspiring adventurer, is curled up by the bedroom window, reading. The cover of the well-worn book reads: "Cryptids of Appalachia".

ISAAC

In this region, no cell service or wireless internet are allowed. This makes it the ideal home for cryptids and other creatures that wish to stay hidden from the world of humans-

A THUMP from outside Isaac's window interrupts his reading. He looks up.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

Huh?

Isaac opens his window, the morning wind rushing into his room, which WE SEE NOW is stacked with moving boxes.

EXT. VILLENNA HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Outside, the towering shapes of the Appalachian mountains and the woods bordering the house form a beautiful vista.

WE PAN ACROSS and there - perched on the roof under Isaac's second-story window - is a filthy possum with a Pringles can.

ISAAC

Awesome!

He climbs out of his window onto the roof and approaches the possum, which looks at him and HISSES.

Then, as if deciding he isn't a threat, the possum buries her face in the chip can.

Immediately she realizes she has become stuck in the tube. she scrabbles at the cardboard, SQUEAKING in DISTRESS.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

Hang on, I gotcha!

Isaac gently removes the tube from the possum's face.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

I'm Isaac, nice to meet you!

The possum looks up at him with beady, sparkling eyes...

Then she HISSES at him, grabs the Pringles can, and LEAPS off the roof like a professional diver.

The possum lands neatly on the lawn, when-

WHAM! - The For Sale is SLAMMED DOWN onto the poor critter.

WE WHIP UP to see DR. REYNA VILLENA, a single mother in her 40's who's really just trying her best right now. She raises the sign back up, ready for a second blow.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

Mom! Wait!

Isaac makes a SAFE AND LEGAL descent from the roof that is DEFINITELY SAFE and VERY ALLOWED on TV-Y7.

REYNA

Isaac, stay back honey.

ISAAC

All she wanted was some chips,
she's innocent!

Reyna pokes the possum's limp body with the sign.

As if on cue the possum SPRINGS to her feet and HISSES. Reyna recoils in horror and drops the sign.

The possum jumps off the porch and squirms into a gap in the lattice under the deck, vanishing into the shadows beneath.

Reyna crouches down, peering through where the possum just went, clear revulsion on her face.

REYNA

Oh you filthy little creature! Go
find your own house, why don't you!

She turns in time to catch Isaac making a break for the treeline, *Cryptids of Appalachia* tucked under his arm.

REYNA (CONT'D)

Isaac Villena! Exactly where do you
think you're going?

Isaac stops short halfway across the yard.

ISAAC

You said I could go exploring once
I unpacked my room!

REYNA

And did you?

QUICK INSERT of Isaac's room, piled high with unopened boxes.

ISAAC

...yes...

Reyna cocks an eyebrow. She doesn't buy it for a second, but her face softens. She relents.

REYNA
Alright. You can go-

ISAAC
Aw yeah!!

REYNA
-But! Your sister has to go with you! I don't want you in the woods all alone. It's not safe.

ISAAC
I can look after myself, Mom!
Adventurers don't need babysitters.

Reyna crosses the yard to where Isaac is.

REYNA
But every great adventurer has a-
oh what did you call it?- a party!
To look out for each other, keep
each other safe, right?

ISAAC
I guess...

Reyna glances at her watch.

REYNA
Ah! I'm going to be late for work!

She takes a moment to breathe and turns to Isaac.

REYNA (CONT'D)
I love you very much. I'll see you
tonight, ok?

Reyna brings her son in for a big hug. Isaac looks over her shoulder to the treeline.

ISAAC
Alright... Love you too, Mom...

INT. VILLENA HOUSE - DAY

The wood-paneled walls of the hallway haven't changed since the 70s. Nor, it seems, has the dirty shag carpet.

Isaac pushes open the door to his older sister's bedroom. The light from the hall spills into the dimly lit room.

ISAAC

Maya?

MAYA's face is *just* visible under a sulking pile of blankets.

MAYA

Leave me alone! Can't you see I'm
in mourning??

On the nightstand beside Maya, a tiny funeral shrine has been constructed around her phone - the screen reads "NO SIGNAL".

Maya picks up the phone and scrolls through text chains - all of her recent replies are flagged "FAILED TO SEND".

ISAAC (O.S.)

Well I know what'll cheer you up!

He jumps onto her bed, landing squarely on her, and flings open the curtains. Maya recoils from the light with a HISS.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

A Villena family monster hunt! Come on Maya! I bet there's loads of crazy stuff out there that no one's ever even *heard* about before!

Isaac holds up a notebook with lots of doodles of weirdly attractive werewolves, clearly made by Maya.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

(goading)

There could be werewolves...

Maya sees the notebook, and like lightning her hand shoots out and snatches the book away from him.

MAYA

Isaac! OMG!! GET OUT!

ISAAC

But Maya!!

Isaac jumps off the bed, fleeing for his life. Maya hurls a pillow at him, which he barely dodges.

MAYA

OUT!!

EXT. VILLENA HOUSE - DAY

Isaac sits at the edge of the porch with the "Cryptids of Appalachia" beside him. He sighs.

ISAAC

I never had a party in Pittsburg...
This place can't be that different!

The possum pokes her little head up from under the porch.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

There you are! Sorry about my mom
earlier. You can stay here if you
want. I won't tell her.

Isaac reaches a hand toward her. The possum sniffs at him.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

See, you're not scary at all!

The possum SNAPS at his hand, then grabs Isaac's book in her
mouth and TAKES OFF RUNNING towards the treeline.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

Ow! Hey! Wait, that's mine! Get
back here!

He chases her to the edge of the woods. The possum scampers
off till she's lost among the underbrush. Isaac stops at the
edge of the forest.

He looks back toward home - clearly torn.

Birdsong catches his ears, drawing him back to the forest.

A gentle breeze whispers out from the woods, causing the tree
branches to wave and sway, beckoning Isaac deeper in.

He takes one.

Single.

Step.

Across the treeline.

Then another. And another.

His excitement and adrenaline bubble up into LAUGHTER. Unable
to contain himself, he breaks into a run.

WE SEE up into the branches above: as a pair of GLOWING EYES
watch Isaac rush headfirst, and all alone, into the unknown.

END OF ACT ONE.

ACT TWO

EXT. GREEN WOODS - DAY

Light breaks in through the leaves, covering the ground in dappled patches of gold between beds of towering wildflowers.

Isaac stops as he enters to the sunlit glade, a huge smile across his face as he takes it all in.

A branch SNAPS nearby, Isaac whips around - on high alert for the source of the noise.

He wanders close to a thick tangle of mountain holly. The bush SHAKES as something moves within it.

Isaac DIVES into the thicket-

ISAAC

GOTCHA!

-and TACKLES right into a nervous-looking boy with huge glasses and a thick mess of curly hair.

This 12-year-old is what would happen if you gave a marshmallow anxiety, and his name is MARTIN.

MARTIN

AAAAAHHHH!!

Isaac and Martin COLLAPSE into the thicket. Isaac lands atop Martin, who's arms are up in a blind defense.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

Don't hurt me!!

Isaac leaps to his feet, immediately realizing his mistake.

ISAAC

Ohmygosh are you ok? I thought you were a possum!

MARTIN

I, uh- sorry- yeah, I- a possum?

JUST THEN, the possum emerges from behind a nearby tree, Isaac's book still in its mouth.

ISAAC

You!! Get back here!!

The possum panics and scampers away, Isaac gives chase, leaving a prone and confused Martin behind.

The possum turns a sharp corner, Isaac grabs onto a nearby sapling and uses his momentum to swing around the turn.

The possum stops short, her path blocked by a huge boulder. Isaac catches up, cornering the critter.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
Give me it back and I'll stop
chasing you, ok? Why do you want it
so bad? You can't even read!!

The possum turns and GROWLS, the book still in her mouth.

MARTIN
W-wait! Hang on-!

Martin runs up behind Isaac, a little out of breath. He puts himself between Isaac and the possum.

Martin grabs a big handful of some nearby wild plants, he offers it out to the possum.

MARTIN (CONT'D)
You just need something for your
nest, right? H-here, if you give us
the book, I'll give you this!

The possum regards him suspiciously.

It sniffs at the foliage in Martin's hand, then quickly grabs it and scampers off into the woods once again.

ISAAC
Whoah! That was awesome!! How did
you do that??

Martin's face goes bright red with embarrassment.

MARTIN
Oh! Uh- I uh- y'know just, stuff I
read about... in books... uh-

ISAAC
Are you an adventurer, too?

MARTIN
Oh, no. I'm a Martin- I MEAN- I'm
Martin. Martin is my name!
I'm talking too much.

ISAAC
Nice to meet you, Martin! I'm
Isaac. Thanks for your help! Sorry
I tackled you earlier...

MARTIN

It's welcome! -I mean- you're ok -I
MEAN- ahh- Here!

He picks up Isaac's book, and catches a glimpse of the cover.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

"Cryptids of Appalachia"?

ISAAC

Oh, uh- y'know like bigfoot, or
mothman, or the Flatwoods Monster!

MARTIN

The Flatwoods Monster?

ISAAC

Yeah! It's this huge creature with
big glowing eyes and long, clawed
hands. Some people say it's an
alien from outer space, but I think-

Martin is staring at him wide-eyed. Isaac's confidence
fizzles out. Now it's his turn to be embarrassed.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

Sorry, that probably sounds a
little crazy doesn't it?

MARTIN

N-not at all! I-I know a ton about
cryptids, too! I-I just never met
anyone else who was interested in
them before- and- uh-

ISAAC

No way! Have you ever seen one out
here? I bet there's a *million* of
them in this forest!

MARTIN

Uh- n-not really... I uh- I never
actually... looked? I mostly just
read... about them...

ISAAC

I was actually about to go looking
for cryptids right now!

MARTIN

Y-you are? Wait, you're not some
kind of monster h-hunter are you??

ISAAC

Not exactly. I'm an adventurer! I explore the unknown in search of creatures and places that no one's ever seen before!

As he says this, Isaac turns dramatically to the forest around him. Martin peeks out from behind him.

MARTIN

W-where are you headed?

ISAAC

To be honest, I don't know where I am right now. But that's all part of the fun! How about this way!

He starts blindly in off in a random direction.

MARTIN

W-well maybe I could, y'know... Go with you? S-sorry... I've just never really had anyone to talk to about cryptids before, and... I know this area pretty well, I-I could be your guide! Or something... uh- If you want-

Isaac breaks into a huge grin.

ISAAC

That- sounds- awesome!! I've never had an adventuring party before! The two of us together, we'll be finding monsters in no time!

MARTIN

O-Okay!

He runs to catch up with Isaac and the two walk further into-

EXT. GREEN WOODS - MONSTER HUNT MONTAGE

Isaac swings on a vine across a shallow creek as Martin crosses safely on some stones below.

Isaac looks into a hollowed out log, he reaches in- and comes out holding a MASSIVE SPIDER by its thread. Martin screams.

The two boys examine an odd footprint in the dirt, comparing it to various creatures in Martin's book.

Isaac wades through a stream inside a small cave.

He picks up a pale salamander with glassy eyes and turns to show Martin, who is currently fleeing a bat.

EXT. GREEN WOODS - LATER

Isaac and Martin navigate a steep hillside switchback. Martin thumbs through his book as Isaac rambles.

ISAAC

So far we've seen 12 squirrels,
seven raccoons, one cave
salamander, and one bat.

MARTIN

Two bats... I think the first one
called for help...

ISAAC

That's a pretty successful day so
far! Though I kinda hoped we'd have
found at least one monster by now.

MARTIN

Maybe they're hiding?

ISAAC

Or they're in disguise!!

MARTIN

H-huh? What do you mean?

Isaac points to the page Martin is on: THE FEARSOME NOTDEER!

ISAAC

Like that one! The NotDeer! It
looks just like a normal deer,
until you get too close, and then
it tries to eat you!! BLAARRGGH!!

Martin pales a shade at Isaac's carnivorous deer impression.

MARTIN

M-maybe we *don't* go looking for
that one...

ISAAC

Whoah! What's that??

He points to the bottom of the holler, where a dark tangle of beech trees and kudzu forms a separate part of the woods.

Isaac takes off down the hill, Martin close behind.

MARTIN

Isaac wait! That's deep woods.
Forget bigfoot, t-that place is
full of snakes and bears a-and
poison ivy and-

ISAAC

That's exactly the kind of place a
monster would live! Come on!

With that, Isaac pushes his way into the undergrowth, the
branches swallowing him up, and he disappears into the green.

Martin freezes at the edge of the deep woods.

The dark trees seem to swallow the world around him. Martin
stumbles back. He turns, about to run away!

But he stops. Against every instinct, he makes a decision.

MARTIN

Aw man...

EXT. DEEP WOODS - DAY

A knot of pine and beech trees choke the daylight from above,
leaving only a dim gloom to puddle up across the kudzu-
covered ground below.

Isaac pushes his way through the thorny undergrowth.

He steps on a bed of leaves, which BREAKS AWAY BENEATH HIM.

Isaac tumbles forward over the hidden ridge with a SHOUT, and
CRASHES to the forest floor six feet below.

ISAAC

I'm ok! Watch your step, Martin!

No reply.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

Martin?

Only the faint echoes of birdsong permeate the quiet...

KER-BLAAM!!

An EXPLOSION of orange gas DETONATES in a tree on the ridge
above him.

The tree CREAAKS, leans, and TOPPLES OVER!

Isaac leaps to the side, and the tree CRASHES DOWN right where he'd been standing.

A voice echoes out from the orange smoke cloud.

CASEY (O.S.)
(hollers)
Well *how-dee-doo!!* I tell ya'what,
that silver nitrate packs a *wallop!*

CASEY CAUDILL, the 11-year-old hillbilly scientist, leaps barefoot from the top of the ridge, slides down the rubble, and lands atop the still-smoking tree.

She tastes the burnt bark, and spits it out.

CASEY (CONT'D)
EUGH! Too much Magnesium. WELP!
Makin a note of that for next time!

She scribbles something in her notebook.

ISAAC
Hey! What's the big idea?

Casey removes her lab goggles and cheeses an ear-to-ear grin.

CASEY
Sorry, stranger! Didn't see ya there! Name's Casey Caudill! Pleased ta meetcha!

ISAAC
Isaac. I thought people stayed away from this part of the forest.

CASEY
They sure do! Makin' it the perfect place for my experiments!

A RADIO CRACKLES, then the STRANGE, HAUNTING MELODY plays.

Casey takes out a transistor radio with wild modifications, she waves it in the air, hunting for the strongest direction of the signal.

CASEY (CONT'D)
Oh!! That's a new one!!

She abruptly walks into the trees. Isaac follows.

ISAAC
Wait! Is that a phantom signal?

CASEY

That's what superstitious types call 'em. But I been tracking these signals out here for weeks!

ISAAC

Aw man, Martin will- wait. Martin!!

CASEY

SHH!! Hold up a second!

She turns down the radio. No birdsong permeates the air. No squirrels rummage in the trees. Even the wind seems to have stilled itself. The noise of the woods has gone quiet.

CASEY (CONT'D)

Listen...

Silence.

For a little too long...

SKREEE-CRAAASHH!!! Metal SLAMMING into metal!

An UNEARTHLY SHRIEK SHATTERS THE AIR.

Isaac rushes toward the source of the noise. Casey freezes.

ISAAC

Martin!

He rounds a small cliff on high alert, but this whole area seems completely empty. The area under the cliff is shrouded in shadow and leaves, but seems to be hollow.

Isaac takes a step closer, brushing aside a branch.

Casey catches up, clearly uncomfortable.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

Martin?

Behind it is a heavy metal grate, and-

TWO MASSIVE GLOWING EYES.

CASEY

Uh, Isaac-?

IIIIAAGGHH!! - a piercing screech from the cave. The creature lunges forward, SLAMMING INTO the grate- the kids leap back!

CASEY (CONT'D)

What in Sam Hill is that!?

ISAAC

Whoah! Hey!

CRASH! CRASH! SHRRRIIIIEEEEEKKK!!!

The creature rattles the chain-link grate.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
It's okay! I'm not gonna hurt you!!
Take it easy!... Whoah...

The RATTLING stops. The glowing eyes watch from the darkness.

Isaac pulls down a whole mess of sticks and dirt, revealing that the "cliff" was actually a hidden culvert bear trap.

The monster lets out a baleful SHRIIEEEK.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
It's trapped.

Isaac slowly approaches the cage. He tests the door with a hand, and SIX HOOKED TALONS grasp the links from inside.

The monster is now partly in sunlight, Isaac stares in awe at it. Though not much taller than him, it is covered in shaggy brown fluff, with two long antennae, and insectoid wings.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
(awestruck)
Mothman.

Casey CLICKS her radio on, and the Mothman's EERIE MELODY fills the air once again.

CASEY
I ain't ever seen anythin like
this! It's like it's communicatin
over radio! WOO-EE! This'll get me
a Nobel Prize for sure!

She starts scribbling furiously in her notebook.

ISAAC
(giddy)
Ha-HA! This is the best day EVER!
Oh man Martin's gonna totally flip
when he finds out about this!
(to Casey)
Come on, let's get him free.

CASEY
Y'sure? What if it tries to eat us?

He considers that, then reaches his hand toward the cage.

CASEY (CONT'D)
What are you *doin*??

The Mothman flinches back. Then, slowly, he leans closer, brushing Isaac's hand with his antennae.

ISAAC
See? You're not scary at all.

Mothman WHISTLES softly. Isaac laughs, giddy with excitement.

Casey just watches with fascination. She grins.

CASEY
Y'know what, I reckon you're right.
Better to observe him in his
natural habitat!

She reaches a hand towards the Mothman as well, but just then-

Mothman SHRIEKS and retreats back into the cage- as Ranger Billups emerges from the woods, a tranquillizer gun slung over his shoulder.

He stops dead in his tracks as he spots Isaac and Casey.

BILLUPS
Holy Moses! Kids! Get back from
there! That's a bear trap, y'hear?
Whatever's in there-

The glowing eyes of the Mothman peer out from the shadows of the trap. He SHRIEKS and spreads his wings defensively.

Billups stumbles back, the tranq gun suddenly in his hands.

BILLUPS (CONT'D)
What in the-- YOU AGAIN!?

Billups levels the tranq gun at the Mothman, it THRASHES around in the cage, too quick to get a bead on it.

BILLUPS (CONT'D)
It's alright, I'm with the forestry
service. Now get clear of that-
THING! It's dangerous, I tell ya!

Isaac stands firm. Casey GROWLS. Mothman SHRIEKS, terrified.

ISAAC
No he's not! He's just scared!

CASEY
Yeah! He ain't hurtin' nobody!

BILLUPS

Y'all got no idea whatcher talkin' about. Whatever that thang is, *it* ain't natural! Now get behind me before one of y'all gets hurt!

Mothman is SLAMMING HIMSELF against the door of the cage now. With each hit, the latch on the door strains, but it holds.

ISAAC

(whisper)

I got the latch, you get the door.

Casey nods and climbs on top of the cage.

BILLUPS

Hey! Get offa that thing! Imma get this critter to folks that'll know what to do with it.

ISAAC

I won't let you hurt him! NOW!

Isaac unhooks the latch and Casey HEAVES the door open!

Mothman EXPLODES out of the darkness in a BLUR of wings.

Billups dives to the ground as Mothman swoops overhead, kicking up a cloud of dust.

Mothman soars up into the treetops and out of sight.

Billups, prone, takes a hasty aim and FIRES the tranq gun.

The red-flighted dart zips into the trees, disappearing along with the Mothman.

The dust clears. Billups stands, brushing himself off.

BILLUPS

You kids got a lot of explainin to-

Isaac has DISAPPEARED. Casey looks down at where Isaac used to be, equally surprised.

CASEY

Oops. HEY ISAAC WAIT UP!

She takes off after him.

END OF ACT TWO.

ACT THREE

EXT. DEEP WOODS - MOMENTS LATER

Isaac and Casey HURTLE through the forest - vaulting bushes and getting snagged on thorns as they go.

ISAAC
Did the ranger hit him?

CASEY
Not sure, lost sight of 'em!

Isaac looks back to see if anyone is following-

MARTIN
Look out!!

WHUMP!! Isaac BARRELS into Martin at top speed. The two go crashing to the ground.

ISAAC
Martin! Man, am I glad to see you!

Isaac helps Martin up.

MARTIN
What happened? I-I lost you and then I heard an explosion and- wait- Casey? What're you doing here?

CASEY
Heya, Glasses! Fancy seein' you round the deep woods for once!

ISAAC
You're never gonna believe it! We saw the Mothman!

Martin sinks into his jacket again.

MARTIN
R-really?? What was he- what was it like? Was he... scary?

ISAAC
Not at all!! You should've seen him Martin, it was amazing!

CASEY
And now we're fugitives!!

She cackles with glee.

MARTIN

What??

ISAAC

He was trapped, and there was some guy trying to catch it, so we set him free and- we gotta find him and make sure he's okay!

BILLUPS (O.S.)

Kids! Get back here, danggummit!

CASEY

WOOP! It's the fuzz! Quick, let's get outta here!

ISAAC

Is there any way we can lose him?

CASEY

Follow me, I've got an idea...

EXT. CASEY'S LAB - AFTERNOON

Casey bounces through the woods, Isaac and Martin following.

CASEY

Gentlemen, welcome - to my LAB!

She parts the branches like an announcer, revealing:

A dingy old Ranger station built into the steep hillside.

It's in horrible condition: green paint chipped where it hasn't worn off completely, most of the windows broken and boarded over, and vegetation overgrowing and reclaiming it.

A few hastily assembled "CASEY'S LAB" and "CAUTION, SCIENCE IN PROGRESS" signs dot the land around it, and a new door has been somehow affixed to the entrance.

MARTIN

That's definitely not safe...

INT. CASEY'S LAB - CONTINUOUS

The door SHUDDERS open on hodgepodge hinges.

Inside, though still run-down, is a functional lab - complete with a microscope, beakers, and charts all across the walls alongside posters of scientists like Rosalind Franklin and Marie Curie, who smile in approval at this rogue laboratory.

CASEY

I don't think anybody knows this place exists, so we can rest easy.

MARTIN

But what now?? That Ranger is still out there!

ISAAC

We have to find the Mothman before he does- Casey, you said you'd been tracking those phantom signals?

CASEY

Uh-huh! Check it out!

She unrolls an old topography map on the table in front of them. Crayon annotations mark "DEEP WOODS", "LAB", and several dots of different colors.

Casey makes a new dot in the Deep Woods.

CASEY (CONT'D)

I've heard a ton of weird radio signals out here that *definitely* aren't allowed this deep in the Quiet Zone. I marked where the source of each one was, but I never saw whatever was makin 'em before today. This one-

(points to the new dot)

Is Mothman. I'd never heard that signal before, but he was awful close to this group here.

She points further in the deep woods, to a group of six dots.

ISAAC

-maybe that's where Mothman was headed! Towards other Cryptids! Come on, let's check it out!

Isaac picks up the radio and flings open the door.

MARTIN

W-wait! Let's think this through!

ISAAC

We can't wait! For all we know, that Ranger might have already caught the Mothman again! And what if he finds those other cryptids? Who knows what he'll do to them!

CASEY

What would we even do once we found him? We can't just charge out there with no procedure! I'm with Glasses, Isaac. We need a plan.

ISAAC

Then you guys can stay and make one! I *have* to save the Mothman! Even if I have to do it alone.

Isaac takes off into the woods.

MARTIN

Isaac!

EXT. DEEP WOODS - EVENING

The setting sun is all but covered by the mountains, throwing the already dark woods into an almost-midnight black.

Isaac stumbles through the trees, fiddling with the radio dials in vain. Only STATIC and FRAGMENTS of other signals.

A CRACKLE- a TINY BIT of signal. THEN AGAIN!

ISAAC

There!

The MELODY GETS STRONGER, then CUTS OUT.

Isaac looks around, realizing for the first time that he is completely and utterly lost.

A CRUNCH behind him. Something BIG. Isaac points the radio at it, but still static. He peeks around the tree trunk where the sound is coming from, only to find...

A cute little black bear cub rolls playfully in the leaves, SQUEAKING and GROWLING. It looks up at Isaac with curiosity.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

Hey little guy! What're you doing out here... All by... yourself...

From behind the still innocent little baby bear A MASSIVE, SNARLING MAMA BEAR RISES UP ON HER HIND LEGS.

Isaac takes a step back.

For the first time, he looks...

Scared.

THE BEAR ROARS.

Isaac sprints through the woods, weaving his way through the trees. The black bear still chasing him, gaining ground.

He takes a sharp turn. The bear overshoots, giving Isaac a precious few moments to get ahead of it.

MARTIN (O.S.)
I hear something!

Martin appears from behind a boulder, he looks relieved.

MARTIN (CONT'D)
Isaac!! Casey! Casey, I found him!

Isaac barely stops in time. He shouts ahead to Martin.

ISAAC
Martin! Bear! Angry bear!!

As if summoned, the bear ROARS and charges around the corner, right towards the both of them.

MARTIN
Uhhh CASEY!?

CASEY (O.S.)
ON IT!

Casey springs out of nowhere, leaping off the top of the boulder with a BATTLE CRY and chucking two bags of a legally unidentifiable powder at the ground in front of the bear.

The bags EXPLODE with a FLASH and a BANG into orange clouds.

The bear REARS BACK, stunned.

CASEY (CONT'D)
Let's go!

The three kids TEAR through the woods, pursued by bear.

Casey grabs another bag out of her pocket.

CASEY (CONT'D)
Come on...

She looks back, still running, and HUCKS the bag with all her might. It EXPLODES INCHES FROM THE BEAR'S FACE.

The bear grinds to a stop, blinded and ROARING in confusion.

CASEY (CONT'D)
 Haha! Take THAT!

Casey turns-

CASEY (CONT'D)
 Uh oh.

-JUST IN TIME to see the massive tree branch in front of her before she COLLIDES WITH IT FULL-SPEED.

WHAM!!

Casey staggers back, seeing stars, and collapses.

Isaac skids to a halt.

ISAAC
 Casey!!

He rushes over to her, she seems relatively okay, but is too out of it to stand.

CASEY
 Isaac?? Since when was there four of ya?...

The bear is RIGHT ON TOP OF THEM.

Isaac steps between Casey and the bear, making himself as big as possible.

ISAAC
 STAY BACK! Leave my friends ALONE!!

The bear REARS UP on her hind legs, BELLOWING A CHALLENGE.

Isaac takes a deep breath to YELL BACK, and RIGHT AS HE DOES-

IIIIIIIAAAAAGHH!!!! An inhuman SHRIEK RIPS through the woods.

The radio BLARES to life, the MOTHMAN'S MELODY DROWNS OUT ALL OTHER SOUND.

A blur - the Mothman - CANNONBALLS into the bear at Mach speed, knocking her away.

The bear swipes at Mothman, who dodges. Mothman kicks out, sending the bear staggering even further.

The cryptid lands in front of Isaac and Casey, wings outstretched, blocking them from view.

Isaac reels back from the fight, dropping the radio. It hits the ground with a CRUNCH and the MOTHMAN'S MELODY CUTS OUT.

The bear ROARS in defiance!

Mothman SHRIEKS AGAIN, louder this time!

A tense silence. Then the bear drops to all fours. It GRUNTS, and saunters back into the woods.

Mothman turns to look at Isaac and a still woozy Casey.

CASEY

Whazzat?? Sum kinda bat? Ow...

Before Isaac can react, the Mothman grabs Isaac and Casey by the backs of their clothes, and TAKES OFF INTO THE SKY.

EXT. ABOVE THE TREES - CONTINUOUS

They soar into the evening sky. Isaac struggles, trying to free himself from the Mothman's grip.

ISAAC

Wait! We have to go back! Martin is still down there! We can't leave him! Put me DOWN!

The Mothman banks sharply, gliding down towards the woods.

EXT. CASEY'S LAB - CONTINUOUS

They all come down for a clumsy landing outside of the lab. Casey sprawls out, but Isaac takes off towards the treeline.

CASEY

Thanks for the ride bug-man! Ow...

ISAAC

We have to go back! They were out there because of me! I'm not leaving Martin behind!!

The Mothman blocks his way, hands up. Then he starts...

To CHANGE.

The wings cover the body, becoming a poofy jacket. The fur becomes curly brown hair. The glowing eyes become glasses-

Until what once was the Mothman turns into-

ISAAC (CONT'D)
MARTIN??

MARTIN
Uh... H-hi?

Isaac wraps Martin up in a huge hug, catching him off guard.

MARTIN (CONT'D)
You're not... scared of me?

ISAAC
Scared of you? Martin you're
freaking awesome!! I can't believe
I'm friends with the Mo-

Martin SHUSHES him as Casey walks up, rubbing her head.

MARTIN
(whisper)
I... I don't think I'm ready to
tell her yet...

CASEY
Ah... Hey y'all... jeeze louise
that's gonna bruise.

ISAAC
Are you okay? I got your radio!
Sorry... it got a little busted.

He hands the radio back to her.

CASEY
Shucks, I'll be fine.

Casey looks over the radio's mangled antennae.

CASEY (CONT'D)
Nothin some duct tape can't fix.
Where'd the ol' Mothman get off to?

ISAAC
He... flew off.

MARTIN
But I'm sure we'll find him again.

CASEY
Well drat! I ain't got near enough
data for that Nobel Prize! Guess
we're back to square one, huh?

ISAAC

I'm sorry you guys. I shouldn't
have gone out alone like that.

MARTIN

Nobody got eaten!...or dissected...
So I call today a win!

The molasses orange of sunset gently fades into a raspberry
red that wraps around the distant mountains.

ISAAC

There's still so much out there,
just waiting to be discovered.

CASEY

And we still gotta figure out what
to do 'bout ol' Ranger Bushybrows!

ISAAC

Back home I got used to going on
adventures alone, and I guess I
forgot how to be-

MARTIN

A team?

ISAAC

I was gonna say a party.

CASEY

A coterie!

Blank stares from Isaac and Martin.

CASEY (CONT'D)

Or a party, sheesh! I prolly got a
concussion, gimmie a break!

ISAAC

I guess what I'm trying to say is:
I can't do this by myself. But the
three of us make a great...
coterie! So, how about from now on,
when there's an adventure, we stick
together! No matter what.

Martin smiles.

MARTIN

Together sounds good!

CASEY

That suits me just fine!

The three of them look out over the forest, each imagining what adventure - or terror - might lurk between those trees.

CASEY (CONT'D)
Oh, almost forgot! Check it out!

She grins - revealing a newly missing tooth!

WE FLOAT UP above the woods as the last rays of daylight are swallowed up between the jaws of the hills and the night.

MARTIN (O.S.)
Ohhh I'm gonna be sick!

CASEY (O.S.)
(cackling)
What's the matter Glasses? It's just a tooth! You wanna see it?

ISAAC (O.S.)
AWESOME!!

INT. GREEN BANK TELESCOPE - NIGHT

Crammed between various machines, Dr. Reyna Villena and two other researchers pour over a cluttered table covered in diagrams and readouts.

One machine REVS TO LIFE and spits out a slip of paper. Dr. Villena looks at this new data with confusion.

She sighs, then goes to a map on the wall covered in push pins, and marks another location with a pin.

REYNA
Alright. What are you? And what are you hiding?

She steps back, and WE SEE now that the locations marked are identical to Casey's map, except this map has DOZENS more.

OUTSIDE THE LAB

The Green Bank Telescope glows like a crimson wildfire in the cast of its own signal lights.

The dish rotates slowly, aimed low towards the mountains-like the unblinking eye of a predator...

Hunting.

CUT TO BLACK.