

THE SPOT

Written by

Maxim Marukh

Max.Marukh@gmail.com

EXT. FOREST CLEARING - DAY

It's the year 2000. A group of YOUNG PEOPLE is on a wild camping trip in the woods. We see their cozy little campsite: three tents and two cars forming a barrier against the world.

Inside the camp, a fire burns, with SIX PEOPLE on folding chairs around it. They're having a good time, but nothing too crazy. A makeshift wooden table holds simple snacks you'd find in any grocery store, along with some drinks and light booze, nothing stronger than beer. Soft music plays from one of the cars.

As the camera pans around the camp, we get an inside look at their life. Everyone's chatting, with the sounds of nature, voices, and music blending into a familiar cacophony of a group of friends chilling. Someone's laughing, someone's munching on snacks.

The camera finally lands on one of the teens. This is SAMMY (20), a charming, smiley guy, the life of the party. Storytelling is one of his many talents. Right now, he's working his magic on the group.

SAMMY

So picture this: the whole bus stop is watching! People forgot about their buses, forgot it's Monday and they gotta get to work. They're just hooked on this guy!

The listeners grin, hanging on Sammy's every word.

SAMMY (CONT'D.)

And this dude... he's totally hammered. I mean, out cold! So, he's standing there trying to take a piss.

The girls let out a long "Eww!"

SAMMY (CONT'D.)

He wants to pee right at the bus stop and he's struggling to unzip his pants. People don't care about that. They're just watching him battle his belt. The poor guy is so out of it, he can't even figure out the buckle...

The listeners are as hooked on the guy's fate as the people at the bus stop were. Except for the couple, ANDREW (23) and NIKKI (22). Perfectly polished and thriving, these two stand out from the group. It's clear that it takes more than a silly story to grab their attention.

Ignoring Sammy's tale, they chat animatedly with each other.

SAMMY (CONT'D.)

He doesn't notice anyone. He's gripping his belt with both hands, yanking it back and forth. He can barely stand, swaying like the Statue of Pisa...

To Sammy's right sits SARAH (20). Thin and delicate, she's glued to her pocketbook. Sarah came here with Sammy, but keeps her distance. They're not a couple yet, but this trip might change that.

SARAH

(looking up from her pocketbook)

It's the TOWER of Pisa, genius.

SAMMY

Same difference.

SARAH

And it doesn't sway. It leans.

SAMMY

Well, this guy is leaning too! Only he's not going down. So he's wrestling with his belt, yanking it, fiddling with it. Everyone at the bus stop is cracking up. I don't know how long this went on, but a couple of buses came and went, including mine. But I didn't care, I'd pay extra just to see how it ends. And our guy's not giving up. He's dead set on peeing on that bus stop.

SARAH

Can you not...

SAMMY

Pardon my French. He needs to take a leak. Answer nature's call. Hit the head. Relieve oneself...

SARAH

Gross...

Sammy laughs infectiously. He's joined by BOBBY (21), big and quiet, who's enjoying his friend's antics. Next to Bobby is his girlfriend, JANE (19). Noticing her boyfriend's reaction, Jane smiles awkwardly. She's new to the group and feels a bit out of place.

SAMMY

So, he's yanking the belt. Back and forth, back and forth, back and forth...

JANE

Oh my God.

Sammy accompanies his story with animated gestures. Bobby is glued to every move.

SAMMY

And finally, the buckle gives way!
The whole bus stop goes silent.
Traffic lights turn red. Cars stop.
Pedestrians slow down. Our guy
yanks the end of the belt out,
grabs hold of it... and starts
peeing!

Pause as everyone tries to figure out the punchline.

SAMMY (CONT'D.)

Right into his pants! Can you
believe it? The idiot was so drunk,
he forgot to take them off. But
that's not even the best part. The
best part is, he mixed up the ends!

Everyone bursts into laughter.

SAMMY

He was so wasted, he couldn't tell
his junk from his belt! But you
should've seen his face...

FADE TO BLACK:

Opening credits roll on the screen.

FADE IN:

EXT. FOREST CLEARING - LATER

The group is still having a blast. Food is quickly disappearing from the table, beer bottles are being raised. Someone is smoking. The fire has died down and is barely smoking. Sarah and Nikki are spraying insect repellent on their exposed skin.

Even though the sun is still high, Sammy wants to tell scary stories.

SAMMY

(shouting over everyone)
Alright, folks! Time for some
stories!

EVERYONE

(in unison)
NO-O-O!

SAMMY

Scary ones!

SARAH

(glued to her pocketbook)
But it's still light out.

SAMMY

So what? The scariest things happen during the day.

SARAH

Yeah, but in daylight, they're not as scary. How about we wait until dark?

SAMMY

I'll tell ya a different story at night.

SARAH

Yeah, right.

She's lightly flirting with him.

SAMMY

You don't know me well enough.

SARAH

And let's keep it that way.

Andrew and Nikki continue their low-voiced conversation.

SAMMY

(to Andrew)

Hey, Earth to space, Earth to space! Do you read me?

ANDREW

Yeah, yeah. We're listening.

(to Nikki)

Pass me another beer, will ya?

Nikki grabs an unopened beer bottle from the table and hands it to her husband.

SARAH

(shivering)

Someone, add more wood to the fire.

Bobby gets up and goes to get some firewood. The camera follows him. The conversation at the clearing quiets down as Bobby moves away from the center.

SAMMY (O.S.)

Yeah? So what was I talking about?

ANDREW (O.S.)
Uh... something interesting.

SAMMY (O.S.)
Yeah, thought so.
(to Bobby)
Yo Bobby, grab some more beer!

NIKKI (O.S.)
You talk too much.

SAMMY (O.S.)
At least I'm heard.

ANDREW (O.S.)
True that.

SAMMY (O.S.)
Cut the chit-chat.
(to everyone)
Alright, no kidding. I know an awesome story, and it's totally real.

SARAH (O.S.)
Yeah, right.

SAMMY (O.S.)
I'm serious!

SARAH (O.S.)
Is that even possible?

ANDREW (O.S.)
Did this happen to you?

Bobby walks to the car, opens the trunk, and rummages around for a while. We see him from behind. Finally, he pulls out and places on the car roof: a bottle of whiskey, two six-packs of beer, and a bundle of firewood, like those sold in camping sections.

Suddenly, he hears a noise, freezes, and listens. Then he slowly walks around the car, peering into the forest. The noise comes from the road they came in on. It's the sound of footsteps.

Bobby waits. Soon, two figures appear around the bend: a woman and a boy. The woman is SHIRLEY, a little over 40, but her disheveled look and puffy face make her look ten years older. A quick glance is enough to tell she hits the bottle often, but hasn't hit rock bottom yet. Her son, Timmy, 10, holds her hand with the resigned obedience of a trained pet.

Noticing Bobby, Shirley quickens her pace.

SHIRLEY.
Howdy, young'uns.

BOBBY

Hey.

Shirley stops a few steps away from Bobby, not letting go of Timmy's hand. She looks Bobby up and down, then peers behind him, taking in the camp setup.

SHIRLEY

Y'all campin' out?

BOBBY

Aha.

SHIRLEY

City folks, huh?

BOBBY

Yeah.

Shirley glances at the car behind Bobby. She clearly wants something.

SHIRLEY

Well, y'all enjoy yerselves. This here's a real nice spot. Real quiet, nature all 'round, and there's a pond just past the village.

(points down the road)

Water's real clean. Our kids spend all day there. This one too...

Shirley ruffles Timmy's hair. He ducks away. An awkward pause. Bobby shifts from foot to foot, clearly wanting to end the conversation.

SHIRLEY

Alright then, y'all have a good time. God bless. We's locals. Believe it or not, I only been outta the village twice in my life. Twice, can ya believe it?

Bobby nods silently.

SHIRLEY

Lived here my whole life. Buried my folks and my first husband here. And I'll die here too, and that's just fine by me.

Shirley pulls a pack of cigarettes from her tattered faux-leather jacket, shakes one out, and lights it. The white cigarette contrasts with her dirt-stained and tanned fingers.

Bobby pulls the bundle of firewood off the car roof, hinting that he needs to go, but Shirley keeps talking, seemingly oblivious.

SHIRLEY

Born and raised here. Got friends,
family, my own place. Don't need
nothin' else, y'know? Got
everything I need. I could lend ya
somethin' if ya need it. Do ya?

BOBBY

No, thanks.

SHIRLEY

Tools, an axe? Got everythin' ya
need, we ain't lackin'.

BOBBY

We've got an axe.

Shirley takes a deep drag, nods. She ruffles Timmy's hair
again. Squinting at Bobby.

SHIRLEY

What's yer name?

BOBBY

Bobby.

SHIRLEY

I'm Shirley.
(She waves at Bobby
playfully.)
Nice ta meetcha.

She winks. After a few hurried drags, she flicks the
cigarette away with a snap.

SHIRLEY

Alright then, y'all take care now.
Bobby, you got me? If ya need
anythin', tools, an axe, just
holler. Come to the village, ask
for Shirley Brown, everyone knows
me. Don't be shy. Need supplies,
bread, veggies... my veggies are
the best! All homegrown. Just bring
your own booze, I'm always runnin'
low...

Shirley falls silent but doesn't move to leave. She peers
behind Bobby again, eyeing the car.

CLOSE-UP: the car roof, where two six-packs of beer and an
unopened bottle of whiskey sit.

The last thing we see is Shirley's smiling face.

FADE TO BLACK:

We hear the sounds of a guitar, the crackling of the fire, and the chatter of the group.

FADE IN:

EXT. FOREST CLEARING - LATER

The group sits around the newly stoked fire. Sammy strums a guitar. Clearly, he's better at storytelling than playing; his playing is choppy and off-key.

The others nod along and quietly sing. Andrew and Nikki sit cuddled up, as do Bobby and Jane. Sarah listens to Sammy, covering her mouth with her hands. She's blushing with embarrassment, but her wide eyes are filled with admiration for Sammy.

Suddenly, the guitar STOPS. The camera focuses on Sammy, who has abruptly stopped playing. He looks surprised, staring off-screen. Then we see what he sees.

POV SAMMY: Standing between the tents is Timmy, Shirley's son.

SAMMY

Hey there, kid. What's up?

Now the whole group notices the boy.

BOBBY

Oh, I know him! What are you doing here?

Timmy doesn't answer, just shifts from foot to foot.

BOBBY

Come over here.

JANE

(worried)

How do you know him? Is that the kid from earlier?

BOBBY

Yeah.

(to Timmy)

Where's your mom?

Nikki stands up and beckons Timmy with her hand, like coaxing a shy puppy.

NIKKI

Come on, don't be scared. Are you here by yourself?

Timmy shuffles closer to the fire, shaking his head. He's not crying yet, but his eyes are already watery.

NIKKI
What's your name?

TIMMY
Timmy.

NIKKI
Hey Timmy! I'm Nikki.

Nikki sits Timmy on an empty chair, and Andrew hands him a sausage roll. The boy immediately bites into it hungrily.

NIKKI
Timmy, where's your mom?
Timmy shrugs.

NIKKI
Are you lost?

TIMMY
(chewing the sausage roll)
She'll be back soon.

SARAH
Maybe we should go look for her?
It'll be dark soon.

NIKKI
No need. She got herself lost,
she'll find her way back.

TIMMY
Can I stay with you guys for a
while?

The friends exchange looks. Nikki and Andrew, the unspoken leaders, take charge.

NIKKI
(catching her husband's eye)
Of course you can. You thirsty?

CLOSE-UP on Timmy. He smiles and nods.

FADE TO BLACK AND BACK IN:

EXT. FOREST CLEARING - EVENING

Now there are seven people in the clearing. Timmy has settled in and feels quite at home. He smiles, listening to his new friends' conversations. Andrew and Nikki have seamlessly taken on the role of young parents, sitting on either side of Timmy, ensuring he isn't bored. The others have grown used to Timmy's presence and hardly notice him.

Sammy is telling stories.

SAMMY

You guys remember Rabbit? Bobby, you gotta remember... Rabbit, he transferred to our school in sixth grade.

BOBBY

(distracted)

Aha...

SAMMY

With the teeth...

BOBBY

Uh-huh.

Bobby is no longer smiling or laughing, his face shows concern. He keeps checking his watch. His girlfriend Jane clings to his right side, gently stroking his arm—her mind already in the tent under the same blanket with him. Ignoring her affections, Bobby watches Andrew and Nikki, who are sweetly chatting with Timmy.

SAMMY

So, this guy Rabbit pulled a stunt the other day. He and his buddies decided to...

(laughs)

Well, you know... chase the dragon.

SARAH

What?

SAMMY

Yeah, you know, smoke some stuff.

SARAH

Oh my god!

Andrew gives Sammy a disapproving look. Nikki, pretending not to hear, continues asking Timmy questions.

SAMMY

Yeah, they're good guys, but they mess around sometimes. So, Rabbit and one of his buddies went to see their hookup...

SARAH

Their what?

SAMMY

Bobby, explain it to her.

Bobby doesn't hear the request, still checking his watch.

SAMMY

Hey, wake up! My lady wants to know what a hookup is. Let the expert explain.

BOBBY

(abstractedly)

A hookup is someone who supplies weed. The middleman between the producer and the buyer.

JANE

Bobby, you sold drugs?

BOBBY

No, of course not.

JANE

Then why did he call you an expert?

BOBBY

Don't listen to him. He's an idiot.

Jane sulkily punches Bobby's shoulder, but he barely notices. Sammy laughs loudly. Sarah shakes her head skeptically, but there's a smile on her lips. The pocketbook she's been glued to all day now sits forgotten on her lap.

SAMMY

So, they met with the hookup, got the stuff, and decided to sample it right then and there.

Andrew and Nikki fall silent. Pretending not to hear any longer is pointless, and now two disapproving looks are directed at Sammy. We see Timmy's confused face.

SAMMY

And it was out on the street, middle of the day, super busy. So they lit up right there in the car at a Walmart parking lot... and it knocked them flat!

NIKKI

Maybe you should stop.

ANDREW

Yeah, storyteller, cut it out. There's a kid here, you know.

Sammy's face hardens, the jokester gone.

SAMMY

Oh, looks like Mom and Dad are upset! Have you adopted him already?

ANDREW

Knock it off, I said. Enough with the clowning.

SAMMY

Oh, of course... you guys are so serious. We can't compete with that!

NIKKI

It's not about us! The kid doesn't need to hear this crap.

SAMMY

No one's forcing him. By the way, how long is he planning to stick around? Are we letting him sleep over too?

The camera focuses on Bobby, who's fidgeting in his chair. He clearly wants to join the conversation but can't find the right moment.

NIKKI

If we need to, we will.

SARAH

Not in our tent.

Sammy straightens up. He managed to charm Sarah and is looking forward to an unforgettable night, so he's not about to let some stray kid ruin his chances.

SAMMY

We've only got room for two.

JANE

Oh, ours is small too. And we only have two sleeping bags. Right, Bobby?

Bobby remains silent.

NIKKI

We'll find him a spot, won't we, hon?

Andrew's face shows he didn't expect this turn. He shrugs uncertainly.

SAMMY

Maybe it's time for his real parents to come back? Timon, where's your maman?

Timmy doesn't answer, looking scared.

Bobby can't take it anymore.

BOBBY

This is all my fault. Timmy,
Timmy... hey? Your mom didn't go
anywhere, did she?

Timmy looks like he's about to bolt.

JANE

Bobby, what are you talking about?

BOBBY

I think his mom is somewhere
nearby, passed out in the woods.
When they came by earlier... well,
I left a bottle of Jack on the car.
I think she swiped it...

Stunned silence. Everyone looks at Bobby in shock.

JANE

You what? Left a bottle out?

BOBBY

Not on purpose! I took it out when
I was looking for the beer and
firewood and... fuck, I don't know,
I just forgot to put it back in the
trunk.

SAMMY

That's fucking awesome! Great job,
bro...

JANE

(furiously)
You FORGOT?!

BOBBY

I'm not lying! She stuck to me like
glue! "Oh, we've got a pond, come
visit..." She distracted me! I
think she came over just for that.

The camera focuses on Timmy. His face contorts as he's on the
verge of crying: eyes welling up with tears, lips trembling.
These transformations happen as the others talk like Timmy
isn't there.

NIKKI (O.S.)

Wait, wait... So, you're saying his
mom is passed out somewhere, and
this kid--

SAMMY (O.S.)

That's really messed up.

ANDREW (O.S.)

C'mon man, we agreed - no charity
for the locals.

BOBBY (O.S.)

I didn't mean to! I even kept the
booze in the trunk to avoid
trouble. She caught me by the car.
She must have seen it.

Wide shot. Everyone is deep in thought, looking serious.
Timmy slowly shakes his head side to side, like a defendant
waiting for a verdict.

ANDREW

Timmy, Timmy, can you show us
where... where you left your mom?

Timmy shakes his head.

ANDREW

But you remember the way you came,
right? Let's go find your mom
together?

TIMMY

I don't know...

NIKKI

It's almost dark, he won't remember
anything. We should wait until
morning.

SARAH

Pfft!

SAMMY

Maybe he just doesn't want to. Come
on, kid, give it a shot. She's got
to be around here somewhere.

TIMMY

I don't know...

Timmy is on the verge of tears. Nikki glares at Sammy.

NIKKI

Stop pressuring him.

SAMMY

I'm not pressuring him.

NIKKI

You are, Sammy.

ANDREW

What's the point anyway? Even if we find her, she won't wake up anytime soon.

NIKKI

Exactly! We're not going to sober her up just to get him home. We need to wait until morning.

Sarah stands up dramatically and heads to her tent. Nikki watches her go. After a moment, Sammy follows her.

CUT TO:

INT. SAMMY AND SARAH'S TENT - EVENING

The only light in the tent comes from a small electric lantern. Sarah sits in the corner on a sleeping bag, knees pulled to her chest, arms wrapped around them. She's staring at a spot, nostrils flaring with anger. Sammy enters the tent a moment later.

SAMMY

Sarah, you okay?

Sarah nods.

SAMMY

Man, those two are driving me nuts!

SARAH

You're telling me.

SAMMY

I can't figure out what they want.

SARAH

Our "perfect couple" is just playing around. It's sickening to watch.

SAMMY

If they want to keep him, fine. But in their own tent.

SARAH

Andrew won't keep him in theirs. Did you see the way he looked?

SAMMY

Yeah. But there's no way he's making me do it. I said: no space here.

SARAH

He'll come up with something. Some vote or drawing straws, you know how he is. He doesn't want this either; he's just agreeing with Nikki.

SAMMY

Ever since he got married, he's a different person. Mr. Happy Family... looks down on everyone.

SARAH

Well, he's living the dream. Daddy bought him a condo, mommy got him a car. They've got it all.

SAMMY

And he's totally whipped. Screw those fairy tales...

Bobby sticks his head into the tent. The conversation stops immediately.

BOBBY

Can I come in?

SARAH

Yeah, come on.

Bobby squeezes into the tent and sits down next to Sarah and Sammy.

SAMMY

What's up?

BOBBY

They're calling for you. Andrew's got an idea.

SARAH

Told you.

SAMMY

What does he want now?

BOBBY

Take the kid to the village.

SAMMY

(thinking)

That's way out there... dirt roads all the way. It's pitch dark.

BOBBY

I know.

SAMMY

Getting lost would be a piece of piss.

(to Sarah)

Sorry.

Sarah rolls her eyes.

BOBBY

Yeah, I get it.

SARAH

And who's gonna take him?

CUT TO:

EXT. FOREST CLEARING - NIGHT

The group is gathered again, but now everyone is standing. Andrew gives Bobby last-minute directions.

ANDREW

There's a hill, then a stone bridge. Cross the bridge and take a left. After that, you can't miss it. You'll see the village lights on the right.

Bobby nods. Next to him are Nikki and Jane. Nikki holds Timmy's hand.

ANDREW

Good luck.

Nikki hands Timmy over to Jane, looking worried and sad.

NIKKI

You remember where to turn, right?

CUT TO:

INT. BOBBY'S CAR (MOVING) - NIGHT

Bobby is behind the wheel, sweating and stressed, wildly turning the wheel back and forth, navigating the narrow road. The car bounces on the bumps. Next to him, Jane looks anxious. It's clear they've been lost for a while. Timmy is in the back seat, staring into the dark.

JANE

You're lost.

BOBBY

Say it ten more times, Jane, maybe it'll sink in.

JANE

This is so stupid! Why did you volunteer? Andrew came up with the idea; he should've done it.

BOBBY

Andrew was drinking beer, I wasn't.

Bobby stops at another fork in the road, straining to choose a direction. Black tree trunks surround them.

JANE

Oh yeah, like there are cops around every corner here!

BOBBY

And I let his drunk mom swipe the whiskey bottle.

JANE

(screaming)

Oh, don't start! No one forced her to drink it all in middle of the woods!

BOBBY

I saw how badly she wanted it. I should've known. All because of that damn Sammy... "Grab the bottle, grab the bottle." Why bother if no one's drinking whiskey?

JANE

The locals do.

BOBBY

Stop being a smartass.

JANE

Then stop getting us lost and turn around! We're not finding anything out here. We need to get out of here ourselves.

Bobby snaps, and now both are shouting openly at each other. The camera shows from the back seat: two yelling heads from behind the front seats.

BOBBY

Did you forget who's in the back seat?

JANE

I didn't!

BOBBY

So what now?

JANE
I don't know!

BOBBY
(mocking)
I don't know!

JANE
We take him back!

BOBBY
Oh yeah?

JANE
Yeah!

BOBBY
And whose tent is he staying in?

JANE
I don't care whose, alright? Just not ours! Your married friends seemed to like him - let them take him!

BOBBY
Yeah, right! Like they'll jump at the chance.

JANE
Then he can sleep in the car!

The sound of a car door slamming cuts off the argument.

From the back seat view: both heads turn simultaneously to look at the camera.

From the driver's view: the back seat is empty.

BOBBY
(to Jane)
Idiot.

Bobby opens the door and tries to get out, but Jane grabs his arm.

JANE
Wait.

BOBBY
What?

JANE
Don't go. Let--

BOBBY
What?

JANE

--let him go. We'll say we dropped him off...

BOBBY

(shocked)

Are you crazy?

JANE

Think about it - he knows these woods better than we do. He can make it on his own.

BOBBY

You've lost it, Jane!

Bobby pulls his arm away from Jane with disdain and quickly exits the car. However, as soon as he reaches the hood, he slows down.

DRIVER'S POV: Through the windshield, we see Bobby's profile, illuminated from below by the headlights. He stops, lowers his head...

FADE TO:

EXT. FOREST CLEARING - NIGHT

Bobby and Jane are back at camp. We catch them in the middle of being interrogated by Nikki and Andrew. Sammy and Sarah are not involved, sitting apart, engrossed in each other.

NIKKI

Did he at least thank you?

BOBBY

Yeah.

NIKKI

You make sure he got home?

BOBBY

Yes.

ANDREW

So you found the village right away. Why'd it take so long?

Bobby glances at Jane. He's not good at lying.

JANE

We took a wrong turn on the way back.

ANDREW

(to Bobby)

You came in from the church side?

Bobby nods.

ANDREW
(continuing)
The little red brick church?

Bobby nods again. Andrew and Nikki exchange looks.

NIKKI
You didn't take him all the way.
You dropped him off halfway.

Bobby's face changes, and it's clear without words. Jane doesn't give up.

JANE
What? Why would you--

ANDREW
(interrupts)
You couldn't have come in from the church side, because it's in the center of the village. You'd know that if you'd been there.

Jane looks at Bobby, who shakes his head - there's no point in denying it.

NIKKI
(to Andrew)
I told you! I knew it, I just knew it!

In the background, Sammy leans back in his chair and says, "Ha!"

JANE
(yelling)
Look, if you're so smart, you should've done it yourselves! We were lost for almost an hour! We stopped at a fork, and he bolted. That's it. We're not chasing him through the woods at night!

The camp, which had settled into a semi-daze, comes ALIVE and BURSTS into ACTION. Everyone is yelling and rushing around, waving their arms. The camera jumps from one person to another.

The following lines are delivered almost simultaneously.

ANDREW
(to Bobby)
How could you...

NIKKI
(pointing at Jane)
It's all her fault!

JANE
Oh yeah? Screw you!

In the background, Sammy and Sarah laugh.

BOBBY
(to Andrewy)
It just happened.

NIKKI
(to Jane)
Rude much? Who do you think you
are?

JANE
Who are you? Why'd you dump this on
us?

NIKKI
Who gave his "white trash" mom the
bottle?

ANDREW
(to Bobby)
You shouldn't have volunteered. I
would've done it myself.

JANE
(to Nikki)
Like you wouldn't have! You'd have
offered snacks too, Mother Teresa...

BOBBY
(to Andrew)
Don't start, okay! You could've
gone right away...

NIKKI
(to Jane)
You're a piece of work.
(to Bobby)
You should teach her some manners.

BOBBY
(to Nikki)
Take a hike, no one asked you.

NIKKI
(offended)
Oh!

Laughter is heard again from Sammy and Sarah.

ANDREW

(to Bobby)

I get it, but this is too much...

JANE

Oh, he won't drive drunk... Such a cop-out.

NIKKI

Shut up already!

ANDREW

(continuing)

...leaving the kid behind!

NIKKI

Why bother explaining to them? It's pointless.

(points at Sammy and Sarah)

Those two are just laughing!

SARAH

(without getting up)

I told you! We should've looked for his mom right away, not waited till night. This is on you.

NIKKI

Oh, come on Sarah, it's all on me now? And you're innocent, huh? You didn't want the kid to stay the night from the start, showing your fucking attitude!

SAMMY

Hey, take it easy.

SARAH

(indifferently)

No one wanted to leave him for the night.

Silence falls over the clearing, broken only by the crackling fire and the chirping of crickets. Sarah's words seem to cut through the chaos, expressing the unspoken truth everyone was afraid to voice.

SUDDENLY, the silence is shattered by a faint, almost ghostly sound of a child crying, coming from the forest. Everyone strains to listen.

BOBBY

Did you hear that?

SARAH

It's him...

Everyone listens again. The crying stops.

SARAH
It's definitely him.

SAMMY
Don't be ridiculous.

NIKKI
(horrified)
Andrew, let's get out of here!

ANDREW
Where to?

NIKKI
Let's go find Timmy and head home.

ANDREW
It's the middle of the night.

NIKKI
So what?

BOBBY
Come on, guys, knock it off..

SAMMY
Let them go.

ANDREW
Babe, are you sure?

NIKKI
This place is awful. Let's go!

Andrew looks at Nikki for a long moment.

CUT TO:

INT. ANDREW'S CAR (MOVING) - NIGHT

POV from the driver's seat: headlights illuminate the bumpy, winding dirt road. The car speeds along, with Andrew focused intently on the road. A crossroads appears ahead.

ANDREW
This is the third one.

Nikki is in the front passenger seat, her head swiveling like a radar dish, eyes scanning the surroundings.

NIKKI
Turn right here.

ANDREW
Did he say right?

NIKKI

Yeah, turn. They went right at the third one, then left at the fork...

ANDREW

They shouldn't even be here...

NIKKI

(continuing)

...then they stopped at the next fork, and he took off.

Andrew sharply turns the wheel, kicking up dust as he makes a hard turn. He keeps speeding.

ANDREW

Took off, yeah right...

NIKKI

Do you buy that?

ANDREW

Not a chance. It pisses me off. Just tell the truth: you got tired and dropped him off. Why lie?

NIKKI

Because they've got no conscience. Honestly, I'm shocked. Bobby just fell so far in my eyes...

ANDREW

Ditto.

NIKKI

I could see this from anyone, but not him. It's all because of that Jane of his...

ANDREW

I didn't like her from the start.

NIKKI

Didn't like her? She's the reason for all this! She never wanted to come with us in the first place.

ANDREW

You think so?

NIKKI

She's a total bitch...

(yells)

Andrew, you missed the turn!

EXT. DIRT ROAD - NIGHT

We see the car speeding down the right fork of the road.

INT. ANDREW'S CAR (MOVING) - NIGHT

POV from Nikki: Andrew is cursing as he speeds along.

NIKKI

Slow down!

ANDREW

The road's too narrow to turn
around. I'll find a wider spot...

The car races down the narrow dirt road, flanked on both sides by steep ditches.

POV from the driver: the dirt road dips and rises ahead of the car. After a while, the road widens into a circular patch of tightly packed dirt.

ANDREW

There's a spot!

NIKKI

Slow down! Where are you racing off
to?

CU: the driver's feet. The right boot floors the gas pedal.

ANDREW

(turning to Nikki)

Hold on tight!

In the next second, there's a loud thud.

POV from the driver: something dark rolls over the hood, smashes into the windshield, and flies over the roof.

CU: the driver's feet, slamming on the clutch and brake pedals.

The car skids to a stop, kicking up clouds of black dust and...
...finally COMES TO A HALT.

CU: Andrew's hand shifting the gear lever into neutral.

EXT. DIRT ROAD - NIGHT

Shot from the ground, near the spot where the object Andrew hit lies in a shapeless heap. We can only see part of it, so we can't tell what it is.

Ten meters ahead, the car's rear lights and brake lights glow red.

INT. ANDREW'S CAR - NIGHT

We observe the passengers from outside, through the windshield. The shot includes part of the crumpled hood. Andrew and Nikki are pressed back into their seats, breathing heavily. There are cracks and blood splatters on the windshield.

NIKKI

Did we hit someone?

Andrew glances in the rearview mirror.

NIKKI

What's back there?

Andrew is too scared to speak.

CUT TO inside the car.

INT. ANDREW'S CAR - NIGHT

The engine hums steadily.

POV from Andrew: hands gripping the wheel, a few cracks in the windshield, and blood splatters like dark smudges. Andrew turns on the wipers, trying to wipe away the blood, but it just smears across the glass.

We observe the passengers from outside through the windshield.

NIKKI

Oh my God...

EXT. DIRT ROAD - NIGHT

Shot from the ground in the same spot as before. The dark, shapeless heap lies motionless, but now a strand of thin, boyish hair is visible, fluttering in the breeze. Andrew's car is ten meters ahead, brake lights glowing red, but it's unclear if the engine is still running.

INT. ANDREW'S CAR - NIGHT

POV from the hood through the windshield. The passengers sit frozen, like crash test dummies. Finally...

ANDREW

I need to...

(MORE)

ANDREW (CONT'D)
(swallows hard)
I need to check...

Andrew hesitates to get out of the car. There's a long pause.

NIKKI
Andrew, listen...

ANDREW
I'll go... I'll go and--

NIKKI
(interrupts)
I'm pregnant.

CUT TO inside the car.

INT. ANDREW'S CAR - NIGHT

Andrew turns and looks at Nikki in shock.

NIKKI
I was going to tell you tonight in
the tent... Thought it would be
romantic. But... Well... We're having
a baby, Andrew.

EXT. DIRT ROAD - NIGHT

Shot from the ground in the same spot as before. Silence. The
strand of hair still flutters above the shapeless heap.

Focus on Andrew's car. Brake lights and taillights glow.

In the next second, the brake lights go off.

CUT TO:

INT. SAMMY AND SARAH'S TENT - NIGHT

Sarah lies on her back, completely still, totally naked, with
the sleeping bag covering her lower body. Sammy hovers over
her, slowly kissing her neck and bare chest.

The last thing we see is Sarah's eyes, staring blankly at the
ceiling.