

*Dan, Violet, and Eliza are hiking in Montana in the middle of summer. They are just arriving at the site where they'll set up camp for the night. It's late afternoon. The forest is exploding with life. A deer crosses a nearby stream. A caterpillar gives birth to a butterfly. Two foxes mate loudly in the distance. A third fox watches.*

*It's hot. The three adventurers enter. They are dressed head to toe in hiking gear. They are mosquito bitten and exhausted, but happy.*

*Dan sits down on a log. The others follow suit.*

Violet: I always miss the leaves falling.

Dan: I can't even imagine what winter feels like this time of year.

Violet: I know. I think I have terrible object permanence. I'm like a toddler.

Dan: And you love cartoon network. You kind of are a toddler.

Violet: Yeah I do though.

Eliza: I'm starving.

Dan: I think I'm getting all the mosquitos. I'm a blood dispenser.

Violet: Me too. And I can't eat anymore jerky or I'll throw up.

Eliza: It's the worst possible food.

Dan: You know, some people have to eat cockroaches.

Violet: Cockroaches aren't a food. They're a topping.

Eliza: Like sprinkles.

Violet: You can't collect a bowl full of cockroaches.

Eliza: Well, I'm not hungry anymore.

Dan: I still am. And we have ramen. So if one of you sets up a fire pit I'll go get sticks.

Eliza: Yeah sure.

*Dan exits.*

Eliza: I hate these boots. *(She pulls them off.)* And they cost four hundred dollars.

Violet: You could get them second hand.

Eliza: Next time I will. *(She begins setting up a fire pit but instead builds an anthill.)* We could go hunting...

Violet: Hunting?

Eliza: I just feel like we could live off the land or something.

Violet: We don't have guns or anything to kill—

Eliza: I know. We could go fishing, though. What if we went fishing? We'll get a long stick and some string— we've got plenty of string— and just dangle a worm on the end— we have a hook don't we? I can dismantle this *(pointing to her coat)* mess and we'll tie a hook to a string—

Violet: I thought you were a vegetarian?

Eliza: Oh *(pause)* I forgot

Violet: I don't understand you sometimes

Eliza: It's strange— I don't feel like a *vegetarian*, you know? Like, some people are 'gay' and some people are 'black' but I'm not a 'vegetarian'

Violet: You don't have to be gay or black to be a chi omega

Eliza: I guess so. *(Pause)* I want to live like a native american I think. The sky is so big out here.

Violet: Oh?

Eliza: Have you read *Sapiens*?

Dan: *(Entering)* A prelapsarian fever dream.

Eliza: I just think.

Violet: Who doesn't?

Eliza: I just think modernity is a net negative for society.

Dan: Modernity gave you S'well and frappuccinos—

Eliza: I know, and for that I am eternally grateful.

Violet: Weren't you getting kindling Dan?

Dan: Oh. I forgot. *(Pause)* It feels amazing to be out of the world and in Nature—

Violet: It's fine. *(She looks at the sand pile.)* We were setting up a fire pit but we messed up at some point. Did you bring the instructions?

Dan: They must be in here somewhere. *(He begins digging through the backpack.)* Jesus, this is soaking wet.

Eliza: You sweated through it. You shouldn't've gotten it second-hand.

Dan: Why is there so much paper in here?

Violet: Oh, ah— that's mine. Just leave it.

Dan: What is this?

Violet: They're my drawings— it's sort of Georgia O'Keefe inspired but instead of flowers and skulls they're the insides of old iphones and computers—

Dan: They're surprisingly phallic

Eliza: God, it's hot. *(She begins taking off her socks and jacket.)* I'm suffocating.

Dan: Well, I can't find anything. Wait— *(He lifts up a sheet of instructions. A few cockroaches fall to the ground from the bottom of the bag.)* It says we have to do a chant. Paint our faces. And summon the fire.

Violet: That's ridiculous.

Dan: If one of you sets up a fire pit I'll go get sticks.

Violet: Yeah, sure.

Eliza: That's used, too.

*Dan exits.*

Violet: I like your necklace

Eliza: This? Oh, thanks— I got it on birthright

Violet: What's birthright?

Eliza: It's this trip Jews can take to learn about their ancestral homeland— it's sort of a free vacation to Israel.

Violet: What was it like?

Eliza: Hot. But amazing— it's just strange to see so many of us in one country. You can't understand the feeling of being homeless until you've walked on the ground that belongs to you.

*Pause*

Violet: Did you go to Palestine?

Eliza: No, it was a trip to Israel.

Violet: I feel like you can't really go to one without the other.

Eliza: Well. The Jews were there before Palestine was even a word.

Violet: Do you think you'll go back?

Eliza: I don't know. I might do a summer abroad or something— I just need to figure out my 'career path' first.

Violet: poli-sci, right?

Eliza: Yeah, I just— something feels wrong about doing the same-old consulting firm, marketing, vp, executive vp, president, ceo, retirement, death. I want to change the world. I want to make a difference.

Violet: You should try to find a company with morals.

Eliza: I'm looking. I put "Win-Win" for the 'business philosophy' section of my resume. It's so hot. Are you not just boiling?

Violet: Take some water.

Eliza: There's barely any left.

Violet: Are you sure?

*Eliza takes out the bottle from the bag*

Eliza: Oh, nevermind. I could've sworn we were down to one— the level rose.

*Dan enters with a bundle of twigs*

Dan: Guys. I got twigs.

Eliza: You're so resourceful.

Violet: You'll make a great housewife some day.

Dan: Hey. I had to climb a tree for some of these. I could be an explorer.

Violet: Maybe you'll discover the new world.

*Two people enter dressed as coyotes. They circle the group at the edges of the theater.*

Dan: We have a lighter, right?

*He sets up a fire teepee*

Eliza: I mean, yeah. But can we try to light it without that? By spinning a stick? With friction?

Dan: Or how about we use fire bending? Or— you know what? Maybe if we stare at it hard enough and chant loud enough and dance fast enough it'll just 'poof!'

*Night has begun to fall*

Violet: Can we just use the lighter? I'm hungry.

Eliza: Yeah, sure.

*She stares at the people dressed as dogs. One stares back.*

Crow: Uh— *(like a bark)* dog. Bark. Shit. Bark bark. Woof. *He stares at his partner hopelessly* Woof...

Coyote: Woof! Woof woof.

Dan: *(Turning)* What the hell?

Crow: Ah, shit. *(He stands and throws off the costume.)* All right, sorry guys. I guess this whole thing is probably a little weird.

Coyote: Woof?

Crow: Stop, man. Be serious.

Coyote: All right, sorry..

Crow: Hi everyone. I'm Crow.

Coyote: Coyote.

Crow: We're the resident forest spirits.

Coyote: Yup.

Crow: Take a seat

*They don't sit.*

Crow: Hey. Sit.

*They sit. The fire ignites.*

Dan: Who are you?

Crow: We're from the neighborhood.. We mostly do PR, R&D

Coyote: Accounting

Crow: And HR! We run the behind the scenes stuff

Coyote: Right.

Eliza: So... you guys are Indians? Native Americans?

Crow: you could say that—

Coyote: No. No you can't—

Crow: I mean, it's not our preferred—

Dan: But you're white

Crow: What?

Dan: You're white. You're not— you know. Native.

Violet: *(Helpfully)* A POC

Coyote: A proof of concept?

Crow: You must be mistaken— I'm a forest spirit. Actually: I'm a crow.

Coyote: Yes and I'm a coyote. That's where we get our names.

Eliza: I see. Dan—

Dan: I think we're hallucinating this together, right?

Violet: Yes.

Dan: I think it's from the mosquitos.

Eliza: I think it's heat stroke

Crow: No, no. We're real. Look, I'll prove it to you. Watch: *(He twirls his hand and twists his fingers as though weaving a magical net. Suddenly, a cockroach appears in his palm.)* Tada!

Violet: Oh.

Crow: No, really. *(He eats it.)* So look, here's the deal— we need you to leave.

Dan: What?

Crow: Leave now. The thing is, you're actually messing up the whole time frame. There's this big, well, convention that's about to happen at the convention center, and it really has to go smoothly. And it wouldn't look great for us if three Americans showed up. Because you are definitely not invited.

Dan: Well. We're certainly not leaving.

Coyote: That's sort of your thing isn't it.

Eliza: Excuse me?

Crow: Ok, watch closely. *He twirls and swirls his hand once again, then pantomimes shooting an arrow at Dan. Dan passes out.*

Violet: Dan?

Crow: And you! *He spins around and waves his hands and points them at Violet. She passes out.*

Eliza: Violet!

*Coyote hits Eliza on the back of the head with a rock. She passes out.*

Coyote: Oh, yes. Fantastic.

Crow: Make sure you get pictures of this. And that *(he points to the coke bottle)* and those papers— just everything. The world is going to freak out when they see what's going on a few hundred yards away. Oh yeah. This is perfect.

Coyote: Are we still doing the plan?

Crow: Do you want to make another power point in the next 20 hours?

Coyote: Not particularly, no.

Crow: Then just stick with it. It's all handled. *(He pantomimes shimmering, magical fairy dust with his fingers)* A little a this, a little a that— just enough for a trip to the equator or so

Coyote: Yeah.

*Crow begins to exit, but is interrupted—*

Coyote: You know, I've been watching these youtube videos about how to make your own fairy dust.

Crow: No.

Coyote: It's gonna be legal in Montana in a few years anyway man. We might as well get ahead of the game.

Crow: We threw, what, 10 bucks on Craigslist to put two people in a magical trance state for a few hours? I'm fine with that.

Coyote: Plus shipping.

Crow: Alright. You look into it. But clean up all your other DIY shit first.

Coyote: Ok, ok. I will. What are we gonna do with the third one? We only bought enough of that for two humans—

Crow: Just roast her or something. I don't care.

*Crow turns to leave again.*

Coyote: Hey— thanks for doing this whole thing, man. You know how I feel about public speaking.

Crow: Yeah, I know.

Coyote: That TED talk—

Crow: Yeah, I know.

*Crow leaps into the air and flies off. Coyote walks off the other way, dragging Eliza. The lights fade down except on Violet and Dan.*

*It is midnight. A full moon is out. Violet and Dan wake up in the middle of a forest, but it is a different forest, with different animals. It's humid, and muggy. Insects crawl on every surface. Parasitic flies lay eggs in frogs' backs. Primates call out. It's a jungle. We're not in Montana any more. The sound of crashing waves is almost, or barely, audible.*

Dan: Oh god.

Violet: Dan...

*He sees that she is pregnant*

Dan: Oh my god. Oh no. Violet.

Violet: Dan...

Dan: Oh no. What...

Violet: Dan...

Dan: I—

*Long pause. They sit up.*

Dan: I don't know where we are and I think we're going to die.

Violet: Yeah. Well.

Dan: What?

Violet: Ugh. So anticlimactic.

Dan: What?

Violet: And I feel like an elephant. Look at me.

Dan: You...

Violet: Yep. *Pause.* I spent so long jumping up and down in my bedroom pretending to be a famous politician, or a famous chef, a famous teacher—

Dan: Famous?

Violet: Yep. *Pause.* I didn't really get into board games I guess. I was too busy planning to save the world.

Dan: Huh. I remember you told me about wanting to be a priest—

Violet: oh yeah, forever ago. Six year old me wanted to be the pope I think.

Dan: Cute.

*Pause*

Dan: There's a lot that I don't know about you, I guess

Violet: I never took you to my country house.

Dan: I know. I've been expecting an invite.

Violet: I was going to take you. To see the leaves fall. And cook bacon for you— I told you, I can cook it perfectly

Dan: I do love— do you hear that? *Pause.* That rushing noise.

Violet: I'm sorry about your paper

Dan: God, this is so bizarre. My brain feels sticky.

Violet: I said your paper topic was derivative.

Dan: Paper.

Violet: Last year. *She lies back.* You were writing about the moral disconnect in the Stanford prison experiment and how that related to the lack of empathy in a corporate... environment. I read it, you know. I liked it.

Dan: We're— I don't know. I don't— we're in a jungle and you're talking about some paper I wrote?

Violet: I really connected with it! *She stands.* And I'm sorry about not coming to that show.

Dan: Is this your confessional? Sit down. It's boiling—

*He retches. Black oil pools down from his mouth. Violet doesn't notice.*

Violet: What I'm saying is that I connected with it on a personal level. How 'the environment' is just like 'the economy.' It doesn't make sense. Everything is the economy. Everything is the environment.

Dan: *Beginning to laugh* Honestly I don't really remember—

Violet: It especially got me thinking—

Dan: *Laughing* Violet, you're bleeding.

*She looks down. There's blood everywhere.*

Violet: Oh, no.

*The drone of insects increases as they are drawn to the scent of Violet's blood.*

Dan: You need to lie down.

*The sound of loud, predatory calls*

Violet: What's that

Dan: I don't —

Violet: Something is coming.

Dan: There's nothing we can do.

*Dan gags and nothing comes up.*

Violet: We need to run.

Dan: Run where?

Violet: I don't know—

Dan: Why don't you click your heels a few times—

*The stomping footsteps of a massive creature echo out*

Dan: Ok. Ok. Take my hand.

*He reaches out and notices something under his skin. It's a larva. He pulls it out.*

Dan: Jesus christ.

Violet: Oh.

*She bends over. Blood is covering the lower half of her body. The buzzing, stomping, panting, shrieking, wing flapping increases. Then: Silence. Crow enters, already monologuing, dressed in a black suit.*

*Coyote is filming from the edge of the theater.*

Crow: ...tortured is?

*Pause for theatrics*

Crow: The waiting. The anticipation. The smell, the sight of the... instruments, the noise of things being sharpened. *Pause.* Do you know why I brought you here?

Violet: To hurt us? Why? What did we & Dan: What are you doing to me? My— where are we?

Crow: To make you wait.

*Pause. The sound of ocean waves begins, barely.*

Crow: We've been anticipating this for a long time. We knew you were coming. The most intelligent species on earth. The brightest; the boldest; the moon-walking apes. We watched you play and build and discover. *Waves increase.* And burn things. And break things. You've hurt a great many of us.

*Pause.* So we figured it was time to return the favor. *Pause. Waves increase.* You know, animals work in mysterious ways. Take the bullfrog, for example. *He pulls one out of his pocket. It's alive and it croaks.* Drop it in boiling water and it will flail desperately, trying to save its life. But if you slowly increase the temperature, the frog won't notice it's being cooked alive— until it's gone. *He squeezes the frog. Water comes out. The waves are unmistakable now. Water begins flowing down the walls in a light trickle.*

Crow: And that's what we've been doing to you. The sky seems impossibly big, doesn't it?

*Coyote enters, dragging Eliza. She is dressed as a dodo bird. Under a mask she is blindfolded. Coyote releases her and she wanders around the stage. She calls out to her friends. They cannot answer or move.*

Crow: So. When you can't make them see the light... well, we're turning up the heat. Bit by bit, day by day. At first, you had no idea. Then your scientists were afraid. Some of you started to listen. *Eliza wanders into Crow's arms. He grabs her.* Now the fun begins— the futile race against the clock. We do to you what you've done to us for hundreds of years. We boil you alive. We push you to the edge of extinction— *Pause. The waves are roaring now. Water fills the theater. It swarms over everything. The stage is sodden, drowned. Finally, everything calms.*

Crow: It's much cooler down here, isn't it? *He breathes out and bubbles escape.* When we flood your cities and melt your statues and your skyscrapers, I'll think of this moment. Water has a way of healing wounds, even the most— um. Water has a way of healing even the most... poisonous wounds

Coyote: That's good. That's great.

Crow: Do you think we got it?

Coyote: I got it.

Crow: Even the background noise?

Coyote: We can fix it in post.

Crow: Are you sure? Cause we can do it again—

Coyote: We got it! I'm sure. Hey. Hey! Look at me, bro. You did great. You're killer.

Crow: Really?

Coyote: Yeah, really. You sold it.

Crow: God, it's just— it's so hard to make spirits change.

Dan: What's going on.

Crow: Oh, this— it's for this convention we're doing tonight. To support the effort to warm the planet and remove the human race.

Coyote: It's sort of a charity event. It's got great sponsors though.

Crow: Yeah, the Clinton foundation, Harvard, Citigroup— lots of big names.

Coyote: Hey, thanks for doing this, you guys. You have no idea how hard it was to get actual humans to participate willingly.

Crow: Yeah, cadavers just don't move like the real thing.

Coyote: Pound it, dude. *He goes in for the fist bump. It's not reciprocated.*

Violet: So you just—

Eliza: Violet! Help! Help me! *She can't hear or see.*

Coyote: Oh, my bad. *He helps her take off her mask and blindfold and earmuffs.* Sorry, darling.

Violet: You cast us in your promotional video. For the end of the world.

*Her stomach slowly deflates.*

Coyote: The end of the world!

Crow: Haha! No, no! Of course not, the end of the world? No. Just *humans*. Just you people. And listen. You were great. Really, stellar. Grade a. Top of the—

Dan: How could you? There are— there are 7 billion people on this planet! Oh my god, I'm yelling at a forest spirit. Jesus. Jesus christ.

Crow: You kids and your expletive gods. Jesus christ. God fucking damnit.

Coyote: Listen— I really wouldn't give a shit about the number of invasive parasites growing on my back. I'd just want them off. And that's what she— *he pats the wall, indicating Earth*— wants too.

Besides, we assumed you'd be all up for it.

Violet: What?

Crow: Yeah! I mean, you spend your tax dollars on oil companies and corn plantations and cattle ranches. Your whole country is built on lumber and diamonds and coal.

Coyote: Yeah, we thought you would be down.

Dan: Down?

Violet: We're not down.

Crow: Woah, I have a consent form right here.

Coyote: Yeah, signed in blood under a full moon. And notarized.

Dan: When did I sign that?

Coyote: It's actually on the last page of the apple terms and conditions

Crow: We have an agreement with Tim Cook—

Eliza: Can we just go home?

*Pause*

Crow: Yeah. Sorry about the mix-up, guys. I really hope it doesn't negatively impact your opinion of the park.

Coyote: We'd love to have you again, you know. If you're ever in town again before your species is wiped off the map, come say hi.

*Crow snaps his fingers. The stage goes black. Lights flash. Thunder rumbles. When the lights come up the three are in the kitchen of Violet's Upstate New York summer home. Water rushes very gently in the background. Something sizzles offstage.*

Eliza: Where are we?

Violet: This is my country house Upstate.

Dan: Look.

*He points out the window. The property is flooded.*

Violet: Oh, wow. *Pause.* That must be the Hudson flooding.

Dan: *Looking around.* How often did you come up here?

Violet: Hmm? Oh—all the time, before my grandma died.

Dan: It's gorgeous. Look at all this exposed wood.

*Eliza lies down on the floor.*

Violet: Isn't it? Back when I had the motivation to draw I could only draw up here.

Dan: You draw?

Violet: Not anymore.

Dan: Why'd you stop coming up? I mean, I know, you said, your grandma, but still, how come—

Violet: Family drama. *Pause.* It was interesting at the time, but now talking about it just tastes like dry oatmeal. Or something.

Dan: Right.

Violet: Anyway, the world is ending. Aren't we supposed to talk about that?

Dan: I don't—

Eliza: *Practically hungover. Groaning.* Violet, does your mansion have any water?

Violet: It's—in the kitchen. I'll get you something. *Pause.* How do you feel?

Eliza: Fantastic.

Violet: Here. *A glass. Pause.* Do you want to see upstairs?

*Pause.*

Violet: Dan?

Dan: Me?

Violet: Yeah, you.

Dan: Oh. Oh, well—

Violet: The world is ending, Dan.

Dan: Yeah. Yeah, you're right. *He stands. They exit.*

*Eliza: Beautiful. La la la la. She rubs her forehead. Where's the goddamn water. Vi—ugh. She stands, slowly. Picking up her glass she makes her way over to the window. Offstage, the sound of a rushing stream echoes placidly. Everything is calm. Damn. Look at me, already bored. She drinks. She drops her glass. It shatters. She presses her hands to the window. Careful now—you'll miss it. A leaf falls, red and twisting, from a tree in the backyard.*

Scene