

CAMP LOST

Written by

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TEASER

FADE IN:

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

SUPER: PACIFIC NORTHWEST - 1998

Three teenagers explore the dark, damp woods that lay before them. They whisper loud enough to be heard over the cracking of sticks under their feet.

ETHAN

This way.

ETHAN MILLER (11) somewhat confidently leads his friends to the right, following a half-covered trail. If it weren't for his oversized Seattle Supersonics sweatshirt, and wired-rimmed glasses, and teenage acne, you'd think him much older than eleven based on his mature demeanor alone.

JOE BUCHANAN (13) follows his friend. He wears a distressed flannel with jeans. His wavy dirty-blond hair falls at his cheek bones near a nose he has yet to grow into. His broad shoulders suggest that he's older than the other two. He walks next to a girl, JESS SANDERS (12). She is tall and thin. Her overalls have been hemmed two inches too soon, which makes her frame even more apparent. Her tight, brown curls frame her face, which is still plump with youth. Joe grabs her hand and squeezes. He nods his head to the left, indicating they leave the group and explore another direction, alone. Jess smiles shyly and follows his lead.

Ethan walks ahead, unaware that his friends have left him to explore alone. The sound of twigs and leaves under his weathered Converse are the only remaining sound. He pushes past the branches and brush. He climbs over boulders and ducks under large fallen trees. Suddenly, he comes upon a clearing. In front of him lies a STAIRCASE. It looks identical to the one in his family home, beige carpet with a white wooden railing. It is pristine, untouched by moss or dirt. Not an animal in site. They seem to know better than to come near.

Ethan looks around and realizes for the first time that his friends are not with him. He calls out for them but no words escape his lips. The sound of the wind and the rustling of leaves have been replaced by a noise-cancelling hum, which rings in our ears as well as Ethan's. He calls out once again to his friends, to no avail. He moves closer to the Staircase, alone.

Ethan approaches the anomaly that lays before him. As he does, a voice breaks through the crackling silence. It begins as an inaudible whisper and grows louder as Ethan steps closer. It speaks slowly, it's voice raspy and harsh.

STAIRCASE

Come home, Ethan. Your friends are here. They've missed you.

Ethan looks back from where he came. He looks for his friends, for where they could be. But no one is there. He turns back to the staircase.

STAIRCASE (CONT'D)

That's it. We've been waiting for you.

Ethan lifts his foot and begins to climb the staircase. As he does, the voice intensifies. It moves from a loud whisper to a deafening white noise. As he ascends each step the voice grows, engulfing the space.

STAIRCASE (CONT'D)

Just one more step and we'll all be together.

Ethan feels a stabbing pain in his head and hears a ringing in his ears. He reaches for his head, trying to grab it and control the pain as he continues to take the stairs, step by step. As he reaches the top step the noise reaches its crescendo. Ethan lets out a shattering scream and a thunderous crack rings through the forest.

From another corner of the woods, Jess and Joe look up in horror. At the top of the staircase there is nothing but an oversized Supersonics sweatshirt. Ethan is gone.

SMASH TO TITLES:
CAMP LOST

END OF TEASER

INT. SCHOOL BUS - DAY

The driver, COUNSELOR JOE, spins out of his seat and stands up. His quick dry cargo shorts hang off his thin frame. They're accompanied by a colorful Camp Lost shirt, and a white bucket hat that's been colored beige by the sun. Beck takes off his headphones, as do a handful of other campers, and turns his attention to the front of the bus.

COUNSELOR JOE

Hello campers. And welcome to Camp Lost!

A couple of cheers emanate from the back of the bus.

COUNSELOR JOE (CONT'D)

Just a couple of rules before we take you to your cabins and let you settle in for the summer.

(beat)

If it pings, rings, or dings, it is not allowed. That's right campers if you didn't already know or your parents were too afraid to tell you, this is a zero technology camp.

Audible moans and murmuring can be heard from the campers.

COUNSELOR JOE (CONT'D)

No phones. No tablets. No laptops. If it was made in this millennium I don't want to see it. That said we do have a tech room of sorts. There you'll find cds, Walkmans, and a stand-alone Macintosh that will only be used to email your parents.

At the back of the bus, KENZIE (12), turns to her friend.

KENZIE

What's a Macintosh.

Her friend shrugs her shoulders, unsure. Another camper, JEREMY (12), raises his hand.

COUNSELOR JOE

Yes, Jeremy. Tamagochis and Gameboys are allowed. The rules haven't changed since last year.

A girl, RACHEL, raises her hand.

RACHEL
So, you're saying no technology.
Like, at all?

COUNSELOR JOE
Correct.

RACHEL
iPhone?

COUNSELOR JOE
No.

RACHEL
Android?

COUNSELOR JOE
No.

RACHEL
Apple Watch?

COUNSELOR JOE
No.

RACHEL
Smart Speaker?

COUNSELOR JOE
You can't have possibly brought one
of those to camp.

A SMART SPEAKER voice sounds off.

SMART SPEAKER
I'm sorry. I didn't catch that.
Would you like to ask again?

Counselor Joe gives a heavy sigh and address the entire bus
again.

COUNSELOR JOE
Like I said. There will be no
twenty-first century technology
this summer. As you get off the
bus, please hand over all
electronic devices to Counselor
Jess. What you don't give us I
promise we will find. And in the
mean time, if you have any
questions, just refer back to this
catchy phrase: "Made before ninty-
nine, it's probably fine.

(MORE)

COUNSELOR JOE (CONT'D)
Two-thousand and beyond, it needs
to get gone."

The bus is silent.

COUNSELOR JOE (CONT'D)
Yeah...It needs some work. But
we're gonna have a lot of fun this
summer. We've got arts and crafts,
hiking, kayaking, swimming, and
with a little luck you might
even...

Counselor Joe points to the crowd of CAMPERS on the bus and a
few of them chime in as Counselor Joe finishes his line.

COUNSELOR JOE/CAMPERS
Get lost!

EXT. CAMP LOST - DAY - CONTINUOUS

The campers exit the bus and hand over their cellphones,
tablets, and smart watches to COUNSELOR JESS, who stands tall
at the front of the bus. Her tight natural curls frame her
sun-kissed face, which glistens even more than usual from the
generous amount of sunscreen she's used.

Rachel nears the front of the line and reaches Counselor
Jess. She hands over her phone and tries to move on but Jess
holds her back. She clears her throat and motions for Rachel
to give her more. Rachel coughs up the smart speakers from
her backpack. She tries to leave but Jess stops her again.

COUNSELOR JESS
And the Switch.

Rachel rolls her eyes and pulls a Nintendo Switch out of the
inside pocket of her denim jacket.

RACHEL
Can I go now?

COUNSELOR JESS
You may.

The campers walk to the side of the bus and pull their
luggage from a large pile as Jr. Counselor, NICK, calls their
last name and assigns them a cabin number.

NICK
Butler, Jacobs, Michaels, Miller,
Nanoo, Owens, Purser, Taylor, Yee,
and Zeigler. Cabin 1.

As the campers gather their things and listen for their name to be called, Counselor Joe and Counselor Jess meet by the front of the bus.

COUNSELOR JOE
Can you believe? Another summer
here already.

COUNSELOR JESS
Time marches on, I guess.

COUNSELOR JOE
I love it here. Reminds me of old
times. Fresh air, forest, you,
Ethan.

Counselor Jess is silent, she stares down at her feet and remains silent as Counselor Joe continues to talk.

COUNSELOR JOE (CONT'D)
I don't know how or why, but some
nights it's like I can almost hear
him. Like he's close by.
(beat)
Who knows, maybe one night the
stars'll align and we'll get to see
him one more time.

Jess holds her silence for a moment longer, letting the full weight of what she is about to say wash over her. When she does speak she sounds as if the words are being forced from her mouth.

COUNSELOR JESS
I talked to the bank.

COUNSELOR JOE
They called you too?

COUNSELOR JESS
Last month.

COUNSELOR JOE
And?

Jess doesn't say anything. He asks again.

COUNSELOR JOE (CONT'D)
And?

Jess takes a breath.

COUNSELOR JESS
I think we should sell.

Joe's head drops slightly. And Jess sets into a very clearly prepared rebuttal.

COUNSELOR JESS (CONT'D)

It makes the most sense.
Financially. Emotionally.
Personally.

(beat)

I have a job. A good job.

COUNSELOR JOE

I have a job too, Jess.

Jess becomes increasingly more frustrated.

COUNSELOR JESS

As a teacher. We don't all have the
luxury of taking summers off. At
least not forever. And I'm seeing
someone.

This last comment comes out faster and more agitated than expected.

COUNSELOR JOE

Oh.

COUNSELOR JESS

He's good. We're good. And I don't
want to throw that away for
something that's never gonna
happen.

COUNSELOR JOE

So you're gonna give up? Just like
that.

(beat)

What would Ethan say?

Jess stands up a little straighter, gathering her gumption.

COUNSELOR JESS

Nothing Joe. It's been twenty-five
years since he died.

COUNSELOR JOE

Disappeared!

COUNSELOR JESS

Either way. We haven't heard a
thing. What am I supposed to do?
Spend the rest of my life here?
Waiting for a miracle? We tried.
Every damn summer.

(MORE)

COUNSELOR JESS (CONT'D)

But it's time to face facts. He's
not coming back. And this summer
isn't gonna to change that.

Jess walks always with a Jr. Counselor and a group of
campers. Joe stands alone for a moment before kicking a rock
down the road and flagging down his group of boys.

COUNSELOR JOE

Cabin 10 follow me.

END OF ACT ONE