

EXT. SNOWY FOREST - NIGHT

It is eerily quiet. Two figures rest against separate trees, unmoving. There is a layer of snow laying on the two. There are the remains of a fire before them.

CUT TO:

THE FIRE

We see the fire has gone out long ago, snow covering the blackened wood.

PAN TO ANNALISE

Annalise is not cold. She reaches out a hand and studies it, shaking it slightly as if that will encourage her to start shivering. She harshly breathes out, looking for mist but theres NOTHING.

Annalise looks off to the side where JACK SLEEPS against a tree. She focuses on the LANTERN and the faint glow inside.

CUT TO:

Someone LOOKS DOWN on the pair through the trees as a shadow jumps across the trees, making a rustle.

Annalise frowns, her eyes glancing that direction, but she doesn't turn her head.

She GETS UP, stepping on the remains of the fire and tracking black ash as she leaves the clearing. She walks for a while.

CUT TO:

EXT. FULL SHOT - SNOWY HILL - NIGHT

We follow Annalise as she comes over the crest of a hill, wading through shin deep snow.

Something watches her through a bush.

SUDDENLY Annalise launches herself at the bush, crashing through it and tackling her stalker. She rolls down a short hill. When she stops she shakes herself and looks at what she's holding down. It's a rabbit, frozen in fear.

Annalise gasps.

ANNALISE
(regretful)
Sorry!

The rabbit bolts away as she lifts her hands from it. It leaves a faint trail of blood that stands out against the snow.

Anna watches worried and horrified. She glances at her hands.

A wry chuckle echoes from the trees around her.

Anna stands up.

ANNALISE
(loudly)
Who's---! Show thyself!

FOREST SPIRIT
What bravery for a creature like
you.

A shadow moves through the trees, much taller than Annalise.

Annalise's eyes track the sounds and she turns to follow the movement as the stranger circles her from the trees.

ANNALISE
There's no one like me. I'm just
me.

FOREST SPIRIT
Is that so? Then what do you call
yourself.

ANNALISE
My name isn't important. You
though? If you're so intent on
stalking us you *must* be
important. Important and very
bored. I can't imagine why
someone like yourself would take
it upon themselves to waste their
time messing with a couple of
ghosts.

FOREST SPIRIT
(interested)
Ghosts? Is that what you two are.
My what a strange ordeal.

ANNALISE
 (suspiciously)
 Why?

It's silent for a moment.

Annalise turns around, looking for the speaker in the trees.

FOREST SPIRIT
 Ghosts don't travel, my dear.

Annalise makes a disgusted face at being called "dear"

ANNALISE
 Well we do. I don't see why
 that's any of your business.

A group of trees behind Annalise shift as a tall shadow disconnects from them.

Anna turns to find something off-screen staring down at her.

FOREST SPIRIT
 This is my forest, child. As are
 all the souls that dare venture
 inward and never leave.

Annalise tries not to look afraid.

ANNALISE
 (angry)
 Well..We're not staying. We're
 just passing through.

The Forest Spirit continues to LOOM over the Annalise. It bends down slightly.

FOREST SPIRIT
 Woodcutters. Soldiers. Merchants.
 Weary travelers who wish to take
 a short cut away from the safety
 of the road. All say the same
 thing.

FOREST SPIRIT (CONT.)
 And all remain with me.

There's a beat as Annalise glanced down at the black ash she's tracked with her. She looks back up at the Spirit defiantly.

ANNALISE

What of children?

FOREST SPIRIT

What of them?

ANNALISE

You want to know what we're doing here don't you? Children. J--my companion doesn't leave the ghosts of children lost in some dark wood. We don't care who you think you own.

FOREST SPIRIT

Hm. That soul your companion carries in his...

Forest Spirit laughs at the absurdity.

FOREST SPIRIT (CONT'D)

Vegetable...is mine. You have no right to take it.

ANNALISE

"It" is a little girl. And she deserves to be back with her family.

FOREST SPIRIT

You think that is the only child trapped in my woods? Do you mean to save all of them. Will you find all of them?

Before Annalise can answer a flash of fire whips out from off screen and the Forest Spirit backs into the trees with an ungodly howl of rage.

Jack shoves the TURNIP LANTERN in Annalise's arms and turns her around.

Annalise fumbles with the LANTERN for a moment and stumbles.

JACK

Run!

ANNALISE

Where?!

JACK

It doesn't matter where! Until daylight. Do not stop until daylight or you leave the wood.

I'll find you. Now *run!*

Annalise takes a few steps backward, clutching the lantern to her chest, before she turns and bolts away from the clearing and disappears into the trees.