

EXT: ALYESSA'S HOUSE: NIGHT

The house is surrounded by well-maintained gardens and a wrap around porch with a swing hanging from the ceiling on the right end. It has been painted light lavender with off white and mauve trimming; it looks very much like a dollhouse. Roman walks Alyessa to her front door. Both are reluctant for the day to end.

ROMAN

This is your mother's house.

ALYSSA

You betcha.

ROMAN

I didn't mean anything by it.

ALYESSA

(Teasing)

I know.

ROMAN

I like it. It's different.

ALYESSA

It's definitely that. Mom collects dollhouse. After Dad died, she turned their house into a life-size one. At first, the neighbors had a fit.

ROMAN

Obviously, she didn't listen.

ALYESSA

Not for a minute. She said the moment they start paying her bills, they could have a say. Until then, they could just shut up.

ROMAN

Strong lady.

ALYESSA

That's my Mom.

ROMAN

Who has a beautiful daughter.

ALYESSA

(Embarrassed)

I had a good time today.

ROMAN

Me too. Who thought playing hooky could be so much fun.

ALYESSA

(Brushing the popcorn off his shirt)

Popcorn.

ROMAN

Lunch. The museum. Dinner and a movie. That must be some kind of record. How will we top that next time?

ALYESSA

We'll just have to be creative.

ROMAN

I can do that.

ALYESSA

Me too.

They stall for a moment.

ROMAN

I should say good night.

ALYESSA

Good night. Thank you for the wonderful day.

ROMAN

(Backing down the stairs)

I have to get up early.

ALYESSA

Me, too.

(Laughing at herself)

I just said that.

ROMAN

(Stopping on the bottom step)

I don't mind. What are you doing for dinner tomorrow night?

ALYESSA

(Following to the edge of the porch)

Not sick of me yet?

ROMAN

Not even close.

ALYESSA

I teach class tomorrow night at 7. Why don't you stop by. We'll be working on self-defense techniques.

ROMAN

I'll see what I can do. Maybe you can show how to avoid black eyes?

ALESSA

I'll see what can do.

They both wait. Roman turns to walk away.

Good night, Roman.

ROMAN

Good night.

Roman turns to leave but stops. Instead, he runs back up the stairs and they passionately kiss.

Now it's a good night.

ALYESSA

Yes, it is.

Happily, Roman walks back down the stairs; Alyessa watches.

CUT

EXT: ISOLATED CABIN IN THE WOODS: NIGHT

The cabin is survivalist paradise. It is isolated, hard to find and easily defended. Surrounded by a thick forest, it can't be seen from the road. However, the yard around it has been cleared of all ground cover. A generator rumbles in the background. Lights shine from several windows. A man can be seen walking around on the inside. The moon illuminates most of the yard.

Max and Steve hide in the underbrush just inside the treeline.

MAX

(Whispering)

This isn't going to be easy.

STEVE

(Whispering)

Tell me about it. Types like him are real paranoid. The slightest sound will set him off.

MAX

Now what?

STEVE

We wait.

MAX

For what? Morning?

STEVE

We can't rush.

MAX

(Standing up branches snap under his feet)

We should at least make sure the kid's okay.

Steve pulls him back down and points at the house. The man has stopped pacing and is looking outside the window. Max crouches back down.

He couldn't have heard me.

STEVE

Adrenaline super charged senses. The kid's safe as long as he thinks he has the upper hand.

MAX

Do you think he saw me?

STEVE

I'm not sure. He might just think it was an animal.

The man backs out of sight.

I don't like the look of that.

MAX

What--

Steve shushes him. The lights in the cabin go out.

STEVE

Problem.

(Creeping toward the cabin)

You stay here.

MAX

Where you going?

STEVE

To get the kid.

MAX

What about--

STEVE

He knows we're here.

MAX

I'm going with you.

STEVE

No. You go back to the car and call for the cavalry.

MAX

I can call from here.

STEVE

He'll see the light and know for sure.

Suddenly flames are seen inside the cabin. They rapidly spread from one end to the other.

Son of a bitch!

Steve races across the yard to the house. Max dials his phone. Steve kicks in the door and runs inside. Behind him, Max can be seen following.

CUT

INT: CABIN: NIGHT

The fire rapidly spreads. Bernie stands in front of the sofa, pointing a rifle at the door. Crying, Garret cowers on the sofa. Steve stands in the doorway

BERNIE

Get out! You're not taking him!

STEVE

(Trying to calm him down)  
You don't have to do this.

BERNIE

He's mine! I created him!

Max runs in.

You? What are you doing here?

GARRET

I want to go home!

MAX

Hey, man. I'm just trying to help.

STEVE

That's all I'm trying to do.  
(To Garret)  
Kid, are you okay?

GARRET

I want my mama!

STEVE

I'll get you back to her.

BERNIE

No! He's mine!

The room is filling with smoke and flames, which are rapidly affecting all of them, especially Garret.

STEVE

She's worried about you--both of you.

BERNIE

She's just wants money. She don't care about me. Otherwise, she wouldn't have divorced me.

MAX

A boy needs his father in his life. I get that.

BERNIE

Damn straight! That bitch is trying to keep me from him.

STEVE

(Taking a couple of steps closer)

No, she's not.

(Pointing at the couch)

He's your son. He's also her son. A boy needs both his mama and papa.

BERNIE

Stay back.

The heat cracks the glass of the family pictures hanging on the wall. Several fall to the ground.

STEVE

(Stopping)

It's getting hot in here man. Can't we talk about this outside?

BERNIE

(Backing up)

NO ONE'S TAKING HIM FROM ME!

MAX

(Stands behind Steve)

Death will take him!

BERNIE

No! We'll be together! Always!

Glass breaks. Object fall. The roof creaks above them.

STEVE

I can't let that happen.

MAX

Racing, I saw how painful burns are. Do you want that for him? A slow painful death.

BERNIE

Once the flames hit the propane tank, it'll be over fast and easy.

MAX

Propane?

STEVE

Where is it?

BERNIE

Outside the kitchen. Enough to turn the cabin in to kindling

STEVE

(Turning toward Max)

Max.

MAX

Yea, Steve.

STEVE

(Using sign language "Get Boy")

Understand?

BERNIE

What was that?

MAX

What about you?

STEVE

Don't worry about me?

BERNIE

What did you say?

STEVE

(Turning to face Bernie and putting one hand behind his back)

I said we're leaving.

With the hand behind his back, Steve counts one, two. However, before he can get to three the roof above them loudly crack as the flame eats the support beam. Steve rushes toward Bernie. Max skirts around him toward the boy.

CUT

EXT: CABIN: NIGHT

The cabin is engulfed. A shot is fired. Part of the roof collapses. The propane tank explodes, destroying the cabin.

CUT