

## Scene 2

9:30 PM, the lake-house in New Hampshire.

There are several lights on in the house and one on outside.

DAVID's laptop is sitting, on and open, at the table. There is a pot of coffee brewing in the kitchen.

A beat.

DAVID comes down the stairs. He's shirtless. There are cuts and scars running down his arms, and a few on his stomach, chest, and back.

He walks into the kitchen, grabs a mug from a cabinet, and pours a cup of coffee.

He walks over to the table, taking a sip of coffee as he walks. He burns his tongue (no big deal).

He sits and types on his laptop for a minute or two, every once in a while stopping to reflect on what he's written or delete something.

He pauses. He takes out his phone and fiddles with it. He walks over to the kitchen, there's a "bluetooth" speaker sitting on the counter. DAVID pushes a button on the speaker and then a button on his phone.

The speaker says "connected."

DAVID fiddles with his phone for a second.

"Dark Doo Wop" by "MS MR" plays on the speaker.

DAVID walks back over to the table, continuing his laptop work. For a minute or two he "works," but mostly he's just listening to the music and thinking.

DAVID gets up, walks to the kitchen, and pulls a pan out of a cabinet. He opens the refrigerator and grabs three eggs.

The song on the speaker ends and begins playing some ambient music.

*DAVID puts the pan and eggs down on the counter. He walks to the table and changes the song on his phone. Dreamy surfer rock plays.*

*DAVID goes back to the kitchen. He turns on the stove and puts the pan on. He cracks the eggs into the pan and disposes of the shells. He cooks for a moment.*

*There's a knock at the door.*

*DAVID turns around and stares at the door.*

*A beat.*

*There's a knock again.*

*DAVID walks over to the table, to his phone, and pauses the music.*

*There's another knock.*

DAVID

Um. One second!

*DAVID runs up the stairs.*

*A beat.*

*DAVID reemerges, coming down the stairs in a long-sleeve hoodie sweatshirt.*

*Several knocks.*

*DAVID walks over to the door.*

DAVID

Uhhh. Who is it?

*There's a voice from the other side of the door. It's exasperated and slightly frazzled, unnerving.*

PERRY

Can I come in?

DAVID

What? Who is it?

PERRY

Can I come in and use your telephone?

A pause.

PERRY

I've been walking for hours. I'm sorry. I got lost and I can't find my way back in the dark. Could I come in and use your telephone? And sit down for a minute?

*DAVID cracks the door open. He sees the old man (PERRY), who is breathing heavily and looks disheveled.*

DAVID

Oh yeah. Yes of course. Come in.

*DAVID opens the door for PERRY who stumbles in, exhausted.*

PERRY

Thank you so much. Thank you.

DAVID

Please. Sit down.

*DAVID pulls a chair out at the table for PERRY. PERRY plops himself into the chair and lets out a sigh.*

PERRY

Thank you so much. My damn eyesight in my old age. I shouldn't be out when it gets dark. I know this. My daughter keeps telling me not to go out in the woods after it gets dark. Even in the summer. I'm so sorry to bother you.

DAVID

That's alright. Are you okay?

PERRY

Yes. I'm just old. And stupid. It's not a pretty combination.

DAVID

Are you um. ? . Are you alright?

PERRY

Yeah. Yeah. Just . . . (sighs). I uh just need to catch my breath. Don't get old.

DAVID

Go ahead. Yeah. Do you nee? . . .

PERRY  
Could I have some water?

DAVID  
Yes. Of course.

*DAVID stands up and goes to the kitchen. He grabs a cup out of the cabinet and fills it from the tap.*

*He notices that the stove-burner is still on.*

DAVID  
Oh shit!

*DAVID turns off the burner. He startles PERRY.*

PERRY  
What's wrong?

DAVID  
Oh nothing. Here's your water.

*DAVID walks to PERRY and hands him the glass.*

PERRY  
Thank you.

*PERRY chugs half the glass.*

*A beat.*

PERRY  
Do you live in this big place all by yourself?

DAVID  
It's my brother's place. I'm staying for a few days.  
You need to use my phone?

*DAVID retreats to grab his phone but stops when he hears PERRY talk.*

PERRY  
It's very nice out here on the water. It's a beautiful time of year to visit.

DAVID  
Yeah. It's really gorgeous. Really uh really beautiful.

PERRY

Yeah.

DAVID

It's my first time out here. It's really nice. I ca .  
. .

PERRY

First time to Lake Laura?

DAVID

Yeah. First time in New Hampshire.

PERRY

It sure is beautiful, isn't it?

DAVID

Yeah. Absolutely.

PERRY

You just got here? You're here for work or just visiting?

DAVID

No no. Just visiting. Just enjoying the, quiet.

PERRY

Ah. It's not so quiet where you're coming from?

DAVID

Not as much.

*DAVID walks over to the telephone and picks it up, he carries it over to the table.*

PERRY

Any kids?

DAVID

Who me?

PERRY

No. Your brother and his wife.

DAVID

No. No kids. How many kids do you have?

PERRY

None.

DAVID

None?

PERRY

I don't have any kids.

*A beat.*

DAVID

I thought you said your daughter was waiting for you at home?

PERRY

No. No. Did I say my daughter? (Laughs) My wife is waiting for me at home. My damn eyesight. I can't walk at night anymore. Not when it gets dark.

DAVID

Do you wanna call her? Where do you live? I could walk you there.

PERRY

(Slightly concerned) No. No need to get both of us lost up in the woods. I'll call and have her pick me up in the car. If that's alright. I'm sorry to be such a trouble.

DAVID

Of course. It's no trouble at all.

PERRY

And hopefully I won't get into too much trouble from the wife, huh?

*PERRY winks.*

DAVID

I hope not.

*DAVID hands the phone to PERRY. PERRY fiddles with the phone.*

DAVID

I don't think I caught your name, sir.

*A beat. PERRY is still fiddling with the phone.*

PERRY

It's Perry.

DAVID

My name's David.

PERRY

Say David, could you help me with this phone? There's some kind of code.

DAVID

Oh yeah.

*DAVID takes the phone gingerly from PERRY's hand. He types in his password and opens the phone app.*

DAVID

Sorry about that.

*DAVID hands the phone back to PERRY.*

PERRY

(Concentrating and whispering to himself) Okay. Six. Zero. Three. Um. Seven. Two. Four. Four. Three. Eight. (PERRY closes his eyes and exhales a deep breath. A beat.) One.

*PERRY holds the phone to his ear for a few seconds. It rings several times.*

PERRY

Hey Barb . . . Yes I'm fine. Yeah. I, I took a wrong turn I think up on the path above the . . . yeah, above the black farm house, yeah by the lake. That's right. So I'm . . . Yeah I'm alright. I'm calling from a nice young man's phone. He gave me something to drink and I'm sitting safe and sound in his home. Yeah . . . yes I'm . . . yeah. Would you come pick me up, Love? . . . Yes . . . Yes . . . Well I don't . . . yeah, um let me check?

(To DAVID) What's the address here?

DAVID

(Caught a bit offguard) Oh. Ummm.

*DAVID looks around for a piece of mail with the address, he doesn't see anything. He looks at the door, thinking about walking outside to look at the house number.*

*He opens up a drawer next to the table and produces a letter.*

DAVID

Ah, here we go. 6385, North Woodier Street.

PERRY

Sixty-three. (He looks at DAVID for help.)

DAVID

Eighty-five, North Woodier Street.

PERRY

Eighty-five, North Woodier Street. Okay? . . . You'll put it in your thing? In the car. . . . Okay. . . . Yes. I know. I know. I'll be more careful. What's that? . . . Oh. Well, get here when you can. Okay. Okay. Thank you. (He looks at DAVID) His name's . . . David. Yes, very kind. I'll try not to bother him for too long (He winks at DAVID). Okay. Yes. Yeah. Bye-bye. Love you too. Yeah. Bye.

*DAVID walks over to the table. PERRY takes the phone away from his ear and hands it to DAVID.*

PERRY

Thank you. It could be a little while. She's at the store. She doesn't want the ice cream to melt.

DAVID

That's okay. Do you want something to eat? Do you . ?  
.

PERRY

No thank you.

*A beat.*

PERRY

Your brother lives here, huh?

DAVID

Yeah.

*A beat.*

PERRY

Do you have anything to drink?

DAVID

Yeah. Do you need more water?

PERRY

No. I'm fine.



A beat.

PERRY

Do you have any, uh, anything to warm up the stomach? Anything that moves the spirit? (He smiles sheepishly.)

*DAVID stares at Perry, unsure of the question. After a second it clicks.*

DAVID

Oh yeah.

PERRY

I'm not allowed to have it at home. Except on special occasions.

DAVID

(Half-jokingly) I won't get in any trouble, will I?

PERRY

(Laughs) No. I know every judge in New Hampshire.

DAVID

My brother keeps a pretty well stocked bar. I'm sure he has something.

*DAVID walks to the liquor cabinet.*

PERRY

If it isn't a bother.

DAVID

No. Not at all. Not a bother. (Looking at the contents of the cabinet.) What do you want? We have whiskey . . .

PERRY

Whiskey is fine.

DAVID

What?

PERRY

Whiskey is just fine, son.

*DAVID takes the whiskey out of the cabinet, walks over to the kitchen, fills two glasses and carries them to the table.*

*DAVID takes a seat on the opposite side of the*

*table.*

PERRY  
Thank you.

DAVID  
You're welcome.

*They both take a sip. DAVID raises his glass to PERRY's. They clink.*

DAVID  
To special occasions.

PERRY  
Oh, yeah.

DAVID  
How far do you live from here?

PERRY  
Not far.

DAVID  
On the lake?

PERRY  
Yes. Me and the wife have lived here since . . .  
(thinking) 1985.

DAVID  
Wow. A long time.

PERRY  
I guess it has been a long time. It doesn't seem that long.

*A beat.*

PERRY  
There's a lo . . .

DAVID  
I haven't had dinner yet. (Motioning towards the kitchen) Do you mind?

PERRY  
No. Of course not. Please eat.

*DAVID stands up and walks to the kitchen.*

PERRY

I'm the one intruding on your evening.

DAVID

No problem. It's no intrusion at all.

*DAVID walks over to his half-made meal. He takes a look at the pan, decides that it's a lost cause and tosses the burnt eggs into the trash.*

*PERRY continues to sip his whiskey.*

*DAVID looks in the refrigerator for a moment. He removes a package of turkey, two slices of cheese, a container of mayo, and a "tupperware" container of home fries.*

DAVID

Are you hungry?

PERRY

No thank you.

*DAVID grabs two pieces of bread from a pantry drawer and makes a sandwich. He grabs a napkin and a fork (from the silverware drawer,) and returns to the table.*

PERRY

Bon appétit.

DAVID

(It takes him a second to process) Yeah. (Laughing politely) Thanks.

*DAVID takes a bite of his sandwich.*

PERRY

So what are you doing on the lake?

*DAVID finishes chewing and takes a hard gulp.*

DAVID

I'm just here for about a week. My brother and his wife are out of town and I . . . so I have the place to myself for a few days.

*A beat.*

I'm a writer. So I'm taking some time to write. It's so uh, nice and quiet out here.

PERRY

What kind of writer?

DAVID

Ummm. I guess uh literature. Fiction. I've mostly just written short stories. Nothing really published outside of some small literary magazines, but I would like to write a novel eventually.

*Headlights shine outside. DAVID looks at the door, looking for PERRY's ride. The car passes.*

PERRY

Any nonfiction?

DAVID

I haven't really written any nonfiction, no.

PERRY

I used to write nonfiction. When I was younger.

DAVID

Oh yeah?

PERRY

Yeah. About the topography of New Hampshire. And about the Abenaki Indians.

DAVID

Wow. That sounds fascinating.

*DAVID puts salt and pepper on his home fries.*

PERRY

And about The Witches of the Lake.

*The tone has changed ever so slightly in the room. The air has gotten staler or sharper, no one could be sure which.*

*DAVID picks up some salt that's spilled onto the table using his fingers. He tosses the salt over his left shoulder.*

*PERRY perks up.*

PERRY

Good man!

*DAVID is confused and a little startled.*

*PERRY mimics the throwing of the salt over his left shoulder and winks.*

PERRY

We don't need any bad luck.

DAVID

(Unsure) Yeah.

PERRY

Do you think I could have one more, little? (He motions to his empty glass.)

DAVID

Oh! Yeah.

*DAVID walks into the kitchen and grabs the bottle. He comes to the old man and fills his glass.*

PERRY

Thank you.

*DAVID sits down.*

*PERRY takes a sip and closes his eyes.*

*A beat.*

PERRY

So. Have you ever heard of the Witches of Lake Laura?

DAVID

No. (He looks at the door). This uh? (He motions to the window).

*PERRY nods.*

PERRY

There have been witch sightings here since as long as anyone can remember. Even before colonists got here. The Abenaki's told of the Skadegamutc. Witch-ghost. Indian tales, mostly not being written down. Told from person to person.

Witch-ghosts. The undead spirits of evil sorcerers that haunted the woods. They would come to life at night as horrifying illusions, terrorizing any unlucky soul that came across them, devouring their flesh and drinking their blood. Sounds almost like a modern horror movie.

*PERRY winks.*

*A beat.*

1714, The New Hampshire Assembly passes an act to punish the Indians, among others, "An Act to Prevent Disorders in the Night", is what it was called. It was a curfew. All Indians, Blacks, Molattos, servants, and slaves were not allowed to be outside after nine o'clock at night. Okay?

DAVID

(Unsure) Sure.

*PERRY takes a long sip of whiskey.*

PERRY

So, the colony of New Hampshire established night watches across the territory. Groups that would make sure nobody was out past when they shouldn't be. And the township of, well what would be called Littleton now I guess, had their own night watch. The head of that night watch was a man named Alexander Ellis. Well one October night Alex decides he doesn't want to go on shift that night. So he sends his patrol out and stays back in town to get drunk. In his drunken stupor he ends up falling asleep in his chair at the night watch's headquarters. He wakes up in the middle of the night and finds that nobody from his crew has come back. He thinks it's odd but assumes that they had a similar idea to what he had, and decides to stumble into the woods to give them a good thrashing or perhaps to join in on their party if the mood suits him. He takes the usual scouting path up into the woods. He walks for five, ten, fifteen minutes, and as he begins to give up hope of ever finding his men he sees a small fire off in the distance. He stumbles towards the flame and he smells (PERRY takes a deep breathe through his nose) a terrible smell, like the smell of bad meat. Bad bad meat. Rotten meat. He walks, as he approaches the flame gets bigger and bigger. He gets to the fire only to find that it's one of his own men, that's being burned, engulfed in flame, charred to a crisp by this point. He'd been strung up ten feet up off the ground in a tree. He was now the wick of what almost looks like a massive candle, horrible rotten burning flesh illuminating the night all around. Right?

DAVID

Yeah.

PERRY

And the poor soul up in the tree lights up ground all around him. There, on the ground, the captain sees the rest of his men. There their faces are horribly disfigured. Their eyes are cut out of their skulls and their stomachs are cut open. Their insides are cleaned completely out. All of their guts and organs are gone. Just gone. No trail of innards. Just empty husks of human body. Their jaws were broken too, twisted open like the top of a pickle jar. Their tongues were missing, cut right out of their mouths. Cleanly. And they were staring at him, his men were staring at him. All broken jaws and eye sockets. He tries to scream but he's too frightened. He turns around to run and he sees an old woman floating above the tree. An ugly old woman, with scraggly white hair and big, white, luminous eyes. And her eyes had no pupils in them at all. Just empty whiteness. She laughs at him. A terrible, icy, shrill laugh. A humiliating laugh. The captain feels naked and alone in that moment. More alone than any blackness in the world could ever make him feel. More alone than anything you could ever imagine in any port in the farthest away reaches from home. She laughs that horrible laugh, and then, she stops. And then she's gone.

*A beat.*

PERRY

The captain runs. He runs all the way back into town. The next day they find him in the headquarters of the night watch, crying and screaming. He was soiled, pissed himself. They didn't know whether he was drunk or crazy. The men never did come back but they never found the bodies either. When the captain calmed down enough to show them where they'd been, the bodies were gone. Some people believed him, most didn't. Some people thought maybe he had killed his own men in some kind of drunken madness. Some people thought it was the work of the devil. Something like in Salem or Portsmouth. The Indians thought maybe it was a curse or a ghost brought on by the colonials themselves.

DAVID

(Skeptical of PERRY) Were they saying . ? . Was this area like an Indian burial ground?

PERRY

(Chuckles) The whole country is an Indian burial

ground.

DAVID

So you've written about it, but you don't believe it?

PERRY

I didn't say that. (A beat). What church were you raised in?

DAVID

I wasn't really raised with religion.

PERRY

Huh?

*PERRY picks up a grain of salt and throws it over his shoulder.*

PERRY

All I know is that when something (he thinks for a second) weird happens, people around here begin to wonder. That's all. Whenever a child goes missing or some poor soul swims off into the lake and doesn't come back . . . There are dozens of occurrences of people seeing something possessed, or witchcraft, whatever you wanna call it over the years. People walking off cliffs to their own deaths. children following dark figures out into the woods, never to return. Folks have seen madness out here, from time to time.

DAVID

(A little freaked out) Are you like um . . . have you studied the occult or . . . anything like that?

PERRY

(Laughs) No. I'm just a silly, rambling old man.

*A beat. DAVID doesn't know what to say.*

DAVID

In these stories, why do the witches or ghost-witches kill the men, or drink their blood, or any of it? What's the motive?

PERRY

I don't know. I would guess it's because they want to.

*A beat.*



PERRY

I don't know maybe there isn't anything strange out there at all, but when something happens in this world that can't be explained . . . Well, I don't really have a good answer for it. And I've got to wonder what's really out there, and what's really out there.

*PERRY shrugs and takes a long sip of whiskey.*

LIGHTS DOWN.