

DWELLER OF DARKNESS

an original screenplay by

Vicky L. Neal

3024 Apple Knoll Lane
Middletown, Ohio 45044
(513) 539-0258
vickyneal5@yahoo.com
www.vickylneal.com

FADE IN:

EXT. WILDERNESS - DAY

TIM (18) and CASSIE (17) trek along a trail. With them are SARAH (18) and BRAD (19).

Following alone is SAM (19). Each wears a backpack. The hot late day sun wears heavily on them.

CASSIE
How much further?

BRAD
About half a mile.

SARAH
Are you guys sure we won't get in any trouble for this?

BRAD
Totally.

TIM
Sam and I have done this lots of times. Makes for an interesting sleep-over.

CASSIE
If my parents ever find out I'm camping with three guys--

BRAD
You told them you were spending the night with Sarah. It's the truth.

SAM
You just left out some of the details.

A small, somewhat rundown house is off to the side. The teens eye it as they walk past.

BRAD
This crazy man lives there. He watches hikers, waiting for the right ones.

The girls worry.

CASSIE
The right ones for what?

BRAD

He has this ax he uses for chopping wood. Let's just say that's not all he chops with it.

Cassie stops, a hand to her throat. Sarah also stops, staring at Brad in shock. Brad laughs.

BRAD

You girls are too easy.

Face tightened in anger, Cassie marches off.

TIM

(to Brad)

Thanks a lot. Now I won't be getting any all weekend.

SARAH

If it will make you feel better, neither will Brad.

She follows after Cassie. Tim trails after them.

Still amused, Brad goes next. Sam is last.

UP THE TRAIL

Cassie and Sarah walk side by side.

CASSIE

Why do they have to be such jerks?

SARAH

I think a better question is why we stay with those jerks.

CASSIE

(smiling)

Well, I can speak for Tim. He's awesome in bed.

SARAH

(unconvincing)

Brad's good... too.

They laugh.

SAMPSON (50s), very creepy, suddenly steps out in front of the girls. They scream briefly as they step back from him, clinging to each other. The boys catch up.

SAMPSON
Stay away from them caves.

BRAD
Out of our way, old man.

He attempts to push past the old man. Sampson continues to block their path.

SAMPSON
You won't come out alive.

SARAH
What's he talking about?

TIM
Just some wild story the locals tell about a monster that lives in a remote section of the caves.

CASSIE
Monster?

BRAD
It's just made up shit to bring in the tourists.
(to Sampson)
Now get out of our way.

He shoves Sampson to the side and walks past. His companions follow. They look back at Sampson.

SAMPSON
(shakes fist)
You'll be sorry!

Sarah turns her attention forward.

SARAH
Maybe we should go back.

Brad places an arm around her.

TIM
He does this shit all the time. Probably just lonely and uses his monster story as an excuse to talk with tourists.

BRAD
You girls need to grow a pair.

CASSIE
A girl with balls. Good visuals.

TIM
Stop right there. I'm already gonna
have nightmares tonight.

Sarah looks over at Cassie. Cassie amusingly shakes her head.

EXT. HILL - DAY

The teens arrive at the base. They look up as they study the hill.

SARAH
We have to climb that?

TIM
Yep. Follow me.

He starts the climb. A frown on her face, Cassie follows. Sam next.

Brad gestures to the hill.

BRAD
After you.

Grinning, Sarah starts her climb. Brad sticks close.

LEDGE

A small opening only three feet high leads into vast darkness. The kids reach the plateau and stop to catch their breath.

Tim is the first to remove a helmet with built-in lamp from his pack. He puts it on.

TIM
Helmets on.

The others remove similar helmets from their packs and put them on. Each then turns on their light. They proceed with caution into the cavity. Their voices echo off of rock walls.

CASSIE
This is so creepy.

TIM

If you get scared, cling to me all you want.

They disappear inside.

INT. BURNSIDE CAVES

The teens are camped out in a medium-sized room with one tunnel. Two small lanterns burn. The kids, headlamps off, lie around on sleeping bags. The two couples cuddle while Sam sits alone. They pass around two joints.

TIM

Didn't we tell you this would be fun?

SARAH

There's something to be said for creepy places.

BRAD

Don't worry, ladies. We guys will protect you from whatever lurks in the dark.

All laugh. One of the lanterns fades, leaving the area somewhat darkened on the side of the tunnel. The girls straighten.

Tim grabs the broken lantern and holds it next to the one still lit so he can examine it.

TIM

Hey Sam, hand me the oil.

Sam searches a backpack, comes up empty-handed.

SAM

I don't have it.

TIM

I told you to bring the extra bottle.

SAM

No you didn't.

CASSIE

What happens when the other lantern goes out?