

The House on Blood River

written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. WOODS - BOTTOM OF RAVINE - DAY

Several bodies in different stages of decomposition - from 20 years ago to recent, both male and female, lie together at the bottom. The victims have been killed in brutal ways - shot, stabbed, mutilated, etc. Overgrown brush helps to obscure them from sight, especially at a distance.

O.S. The sound of RUSTLING grows near.

A WOMAN (18), dead, the front of her shirt soaked with blood, comes to a rolling stop next to the others.

EXT. CANOE RENTAL - DAY

A hot summer day. The river looks inviting with its crystal clear, cool water. The slow current is perfect for taking a relaxing trip downstream.

Stacks of canoes stand by the entrance point, where WORKERS assist CANOERS, mostly teens and young adults, into the water with the proper equipment - lifevests, cushions and paddles.

A car pulls into the already crowded lot. CARLY RHODES (17), a girl who thinks "partying" should be a course in school, blonde, leaves the back seat along with her boyfriend MARK HINKLE (17), obvious jock by his physically fit frame and dashing good looks.

From the front, JAMIE HARRISON (17), a tomboy who loves competing with the guys, brunette, very pretty, slides out of the passenger side. STEVE NEWCOMB (18), average looks, but a fun guy to be around, leaves the driver's side. All four are dressed for a day on the river - swim trunks, t-shirts and sandals for the boys; shorts, tank tops and sandals for the girls.

STEVE

Who's ready to party?

Discontent, Carly folds her arms, looking over at the numerous people happily boarding canoes.

CARLY

(sarcastic)

Oh, yay.

Mark slides an arm around her.

MARK  
(to others)  
She's more of an "indoor" girl.

JAMIE  
Give it a chance. It might turn out  
to be more fun than you think.

CARLY  
Uh-huh.

She whirls to Mark.

CARLY  
We could go to the mall instead.  
I'll buy you anything you want.

MARK  
As tempting as that sounds... no.  
We're here so make the best of it.

The group moves to the--

OFFICE WINDOW

-- where a short line of people waits to pay for their trip.  
Steve studies the sign next to the window that contains all  
of the trip and payment information.

STEVE  
What do you guys think? Five, ten  
or fifteen miles?

MARK  
(simultaneous)  
Fifteen.

CARLY  
(simultaneous)  
Five.

Steve looks to Jamie for guidance.

JAMIE  
Since we're here, we might as well  
go for the fifteen.

Carly sighs her disappointment.

It's their turn at the window. WILL THOMAS (20s), great  
body, a little on the crafty side, tends to the customers.

WILL

What are you up for today?

STEVE

I think we'll go for the fifteen.

Will scans his group.

WILL

Four?

STEVE

Yeah. And a cooler.

Will rings up the total on his register.

WILL

That'll be 1-0-8.

Steve pulls money from his wallet and pays Will.

WILL

You'll need to leave your car key.

Steve slides his keys across the counter. Will hags them up on a rack, the numbered slot corresponding to a number he writes on the receipt.

WILL

The get out spot for the fifteen mile trip is just past the third bridge.

He hands Steve a receipt, along with a cooler that has a handle and a tie-down. Steve leads his companions back to the--

PARKING LOT

He uses a latch inside his car to open the trunk. Inside, there's already a large cooler. Steve opens it, revealing ice, cans of beer, and sandwiches/chips in freezer bags.

The boys transfer some of the cooler's contents to the one they rented.

Steve locks his car doors. The boys carry the coolers as they head to the canoes. Carly and Jamie follow. On their way, they bump into a couple leaving the office window. MARVIN DENNING (17) and CHELSEA BROOKS (17) brunette, are braniacs and their appearances don't attempt to hide that fact. Glasses, geekish clothing, they're the kind you'd expect to see at a science fair.

CHELSEA

Hey.

Mark's group is far less enthused to see them. They're not the kind of people these kids would ever hang out with.

MARK

Hey.

MARVIN

Going canoeing?

MARK

Um... yeah.

MARVIN

Since we're all going at the same time anyway, why don't we hang out? Like they say, the more the merrier.

Mark feigns an agreeing grin.

MARK

Great.

MARVIN

We just have to get our cooler.

Holding hands, Marvin and Chelsea head to the parking lot.

Carly punches Mark in the arm.

MARK

Ow.

CARLY

Why did you go and tell them they could hang with us?

MARK

What was I supposed to say?

CARLY

Oh, I don't know. Maybe you could have told them "never in a billion years."

Steve looks over at the parking lot, where--

Marvin and Chelsea stand behind their car, organizing the cooler in their trunk.

STEVE

If we hurry, we can lose `em.

The four dash over to the--

RIVER ENTRANCE

-- where two EMPLOYEES assist a family of four into a canoe. EMPLOYEE #1 is maybe 17, working here for the summer. The second employee is FRANK (23), very timid with glasses. He's mentally challenged and speaks in a slow manner.

Steve's group waits impatiently, taking frequent looks back at the parking lot. Finally, it's their turn. Mark hands EMPLOYEE #1 his receipt.

EMPLOYEE #1

(to Frank)

Two.

Frank pulls down two canoes from a rack.

FRANK

(to canoers)

I got you two of the best canoes.

STEVE

Whoopee for you.

Steve and Mark laugh. Carly even smiles, covering her mouth to hide it. Jamie doesn't find the teasing funny at all and smacks Steve in the arm.

JAMIE

Cut it out.

Head hung low, his feelings hurt, Frank drags the canoes to the water's edge.

Employee #1 hands two paddles to Steve, then two to Mark.

EMPLOYEE #1

Vests or cushions?

MARK

Three cushions, one vest.

Employee #1 grabs one life vest from a rack and three cushions from a stack. Steve passes a cushion to Jamie and keeps one for himself. Mark takes the remaining cushion and the vest, handing the vest to Carly. She examines it with confusion.