

THE ACCIDENT IN THE WOODS

Written by

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INT. WILDERNESS - MORNING

A dense forest painted in autumn hues, the landscape vibrant with shades of red, orange, and yellow. The forest is serene, and the only sounds are the GENTLE RUSTLING of leaves in the breeze.

EXT. FOREST TRAIL - MORNING

ALEX (late 30s, rugged, with a hint of mystery in his eyes) steps into the frame, dressed in camouflage hunting gear. He carries a rifle slung over his shoulder and a backpack.

With deliberate steps, he moves quietly along the forest trail.

The sun peeks through the trees, casting dappled sunlight on the forest floor.

ALEX (V.O)

In the heart of this remote town, I find my refuge. It's here that I escape the noise of the world and embrace nature's silence.

Alex's boots move carefully over fallen leaves and twigs.

ALEX (V.O)

I know every inch of this forest, every sound it makes. It's my sanctuary.

As he walks, the atmosphere becomes subtly tense. The forest, once peaceful, feels different.

ALEX (V.O)

But something's different today. It's as if the woods are holding their breath.

Alex's grip on the rifle tightens, his senses on high alert.

ALEX

I'm not alone.

He raises his rifle, takes aim, and squeezes the trigger.

The GUNSHOT RINGS OUT like thunder in the SILENT forest, shattering the peace. Birds scatter from the trees.

CUT TO BLACK:

SUPER: THE ACCIDENT IN THE WOODS

FADE IN:

EXT. FOREST CLEARING - CONTINUOUS

GUNSHOT ECHOES through the forest.

The SILENCE returns, but it's now charged with an EERIE TENSION.

Alex stands frozen, still aiming his rifle. He slowly lowers it, his eyes wide with shock.

He cautiously approaches the fallen figure in the distance. His feet move through the underbrush and dead leaves.

As he gets closer, the shape of the fallen figure becomes clearer. It's a YOUNG WOMAN, dressed in outdoor gear.

Alex reaches the dead woman and kneels down, his hand trembling. He lifts the person's head and sees a face frozen in an expression of pain.

ALEX

I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry...

Panic sets in, and he frantically looks around the clearing.

He drags the lifeless body through the underbrush, searching for a place to hide it.

EXT. DEEP IN THE WOODS - LATER

Alex strains as he drags the lifeless body deeper into the woods. Sweat beads on his forehead, and his breath quickens with each step.

The forest grows denser, and the canopy of trees blocks out most of the sunlight.

He finally finds a secluded spot concealed by thick undergrowth.

CUT TO:

LATER, he carefully places the body in a shallow grave he's hastily dug.

ALEX (V.O)

I have to cover this up. No one can

know.

He buries the body, his hands trembling, the earth covering the victim with finality.

He looks around, wiping dirt and sweat from his brow.

ALEX (V.O)

This never happened. It's just a terrible accident.

He stands and scans the area for any signs of his presence. Everything appears undisturbed.

ALEX (V.O)

I need to get out of here. Act like nothing happened.

Alex retraces his steps, leaving behind the concealed grave, and returns to the forest trail. The once-vibrant colours of the forest now feel muted and foreboding.

INT. ALEX'S CABIN - DAY

Alex enters his dimly lit cabin, still visibly shaken. He locks the door behind him and paces around the room.

He glances at himself in the small mirror hanging on the wall, trying to reconcile the man he sees with the one who just buried a body in the woods.

ALEX (V.O)

Just act normal. Keep it together.

He heads to the --

BATHROOM

sink, splashing cold water on his face, attempting to wash away the guilt that clings to him.

EXT. FOREST TRAIL - DAY

Alex walks briskly along the forest trail, attempting to appear composed. The woods, once a place of solace, now seem to close in around him.

Passing OTHER HIKERS, he forces a smile and nods, suppressing the anxiety that threatens to surface.

CUT TO:

EXT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

Alex hesitates outside the sheriff's office, debating whether to report the incident, uncertainty etched across his face.

After a moment, he turns away, choosing to keep his dark secret hidden.

EXT. ALEX'S CABIN - DAY

The cabin sits in eerie silence, surrounded by the whispering trees. Alex, tormented by guilt, stares blankly out the window. The weight of the buried secret presses heavily on his conscience.

INT. ALEX'S CABIN - LATER

Alex paces the small space, wrestling with his decision. The dim light casts long shadows on the walls as he debates whether to come clean or continue living with the burden.

The distant howl of a wolf pierces the stillness, adding to the ominous atmosphere.

ALEX (V.O)

I can't keep this hidden forever. What if someone finds out?

He grabs his head, trying to shake off the intrusive thoughts.

CUT TO:

EXT. FOREST - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Images flash before our/Alex's eyes - the gunshot, the lifeless body, the desperate burial.

BACK TO PRESENT:

LIVING ROOM

Alex slumps onto a worn-out couch, overwhelmed by the weight of his actions. He reaches for a bottle of whiskey on the table, pouring a shaky drink.

ALEX (V.O)

One drink won't erase this, but maybe it'll numb the pain.

He takes a swig.

EXT. FOREST CLEARING - MORNING (DREAM SEQUENCE)

Alex's mind transports him back to the clearing, the sunlight filtering through the trees. The eerie tension returns, and he sees the young woman's face frozen in eternal anguish.

Suddenly, her lifeless eyes snap open, staring directly at him. The forest around them morphs into a nightmarish dreamscape.

YOUNG WOMAN  
(whispering, echoing)  
You can't escape this.

Alex jolts awake, drenched in sweat.

INT. ALEX'S CABIN - MORNING

The whiskey bottle sits empty on the table. Alex, shaken and paranoid, glances around as if expecting the ghostly apparition to materialize.

He grabs his jacket, determination in his eyes.

Alex heads toward the door.

EXT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - MORNING

Alex stands outside the sheriff's office, staring at the entrance, hesitating.

He takes a deep breath, summoning the courage to enter.

CUT TO:

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The door creaks as Alex enters the small, dimly lit office. Sheriff JENKINS (50s), a seasoned lawman with a stern expression, looks up from his paperwork.

SHERIFF JENKINS  
(raising an eyebrow)  
Can I help you?

Alex hesitates, the weight of his guilt evident in his eyes.

ALEX  
(stammering)  
I... I need to confess something. It's  
about an accident in the woods.

Sheriff Jenkins leans back, eyeing Alex intently.

SHERIFF JENKINS

Go on.

AUDIO SILENCES as Alex recounts the events, the gunshot, the burial, the overwhelming guilt. Sheriff Jenkins listens, his face remaining impassive.

SHERIFF JENKINS

You did the right thing coming forward. We'll investigate this thoroughly.

Alex nods, a mix of relief and anxiety on his face.

CUT TO:

EXT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

The sheriff and Alex exit the office.

EXT. POLICE STATION - DAY

A patrol car pulls up.

SHERIFF JENKINS

We'll get this sorted out, Alex. It's important we bring closure to this.

They drive off.

EXT. FOREST CLEARING - DAY

Sheriff Jenkins and Alex arrive at the ominous clearing. The air is thick with tension as they step out.

SHERIFF JENKINS

Keep your wits about you. Lead the way.

Alex, now a reluctant guide through the haunting landscape, directs the sheriff to the concealed grave.

They find the makeshift burial site, the disturbed earth a grim testament to the events that transpired.

SHERIFF JENKINS

(grimacing)

Alright, let's exhume the body. We'll need to call in the forensic team.

LATER,

As the FORENSICS TEAM works, the gravity of the situation weighs heavily on Alex. The guilt is palpable.

CUT TO:

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY (A FEW DAYS LATER)

Sheriff Jenkins sits across from Alex, the atmosphere tense.

SHERIFF JENKINS

The forensic team has identified the victim. Her name was Emily Turner. We've notified her family.

Alex nods solemnly.

ALEX

I never meant for this to happen. It was an accident.

SHERIFF JENKINS

That's for the courts to decide. You'll need legal representation.

Alex nods again.

CUT TO:

INT. COURTROOM - DAY (WEEKS LATER)

The courtroom is hushed as Alex stands before the judge, his fate hanging in the balance.

JUDGE (60S)

You are hereby charged with involuntary manslaughter and tampering with evidence. How do you plead?

Alex, his voice shaky, responds.

ALEX

Guilty, Your Honour.

The gavel falls, sealing Alex's fate.