

EXT. CABIN - EVENING

A couple, BAILEY and HUGH, hurries from their cabin. Hugh is bundled up and carries a light bag while Bailey wears only a hoodie and leggings and bears an overstuffed bag. Hugh fights with a large paper map.

HUGH

According to the map, the trail should be just over that hill. We'll be there just in time for sunset!

BAILEY

Why don't you just use your phone's navigation?

HUGH

There's no service out in the woods! For a five mile hike, we need Ol' Reliable.

He waves the map at her with grin. Bailey rolls her eyes.

BAILEY

Whatever you say, babe.

The two set off down the road and disappear over the hill.

EXT. HIKING TRAIL - CONTINUOUS

The two are an hour into the hike. The sun is on its way down for the night.

BAILEY

(out of breath)

Hugh, can we take a break? My back hurts and my nose keeps running!

HUGH

I told you not to pack so much and to dress warmer. We're never going to make it in time if we keep stopping because you didn't listen.

BAILEY

What's so special about this place anyways?

HUGH

It's a beautiful spot. You'll understand when we get there. *If* we get ever there, that is.

BAILEY

Fine, we can keep going, but you have to start talking or something. I'm getting bored!

HUGH

We're taking in the nature.

BAILEY

Pine trees, squirrels, snow. *More* pine trees. I think I've taken it in.

HUGH

Whatever, talk if you want to.

BAILEY

Why are you being weird? Usually you're so chatty.

HUGH

I'm not being weird! Why are you being pushy?

BAILEY

Ugh, never mind. I think I liked the quiet better.

They keep walking in silence for a while. The sun's even closer to setting, and with each passing second, Hugh gets jumpier. Luckily, they're almost there.

HUGH

(out of nowhere)

You asked why this place was so special earlier, right?

Bailey glances at him, raising an eyebrow.

BAILEY

That's right. Do you have an answer now?

HUGH

I do. It's just hard for me to talk about because it's so important to me.

BAILEY

(softening)

Well, I'd like to understand how you feel. What does it mean to you?

HUGH

You've met my parents. You know how outdoorsy they are, right?

BAILEY

Duh, they're the ones who own the cabin out in the middle of nowhere.

HUGH

Exactly! They love it out here. I grew spending summers and Christmas breaks in these woods.

BAILEY

That's so sweet! So you wanted to show me the trails you used to hike on with them?

HUGH

Yes... but not quite.

CUT TO:

EXT. TRAILHEAD - DAY - 35 YEARS AGO

HUGH'S MOM and HUGH'S DAD, a young couple in this flashback, comes upon the trailhead.

HUGH (V.O.)

Even before I was born, one of their favorite things to do was hike. So one day, my dad took my mom to the head of their favorite trail, told her his dreams of a life with her, and proposed.

Hugh's Dad gets on one knee and proposes to Hugh's Mom. She jumps up and down, hugging and kissing him. He slides the ring on her finger.

HUGH (V.O.)

She said yes, and the rest is history!

CUT TO:

EXT. TRAILHEAD - SUNSET - PRESENT DAY

Hugh leads Bailey to the edge of the hill. A waterfall flows into a lake shimmering with sunset colors.

BAILEY

Oh God, is this what I think-

Ignoring her panic, Hugh gets on one knee and pulls a ring from his backpack.

HUGH

My parents started their life together here, and I want the same thing for us. Bailey Faith Meyers, will you-

BAILEY

I can't.

Rejection registers to Hugh and he slowly lowers the ring and stands. Bailey stares at her shoes, feeling ill.

HUGH

You *can't*?

BAILEY

No. I can't.

HUGH

(dumbfounded)

I beg my parents to use the cabin, I convince you to take a vacation, I beg you to go on a hike, all you do is complain and pick at me while we're out, and that's all you say?! You can't?!

BAILEY

What do you want me to do, lie to you? I love you, Hugh, and I know family means a lot to you, but did you ever stop and realize you're not proposing to someone like your mom?

HUGH

The hell is that supposed to mean?

BAILEY

In case you haven't noticed, I've never hiked! I needed breaks and underdressed and overpacked because I'm not outdoorsy.

HUGH

I figured you'd come around to it, sue me!

BAILEY

Of course I respect what this place means to you, but you clearly didn't consider anything I liked when picking how to propose. You never do!

HUGH

Well you never appreciate anything I actually do! All I've heard is complaints. You couldn't even pretend to enjoy it because you knew I did?

BAILEY

Please! All I do is pretend to like what you do. New flash: I don't care about video games, or fishing, or "taking in the nature!"

HUGH

Then why'd you stay with me for the last three years if we apparently have nothing in common?

BAILEY

I guess I was just hoping you'd try to consider my feelings, but clearly that's not going to change.

They stare at each other, fuming and upset. Without a word, Hugh turns and starts back down the trail.

BAILEY (CONT'D)

Don't just run off and ignore what I'm saying!

HUGH

Why should I care what you have to say? We're done.

BAILEY

Hugh! We can't be over without even trying to talk things out!

He spins to face her.

HUGH

Then why didn't you bring any of this up before?

BAILEY

I... I don't know. I couldn't find the words

HUGH

I think the words you were searching for were, "we're done." I just wish you hadn't made me say it for you.

Hugh throws the ring, unaffected by Bailey's scream as he does. He continues down the trail.

BAILEY

(calling after him)

No, don't do that! I love you, I'm just not ready for this. Please, understand- I'm sorry.

He doesn't come back.

HUGH (O.C.)

Good luck getting back with no map! By the time you get to the cabin, I'll be gone. Goodbye, Bailey.

Bailey stands there with tearstained cheeks. She wants to run after him, but she doubts if she can fix this. No, she had to at least try.

BAILEY

(through tears)

I do want to marry you. I do, I swear. Oh God, where's the ring?

She frantically scans the snow for the ring, crawling on the ground and combing through each snowbank. The sun has set now, and it grows colder by the minute.

Bailey's determined to find the ring, but her searching in the snow leaves her emptyhanded. There's only one other place it could be: the lake.

She makes her way down the slope and reluctantly wades into the water. Even as her teeth start chattering, she keeps searching the shallows for the ring.

INT. CABIN - NIGHT- AT THE SAME TIME

Hugh packs his stuff with shaking hands and bloodshot eyes. His phone rings. To his dismay, it's his father. He takes a breath before answering.

HUGH

Hey Dad.

HUGH'S DAD

Any news?

HUGH

(slowly)

Uh, yeah. But it's not good news,
Dad. She said no.

Uncomfortable silence lingers until Hugh's Dad breaks it.

HUGH'S DAD

What are you going to do now?

HUGH

Drive home? I don't know, ever
since I left her out there, I
haven't-

HUGH'S DAD

Hang on, what now? Did you say you
left her out there?

HUGH

Yeah? She can follow the trail
back, she'll be fine.

HUGH'S DAD

Are you serious? That girl doesn't
know what to do with herself on a
trail like that! She could be in
danger!

HUGH

I know she's not too outdoorsy, but
she'll be fine, Dad.

HUGH'S DAD

How long has she been out there?

HUGH

For like two hours at most!
Seriously, what's your deal?

HUGH'S DAD

My *deal* is that I did not raise you
on trails just for you to abandon
someone you claim to care about on
one. Go out there and get her.

HUGH

Dad-

The call ends. Hugh stares at his phone, and after a while, checks the weather. It's below freezing, and a storm's rolling in. He reaches for his coat and heads to the door.

EXT. HIKING TRAIL - NIGHT

Hugh looks for Bailey. His app had been right about the storm; flurries began to fall on him. He begins to worry about Bailey and grows more frantic.

HUGH

Bailey? Bailey! I know you're mad,
but please don't stay out here!

He waits, but hears nothing. He breaks into a run and dashes to the trailhead.

HUGH (CONT'D)

Bailey! Can you hear me? Where are
you?

She's not at the trailhead. He skids to a stop at the edge of the hill and looks out into the water. His stomach drops when he spots a large, human-like shape near the shore.

HUGH (CONT'D)

Oh my God..

As he rushes down the hill, he pulls his phone out to dial 911, but like he said, there's no service. His phone is only useful for its flashlight.

His eyes land on Bailey floating in the shallows. In horror, he rushes to her side and pulls her to shore. Hypothermia's gotten to her. She's not breathing. He starts CPR.

HUGH (CONT'D)

Please, God, breathe! I'm so sorry,
you have to know that!

Over 10 minutes pass, and the CPR does nothing. Hugh finally relents and stares horrified at her unmoving body.

Tears blur his vision, but his eye happens to catch on something on her hand. Hugh breaks into sobs as he puts everything together.

He'd thrown the ring into the water in his anger.

And now there it was, worn by the woman he'd left to die.

END.