

OPEN:

EXT. EDGE OF CLIFF IN THE WOODS - DAY - PRESENT

ETHAN FLETCHER (30), unconventionally handsome, is dressed in jeans, a t-shirt and sneakers. He stands on the edge of a cliff, fixated on the water below, as voices are heard: "You gonna do it or not?" "Don't be a chicken!"

INT. ETHAN'S SUBURBAN HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY (15 YEARS EARLIER)

ETHAN (15), dorky in appearance, races down the stairs gripping his skateboard. His MOM (40s), wearing a button down shirt and a buttoned up cardigan with not a hair out of place, stands with her back against the front door.

Ethan stops in his tracks. Mom holds a helmet with twigs sticking out of it to Ethan, and gives him a knowing look. Mexican standoff, then Ethan begrudgingly takes the helmet.

MOM

You remember what Dad used to say
... "Safety equals certainty".

ETHAN

(almost to himself)
Yeah, I think you're the only one
that ever said that.

Ethan reaches for the door, but Mom pulls him into a tight hug. Ethan's arms hang at his sides. Mom finally releases him. Awkward smile from Ethan, then he leaves. Mom remains in the hallway staring at the closed door.

EXT. ETHAN'S SUBURBAN HOUSE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Ethan tosses the helmet into the bushes. He rides off, as he looks up at the warm summer sunshine, smiling. He slows as he passes the high school's sign: "Welcome Back Everyone!"

EXT. PARKING LOT BEHIND CONVENIENCE STORE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Ethan rides around to the abandoned parking lot. He is taken aback by barricades surrounding the lot. TEENAGE SKATEBOARDERS are huddled, talking. Ethan turns to go, but is spotted before he can make his escape.

SKATEBOARDER #1
 (calling to Ethan)
 Hey Homeschool! Parking lot is out
 of commission. We're heading to the
 old Steadman Place.

SKATEBOARDER #2
 (to Skateboarder #1)
 Creepy Lady might be there.
 (to Ethan)
 Wooohooo... Can you handle it?

SKATEBOARDER #1
 (to Skateboarder #2)
 Don't be an asswipe.

SKATEBOARDER #3
 (to Ethan)
 So whaddya say, Homeschool? You
 comin' or do you need to ask your
 mommy first?

Pause, as Teenage Skateboarders stare at Ethan. Finally,
 Ethan skates over to them and they all leave together.

EXT. STEADMAN PLACE - WOODS - DAY - LATER

Hoots and hollers, as everyone skates around an old abandoned
 stone house in the middle of the woods that is more rubble
 than house. There are various flat and sloped surfaces.

Ethan is skating by himself. The view shifts to CREEPY LADY
 (mid-40s), a gypsy-like woman with wild hair who wears a long
 flowing skirt, a t-shirt, denim jacket and combat boots. She
 approaches the structure, holding firewood in her arms.

CREEPY LADY
 Hey! This isn't a fucking
 playground!

Ethan is mid-maneuver as he sees the Creepy Lady. He trips
 and flies off his skateboard as he yells...

ETHAN
 Holy crap!

Ethan face-plants. He is still. Creepy Lady slams the wood
 down and it scatters everywhere.

CREEPY LADY
 You little shits need to get the
 hell outta here!

The Teenage Skateboarders are yelling things like: "Let's get outta here," "It's the Creepy Lady!" "Move it!". Skateboarder #1 takes a step toward Ethan, then turns toward the others.

SKATEBOARDER #1
We can't just leave him here.

SKATEBOARDER #2
Screw that. Let's go!

Skateboarder #1 pauses to look at Ethan, then turns away. Everyone scrambles off, leaving Ethan to fend for himself.

EXT. STEADMAN PLACE - WOODS - DAY - LATER

Ethan groans softly, as cold water hits him.

ETHAN
What the--

CREEPY LADY
Okay good, you're not dead.
(waving gesture)
You can go now.

ETHAN
I feel dead.

CREEPY LADY
Wuss!

Ethan wipes his face with his t-shirt. He stands, but wobbles and flops back down, holding his head. Creepy Lady groans and turns her back, reaching for something. Alarmed, Ethan grabs his backpack and holds it in front of him like a shield.

ETHAN
I've got a knife in here!

Creepy Lady turns back to Ethan. She is holding an unopened water bottle in her hand.

CREEPY LADY
Please. The only thing a kid like
you has in there is an inhaler.
(adds on)
And maybe a peanut butter and jelly
sandwich your mom made.

Creepy Lady crosses to Ethan and holds out the bottle.

CREEPY LADY (CONT'D)
Take this.

ETHAN
 (trying to be tough)
 No.

CREEPY LADY
 Just take it... Looks like your
 brain cells could use it.

Ethan takes the bottle and examines it from different angles. Finally, he opens it and takes a drink. Creepy Lady pulls a coin from her skirt pocket. She sits and flawlessly does the coin roll trick, in which a coin rolls over and between her fingers. Ethan is mesmerized.

ETHAN
 What're you, a magician?

CREEPY LADY
 Yeah... I made your friends
 disappear.

ETHAN
 They're not my friends.

CREEPY LADY
 You're not as dumb as I thought.

ETHAN
 Dumb enough to get stuck out here
 alone.

CREEPY LADY
 You're not alone. You're with the--
 what was it they called me--the
 Creepy Lady? But I prefer "Jo".

Jo looks at Ethan's skateboard.

JO
 Ethan Fletcher, huh?

ETHAN
 How'd you know?

JO
 I'm psychic... Chill out, Kid. It's
 on the bottom of your skateboard.
 Your mom do that for you too?

ETHAN
 I'm *not* a kid.

JO

Sure. Kid. Never understood skateboarding. If God wanted me to have wheels, I woulda been born a Ferrari.

ETHAN

Someone thinks really highly of themselves.

JO

I'm just sayin' I prefer to keep my feet planted firmly on the ground.

ETHAN

Cause that seems to have gotten you real far in life.

Jo stops her coin roll trick and gives Ethan a look.

JO

Anyone ever tell you your people skills suck?

ETHAN

Says the lady who called me a little shit.

Beat, then they both laugh.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

I don't talk to people much.

JO

Talking is overrated.

ETHAN

So are people.

Silence. Ethan takes a drink. Holds up the bottle.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

Thanks.

JO

No sweat.

Ethan reaches into his backpack.

JO (CONT'D)

Whoa, whoa, whoa, take it easy there, quickdraw!

Ethan holds out one half of a sandwich to Jo.

ETHAN

And in case you're wondering, it's
not peanut butter and jelly.

(slight beat)

But my mom *did* make it for me.

Jo is taken aback by Ethan's generosity, then...

JO

Is there mayo on it? I hate mayo.

ETHAN

No.

JO

Good... What about mustard?

ETHAN

Seriously? It's a free sandwich.

(slight beat)

But yes. *Brown* mustard.

(adds on)

Cause yellow mustard...

Ethan makes a grossed out face.

JO

No shit.

Beat, then Jo finally takes the sandwich from Ethan.

JO (CONT'D)

(awkward)

Thanks.

Ethan nods. Jo takes a bite and immediately makes a face. She removes the top of the bread and holds up a pickle.

JO (CONT'D)

Now that's a damn shame. This isn't
even a pickle. It's a cucumber
dipped in vinegar!

ETHAN

(takes a bite)

Beggars can't be choosers.

JO

Excuse me?