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ONE SET COMING BACK

Dialogues / Thriller / 4 min
Cast 3 Female x2 Male x1

Dev went out for firewood almost an hour ago and the snow is getting worse. Caleb volunteers to go look for him. Tess wants to know why his boots are already wet.

CHARACTERS

TESS - late 20s, Dev's girlfriend, counting the minutes and not willing to be talked out of what she notices

RENEE - early 30s, the peacemaker of the group, wants everyone to be fine until she sees something she cannot unsee

CALEB - 30, Dev's best friend since college, the only one with his boots on

SETTING

The main room of a rental cabin in the mountains, late on a winter night, snow coming down hard.

The main room of a rental cabin. A wood stove burning down. One lamp. Snow against the window. TESS stands at the window holding her cell phone up, looking for a signal. RENEE is on the couch under a blanket. CALEB sits in an armchair, boots on.

TESS

Nothing. Not one bar.

RENEE

There wasn't one bar when we got here.
That's the whole point of this place.

TESS

Well, the point of this place sucks.

RENEE

How long's it been?

TESS

Fifty minutes.

CALEB

It hasn't been fifty.

TESS

He went out at ten-forty. It's eleven-thirty-two.

CALEB

The woodpile's like a hundred feet.

TESS

I know how far the woodpile is.

RENEE

Maybe he's splitting some. There was an axe out there.

TESS

For fifty minutes? In that?

Wind. Everyone looks at the window.

RENEE

He does this. He wanders. Remember the lake, he went to get ice and came back with a fish.

TESS

That was daytime.

RENEE

He's fine.

TESS

Stop saying that.

RENEE

Okay.

TESS

Say something else.

RENEE

Okay. Then somebody should go look.

Silence. The stove ticks.

CALEB

I'll go.

TESS

No.

CALEB

What do you mean no.

TESS

I mean you were out there already. You and him. You went out on the porch after dinner and you were both yelling.

CALEB

We weren't yelling.

TESS

I heard you through the door, Caleb.

CALEB

We were talking about the truck. He wants to leave a day early.

RENEE

Why?

CALEB

Because he does. Ask him.

TESS

I can't ask him. He's not here.

CALEB

Okay. Then I'll go find him and you can ask him.

He stands. TESS steps between him and the door.

TESS

Renee should go.

RENEE

Me?

TESS

Or me. One of us.

CALEB

You don't know the trail.

TESS

It's a hundred feet. You just said.

CALEB

In the dark it's different.

TESS

Then why do you wanna go alone?

CALEB

Because I'm the one with boots on.

Beat. TESS looks down. RENEE looks down.

RENEE

Caleb.

CALEB

What.

RENEE

Why are your boots wet?

CALEB

Because I was on the porch. Earlier. You just said.

RENEE

The porch is covered.

CALEB

Snow blows in.

TESS

There's mud on them. Up to the laces.
There's no mud on the porch.

CALEB

I went to the truck. To get my charger.

RENEE

When?

CALEB

I don't know. After.

TESS

After what?

CALEB

After dinner. Jesus. After dinner, I went to the truck, I came back, I sat down. You were

both in the kitchen.

RENEE

(quietly)

We were in the kitchen for like two minutes.

CALEB

Then it was two minutes.

TESS

Where's the charger?

CALEB

What?

TESS

The charger. From the truck. Where is it?

CALEB doesn't answer. He looks at the door. Then at the window.

CALEB

Something's out there.

RENEE

Don't.

CALEB

I'm serious. When I went to the truck. There was something by the tree line. I thought it was him. I called out. It didn't move.

TESS

And you came back inside and sat down.

CALEB

I didn't want to scare you.

TESS

And then Dev went out. And you didn't say anything.

CALEB

I thought I was seeing things.

TESS picks up the fire poker from beside the stove. She doesn't point it at anyone. She just holds it.

TESS

Renee. Get the flashlight from the kitchen.
The big one.

RENEE

Tess.

TESS

Get it.

RENEE goes. TESS and CALEB face each other.

CALEB

You think I did something.

TESS

I think you're gonna sit down.

CALEB

Tess. He's my best friend.

TESS

Then sit down and wait with me for him.

CALEB slowly sits. RENEE comes back with the flashlight. It's on. She's shaking.

RENEE

There's footprints.

TESS

Where?

RENEE

Off the kitchen door. Going out toward the
trees. One set.

(beat)

And one set coming back. Dev went out the
front.

*Everyone looks at CALEB's boots. Outside, a long
way off, someone calls a name. It might be Dev's
voice. It might not.*

END OF SCRIPT