

VOICEOVER (Jordana Williams): Please note that while *God of Obsidian* contains no physical violence or sexual assault, it does depict a psychologically abusive gaslighting relationship. Listeners should proceed at their own discretion. And if you're experiencing domestic violence or questioning unhealthy aspects of your relationship, we encourage you to call 1-800-799-SAFE. That's 1-800-799-7233. Or go to thehotline.org.

[A chime transition. Lawnmowers drone in the distance.]

NATHAN (Mac Rogers) (voiceover): There it is. Sound of lawnmowers. That's how I know it's summer. What was it Alice said? Years ago now, something about how I should taunt them, because they have to mow and I don't? I guess I could do something about the vines? Like if I was *looking* for yardwork? They come up out of... whatever that is down there, and it seems like they get bigger and redder every year. But I kinda don't wanna mess with them, you know?

[The door closes and Alice quickly walks across the room.]

ALICE (Rebecca Comtois): (angrily) I heard a story once.

NATHAN: So you just don't care, do you—

ALICE: It's a story about a man who—

NATHAN: You really don't care, you don't care about anyone but yourself.

ALICE: What are you talking—no, it's *my* thing, it's *my* turn, *I'm* talking.

NATHAN: Do you even know what being in a couple means?

ALICE: I have something to show you and then I'm gonna—

NATHAN: Sure, show me anything you want, but first tell me you know what being in a couple means.

ALICE: We're not talking about that!

NATHAN: Well there it is right there.

ALICE: What?

NATHAN: Right there. Being in a couple means you don't get to unilaterally decide what we're talking about. Being in a couple means sometimes we talk about what *I* want to talk about. Being in a couple also means you don't disappear for *hours* when your partner has no idea where you are!

ALICE: You leave for hours every day, every *single* day.

NATHAN: That's not the same, you *know* where I'm going, I'm going to *work*! I'm going to the job that I do that's why you eat every day and don't have to sleep in the snow!

ALICE: Why do you get to leave and I don't?

NATHAN: What are you talking—you can leave any time you want! You know what? Test it, test it right now, I'm here, the door's there, you've got a clear path, test it!

ALICE: I *am* gonna leave, but not 'till I've made you watch this!

NATHAN: Okay but then let's both acknowledge for the record that you *can* leave and you're choosing not to—

ALICE: I don't give a shit, I don't give a shit! All I care about is you watching this video until it's done, and then I'm *leaving you*!

[Beat.]

NATHAN: It's Shey and Connie. That's where you've been. What did they say to you?

ALICE: Watch the screen.

NATHAN: You should think about what the motivation is behind the words, that's just basic critical thinking—

ALICE: I want your eyes on the screen before I press play.

NATHAN: Okay somewhere inside yourself you realize how ridiculous this is.

ALICE: Watch the screen!

NATHAN: Do... you want to watch?

ALICE: I'll be watching you.

NATHAN: You know what you sound like right now?

ALICE: Don't look at me.

NATHAN: You sound like a thug.

ALICE: Look here! Look *here*! And *do not* look away until it's over. Now: press play.

[The tinny sound of a phone video begins playing. Unintelligible voices play in the background as Alice speaks.]

ALICE: I heard a story once. A Man goes to visit his girlfriend's friends. He goes in her place because she's hurt their feelings, and she's too scared to go herself. What she doesn't realize is that her friends are scared, too. They're scared of the man. So they set one of their phones up in the corner of the front hall to record his whole visit.

They let the Man in. She stands right in front of him, but Connie hangs way back against the wall. So She does the talking. She says, "We wanted to make a..." and then she looks back at Connie. Connie's voice is shaking, but she says, "A suggestion?" And She says, "Yeah, a *suggestion*. We'd like to make dinner for you for you and Alice" – and then the Man interrupts her. He says "I'm not sure you understand how busy we are. I'm not sure you understand that we live very full lives."

And so She says, "We understand. That's why we'd like to bring the food to you. We'll cook the food right there at your house, we'll have a great dinner and catch up, and then Connie and me will clean up after it's done and take everything away with us. It'll be like we were never there. Would that be all right? We just really..." And She looks at Connie again. And Connie says, "We just miss her, that's all."

And then the Man says, right to their faces, right on camera:

"Alice thought you might try to get back into her life. She remembers your friendship as one-sided and abusive, and she wants to put it behind her. She told me to tell you that she doesn't want to see you anymore."

[The video ends.]

NATHAN: Okay, clearly, clearly...

ALICE: (her voice begins to break) All this time I've thought you were protecting me.

NATHAN: Okay first of all this is surveillance.

ALICE: I thought you were looking after me, like you were taking care of me.

NATHAN: This is surveillance-state, do you actually endorse this?

ALICE: And now I know you're a liar, and like a, and like a–

NATHAN: All right, obviously you've rehearsed some sort of a–

ALICE: Like a liar and a *manipulator*, and, like—

NATHAN: And obviously we're at the end of the part that you practiced, so why don't you take a breath and maybe I can address some of the ethics—

ALICE: And you told me *they* didn't want to see *me* anymore, and you told them *the total fucking opposite!*

NATHAN: All right—

ALICE: You're a *liar*, Nathan, you're a liar, and I deserve—

NATHAN: I am not a liar.

ALICE: And I deserve better!

NATHAN: I'm not a liar.

ALICE: I deserve better than a liar!

NATHAN: I'm not a liar, that's a crazy thing to—

ALICE: And I want you to *admit* you're a liar! They told me to just leave, they said, "Don't go back in there," but I said, "I *am* going back in there because I want him to admit that he *lied!*"

NATHAN: I have nothing to admit, I didn't lie, and—

ALICE: It's always *me* who has to be wrong when we're talking about things, but this time *you're* wrong, and I want you to say so!

NATHAN: I'm not wrong.

ALICE: Why won't you *say so*?

NATHAN: Because I'm not wrong.

ALICE: Yes, you are, it's on video, it's *right there!*

NATHAN: Okay, I want you to notice what you're doing with your body right now.

[Alice becomes so upset that it is difficult for her to speak—her voice is strained and she's gasping for breath.]

ALICE: You told them it was my idea!

NATHAN: Can you see what you're doing with your body right now?

ALICE: You told my best friends I didn't want to see them anymore! *It's on video!!*

NATHAN: You're yelling at me, and you're not breathing in enough air.

ALICE: What do you have to say about that? What do you have to say for yourself?

NATHAN: See? You're short of breath, you're flushed, you're starving your body of oxygen, you're literally *abusing your own body* right now, can't you feel it?

ALICE: Fine! Fine! You don't wanna answer? Then here's what I have to say to you—

NATHAN: Can you feel how things are spinning right now, like you have a spinning sensation? You can feel it, right?

ALICE: I feel spinning I'm right now because I'm—

NATHAN: You need to sit down, or even better, lie down, and take some deep—

ALICE: I'm not lying down, *I'm saying something to you!* You're a liar, Nathan, and a manipulator, and I deserve better, and the days of you running my life are *over!* Because (gasps for breath) you don't own me, I'm my own person, and I'm strong, and I'm worthwhile! So I am walking out that door, and... (gasps) and later on I'm gonna come back for all my stuff, and you can either be here or not, but I'm coming back for my stuff, and I'm gonna have Shey and Connie with me, and (gasps) and probably some big guys too—

NATHAN: What the hell are you talking about, "big guys," what like *bodyguards?*

ALICE: (begins to recover) And I'm gonna take my stuff and you're never gonna see me again. That's the only reason I came back in this house, so I could look you straight in the face and say: you'll never see me again. You don't own me. I deserve better, and you'll never see me again. That's the story I heard. That's *my* story. The end!

NATHAN: (quietly) All right.

ALICE: I know it's all right.

NATHAN: I understand.

[Nathan sits down on the floor.]

ALICE: What are you doing?

NATHAN: Why does it matter?

ALICE: Why are you... why are you sitting on the...

NATHAN: Didn't you just say you were leaving?

ALICE: There's like a million places to—why are you sitting on the floor?

NATHAN: Who cares?

ALICE: You never sit on the floor.

NATHAN: What do you mean, never?

ALICE: Never, in the whole time I've known you, have you ever—

NATHAN: "In the whole time you've known me," you've never seen me sit on the floor.

ALICE: I don't get it.

NATHAN: It'll come to you. Tomorrow, or the next day.

ALICE: What'll "come to me"?

NATHAN: Goodbye, Alice.

ALICE: What...?

NATHAN: You said you're leaving, I respect that. Goodbye. Thank you for all the years you've given me.

[Beat.]

ALICE: Okay.

[Beat.]

NATHAN: I don't understand why you're not leaving.

ALICE: You're just saying—

NATHAN: I'm saying thank you for the years you've given me, they've been the best years of my life.

ALICE: Well... okay then I'm... leaving.

[The floor creaks as Alice begins to leave.]

ALICE: "In the whole time I've known you"—

NATHAN: It's okay, you'll figure it out later.

ALICE: "...I've never seen you sit on the floor."

NATHAN: It'll come to you, don't rush it.

ALICE: But you sat on the floor... *before* I knew you?

NATHAN: Why would a person ever sit on the floor if they could sit in a chair? Or on a couch?

ALICE: Because...

NATHAN: What does sitting on the floor mean?

ALICE: I-I don't know, it means...

NATHAN: It means you've given up. I sat on the floor a lot before I knew you. And then we met, and you gave me a reason to get up off the floor.

ALICE: But...

NATHAN: For a lot of years, I've had this thing in my life, this beautiful thing in my life that's gotten me off the floor every single day.

ALICE: Nathan, I'm not trying to—

NATHAN: But if that beautiful thing is gone, if that beautiful thing hates me now, then, I mean... this is where I should be.

ALICE: I mean that's... (sighs) I don't *hate* you.

NATHAN: Of course you do. You just said you did.

ALICE: I'm pretty sure I didn't —

NATHAN: You did. You said I'm a liar and a manipulator. I'm not gonna fight you. This is what you want.

ALICE: I didn't use the wo—this is stupid, give me your hand, I'll pull you up—

NATHAN: No thank you.

ALICE: You're really just gonna...

NATHAN: I had a reason to get off the floor, now I don't.

ALICE: Just let me pull you up, this is crazy!

NATHAN: Goodbye, Alice.

ALICE: You're not just gonna stay on the floor forever, you have to go to work—

NATHAN: No I don't.

ALICE: Of course you do! You have to go to your job, you have to eat!

NATHAN: Why?

ALICE: "Why"?

NATHAN: I only did those things for you. You were the reason. That's over now.

ALICE: *This is so stupid, just give me your hand!!*

NATHAN: Thank you for being my reason for as long as you were. I wouldn't trade it for anything.

[A brief silence.]

ALICE: You lied about me. To my best friends. It's on video.

NATHAN: Well it's not, but I understand why you think it is.

ALICE: It's right here!

NATHAN: It's not, really, though.

ALICE: I've watched it a billion times!

NATHAN: Doesn't matter how many times if you're not watching closely enough.

ALICE: Watching for *what*?

NATHAN: I mean I could tell you, but you're leaving. You'll spot it someday.

ALICE: There's nothing to spot!

NATHAN: I understand.

ALICE: There's nothing to spot!

NATHAN: You're not in the right place right now, but you'll get there. You're smart, you'll get there. Goodbye.

[Beat.]

ALICE: I've watched it dozens of times.

NATHAN: Do you just want me to tell you?

ALICE: There's nothing to tell.

NATHAN: Then there's no problem.

[Beat.]

ALICE: Fine, tell me.

NATHAN: Are you sure?

ALICE: I wanna hear whatever bullshit you've... (calms down) just tell me.

NATHAN: Just for the record, you're specifically requesting—

ALICE: Just tell me!

NATHAN: I need to show you on the phone, I'd need you to sit next to me.

ALICE: Can't you just come over here?

NATHAN: I've already explained that. Not anymore.

ALICE: Jesus Christ.

[Alice sits down on the floor.]

ALICE: Ready?

NATHAN: Only if you're sure this is what you want.

[The video begins playing again.]

NATHAN: Okay, see there...

ALICE: What.

NATHAN: One second, it happens again... and there.

ALICE: I didn't—what do you—I didn't see anything.

NATHAN: She says, "We wanted to make a..." and then what happens?

ALICE: She looks at Connie and Connie says, "A suggestion."

NATHAN: You're still not getting it?

ALICE: There's nothing to get.

NATHAN: A minute later, She says, "And we just really, really want to see Alice again. We just really..." And then what happens?

ALICE: She looks at Connie...

NATHAN: Right...

ALICE: And Connie says... "We just miss her a lot, that's all."

NATHAN: I know you see it now. I can tell just by looking at you.

ALICE: So she... looks at Connie two times, I don't get why that's—

NATHAN: She looks at Connie to finish her sentences.

ALICE: I mean, lots of couples—like finish each other's—

NATHAN: Sentences no one should need help finishing. It's not like Connie's feeding her SAT words. She says, "A suggestion" and then she says, "We just miss her." Not like theorems, not like equations or whatever, just "a suggestion" and "we miss her." Super-basic phrases that no one should have to reach for, words people should have right at the top of their minds, unless...

ALICE: Unless...?

NATHAN: Unless this is scripted. Unless these are lines that were scripted ahead of time. Unless this whole encounter with me was scripted and prepared ahead of time for the purpose of luring you back into their lives.

ALICE: That's...

NATHAN: Have you ever not been able to think of the word "suggestion"? Like, I don't know, since you were seven years old, five years old, have you ever forgotten the word "suggestion"?

ALICE: No, but I—

NATHAN: She didn't forget the word, she forgot her scripted line. That's why she keeps looking at Connie. She's signaling: "I forgot my line, feed me my line."

ALICE: I don't... think that's...

NATHAN: This isn't coming from me, this is coming from you. You used to tell me how when they didn't want you tagging along for a couple thing they'd send you a *carefully worded* text. If they use *careful wording* to push you away, they'll use *careful wording* when they want you back. People don't change, they use the same techniques their whole lives. They didn't want you around for a while, and now they do, so they're using the same technique *that they know has worked before*. Right? This is something *you* told *me*.

ALICE: I mean... it's... it's true that...

NATHAN: And what's missing in all of this? In all of this crazy scripted manipulation, what's missing?

ALICE: I don't...

NATHAN: What *you* want. That's what's missing. What Alice wants. And that's what should be the most important thing of all. So—what I said to them, what I said back to them? It was a judgment call in a really tight moment. I had to think of something to say to protect you, and that was the fastest thing I could come up with. [Beat.] You're about to leave me. I understand that, I accept it, you're about to walk out that door and I'm never gonna see you again. And the rest of my life is gonna be... I mean my life is gonna be...

ALICE: No, I don't want...

NATHAN: I don't even wanna think about what it's gonna be. Walking around this house... I don't wanna think about it. But you know what would make it bearable for me, what would give me just that little bit of consolation I need to go on?

ALICE: I don't want it to be like that, that's not—

NATHAN: Would be if I knew you took this one piece of advice from me and carried it with you for the rest of your life: *do what Alice wants*. Not what Shey wants, not what Connie wants, not what some job wants, not what the... the next man in your life wants...

ALICE: No...

NATHAN: But what *Alice wants*. If I was here all alone, but I was able to picture you? Free? Happy? Doing what you want? That you took that advice, that you took that little piece of me with you forever and used it to make yourself free? Then I think I could stand it. I think I could make it. I think that would get me through.

[Rustle as Nathan hugs her.]

ALICE: Sshh, shh-shh-shh, it's okay.

NATHAN: I just love you so much.

ALICE: It's okay.

NATHAN: It's my whole life, my whole life is how I love you so much.

ALICE: I'm sorry.

NATHAN: If I don't have you...

ALICE: I'm sorry, I didn't, I didn't...

NATHAN: There's nothing. You're why there's anything at all.

ALICE: I've got you.

NATHAN: Can you just...

ALICE: Ssshhh.

NATHAN: Can you just stay with me tonight? If you just stay with me tonight...

ALICE: I'm not going anywhere.

NATHAN: If you just stay with me tonight, then tomorrow I can let you go.

ALICE: I'm not going anywhere.

NATHAN: You feel so good.

ALICE: So do you.

ALICE (voiceover): And I hold him, and I squeeze my eyes shut as tight as they'll go, like if I could squeeze them tight enough... And when I open them again...

[Birds call and a breeze rustles the trees.]

ALICE (voiceover): ...It's autumn again. Which means it must've been spring. Which means it must've been summer.

This is what happens when it's autumn again: the leaves turn, but the vines never do. They stay as green and red as they were before. And then when winter comes, the leaves fall off the regular trees, and everything else is bare, but the vines stay the same. In a month or two, they'll have icicles on them, but underneath the icicles, they'll be exactly the same.

Why didn't it work? *I had it on tape.* I was so sure it would work.

[Alice walks up to the trunk and knocks on it.]

ALICE (voiceover): It's his last girlfriend. *Inside the trunk.* That's what I've decided. Maybe if I... maybe that's it. Maybe if I... tell myself that she's in here... like all curled up on her side... in like a dress from a long time ago... and her skin is dry, like old bark with... bones pushing through her face, through her fingers... with nothing in her eyes... if I make her as awful as possible right now, and then I lift this lid... maybe it won't be so bad if she's there.

[She undoes the latch and the lid of the trunk swings open.]

ALICE (voiceover): *But... it's... my Power Blazer. My red Power Blazer, with the shoulder-pads, why would...* (she puts it on) *Okay, still fits fine, it... something in the pocket...*

[Items in the pocket crinkle as she takes them out.]

ALICE (voiceover): Cable bill... insurance card... a flyer someone handed me on the street... when was that? What street? Was it hot or cold?

NATHAN (from the other room): (sleepily) Alice. Come back to bed.

ALICE: (to Nathan) I just wanna look at the... (surprised) the icicles?

ALICE (voiceover): It was the best story ever, and it should've worked. Unless... (crinkles the papers and takes a deep breath) Unless the best stories *aren't the good ones*. Unless the best stories are the boring ones. The ones that never end. The ones that are still happening now. "And then this happens. And then this happens." Is there any way that could be true? (on the verge of tears) If I try to get my suitcase down, he'll hear it. All of my stuff is here. Like *everything* of mine is in this house. I can't just *leave it all*—wait, what's... it's like a basket. Like a picnic basket.

[The wicker basket creaks as she picks it up.]

ALICE (voiceover): (takes a deep breath) It won't hold much, so I have to pick my favorites. It really just ends up being the few things I can find without turning on any lights. Now all that's left, really, is just to... step... outside.

[The door opens, and the sound of the quiet winter outdoors floods in.]

NATHAN (from the other room): Alice?

ALICE (voiceover): There's a story. It's happening right now.

[Alice's footsteps crunch in the snow.]

ALICE (voiceover): Here's what it's about. First: [She takes a step and the bridge creaks.] ...this happens.

[The sound of water running under the bridge becomes louder.]

NATHAN (from the distant doorway): Alice?

[With each repetition, Alice takes a creaking step on the icy bridge.]

ALICE: [takes a step] And then this happens. And then this happens.

NATHAN (from the doorway): Alice what the hell are you—it's the middle of the night!

ALICE: [takes a step] And then this happens.

NATHAN (from the doorway): You're having a picnic in the middle of the night? In the snow?

ALICE: [takes a step] And then this happens.

NATHAN (from the doorway): Wait wait wait, what are you—the bridge is completely iced, you don't know what you're doing!

ALICE: [takes a step] And then this happens.

NATHAN (from the doorway): What, are you like... are you like... I mean this is funny, are you like...

ALICE: [takes a step] And then this happens.

NATHAN (from the doorway): Are you like leaving me? Is it this again?

ALICE: [takes a step] And then this happens.

NATHAN (from the doorway): Come on, you're not leaving me. It must be like two degrees out, what are you—you're not leaving me!

ALICE: [takes a step] And then this happens.

NATHAN (from the doorway): You're leaving me?

ALICE: [takes a step] And then this happens.

NATHAN (from the doorway): Just wait, just wait, JUST WAIT! Okay, you're leaving me. Or you think you're leaving me. Or you really are leaving me. That's fine, that's your choice! You could always leave me, there's no lock on the door!

ALICE: [takes a step] And then this happens.

NATHAN (from the doorway): It's your right to leave. It's any adult's right to leave any other adult, of course that's true. But here's something else that's true: you do owe me a reason.

[Alice begins gasping for breath.]

NATHAN (from the doorway): You can't just leave a person—alone and bereft—a person you've been with for *so many years*—without telling them why!

ALICE: [takes a step] And then this happens.

NATHAN (from the doorway): Leaving a person without a reason is abuse! It's abuse, you know it is! I can tell from the way you're walking that you know it's abuse!

ALICE: [takes a step] And then this happens.

NATHAN (from the doorway): You know what my life is gonna be like without you? And you won't even give me a reason?

[Alice slips on the ice, and a piece falls off the bridge and plops into the water below. A pulsating heartbeat fades in. Nathan's voice begins to sound echoey like it's coming from farther and farther away.]

NATHAN: You know why you keep slipping? There's ice on the bridge! It's already winter again! It was winter the last time you tried this, and it's already winter again! Don't you understand how long you've been here? Don't you understand how old you are?

ALICE: And then this—

[Alice takes a step and slips again.]

NATHAN: You're old, Alice. You're not young, you're old. If you want to try to start over now, you have to start over as someone who's old!

ALICE: And then this—

[She slips again.]

NATHAN: If you want work, you'll have to find it as an old woman. If you want love, you'll have to find it as an old woman. You know how hard it is to find those things when you're old? To find somebody who wants an old woman?

ALICE: And then—

[As she tries to take a step, she slips again. She begins breathing heavily.]

NATHAN: Because I do. I love you as an old woman. I love you exactly as you are.

[Alice stumbles and slips.]

NATHAN: See? Your own body won't let you leave me. Our bodies belong together. So just stay right there—stay right where you are – and let me come to you. I'll bring you back. All you have to do... is look at me.

ALICE: [takes a step] And then this happens. [A definitive step] And then this happens.

NATHAN (from the doorway): Okay Alice—okay Alice wait—Alice wait! ALICE WAIT!

ALICE: And then this happens.

[Alice steps off the bridge and her footsteps crunch in the snow.]

NATHAN (from the doorway): Where are you going to go? There's nothing that way but woods! You know what's in the woods? You think you'll last a day?

ALICE: And then this happens.

[Alice takes more confident, regular steps in the snow.]

NATHAN (from the doorway): You'll be back in an hour! If you can even *find* your way back! If you don't starve first!

ALICE: And then this happens.

[Alice walks away.]

NATHAN (from the doorway): ALICE! I'LL DIE WITHOUT YOU! I'LL DIE WITHOUT YOU! FUCK YOU! FUCK YOU! I HOPE YOU... I hope you...

[A brief chime transition. As Alice talks, she breaks sticks and rubs them together to make a fire.]

ALICE (voiceover): I wouldn't have made camp here if I'd seen the bridge—*and his house over there at the other end*—but it's getting dark, and there are so way more vines than there used to be. *But I still should've known*: walk long enough, far enough, one day you're gonna cross your own path.

NATHAN: Alice?

[Alice stops rubbing the sticks together.]

ALICE: ...Hi.

[Alice starts packing up her things.]

NATHAN: Alice, right? You *are*... Oh, no, you don't have to—you don't have to pack up—were you—I feel weird, were you making a fire? It looked like you were... [Beat.] I tried Shey and Connie's a couple times, not to... just to check... they said you weren't there.

ALICE: I wasn't.

NATHAN: Right, right, I wasn't sure if that was true or if...

ALICE: I wasn't there.

NATHAN: Well hold on, you don't have to...

ALICE: Take care.

[She starts to walk away through the snow.]

NATHAN: They gave me Central America. I don't know if I ever told you, Rootkit's been moving into Central America, and it turns out they're giving it to me. Lots more business there, lots more companies need real IT now, not like somebody's cousin or whatever.

[She stops walking.]

ALICE: Good.

NATHAN: And the new way bonuses are set up now, I actually get paid four percent of the incoming budget of any new structure we put in place. And these structures are pretty significant in scale, so...

ALICE: Good.

NATHAN: Just that whoever... would be in my life... would be really well taken care of.

ALICE: Good.

NATHAN: And you haven't been at Shey and Connie's. And it looked like you were trying to make a fire. It looks like it's been hard.

[Beat.]

ALICE: Yeah.

NATHAN: It's been hard.

ALICE: Yeah.

NATHAN: My poor—[Beat.] It doesn't have to be.

ALICE: What... do you mean?

NATHAN: I mean just... just in there is... coffee, juice, eggs, fruit... new sofa... new *shower*, it has the most incredible... it doesn't have to be this way.

ALICE: Take care.

NATHAN: What?

ALICE: Take care.

NATHAN: What is that?

ALICE: Take care.

NATHAN: What is “take care,” I don’t understand what “take care” is, is that like a warning, are you like warning me? *Wait*, is that my picnic basket?

ALICE: Do you want it back?

NATHAN: Do I...? Did you even hear me? I’m gonna be... I could buy hundreds of picnic baskets, I could buy thousands of... I don’t need it back.

ALICE: Take care.

NATHAN: What does that *mean*?

ALICE: Take care of yourself.

[Alice walks away.]

ALICE (voiceover): I thought, “Ask for something. He said fruit. Ask for fruit to put in your bag to take with you.” But somehow that would’ve ended up... Anyway, that’s not how it is anymore. That’s not how I want it anymore.

[She starts rubbing sticks together to make a fire again.]

ALICE (voiceover): It’s cool at first when your bag is full, but then you can’t go as far, or as fast. It’s better to go in clean. It’s better to say, “You know what? I won’t starve. I’ll find nuts and berries, I’ll kill a squirrel, I’ll find good fresh running water. I don’t have anything now. But I’ll find what I need when I get there.”

[She continues to rub the sticks together.]

ALICE (voiceover): And then this happens. And then this happens.

[The friction gives rise to a burst of small flame. It turns into a crackling fire.]

ALICE (voiceover): And then this happens.

[The fire crackles and then fades out. Chime music begins playing under credits.]

VOICEOVER: *God of Obsidian* by Mac Rogers. Directed by Jordana Williams and featuring Rebecca Comtois and Mac Rogers. Sound design by Bart Fasbender. Produced by Sean Williams. *God of Obsidian* is brought to you by Gideon Media and was recorded in its entirety in Astoria, New York. *God of Obsidian* is dedicated in loving memory to George Comtois.