

THE LOST HEARTS OF LETCHWORTH VILLAGE

Written by

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Screenwriting 1, 10:30 AM

EXT. LETCHWORTH VILLAGE - DAY

The year is 1928, and the iron gates and pathways of Letchworth Village loom across the amazing neoclassical architecture stretching over 2000 acres, their once pristine spikes like gnarled fingers reaching for the sky. The cabins of the patients are nestled among the rolling hills, concealing dark secrets.

A 1928 Falcon Knight Roadster drives into the scene, displaying EMILY, 16, innocent with contemplative green eyes and long brunette hair, wearing institutional clothing in the backseat with nothing but a small case of belongings, including an old family photo.

She is being driven by a silent male village worker. Emily notices the name on his tag, GAVIN, 45, stoic as he wears plain white scrubs and is visibly impatient. Emily begins to ask him questions.

EMILY

Mr. Gavin, where are we going?

Gavin gives no reply, staring at the road ahead. Emily sighs and stares out the window.

EMILY (CONT'D)

Do you know where we're going Mr. Gavin?..

Emily continues staring out the window, and notices the longer they drive, the more bare the trees become.

Approaching the main campus, stretching over 100 acres there stands a church near the entrance, a sea of patients flooding the walkways to the village. The car stops and parks.

Gavin opens the door hastily, ripping Emily out of her seat and begins forcibly leading her through the maze of patients to the Main Building, all the way down the strip of the boys and girls dorms.

GAVIN

Keep up kid! Times a luxury here.

Gavin shoves Emily past some other patients, and begins talking to a passing nurse named GERTRUDE, 37 and stern with a bony wicked appearance, begins to scold him.

GERTRUDE

Another damn patient? We were at full capacity last week!

GAVIN
Orders are orders. She's your
problem now!

Gavin storms off abandoning Emily with Nurse Gertrude, Emily having a clear look of fear and confusion on her face.

INT. LETCHWORTH VILLAGE - HALLWAYS

Nurse Gertrude grabs Emily by the hair, leading her to a dimly lit room with a single mattress and throws her luggage at her before SLAMMING the heavy metal door, making the floor vibrate.

INT. LETCHWORTH VILLAGE - EMILY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Emily sits alone in her dimly lit room. She picks up the small, worn photograph from her bedside. The photo shows a younger Emily with her parents, laughing in a lush garden under a starry sky.

FLASHBACK:

EXT. EMILY'S CHILDHOOD HOME - GARDEN - NIGHT (YEARS AGO)

A young Emily dances barefoot on the grass with her parents. The sound of cicadas fills the air, and the family shares a moment of joy and laughter under the stars.

BACK TO PRESENT:

INT. LETCHWORTH VILLAGE - EMILY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Emily's eyes linger on the photograph, a tear rolling down her cheek. She gently touches the faces in the photo, her expression a mix of sadness and longing.

She then looks around her stark room - the bare walls, the single flat mattress. The contrast is stark and painful. She clutches the photograph to her chest, closing her eyes as if trying to transport herself back to that happier time.

DISSOLVE TO:

A few hours later, the room is bathed in the soft glow of the moonlight. A clock on the wall shows the passage of time.

Emily stands at the small window of her room, gazing out at the bleak landscape of Letchworth Village.

The moonlight casts a ghostly glow, a distinct difference to the warm, vibrant nights of her past.

She slowly places the photograph on the windowsill, as if leaving a piece of her heart there. Her eyes are determined, yet filled with a deep sense of loss.

A silent Emily sits in her room gazing out her small window, the window and main building in view, Emily becoming visually smaller as sparkling white snow fills the screen.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. GIRLS DORM - 4 YEARS LATER

Emily, her face showing the toll of years, adds another tally to the wall of her sparse room. The wall is covered with countless tallies, each marking a day of her confinement. Emily moves mechanically.

Her only companion by her side is LILY, a mysterious selectively mute girl dazed up with medication, she has wild curls that stand out among the rest.

INT. LETCHWORTH VILLAGE - VARIOUS LOCATIONS - DAY

In a series of quick cuts, Emily is seen in different parts of the village: eating her porridge with a vacant stare in the dining hall, walking through the hallways as just another number, "C-27", on her dress, and taking her medication from a nurse without a word. Each scene underscores the monotony and hopelessness of her daily life.

INT. LETCHWORTH VILLAGE - EMILY'S ROOM - NIGHT

The room is dimly lit, casting shadows on Emily's face as she sits on her bed, staring out of her small window. The reflection in the glass shows a blend of her current weary self and a vibrant flashback of her younger self, laughing and playing in a field. The contrast is stark, highlighting the loss of her innocence and freedom. As the flashback fades, a determined look replaces the emptiness in her eyes.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LETCHWORTH VILLAGE - LUNCH ROOM

Nurse Gertrude comes dressed in baggy, tattered scrubs and walks up to a fragile looking child named DAVID, 6, timid and helpless with a spoon in hand, a thick red syrup liquid pooling in the center. David hesitates and whines, but the nurse hastily forces his mouth open and shoves the already contaminated utensil into it.

David begins choking and foaming at the mouth, convulsing into a seizure from a bad allergic reaction to the experimental medication. He becomes unconscious.

Nurse Gertrude in a panic, grabs David's unconscious body and stuffs it into a nearby closet, closing it shut and locking it. Emily notices, but is zombified and unable to move due to the medication she has been taking.

At night, when the medication begins to wear off, she slowly regains consciousness. She looks around the dimly lit asylum.

Emily begins to look at the closet, not sure why she feels so strongly about it. A memory struggling to break through the haze of the medication.

She forces herself to move, her muscles stiff. With a huge effort, she stumbles towards the closet. As she reaches the closet, Emily's trembling hands undo the lock. The door creaks open, revealing an empty, barren space. David is nowhere to be found.

Panic and confusion wash over Emily and she faints.

In her moments of consciousness, she drifts back to the sounds of the cicadas outside. Their chorus brings a bittersweet solace, a feeling of distant memory of better days. With every chirp her strength fades.

CUT TO:

INT. EMILY'S ROOM - ONE YEAR LATER

In their shared room one night, dimly lit and filled with the smell of filth, disease, and death Lily breaks her silence to whisper about "The Vanishing Children." Her eyes holding an unforgiving secret.

LILY
(whispering)
Emily, I've seen things—the
basement, the jars.

EMILY

What do you mean?

LILY

(whispering)

The Vanishing Children.. I feel them, trapped in the walls, between life and death. There's a dark mystery here, Emily. Ever since the doctor has been talking about his new procedure.. I haven't seen Robert or Mary since.

EMILY

Just like David..

LILY

(nodding)

Like David. I saw it happen, Emily. They dragged him away at night, all pale and lifeless, just like the others. They say it's for the procedure, but I know better.

EMILY

(confused and concerned)

What procedure, Lily? What in god's name are they doing to them?

Lily hesitates, her wild curls falling around her face like a protective barrier. She leans in closer to Emily

LILY

(whispering)

They call it the "Lobotomy Procedure" It's supposed to make us better, but it's only making people vanish..

EMILY

(whispering)

But what's in the jars, Lily? I've seen them too. They're filled with... something.

Lily's eyes dart around the dimly lit room, making sure no one is listening. She reaches under her tattered dress and pulls out a piece of paper with scribbles and drawings.

LILY

(whispering)

I've been keeping a journal, Emily. It's the only way to remember.

(MORE)

These drawings, they're all I have
to piece it together.

Emily takes the journal from Lily, her hands trembling as she flips through the pages. The drawings are chaotic, filled with shadows and shapes that seem to move in the flickering light.

EMILY
(whispering)
These... they're like a map, Lily.
A map of hell.

Lily nods, her eyes haunted as she watches Emily trace a finger over a drawing of the main building.

LILY
(whispering)
It's worse than hell. At least hell
doesn't pretend to be heaven.

The door creaks open, and DR. HAWTHORNE, 61, exudes chilling authority. His sharp features and dark penetrating eyes reflect a clinical detachment. Dressed in a pristine doctor's coat, he moves with unsettling precision and spills into the room. He steps forward, his face obscured by the darkness.

DR. HAWTHORNE
(ominously)
Emily, it's time.

Emily clutches the journal to her chest, her knuckles white. Dr. Hawthorne rips her family photograph away as she stands up, her body language defiant yet vulnerable.

CUT TO:

INT. LETCHWORTH VILLAGE - DR. HAWTHORNE'S OFFICE - DAY

Emily sits rigidly in the chair, her eyes darting around the room, taking in the medical instruments and jars of strange liquids. Dr. Hawthorne prepares a syringe, his movements precise and detached.

Emily's gaze falls on a small, barred window. A single bird flies past, free and unburdened. Her eyes follow its flight until Dr. Hawthorne blocks her view.

DR. HAWTHORNE
This will only sting for a moment.

He injects her, and Emily's grip on the journal loosens as her consciousness fades away along with Dr Hawthorne's voice.

CUT TO:

INT. LETCHWORTH VILLAGE - EMILY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Emily awakens in her room, the world a blur of shadows. She's alone, the silence is oppressive. She touches her abdomen, a new fear dawning as she pieces together her fragmented memories.

EMILY (V.O.)
(whispering)
What have they done to me?

She rises, her body weak but her will strong. She stumbles to the window, the moon casting a pale light on her face. She's searching for something, anything, that feels like hope.

CUT TO:

INT. LETCHWORTH VILLAGE - NURSE'S STATION - NIGHT

Emily overhears a conversation between Nurse Gertrude and a young doctor named RUTHIE, 24 and conflicted, her demeanor a blend of determination and underlying compassion that sets her apart from the typical staff. Her eyes are bright and observant, questioning the world around her. Her hair is pulled back in a practical, yet somewhat disheveled bun. Their words are hushed but heavy with implication.

RUTHIE
(uneasy)
The procedures... are they
necessary? They seem... extreme.

NURSE GERTRUDE
(coldly)
Dr. Hawthorne's orders are not to
be questioned. He believes this is
the only way to... cleanse them.

Emily's hand flies to her mouth, stopping a gasp. She retreats to the darkness, her mind racing.

CUT TO:

INT. LETCHWORTH VILLAGE - CHAPEL - DAY

Emily sits in the back pew of the chapel, her body hunched over a Bible, though her eyes see nothing on the pages. Lily finds her, sitting beside her with a worried look.

LILY
(softly)
Emily, what's wrong?

Emily turns to Lily, her eyes hollow but burning with an inner fire.

EMILY
(whispering)
They're trying to erase us, Lily.
But I won't be erased.

Lily takes Emily's hand, squeezing it tightly.

LILY
(whispering)
We'll find a way to fight back.
We'll make them see us.

CUT TO:

INT. LETCHWORTH VILLAGE - SOLITARY CONFINEMENT - DAY

Emily is taken into solitary in the main building asylum by Nurse Gertrude, the walls closing in. But this time, she's not alone. She's cradling her stomach, talking to the life inside her.

EMILY
(whispering)
They won't take you from me. You're
my proof... my witness to their
crimes.

She stands up with strong determination. She begins to scratch a message into the wall with a stone she's found.

EMILY (V.O.)
(whispering)
Our story will be told. And it will
bring these walls down.

The view focuses on the message she's leaving, It says "NOT FORGOTTEN, NOT GONE."

INT. LETCHWORTH VILLAGE - EMILY'S SOLITARY - NEXT DAY

Emily, back in her room, is approached by Nurse Gertrude, who hands her a crumpled, old photograph. Emily looks at it, her eyes widening in shock. It's a picture of her as a child, with her parents, a memory she thought she had lost.

NURSE GERTRUDE
 (softly, with unexpected
 kindness)
 Found this in Dr. Hawthorne's
 office. Thought you might want it
 back.

Emily clutches the photo, tears brimming in her eyes. Nurse Gertrude leaves, her expression conflicted.

CUT TO:

INT. LETCHWORTH VILLAGE - EMILY'S SOLITARY - 3 NIGHTS LATER

Emily stares at the photo, lost in thought. The door creaks open. It's Ruthie, her face serious. She hands Emily a small, old map.

RUTHIE
 (whispering)
 This is our way out. The tunnels
 beneath the village.

Emily studies the map, her eyes tracing the intricate web of tunnels sprawling beneath the village.

INT. LETCHWORTH VILLAGE - SECRET PASSAGEWAY - NIGHT

Emily and Ruthie enter a hidden passageway behind Dr. Hawthorne's office. The entrance to the tunnels looms before them, dark and foreboding.

INT. LETCHWORTH VILLAGE - UNDERGROUND TUNNELS - NIGHT

The tunnels are a maze of shadows and echoes. The walls are lined with old pipes and forgotten relics of the village's past. The air is thick with the weight of untold secrets.

EMILY
 (whispering, to Ruthie)
 How far do these go?

RUTHIE

(whispering)

All under the village. They connect everything... but they're confusing. We need to follow the map closely.

They navigate the tunnels, the only sound their footsteps and the distant, unidentifiable echoes of the asylum above. The path is convoluted, leading them deeper into the earth.

INT. LETCHWORTH VILLAGE - UNDERGROUND CROSSROADS - NIGHT

At a crossroads, Emily pauses, looking at the map. The paths branch in multiple directions, each leading to different parts of the village.

RUTHIE

(whispering)

This way. It leads to the old service exit.

They take a left, the tunnel narrowing, the ceiling lowering. They have to crouch as they move forward.

INT. LETCHWORTH VILLAGE - UNDERGROUND CHAMBER - NIGHT

They stumble upon an underground chamber, walls etched with markings by past patients - a hidden history of the asylum. Emily runs her fingers over the carvings, a chill running down her spine.

EMILY

(softly)

So many voices lost down here...

INT. LETCHWORTH VILLAGE - NEAR SERVICE EXIT - DAWN

Finally, they reach the end of the tunnel. The service exit is just ahead, hidden behind overgrown foliage. The first light of dawn filters in, casting long shadows.

EXT. LETCHWORTH VILLAGE - FOREST - DAWN

Emerging from the tunnel, Emily and Ruthie find themselves at the edge of the forest. The village looms in the distance, its secrets now in their hands.

FADE OUT.