

IT RUNS IN THE FAMILY

By

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Based on the short story
"It Runs in the Family," by Molly N. Moss.

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FADE IN:

EXT. STREET - DAY

Loveless--a (fictitious) Georgia county between Savannah and the Okefenokee. It's late morning.

At the county line road sign, a vulture sits lazily munching on a dead skunk.

CAMERA takes in the small town residential street. It's a blistering summer day, and everybody is drenched in sweat:

Shirtless teenage boys play tag football. A young mother and her toddler daughter weed a vegetable patch together--CAMERA lingers a little on them before moving on. Two aging shade-tree mechanics muck about with a truck's engine.

A large group of laughing, screaming children--girls and boys both, ages about 5-10--chase each other through a lawn sprinkler's spray. CAMERA checks the kids out, especially the older girls.

Reaching a small house badly in need of paint, CAMERA peeps through a window and shows us:

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

ANDRIA, 11, sits at the kitchen table, shoveling scrambled eggs into her mouth.

MAMA, 40-ish, is talking on the phone, smoking a cigarette, and pouring a Jack-and-Coke all at the same time.

MAMA

(into the phone)

I wasn't aiming to go anywhere today, but looks like I'll need to go to the store. This girl child of mine is about to eat me out of house and home. She's gone through two bowls of Fruit Loops, three plates of eggs, six strips of bacon, and two glasses each of milk and orange juice.

Plate empty, Andria looks at Mama.

ANDRIA

Can I have some more?

(CONTINUED)

MAMA

(into the phone)

Hold on a minute.

(points at wall clock--it's 11
a.m.)

You best hurry, if you want Granma
Hunt to take you to see *X-Men* this
afternoon.

ANDRIA

But Mama, I'm so hungry!

MAMA

You must be having a growth spurt.
Get going, girl, and don't worry,
you know Granma Hunt is taking you
to lunch before the movie.

Andria reluctantly goes upstairs to her bedroom. She changes
out of her pajamas and into shorts, t-shirt, and sandals.

When she goes back downstairs, Mama is off the phone,
sitting at the table making a grocery list. Andria hugs and
kisses Mama.

ANDRIA

Okay Mama, I'm gone.

MAMA

Wait up, what's that on your chin?

(looking close)

Uh-oh, it's a hair. Sorry kiddo, it
runs in the family.

Andria runs to check out her reflection. Sure enough, a
black hair has sprouted from her chin.

ANDRIA

Oh no! Mama, you've got to help me
get rid of it!

Mama's phone rings. She glances at Caller ID.

MAMA

Gotta take this. You better run,
girl, you're already late.

ANDRIA

I can't go to a movie like this!
What if I see a kid from school?

(CONTINUED)

MAMA

(into the phone)

Sorry, my girl child has a crisis.
Hold on a minute.

(to Andria)

Pretend you've got a cough. Your
hand will hide your chin. That's
what I did, at your age. Get going,
kid. We'll tweezer it when you get
home.

(into the phone)

I'm back. What's going on?

Andria rushes to the garage.

ANDRIA

Please, God, don't let Jackson
Thomas see me with this hair
sticking out of my chin...

INT. GARAGE - DAY

Andria grabs her bicycle and tries to roll it outside. It
won't roll.

She drags it. In the sunlit garage door, she can see one of
the tires is flat.

ANDRIA

Great, just great. Now what do I
do?

EXT. STREET - DAY

Andria trudges to the end of the driveway, looking both
ways. She sees her brother MARKUS, 15, in the group of boys
playing tag football.

ANDRIA

Markus! Com'ere a minute!

MARKUS

Whatchu want?

ANDRIA

I got a big problem!

MARKUS

(to his buddies)

Girls always got big problems.

Markus trots over to talk to his little sister.

(CONTINUED)

MARKUS
Whassup, kid?

ANDRIA
My bike's got a flat tire.

MARKUS
Yeah, I see that. I'll take a look at it later.

ANDRIA
But I'm s'posed to be on my way to Granma Hunt's house now!

MARKUS
Look, it's Ron's birthday, I can't bail on him to fix a bike tire. You're just gonna have to foot it. But you'll only be late if you stick to the roads. Remember that shortcut through the woods we took a couple times?

ANDRIA
I think so.

MARKUS
You're all set, then. Just remind me about the tire later.

Markus rejoins his friends.

Andria starts walking down Post Road, toward Cypress Creek. CAMERA follows her.

EXT. BRIDGE - DAY

Some neighborhood kids are fishing and swimming in Cypress Creek. Andria waves and calls hi to two of her friends as she crosses the bridge.

ANDRIA
Hey Tony, hey Lorraine. Catchin' anything?

TONY
Nah. So hot, even fish wanna lay low.

LORRAINE
Come sit with us and dip your feet in the creek. Water's cool.

(CONTINUED)

ANDRIA

I can't. My granma is takin' me to a movie. See ya later.

While she chats with her friends, Andria sees a scrawny bald man following her across the bridge. He grins at her and stops halfway to chat with the fishing kids.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Andria moves on, into the woods. She picks at the hair on her chin as she looks around, trying to remember the shortcut.

ANDRIA

Downhill would take me to the swamp, and I remember Markus led me uphill. But all the trees look the same.

She trudges uphill, moving slower as she feels more and more uncertain.

ANDRIA

I wonder if I should go back to the bridge, try to get directions.

She turns around to look back.

That's when she's tackled by LUNCH--the scrawny bald man. She falls face-down and he straddles her back.

Lunch clamps a hand over Andria's mouth. He pulls down her shorts as he speaks to her.

LUNCH

Be still and don't make a sound. Or I'll hurt you bad.

ANDRIA

Please let me go, mister.

LUNCH

(starts choking her)
You don't understand what "don't make a sound" means?

Andria claws at the ground, trying to grab a rock or something to use as a weapon. That's when she sees...

...black hairs, just like the one on her chin, are sprouting thickly all over her hands and arms.

(CONTINUED)

Her fingernails turn into claws.

The tips of her teeth, suddenly sharp, prick her lips.

And WE HEAR her stomach growl. It's so loud, it stops Lunch's efforts to choke her.

LUNCH (cont'd)
What the hell is that?

Lunch's hand is still covering Andria's mouth. She bites him.

He shrieks, and Andria licks blood from her lips and throws him off her. She finishes shape-changing into a wolf...

...and she jumps on Lunch and rips his throat open with her fangs.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. WOODS - EVENING

Wolf Andria shakes herself and stretches. All that's left of Lunch is his head, hands, and feet.

She lopes down to the creek and drinks her fill of water. Only when she steps back does she see her reflection and realize what's happened.

Wolf Andria howls.

MOMENTS LATER ... a rabbit races by. Wolf Andria's stomach growls. She snarls and chases after her new prey.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Wolf Andria crosses the bridge and stalks along Post Road. All the houses have their lights off, except her family's.

She shakes herself again. Then she runs home.

On the porch of her family's house, the black fur ... sinks into Andria's skin.

Her claws are turning back into fingernails, as she grabs the doorknob and yanks the door open.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Mama sits at the table, positioned where she can watch the front door. As soon as she sees Andria, she jumps up and runs to her.

MAMA

Girl child, where have you been?

ANDRIA

Am I in big trouble?

MAMA

That depends. On what you tell me you've been doing. And if I believe you.

Andria bursts into tears.

ANDRIA

Mama, if I tell you the truth, you'll never believe me.

MAMA

(hugging Andria)

Try me, okay?

ANDRIA

I started to go to Granma Hunt's house, I swear. But my bike had a flat tire, and you already told me I was running late. So I ... I tried to take a shortcut through the woods. Markus took me that way twice.

MAMA

You mean you've been lost in the woods all this time?

ANDRIA

No. Worse... Mama, a man followed me, and in the woods he jumped on me, and I... I...

There's a brief silence. Mama holds Andria by the shoulders and looks into her eyes.

MAMA

You turned into a wolf and ate him. Is that it?

(CONTINUED)

ANDRIA

Mama! How did you know that?

MAMA

I do it too. We're werewolves,
kiddo. It runs in the family.

FADE OUT...:

...but:

MAMA (V.O.)

I've been so worried sick about
you, I haven't had a bite to eat
since lunchtime. Was there anything
left of him?

END