A Light In Room Twelve

FADE IN:

EXT. MOTEL - NIGHT

An "L" shaped one story building. Nine rooms on one side, three more and the lobby on the other.

All the lights are off except for one. A dim light flickers in the room farthest from the lobby.

A STORM rages. Rain batters the building front. The water peels off the edges of the structure like a contrail from the high winds.

A single CAR rushes through the empty parking lot.

INT. LOBBY - NIGHT

The car's head lights stop right in front of the doors. STEPHEN, 33, enters. He can barely hold onto the door as he fights the howling winds. He slams it shut. Bells jingle.

STEPHEN

Hello?

BORIS, 72, approaches with a flashlight.

BORIS

What are you doing here?

STEPHEN

Me and my wife. We got caught in the storm. We need shelter.

BORIS

Shelter's at the high school. Two miles down the road.

STEPHEN

It took us an hour to go one mile. Everything's down. Power lines, trees.

Boris looks past Stephen to the car.

BORIS

Can't help you. We're closed.

STEPHEN

Are you... Look, we just need a place to bunker down.

Stephen looks around. Keys hang on pins behind the counter, one through twelve. They're all there. Stephen takes out his wallet.

STEPHEN

How much for a room? I'll pay you double.

BORIS

I said we're closed. Powers out anyway.

STEPHEN

I saw a light still on. In the last room.

Boris walks over to the window. He squints his eyes.

BORIS

That room always had energy. We never rent it out, even when we're open, which we're not.

STEPHEN

Are you kidding me? You're just gonna kick us out? In this shit?

BORIS

Afraid it will be safer for you out there than it is in here.

Boris turns. He pulls out a set of keys and sticks one in the dead bolt. As he does, Stephen reaches over the counter and grabs the key to room twelve. Boris opens the door.

BORIS

Get to the shelter.

STEPHEN

Thanks for all your help.

Stephen leaves. Boris dead bolts the door behind him. He watches the car pull away.

INT. ROOM TWELVE - NIGHT

Pin striped wall paper on the walls. A single queen bed with a red and gold, floral pattern comforter.

The light from the lamp on the end table illuminates the room. A tiny stand with an old rabbit ear television.

The door flings open. Stephen and MAGGIE, 30, enter. Stephen fights to shut the door as Maggie plops down on the bed. Her mascara runs black.

MAGGIE

I can't believe you could just leave our daughter like that.

Stephen rests his head against the door.

STEPHEN

Please, Maggie, don't start. The house was getting torn apart, we had to leave. She'll be fine.

MAGGIE

She'll be fine?! She's all alone! She's probably so frightened.

STEPHEN

She's dead! It's been six months now.

Maggie gets up. She stands in front of Stephen for a moment before she slaps him.

MAGGIE

Don't you say that. You saw her with your own eyes. She's still trapped in our home. You heard what the medium said.

Stephen puts his hands on her face.

STEPHEN

I know. I was there, but no harm can come to her now. When this passes, we will go back and help her find her way.

MAGGIE

We have to pray.

Maggie rifles through the drawers on the end table and finds a bible. Stephen puts his bag on the bed. He pulls two flashlights out and sits on the edge of the bed.

Maggie grabs his hand and sits next to him. She opens the book.

MAGGIE

What is this?

All of the pages are blank, not a single printed word.

STEPHEN

It's probably just a prop. Let me see if I can get any updates on the storm.

Stephen turns on the television. A snowy screen. He tries to adjust the rabbit ears and turns the channels.

Maggie goes back to the drawer. A journal sits in the bottom of it. She pulls it out. A red ribbon marks a page.

STEPHEN

Nothing.

MAGGIE

Look at this.

Stephen turns off the T.V. Maggie sits on the bed.

STEPHEN

What is that?

MAGGIE

A journal, I think.

She flips open to the marker and begins to read.

MAGGIE

September 17th, 1982.

Maggie looks up at Stephen.

STEPHEN

What?

MAGGIE

Today is September 17th. This was thirty years ago, today.

Stephen sits next to her.

MAGGIE

(reading)

My name is Lillian Mcguire. This will probably be my last journal entry. My mother always warned me never to stay at this motel, but I had to seek shelter from the storm. She said a disavowed priest bought it some time ago and that he used to bury sinners under the floorboards. I should've listened. If you're reading this and you shut the door behind you, it is already too late. The ghost in here will not let you out.

Stephen gets up.

STEPHEN

This is bullshit.

He grabs the door handle. It doesn't budge. He tries repeatedly to no avail.

MAGGIE

Stephen?

Stephen pulls back the curtain. Black opaqueness.

STEPHEN

It's like there's nothing out there. I don't even hear the wind anymore.

Maggie grabs the phone on the night stand. She puts it to her ear and taps the tabs in the cradle. She looks at Stephen.

MAGGIE

It's dead.

Stephen pulls out his cell phone.

STEPHEN

No bars. Nothing.

INT. LOBBY BACK ROOM - NIGHT

Boris sits in front of a small, candle-lit statue of Mary Magdalene. He hangs a rosery around her neck.

LOBBY

Boris walks in. He pulls out a bottle of whiskey from a drawer behind the counter, takes a swig. He looks at the key hook behind him. Number twelve is gone.

He rushes over to the window, no light in room twelve.

BORIS

No.

INT. ROOM TWELVE - NIGHT

Stephen rejoins Maggie on the edge of the bed.

MAGGIE

I don't like this, what is going on?

STEPHEN

I don't know, just keep reading.

MAGGIE

(reading)

It would be wise to cover all of the mirrors. You can sometimes see her in them and she is a dreadful sight.

They both look down the tiny hall next to the bathroom. A full size mirror is on the wall. They stare into it.

They don't see it at first, it almost blends into the grey carpeting, but a decrepit arm protrudes from the underneath of the bed. Right between them. It jettisons back underneath.

Maggie SCREAMS. They both jump up. Stephen flips the mattress off. Nothing, just a bed frame and carpet.

MAGGIE

Stephen, I'm scared.

STEPHEN

This is some kind of trick.

He walks over to the mirror and pulls it off the wall. There's nothing behind it.

STEPHEN

I've had enough of this.

Stephen grabs the end table. He throws it into the window. It bounces back. He repeats it twice before the look of defeat shows on his face.

MAGGIE

What do we do?

STEPHEN

Keep reading.

INT. LOBBY BACK ROOM - NIGHT

Boris dresses as if he were a priest about to give a mass. He puts on a white robe and ties a cincture around his waist.

INT. ROOM TWELVE - NIGHT

Stephen stands next to Maggie as she reads the next passage.

MAGGIE

(reading)

As any angry spirit, all I can think is that she just wants to be set free. I would have to find her remains first. Her sacred place of slumber.

Maggie and Stephen look at each other. Then to the carpet underneath the bed frame.

Stephen pulls a knife from his bag and unsheathes it. He climbs into the bed frame and begins to cut the carpet.

MAGGIE

This doesn't sound right.

STEPHEN

What do you mean?

MAGGIE

The medium told us we just had to help Cynthia find a light. We didn't have to do anything with her remains.

Stephen pulls back a huge chunk of carpet. A wooden door, the length of the bed frame is underneath.

Stephen grabs the handle, it swings to the side on its hinges. Dust bellows out. They both cough.

Underneath is an old casket, wide at the shoulders, narrow at the feet.

Stephen sticks his blade in the side of it.

MAGGIE

Stephen, I don't think we should do this.

Stephen doesn't listen. He pries at the casket testing all of its edges. It slowly begins to give way. He grabs the edge of the top with his hand. It creaks open.

Stephen jumps back. Maggie gasps at the smell. The corpse of a woman lies inside, decayed.

Her arms are crossed at her chest. Her eyes have sunken into her skull. Her mouth is wide open.

STEPHEN

What does it say to do now?

MAGGIE

(reading)

The only way to release a trapped spirit is to...

STEPHEN

What?

Maggie starts shaking her head. She looks to Stephen.

MAGGIE

...fill the corpse's mouth with the blood of a dying soul.

STEPHEN

That can't be right.

Maggie starts flipping through the pages of the journal.

MAGGIE

She's lying to us. These are all lies. It's a trick. This is evil!

STEPHEN

The medium said there was no such thing as evil spirits. Just lost souls.

MAGGIE

I don't think this is a spirit.

INT. LOBBY BACK ROOM - NIGHT

Boris lights an incense inside of a thurible and closes it. He walks around the room swinging it by its chain. He murmurs to himself.

INT. ROOM TWELVE - NIGHT

Stephen and Maggie stare at the corpse. The television behind them begins to ooze black tar down its screen. They notice.

MAGGIE

Let's just lock ourselves in the bathroom. Lets wait out the storm.

STEPHEN

Yeah.

BATHROOM

Maggie and Stephen run in.

STEPHEN

Hold on. Let me grab a flashlight.

Stephen runs out.

BEDROOM

Stephen grabs a flashlight from the floor. The bathroom door SLAMS shut. He runs to it. He pulls on it.

STEPHEN

Unlock the door!

MAGGIE (O.S.)

I can't. It won't open.

BATHROOM

Smoke begins to bellow in from the vents.

BEDROOM

MAGGIE (O.S.)

Stephen! Smoke is coming in!

Stephen kicks the door. Over and over again.

STEPHEN

Open! You son of a bitch!

Maggie starts to cough off screen. Stephen slides down the door. He starts to cry. He pulls a picture of a five year old girl with pony tails from his pocket, stares at it.

STEPHEN

I have to do it Maggie. It's the only way she'll let you go.

MAGGIE (O.S.)

No Stephen! Don't you help her!

STEPHEN

I can find Cynthia when I get there. I can show her the path.

MAGGIE (O.S.)

No! Don't you leave me!

STEPHEN

I love you, Maggie.

Stephen walks over to the casket. He puts the serrated edge of the knife against his wrist.

STEPHEN

I believe there are no evil spirits, please, let my wife go.

He begins to saw. He SCREAMS.

FADE OUT

INT. ROOM TWELVE - NIGHT

The lights are out. The front door is open. The ferocious winds slam it into the wall repeatedly.

The bathroom door clicks. Maggie falls out onto her knees. She has a wet towel around her face.

She tosses it to the floor and crawls over to the casket. Stephen lies there, DEAD. His hand completely sawed off.

The corpse is gone. Maggie grabs Stephens body and pulls him upright. She hugs him and cries.

MAGGIE

No Stephen! Why? Why did you help her?

INT. LOBBY BACK ROOM - NIGHT

Boris sits at a table. A shot of whiskey in front of him. The bells from the door jingle off screen.

A decrepit witch of a woman walks in. Her blood red eyes glow against her grey exterior.

BORIS

I hoped I would die before I would ever see you again, demon. I am not strong enough to face you again.

Boris takes his shot of whiskey. He stands.

BORIS

You can take me to hell, but you will never break my faith.

The demon hisses...

DEMON

I don't want your cancerous soul, priest. I want you to walk in your Lord's kingdom for eternity. Replaying the last earthly memory you have over and over again in your head. That of me, slowly tearing the flesh from your bones.

EXT. MOTEL - NIGHT

The SCREAMS begin, but there is no end to this storm in sight.

FADE OUT.