INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

CLOSE UP: Something through the mist. What is it? Squared edges. Crushed metal. There's some light, but mostly a murky pattern.

A DOOR. Silent, until we hear --

The sound of something being DRAGGED at a quiescent pace. Almost as if a heavy trash bag is being pulled across remaining grains of beach sand. The sound GROWS closer.

Then, it stops. We hold on the doorknob. It's worn and hacked with scratch marks along the outer screws.

**SUDDENLY AND WITHOUT WARNING...** a burnt HAND reaches up. Blood SPURTS between it's fingers as it uses the door knob as leverage to pull up the rest of it's body.

The FIGURE stumbles to it's feet like a rag doll. But then it rises with eerie quickness. Cocks it's head, then SLAMS it's open palms into the door several times before CLAWING at the handle once more.

It grows calm and turns into a beam of sunlight. It's flesh has been torn off from part of the neck and cheek. A deathly grin through bluish lips. It opens it's mouth and lets out a HIDEOUS MOAN. Dim, hungry eyes.

The sound of more, many more, FOOTSTEPS...

INT. THE ROOM - NIGHT

Stale. Four walls and a dark ceiling. A single chair and no other furniture. Just a cold, gray floor. A sadness to this place that seems as if it travels back through the fibers of history.

AMANDA sits leaning up against the far wall. Worn but sexy. There's someone else's blood running down the front of her white shirt.

In a calm, soothing VOICE, we hear --

### MALE VOICE (O.S.)

I was living in Colorado with my parents. One night, I had a dream about a tornado. Only, it wasn't a typical tornado. The sky was black and the funnel was white. There were these... rectangular windows all along the sides of it.

Amanda's knees are bruised. Her feet are bare. There are puffed scratch marks up the front on her thighs.

# MALE VOICE (O.S.)

It was rotating, but the windows stayed perfectly still. That's the one thing that always stuck with me. Those windows never moving.

Anyway, I tried to wake my mother up, but she... she wouldn't wake up, and so me and dad finally went down to the basement without her.

We just left her upstairs. Alone.

Amanda's head rests back. She appears to be asleep, but she isn't. She carries the weight of this place on her shoulders. Feeble and still.

### MALE VOICE (O.S.)

While we were down there, I could see that a smaller tornado shot out of the top of the larger one and came for us in the basement. When it got real close, when we could almost touch it, it just stopped spinning and it turned into a man.

PAUL sits with his back against the door. It's his voice we've been hearing. His face is dirty and his hair hangs down. There's an irritated fatigue across his eyes.

I was so little standing next to him. I asked him what he was doing there and he said, "I came for all the people that hide in the basement."

His hand rests between his knees and grips a SHOTGUN. The barrel just barely touches the floor. He's remembering --

PAUL

I think I woke up right after that because I can never remember anymore. It scared me so bad, that even today I've been able to remember every detail up until that point.

Amanda's been listening. She slowly opens her eyes and looks right at him, as though for love.

AMANDA

What do you think it means?

He takes a quiet moment, then --

PAUL

(softly)

That we're all going to die. That there's no use in hiding from it. It'll find us.

He glances down to the shotgun, then back to Amanda. There are tears in her eyes now, but she brushes them away before they can fall.

AMANDA

What are we going to do?

Paul doesn't answer, but Amanda is almost demanding answers --

AMANDA

We can't just sit here waiting for someone to save us. There's no one out there. No one even knows where we are.

I know that.

**AMANDA** 

Then, what are you going to do?

PAUL

Me?

**AMANDA** 

You're the one holding the gun.

Paul slides the shotgun across the floor. It COASTS until finally stopping when it hits the souls of Amanda's feet. She doesn't dare reach for it.

PAUL

Happy?

AMANDA

That's not what I meant.

PAUL

You've been asking me the same question for five hours. I'm sorry, but I don't have a different answer for you.

Amanda just stares at the shotgun. Almost in a trance. Some kind of power over her.

A loud and furious THUD against the door. So abrupt it sends Paul to his feet. He races over Amanda -- scoops up the shotgun and holds it up as if to line up a target, but the noise vanishes just a quickly as it appeared.

PAUL

I don't think they can get inside.

**AMANDA** 

How do you know?

PAUL

They would've found a way by now.

At ease. He leans up against the wall beside Amanda and slides his body downward until he's seated right beside her on the floor.

He sees her face. It's changed now. Her eyes hang with ides of surrender. Her once glimmering, youthful eyes now hang in shame and regret.

PAUL

Look at me.

She does. Paul notices.

PAUL

We're going to be alright, okay?

AMANDA

I'm sorry.

PAUL

Sorry for what? This isn't your fault.

AMANDA

I'm sorry it wasn't me.

And with those five words, Paul sits back. He knows. Each letter slices his flesh like a knife. His eyes now change as well. Heartbreak.

PAUL

Don't...

AMANDA

Just in case we don't make it. I want you to know.

He doesn't want to listen, but there's nowhere to hide. He leans into her.

PAUL

I never thought -- not even for a
minute...

### AMANDA

I throw myself into work. Anywhere where I can be anonymous. Where I can be judged by things that I can control, not by someone's liver output. Work makes me calm. It makes me feel normal. I knew you were hurting, even more than me. And I knew that no matter how hard I tried, I couldn't make it better. (beat)

I watched you take those pills and I sat there are saw you get skinnier and skinnier. You were killing yourself. I guess I was too, or at least looking for reasons. Everyday, I would wake up and I would feel for swollen glands, in my neck, my stomach, my groin. That was the control. Getting to see her face again, on this side or the other, that was the control.

PAUL

They're just moments. Memories.

### AMANDA

I want more. I want more belly laughter. I want more of her sitting at the dinner table. I want more card games and stuffed animals. I just want more.

PAUL

But you can't have them.

Her tears fall now.

# **AMANDA**

And here we are. And all I can think about is how if we're going to die in this place -- how that is going to be my last memory. Being torn apart by a fucking nightmare.

I won't let that happen. I promise you that.

She sobs in his arms. He runs his fingers through her oily hair. He glances up at the air vent. It stops PUMPING in air. Now, they're both looking up --

AMANDA

Did you hear that?

PAUL

The vent. It just stopped.

Paul stands, but Amanda refuses to let go of his arm. He looks back down to her, so afraid, and places his hand on top of hers.

PAUL

It's okay.

She let's him go.

Paul grabs the chair and drags it underneath the vent where he would be able to stand on it and reach the metal slats. Amanda watches in anticipation as he climbs up. Reaches --

BANG!

The door rattles so violently that dust spews from the hinges.

PAUL

It's fine. They're just making noise.

Paul runs his fingers across the vent, there's no air and he cannot see inside.

**AMANDA** 

What is it?

PAUL

I'm not sure.

He uses his thumbnail and begins to loosen the screws. First one, then the other. The cover POPS off. Amanda rises and stands beside the chair now. Paul hands her the face plate.

**AMANDA** 

Can you see anything?

Paul nods -- no. He struggles to see anything inside the deep, dark hole. Without hesitation, he reaches inside.

AMANDA

Be careful.

PAUL

(feeling around)
There's something inside. I can
almost reach it...

Paul's face strains as he lunges forward -- further, until he STOPS. His fingers wrap around something. He looks back down into Amanda's eager eyes.

**AMANDA** 

What is it?

Paul retracts his arm from the vent. He looks into his hand first, then shows it to Amanda.

Car Keys.

Paul climbs back down. His eyes fixated on the metallic key set clamped in between his fingers.

AMANDA

What are they for?

PAUL

I don't think that's the question we should be asking.

AMANDA

Then, what?

PAUL

Who put them there?

AMANDA

(understanding)

Someone knows we're stuck in here.

Amanda begins to pace. She's running her fingers across her lips and her hair, the first signs of someone about to embark on a fear induced panic attack. She's frantic now --

PAUL

Hey... hold it together.

AMANDA

Someone knows we're here! Someone put those keys in there, so that means someone's watching us, Paul.

(louder)

Someone is fucking with us!

PAUL

We don't know that.

AMANDA

Oh really? So what? They just expect us to stroll out the Goddamn door and the keys are going to lead us to safety? Get real --

(quiets herself)

It doesn't make any sense.

PAUL

Maybe someone's trying to help us. I mean, why else would the air go off like that? Maybe it was a clue.

**AMANDA** 

From who?

PAUL

I don't know.

AMANDA

Jesus...

Paul races over and grabs the shotgun off the floor. Amanda follows him --

We don't know anything so we have stay positive.

AMANDA

Positive? Like your dream with the tornados and the basement? Death comes for all of us and all that shit... what happened to all that?

PAUL

(as honest as ever)
Amanda, I'm just trying to do the
right thing for us.

He checks the rounds in the gun. CLICK. Amanda holds the sides of her head and paces away.

A wild THRASHING against the door once again. It startles Amanda and she shouts in anger and rage --

AMANDA

Leave us alone! Let us out of here!

Paul grabs her arm from behind. He steadies her body. The shotgun in one hand, the keys in another. Amanda notices.

AMANDA

What are you going to do?

Paul kisses the top of her hand. He walks past her and stops at the door. Amanda's face turns pale as he places his hand against the metal. She looks at him, her eyes swelling, and she shakes her head -- no.

AMANDA

Paul, I can't. I can't.

PAUL

You don't have to.

(beat)

I'll do it. I'll go and come back for you.

Amanda falls to her knees.

AMANDA

Don't leave me.

PAUL

I'll come back for you.

AMANDA

Baby, those things are still out there.

PAUL

I'll come back for you.

Amanda walks over to him.

AMANDA

Paul, I don't want to be here alone. Please don't open that door.

Paul is on the verge of tears. He slowly reaches down and grabs her hand. Amanda looks at the keys, then at Paul. Tears shake from her trembling face.

PAUL

She had your eyes. That's my control. I look at you and I remember her face. I love you, but if I don't go through this door, nothing is going to change and we will die in here, along with her memory. I won't let that happen.

Amanda wipes her face with the back of her hand. She takes a deep breath.

Paul readies the shotgun. He takes one last turn to Amanda.

PAUL

Stand back.

Amanda retreats to the back wall. Paul goes for the handle. Unlocks it. Flings the door open.

Amanda watches as Paul disappears into the abyss of darkness and MOANING. We catch a glimpse of the horrific FIGURES lining the hallway walls, as --

#### INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Paul moves in slow motion. He FIRES, then PUMPS the shotgun. The tiny flame resonating from the barrel gives off just enough light to illuminate his open-mouthed face. We can see the pain on his brow as he SCREAMS, though we never hear him. That harrowing RINGING in his ears. Blood splatters around him...

# INT. THE ROOM - NIGHT

The shotgun BURSTS can he heard through the metal door as it closes behind him.

Amanda races to lock it. She is now undeniably... alone. Silence, for what seems like an eternity.

She lays her body down over the floor and closes her eyes.

# AMANDA (V.O.)

In my dream, I was a little girl living on my grandfather's farm. I was outside playing in the yard and I found the most beautiful caterpillar. I was hiding it near the fence when a bird flew over us. I tried to "shoo" it away, but it just perched there right above us, on the top of the fence, watching us. Studying us. Our movements. (beat)

A few minutes later a cat came to where we were standing and tried to eat the bird and it flew away. Just then, it started to rain and the cat ran into the garage. By the time I looked back down... the caterpillar was gone. I had lost her. Washed away by the rain, never to be found again. But I looked for her everyday that summer and though I never saw her again, her memory was enough. Her memory kept me searching...

Amanda's eyes burst open as the sound of the door CREAKING breaks her concentration. In front of her, Paul appears. Blood down the front of his shirt. A half-grin across his face. He reaches down for her and takes her by the hand.

PAUL

You ready?

Amanda looks into his eyes. She's amazed. It's almost as if she's dreaming now.

On her face,

AMANDA

Okay.

THE END