High Time

by Sean Chipman

OVER BLACK:

Dozens of crows squawk, louder and louder.

JAMES

Come on, come on! Let's get to the house! God damn it!

Three quick gunshots.

FADE IN:

EXT. HOUSE - FRONT YARD - DAY

An everyman, JAMES (23), pulls an average-looking kid in a wheelchair, AARON (10), up a concrete pathway towards the front door of an old Victorian house.

Aaron tries his best to aim with a revolver as he is being rolled around.

JAMES

Get that fucking door open, now!

A petite woman who wears a backpack, MEGAN (29), struggles to use a lock pick on the front door.

JAMES

Kick it in! We're right behind you.

James lifts Aaron out of the wheelchair and carries him towards the door.

MEGAN

We can't. They'll get in!

JAMES

We're dead out here if we don't!

MEGAN

(Sighs, quiet)

Shit.

Megan kicks the door multiple times until it bursts open. The three of them run inside. Megan slams the door shut.

INT. HOUSE - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Megan leans her back against the door. James sprints into the kitchen. Aaron crawls over to the door, leans against it.

Aaron, stay there. I'll be right back.

Aaron, pale-faced, slowly nods.

MEGAN

I mean it. Do. Not. Move.

AARON

Like I could move if I wanted to.

MEGAN

Right.

Aaron watches Megan run into the kitchen.

He lifts up his pant legs and both of his feet have been hacked off. The skin around the cuts has been seared shut.

KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

James exhales deeply into his hands. Megan glares at him.

JAMES

He'll be all right. I cauterized it.

MEGAN

He's defenseless.

JAMES

Right now, we're safe and that's all that matters. Him... it's too late.

MEGAN

How can you say that? He's your brother.

JAMES

I can say that because when he tries to kill us in...

James looks at the clock. 9:17.

JAMES (CONT'D)

...less than two hours, he won't be my brother anymore. He'll just be another one of them.

Megan glares at him, hate fills her eyes.

JAMES

Get some stuff to nail up.

HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Megan and James nail the dining room table to the front door.

Aaron sits, grabs a coffee table and rips the legs off. He slides the body of it towards James.

JAMES

Hey? Aaron?

Aaron looks at James. James stops nailing.

JAMES

You think you can work on sharpening those legs for me?

Aaron shrugs as he takes a butcher knife and begins to sharpen the table leg's edge.

AARON

Why is this happening?

James and Megan share a glance.

JAMES

I don't know. It just sort of happened one day.

AARON

Is it gonna happen to me, too? You know, because I got bit?

James walks and bends down next to Aaron. He looks right in Aaron's eyes.

JAMES

No. No, it's not. I took care of it. Trust me, man, you're going to be fine.

AARON

You're gonna lie right to my face?

A loud crash; the sound of glass shattering. Everyone turns simultaneously towards the back of the house.

JAMES

They're inside. Close the doors.

James gets up, closes the living room door. At the same time, Megan shuts the kitchen door.

They are now enclosed in the hallway with the stairs.

MEGAN

James? What if it was upstairs?

The three of them look at the top of the stairs. There's nothing out of the ordinary.

James draws his handgun as he slowly walks upstairs. He gets to the top of the stairs and peeks around the corner.

2ND FLOOR - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

There's nothing but darkness. James clutches the gun tighter.

He's frozen in place. He takes baby steps into the dark hallway.

HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

AARON

James?!

JAMES (O.S.)

I'm fine!

MEGAN

He'll be ok.

Megan sits down next to Aaron. He lays his head in her lap. She runs her hand through his hair.

INTERCUT BETWEEN JAMES AND MEGAN & AARON

James kicks open the bathroom door. Nothing.

Before he can react, a crow flies out from a different room, straight at James.

He turns and fire a shot, misses. The crow digs its claws into his neck and bites a chunk out from his shoulder.

JAMES

Aw, God-- Fuck!

Aaron's head shoots up. Megan grabs a hammer near the door. She stands up.

Be right back.

James lifts the gun up and shoots it right next to his ear. The crow flies off as James clutches his ear.

Megan runs upstairs, two at a time. She can't see anything in the darkness.

James fires the gun one time. The muzzle flash is enough to see the crow for a split second.

MEGAN

Keep firing!

JAMES

What?!

MEGAN

Shoot!

AARON (O.S.)

What's going on up there?

James fires at the ceiling wildly. Megan swings the hammer whenever she sees the crow.

Finally, the hammer connects. The crow falls to the ground and Megan hits over and over again until there's nothing left.

James falls to the ground next to Megan.

AARON (O.S.)

You guys ok?!

MEGAN

We're fine!

She reaches in the darkness and finds James' hand. She clutches it tight.

MEGAN

(Whispers)

Am I lying?

JAMES

Yeah.

Megan looks over and slides closer to James.

No. It didn't bite you. It couldn't.

JAMES

(Sighs)

But, it did. I'm sorry.

Aaron attempts to slide to the staircase. As he does, something crashes into the front door and startles him.

Outside, a dog barks fast and loud as it continues to slam into the door.

AARON

Help!

Aaron slides back in front of the door and holds it shut.

James and Megan hurry down the stairs. They push against the door as well.

JAMES

(Laughs, cries)

We're not safe whatever we do.

MEGAN

Sure, we are. We just have to hold out for a few more days.

JAMES

(Sarcastic)

A few more days. You're right. It's simple, you know? Why didn't I think of that?

AARON

I'll be dead soon enough. Then, it's just you and Megan.

JAMES

No, no you won't. We took care of it, remember?

AARON

My science teacher told me that my heart pumps five liters of blood per minute.

JAMES

That stupid bitch--Look, she doesn't know what she's talking about. We took care of it.

AARON

You swear on mom's soul?

James thinks for a minute then slams his fist against the door. Aaron looks away.

JAMES

We have to get you guys outta here. Obviously, it's not safe.

AARON

What about you?

JAMES

I can't go. But, it's ok.

(Looks at Megan, to Aaron)

Have you ever heard of "Of Mice and Men"?

Megan looks at James, puzzled.

AARON

No.

JAMES

It's a good book and has a really special ending.

James stares into Megan's eyes as a tear rolls down her face. She realizes what he's talking about.

JAMES

Basically, these two guys work on farms and stuff and one of them wants some bunnies. They work for the whole story as bad things happen and finally, that one guy gets the bunnies he wanted.

AARON

That's good. But, what does that mean for us?

JAMES

Well, what's the one thing you want more than anything right now?

AARON

I don't want you to be hurt. You or Megan.

James sighs and nods his head.

JAMES

We won't. And, neither will you. I promise.

James leans down near Aaron.

JAMES

Come on. We're gonna get out of here.

Megan does her best to hold back tears.

MEGAN

Listen to your brother.

JAMES

You see? Before you were born, this was our old house. And, there's a lake out back where we can escape. Where we'll be safe. All of us.

James picks Aaron up and carries him into the kitchen.

KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

He sets Aaron down in a chair.

JAMES

We just have to talk for a moment.

James and Megan walks around the corner.

MEGAN

(Whispers)

No. You're not going to do it. He's just ten years old.

JAMES

Would you rather him die as happy as he can be now or have him suffer until he changes?

Megan can't look him in the eye.

James walks back next to Aaron.

JAMES

Right out there. It's only about fifty yards away.

AARON

We're really gonna be okay?

James slowly grabs the gun behind his back and motions it towards Aaron's head.

JAMES

I quarantee it.

James kisses the side of Aaron's face. Megan turns away.

JAMES

I love you.

James fires a shot which hits Aaron in the back of the head. Aaron falls out of the chair.

He drops the gun to the ground and sits in a fetal position, hand to his mouth. Tears roll down his face.

Megan stares at him from the doorway, stone-faced. James sits with his head buried in his hands.

JAMES

If you go, I'll give you some cover.

MEGAN

You're not really going to come with me?

JAMES

No... I think I'll stay here a while.

James holds the gun up towards Megan. She stares at it.

JAMES

There's still a bullet left in it.

(Looks up)

Just in case.

She continues to stare at it.

JAMES

We had a small motorboat we rode around in the summer on. Out by the dock.

Megan bends down at his side. She hugs him, kisses his cheek.

JAMES

(Whispers)

Don't think less of me.

Come with me. You don't know it'll happen to you.

JAMES

(Whispers)

Just go. Please.

MEGAN

I'll bring back help.

JAMES

Sure you will. Go, now. You're running out of time.

She touches his cheek for the last time as she walks to the back door.

EXT. HOUSE - BACK YARD - CONTINUOUS

Megan runs through the back yard towards the lake.

INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

James sets the gun on the ground. He sets his hand on top of Aaron's hand.

EXT. HOUSE - DOCK - CONTINUOUS

Megan undoes the bowline and jumps in the boat. She pulls on the ripcord as hard as she can.

The boat starts up effortlessly as she speeds away.

INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN - LATER

James' eyes have closed. A dog walks in the kitchen and growls. James opens his eyes and stares at the dog.

He raises his middle finger as the dog lunges forward and begins eating James.

James grabs the gun from the ground and puts it to his head.

JAMES

I'm sorry, Aaron.