

Red Light
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FADE IN:

EXT. ROADSIDE DINER - NIGHT

A quaint eatery. Vehicles, mostly tractor trailers, are parked outside.

In the blackness of the night, a jeep careens around the distant bend and enters the diner parking lot. It stops, and the driver's side door opens.

A beautiful and innocent GIRL steps out, no older or wiser than someone fresh out of high school.

Leaving the engine running, she approaches the diner entrance.

INT. ROADSIDE DINER

A less than appealing WAITRESS stands behind the counter holding a newspaper. Her lips curl around a half-burnt cigarette.

A few TRUCKERS sit at the bar.

WAITRESS
(reading newspaper)
Some tow truck driver got killed up
in Greenwich. Killer took the man's
truck and everything.

The cigarette bounces between her lips as she speaks.

TRUCKER
Great. Maybe I'll get lucky and
meet up with this guy if he's
offing truck drivers.

WAITRESS
One trucker hardly qualifies. But
maybe I'll get lucky and he'll take
your friends with you. You guys are
paying this time.

The girl enters.

The truckers notice her immediately, giving her inquisitive looks. She ignores them and advances to the waitress.

(CONTINUED)

GIRL

Excuse me.

WAITRESS

Yes?

GIRL

I'm trying to get to a town called Augustus.

WAITRESS

Augustus. Yeah. I know where that is.

GIRL

Could you tell me the fastest way to get there from here?

WAITRESS

Yeah. Sure.

The waitress grabs a nearby pad of paper and writes on it.

The trucker WHISTLES from the bar.

TRUCKER

Hey. Honey. If you're looking for a place to stay for the night, I got a cozy little bunk in my truck that'd be perfect for yuh.

The trucker smiles and winks.

The incredulous girl ignores him and looks at the waitress, bewildered.

GIRL

Is he serious?

WAITRESS

Seriously handicapped. Take a note from someone who's known him longer and just ignore him.

The waitress rips the paper from the pad and hands it to the girl.

WAITRESS (cont'd)

Alright, here's directions to Augustus. I'm giving you the shortcut because you're in a hurry. You're gonna look for a street called Old Haven Road about ten

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

WAITRESS (cont'd)
miles from here. Take that road and
keep going straight, even when you
get to the intersection. It's a
road less traveled, but it takes
you right into town.

GIRL
Great. Thanks.

WAITRESS
Anytime, sugar. Be careful.

The girl exits.

EXT. ROADSIDE DINER

She climbs into the jeep. Drives away.

Lightning strikes. The ominous CLAP OF THUNDER follows.

EXT. OLD HAVEN ROAD - TEN MILES LATER

Branches stretch high above the blacktop, a tunneling canopy
with no visible end.

As the jeep turns onto OLD HAVEN ROAD, the anticipated rain
finally begins to fall.

INT. JEEP

The girl leans forward, squinting her eyes as the beads of
rain smash against the glass.

EXT. OLD HAVEN ROAD - ESTABLISHING

The jeep continues normally, passing by

A DECREPIT HOUSE

hidden in the darkness of an open field, tucked away like an
antique from another generation.

INT. JEEP

The girl pulls out a cell phone. Dials.

GIRL
Please have service...

A BEEP as the call assumedly goes straight to voicemail.

GIRL (cont'd)
(to phone)
Hey, Dad. It's me. I'm not far from Augustus. Just calling you before I forget or lose service. I haven't seen anything on this road, so I'm sure reception sucks out here.

EXT. OLD HAVEN ROAD

Up ahead, AN INTERSECTION looms. Two bright red traffic lights hang over the road like watchful eyes.

INT. JEEP

The girl notes the forthcoming intersection. She speeds up her message.

GIRL
Anyway, I probably won't call for a while until I get settled in. You can call me back if you get this in the next few minutes. Tell everyone at home I love them.

She closes the phone. Takes a breath. Slowly, the girl eases her foot down on the brake and stops the jeep.

The girl surveys the crimson intersection. In this operative, haunting SILENCE, the girl taps her fingers rhythmically against the steering wheel.

From the cupholder, her cell phone RINGS. She grabs it.

GIRL (cont'd)
(to phone)
Hello?

Filtrating STATIC overrides the caller's VOICE.

(CONTINUED)

GIRL (cont'd)
Dad? Dad -- I can't hear you.

The STATIC is overbearing. The girl looks at her phone screen, followed by a contemplative glance at the red light.

GIRL (cont'd)
Daddy, hang on. I'm gonna try to get a signal.

Like an innocent child retrieving a lost baseball, the girl looks both ways of the street -- each long, dark, and empty.

She releases her foot from the brake and steps on the gas.

EXT. OLD HAVEN ROAD

THE JEEP RUNS THE RED LIGHT.

INT. JEEP

She presses harder on the gas pedal.

GIRL
Daddy? Can you hear me? Hello?

The call ENDS.

Frustrated, the girl instinctively SMACKS the phone against the dashboard. She dials again and looks back at the road, just in time to see the FIGURE in the distance.

She slows the jeep down. Squints, eyes locked as she realizes it's the paralyzed silhouette of a PERSON standing in the middle of the street.

But there is something else moving out there ...straight down the road... an approaching javelin.

CRACK! THWACK!

A piercing whistle. A gut-wrenching crunch.

CLOSE ON THE GIRL'S EYES

as her pupils dilate, her face turning white, blood draining, but from where? THE CAMERA PULLS BACK, following the length of

A CROWBAR

(CONTINUED)

sticking out of the girl's neck, lodged through her flesh and bone, holding her up against the seat.

CONTINUE PULLING BACK, leaving the jeep through a quarter-sized hole in the windshield, surrounded by a ring of web-like cracks.

EXT. OLD HAVEN ROAD

LIGHTNING REVEALS

the road to be empty. The figure has vanished. All that's left is the jeep, a casket for the girl we once knew.

THUNDER.

SMASH TO BLACK!

FADE IN:

EXT. FRATERNITY HOUSE - NIGHT - ESTABLISHING

The conventional frat house full of college boys and sorority girls letting loose.

Toilet paper streams from the front yard trees. The pranksters round the side of the house to continue their bidding in the backyard.

A couple of partygoers tote cases of beer through the front door, nearly knocking over

BEKAH HAYES

nineteen and underage, but unaffected and drunk nonetheless. This is the type of girl who acts first and thinks thereon.

BEKAH

Let's go already! The storm's coming.

NIKKI (O.S.)

Take it easy.

Following behind her is

NIKKI MALONE

same age, but more conscious and responsible. This is Bekah's go-to girl. Both are very pretty, and their contrasting personalities play well off each other.

(CONTINUED)

The two slowly walk to the driveway. Bekah leans on Nikki for support.

BEKAH

If my mom knew how hammered I was,
she'd shove a bellow up my ass.

NIKKI

She would not.

BEKAH

You don't know my mother.

NIKKI

I know her well enough. Besides, I
don't think a bellow would cure
intoxication.

Bekah stumbles to the grass and nearly tangles herself in overhanging toilet paper. She pulls at it.

BEKAH

(laughing)

Who put all this toilet paper
everywhere?

NIKKI

You were throwing it around with
those guys earlier.

BEKAH

Must've been a really shitty party.

Bekah LAUGHS at her own joke. Nikki ignores her.

BEKAH (cont'd)

I should really write this stuff
down.

NIKKI

Why? So you can realize how unfunny
it is by the time you're sober?

Bekah glares.

BEKAH

Nikki, your sarcastic attitude
doesn't appeal to ME, but maybe one
day you'll find some low-life
narcissist like yourself who will
take all of your bullshit.

They find their car.

(CONTINUED)

NIKKI
 Sounds like the perfect guy. Get
 in.

INT. DORMITORY - LIVING ROOM - LITTLE LATER

An austere room full of cardboard boxes and bare furniture.

Nikki and Bekah enter. From the looks of their drenched clothes, the storm has arrived.

NIKKI
 You're lucky classes don't start
 till next week.

BEKAH
 We'll see how lucky I'm feeling
 when I wake up tomorrow.

NIKKI
 I won't feel sorry for you one bit.

BEKAH
 Of course you won't. You'd have to
 be anything other than a heartless
 bitch to feel sorrow.

NIKKI
 (smiling)
 Oh, I love you, too. Get changed
 and go to bed.

BEKAH
 Yes, ma'am.

Bekah stumbles to the darkened hallway and rounds the corner to the closed bedroom door.

A noise, like FOOTSTEPS, arises from inside the abstruse room. Bekah reaches for the doorknob.

A SHADOW

moves stealthily from under the door, and before Bekah can grab the knob, it turns on its own. The door swings open.

Bekah SCREAMS as the person in the room steps out.

The anonymous figure flicks on the light, and a beautiful siren, SAM COLLINS, stands before us. She's no older than Bekah, but with twice the looks and twice the sobriety. GORGEOUS RED HAIR drapes over her curvy bust.

(CONTINUED)

Nikki appears from the living room, panicked.

NIKKI
Bekah? What's wrong?

BEKAH
(exasperated)
GENIUS McBITCH TITS SCARED THE SHIT
OUT OF ME!

NIKKI
You must be...

SAM
Sam Collins. New roommate. I didn't
mean to scare you guys.

Nikki LAUGHS, a sigh of relief.

BEKAH
Well, *Sam Collins*, what are you
doing popping out of dark rooms
like that? Are you trying to give
somebody a hernia?

SAM
I'm sorry. I heard the front door
open. I came out to say hi so I
wouldn't freak you out.

BEKAH
Well, you fucking suck at that.

SAM
I usually make better first
impressions.

BEKAH
Let's hope so.

NIKKI
Stop it, Bekah.

Nikki shrugs all of this away.

NIKKI (cont'd)
I'm Nikki Malone. This is Bekah
Hayes. Don't let her attitude get
on your bad side. She acts like
this around everybody.

(CONTINUED)

BEKAH

I'm much friendlier when I *expect* to see people in my bedroom.

NIKKI

Sam, why didn't you call and let us know you were here?

SAM

I tried calling the dorm and both of your cell phones, and none of them worked.

(beat)

I'm still unpacking some things if you guys would like to help.

BEKAH

Like I'm gonna voluntarily do some heavy lifting...

(beat)

Goodnight.

Bekah enters the bedroom and shuts the door.

Sam smiles. Nikki LAUGHS nervously.

NIKKI

Welcome to Augustus.

EXT. AUGUSTUS STATE UNIVERSITY - DAY

A brimming campus with a beautiful courtyard.

Students move from building to building heading for different classes.

Among them are spectators Nikki and Sam, walking along the green, getting acquainted with the campus.

NIKKI

My mom told me Augustus is the safest university in the state.

The girls walk past an EMERGENCY STATION. Perfect timing.

SAM

Your mom told you that?

NIKKI

Her and my dad used to go here when they were my age, but my dad dropped out for some reason. I think he fell in love too fast.

(CONTINUED)

JIMMY
 (yelling)
 Nikki!

JIMMY MURRAY, 21, jogs towards the two girls. His athletic attire and boyish good looks indicate his sublimity, but his unconventional mannerisms reveal an innocence about him that we can't detect based on appearance.

JIMMY (cont'd)
 Nikki, wait up!

NIKKI
 (in contempt)
 Oh, Jesus Christ...

SAM
 What is it?

NIKKI
 Death approaching.

Jimmy stops in front of the girls and catches his breath.

NIKKI (cont'd)
 What do you want, Jimmy?

JIMMY
 I thought you didn't hear me there
 for a second.

NIKKI
 Can't say I didn't try.

JIMMY
 What are you doing here?

NIKKI
 I go here.

JIMMY
 I know that. I just didn't expect
 to see you on campus.

NIKKI
 I live on campus.

JIMMY
 You know what I mean.

NIKKI
 Apparently not. We're leaving now.

(CONTINUED)

JIMMY

No -- wait. Who's your friend?

He smiles at Sam.

NIKKI

This is Sam, and don't even bother. She's not looking for a disgusting frat boy like yourself or any of your uncultured friends.

JIMMY

(to Sam)

I'm Jimmy.

SAM

Hi.

NIKKI

Stay far away from him and you'll be fine. If he gets too close, you know where to find an emergency station.

JIMMY

Hey, you and Bekah coming over again tonight?

NIKKI

Are you kidding? Bekah is just now waking up from an alcohol-induced coma, and you already want her to come back and get even more hammered? If you're trying to get her into bed, just ask her. I'm sure she'll say yes.

JIMMY

No! I'm not trying to get anyone into bed. The party won't be as crazy, either.

NIKKI

Meaning?

JIMMY

I promise it'll be nothing like last night.

NIKKI

Sorry. Not interested.

Nikki turns, ready to leave.

(CONTINUED)

SAM
Wait. I wouldn't mind going.

JIMMY
Excellent! Muy bien!

NIKKI
(disgruntled)
No...Sam...no...

SAM
Why not, Nikki? It'll be a good way
to get to know people.

NIKKI
These are not people you want to be
around. Look in front of you and
multiply it by twenty. It's a
headache in arms reach of Tylenol.

JIMMY
You never let that stop you before.

SAM
Jimmy, what time is the party?

JIMMY
The social gathering starts at
seven.

NIKKI
Cute, Jimmy.

JIMMY
I'll see you two beauties tonight.

SAM
We'll be there.

Jimmy leaves.

Nikki and Sam continue down the sidewalk.

NIKKI
Asshole.

SAM
When did you guys go out?

NIKKI
Is it that obvious?

Sam nods.

(CONTINUED)

NIKKI (cont'd)
It was in high school. He was a senior and I was the "lucky" sophomore.

SAM
What went wrong?

NIKKI
Everything that didn't go right.

SAM
Well, what went right?

NIKKI
Not a goddamn thing. He slept with my best friend.

SAM
Bekah?

NIKKI
No. Bekah was the one who was there for me when it happened. I don't like to talk about it. What's done is done.

SAM
Well, look on the bright side. At least we have something to do tonight.

NIKKI
That's exactly what Jimmy is thinking.

Sam grins, wrapping her arm around Nikki's shoulders.

SAM
Then let's show up and have a little fun of our own.

INT. FRATERNITY HOUSE - NIGHT

What we're seeing is a duplicate of the previous party.

Dancers occupy the living room. Rock music BLARES from the stereo.

Jimmy and Sam cuddle on the sofa while Nikki and Bekah stand in the corner, unseen by the two. Bekah watches Sam's debaucherous behavior, disgusted and annoyed, yet unsurprised.

(CONTINUED)

BEKAH
You neglected to mention our
roommate is a whore.

NIKKI
She's not.

BEKAH
Then what is she doing with Jimmy?

NIKKI
A favor.

Bekah shrugs.

BEKAH
I need a drink.

NIKKI
What? No. You promised me you
wouldn't.

BEKAH
It's just one drink. I might as
well enjoy it now before I overload
working next week.

NIKKI
You work at a bookstore in the
mall. How much overload can you
get?

BEKAH
Exactly. So what's the big deal if
I have a few drinks?

NIKKI
You're killing yourself, you know
that?

BEKAH
We're all dying anyway.

NIKKI
Some faster than others.

BEKAH
(walking away)
Then I guess I'll be the one saving
you a spot in Hell.

Nikki is left to herself for only a moment before

RICHARD TART

(CONTINUED)

struts toward her. He's an odd-looking guy, the youngest so far and smallest in stature. He's not ugly, but this is definitely a kid who's easily influenced and hardly opinionated because of his meekly appearance.

He's obviously had a few drinks. This cancels everything.

RICHARD
Hey, beautiful.

NIKKI
Do I know you?

RICHARD
No, but if it's any indication from other women in my life, you'll WANT to get to know me.

NIKKI
Uh-huh.

RICHARD
The name's Richard. I'm going to be in a fraternity.

NIKKI
OK.

BEAT.

RICHARD
Did I do something wrong?

NIKKI
Huh?

RICHARD
It took a lot of guts to come over here and introduce myself, and you can't even tell me your name.
(flirtatiously)
But then again, I guess it won't matter later on -- when it counts.

NIKKI
(bluntly)
I don't talk to Dicks.

RICHARD
You won't have to.

(CONTINUED)

NIKKI

Don't flatter yourself. You're the
shortest Dick I've seen.

Nikki walks away, leaving Richard crushed, defeated.

Nikki continues past the couch where Sam and Jimmy continue
their "session" from the sidelines.

Sam winks subtly at Nikki, who's hidden in the doorway, as
she returns to Jimmy.

SAM

So where are the rest of your frat
boys this evening?

JIMMY

Trip down to Cancun. Somebody had
to stay and watch the place.

SAM

So you're the responsible one. I
guess hosting a party is your forte
as well.

JIMMY

You can derive pleasure from
anything I do.

SAM

Do you tell all the girls that?

JIMMY

Only the beautiful ones.

SAM

Are you always this charming?

Jimmy smiles and leans in for the kiss. Their lips touch,
and Jimmy passionately pulls her closer.

They pull away for a moment. Sam lowers herself to his neck
and gently kisses it.

JIMMY

(enjoying it)

Oh yeah...

Sam rests her hand on Jimmy's knee and softly caresses it.
She enticingly moves her hand up his thigh and to his groin.

(CONTINUED)

JIMMY (cont'd)
 Are you always this...
 (beat)
 ...friendly?

Sam suddenly grabs his crotch in a firm grip.

He SQUEALS.

JIMMY (cont'd)
 Sonofabitch!

SAM
 Does that hurt?

JIMMY
 What the hell are you doing!?

She squeezes harder.

SAM
 Does it hurt?

JIMMY
 Yes, it fucking hurts!

SAM
 Good. Maybe next time, you'll THINK
 before making a move on your
 ex-girlfriend's roommate. Am I
 right?

JIMMY
 Yes. Dear God, yes! Let me go!

SAM
 Good. I like you, Jimmy, but don't
 be an asshole.

She lets go of his package and stands. Jimmy crouches forward in pain, groping himself in front of his guests.

Sam walks over to Nikki.

SAM (cont'd)
 He won't bother anyone for a while.

NIKKI
 I can't believe you just did that.

SAM
 He better have cheated on you.

They share a LAUGH.

INT. FRATERNITY HOUSE - LITTLE LATER

The party has died down.

The recognizable few are seated around the fireplace, all attention focused on Jimmy.

JIMMY

So this woman is wondering why her husband always turns the light off whenever they have sex. I mean, it's not every once in a while that he does it; it's EVERY time they screw. At first, the wife thinks maybe it's because, just in case the kids walk in, they won't see anything. But that was bullshit and they both knew it wasn't the real answer.

NIKKI

Get to the point already.

JIMMY

One night, they're having sex, and the wife thinks, 'I'm gonna turn on the light right now and see what's up'. So she does, and she sees her husband doing her with a vibrator!

BEKAH

That's disgusting!

NIKKI

Gross, Jimmy!

JIMMY

Shut up. This is the best part! So anyway, the wife FREAKS OUT, yells at her husband and practically beats the shit out of him. She says, "You better explain this right now if you want this marriage to work!"

(beat)

The husband simply smiles and says, "I'll explain this once you explain the kids."

Uproarious LAUGHTER.

(CONTINUED)

SAM
That's revolting.

BEKAH
That's AMAZING.

JIMMY
True story, too.

NIKKI
Bullshit.

JIMMY
I swear to God!

NIKKI
Yeah, right. You probably read it
in Playboy in between your jackoff
routines.

BEKAH
Now THAT is revolting.

JIMMY
You don't think it's true?

NIKKI
Not a chance.

JIMMY
Bekah?

BEKAH
Sorry, Jimmy. But no.

JIMMY
What about you, Richie Rich?

RICHARD
I don't know, man. Maybe.

NIKKI
What does it matter? Jimmy, why
can't you accept reality the way it
is without having to MAKE it
interesting?

JIMMY
In this place? You're kidding,
right? Augustus is a ghost town.

(CONTINUED)

BEKAH
Which is EXACTLY why you shouldn't
have to make anything up.

An awkward SILENCE.

SAM
What does that mean?

BEKAH
Augustus is a ghost town. Didn't
you know?

JIMMY
Bekah, don't even go there.

BEKAH
Shut up, Jimmy! She has a right to
know about Old Haven if she's going
to live here.

SAM
Hang on a sec. What's Old Haven?

JIMMY
Don't worry about it. Be glad you
are new to this town and know
nothing about it. You too, Richard.

SAM
Yeah, but what is it?

JIMMY
It's bullshit. It's nothing.

NIKKI
This town started this lame ghost
story to warn kids of road dangers.
It's ridiculous.

BEKAH
Guys, quit ruining it! Let me tell
it.

NIKKI
Be our guest.

Nikki falls back in her chair and GROANS.

Sam and Richard lean in, completely intrigued. The others
sit back in malaise.

(CONTINUED)

BEKAH

There's an intersection right
outside town on Old Haven Road and
Butler Street. Have you seen it?

Sam shakes her head "no".

BEKAH (cont'd)

What about you, Richard?

RICHARD

Nuh-uh.

BEKAH

That's okay. I'm sure you'll
understand this story just the
same.

(beat)

Have either of you ever ran a red
light before?

SAM

Like a stoplight?

BEKAH

Yeah.

SAM

Not that I can remember.

BEKAH

Well, most people have. Whether
they're running late or just
impatient, most people will go when
they know they won't get caught.
It's like cheating. It's a natural
impulse. You'll do anything if you
can get away with it.

Nikki glares at Jimmy, who contemptuously SIGHS.

SAM

I don't get it. What does running a
red light have to do with this
town?

BEKAH

It's the legend. If you don't stop
at the red light after dark,
Tabitha Hudson comes for you.

(CONTINUED)

SAM

Tabitha Hudson?

BEKAH

She was killed on Old Haven Road twenty years ago. She hitched a ride home with a college buddy, but something happened during the drive. The man attacked her, and before she could get away, he took a crowbar from the trunk of his car and beat her to death.

JIMMY

They say she was killed near the intersection. She tried to call out for help from the woods, but the only other car on the road didn't see her.

BEKAH

Because they ran the red light.

NIKKI

And now she haunts the intersection, waiting for the next ignorant asshole not to stop.

Nikki has finally loosened up and opened herself to the story.

Sam contemplates all of this.

BEKAH

After her death, the road was cut off from the town for a police investigation. When there was no progress, they shut down the case completely and reopened the road. But even after it was open to the public, nobody wanted to go on it because they were too scared. And even with an unsolved murder taking place, you always had the indifferent ones who didn't concern themselves with it. Those were the people that breathed life into this legend. They fed it with their own lives.

(beat)

Because after the death of Tabitha Hudson, more people started dying.

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. OLD HAVEN ROAD - NIGHT

The road doesn't look too much different, even in this nostalgic regard. The night sky lingers over the road like a mortality blanket waiting to drop at any second.

A FIREBIRD

suddenly zooms past at maximum speed.

BEKAH (V.O.)

The first to go was the high school quarterback, Preston Richardson. He was racing a few of his friends after defeating his football team's biggest rival.

The car is going fast, too fast for the losing racer to catch up.

INT. FIREBIRD

PRESTON RICHARDSON, the arrogant and cocky asshole we all went to school with, sits relaxed in the speeding convertible.

BEKAH (V.O.)

He got the new car as an early graduation present and wanted to show it off to his friends.

EXT. OLD HAVEN ROAD

Up ahead, the familiar INTERSECTION begins to fade through the darkness. The stoplight shines a brilliant red.

BEKAH (V.O.)

The light was red, but Preston was going too fast to stop and thinking too little to care.

The firebird barrels through the intersection like an explosive bullet.

BEKAH (V.O.) (cont'd)

He ran the red light.

INT. FIREBIRD

A devilish grin forms on Preston's presumptuous face.

BEKAH (V.O.)

Then something happened.

His expression suddenly changes right before our eyes. First a demeanor of disbelief, followed by an instantaneous look of PURE HORROR.

Preston hits the brake and precariously jerks at the steering wheel. He overdoes it.

EXT. OLD HAVEN ROAD

The convertible SKIDS across the other lane. The tires lock as burnt rubber SCREECHES across the blacktop.

The firebird escapes Preston's control and, in seconds time, loses itself amongst a wall of towering trees. A fatal mistake.

BACK TO PRESENT

Sam sits stunned, intuitive and impassioned.

BEKAH

Nobody can give a straight answer as to who or what killed Preston Richardson. The cops couldn't explain it. Neither could his friends who were racing him. Instead of dying, it was like he disappeared off the face of the earth completely. His friends kept telling the cops that a person was standing in the middle of the road, but there was nobody there to back it up. And how can any real person like the one they described just vanish into thin air? The police didn't buy it and ruled Preston's death as an accident.

SAM

So why is this town still superstitious about it?

JIMMY

Because the deaths didn't stop there.

(CONTINUED)

BEKAH

Seven victims in total since the death of Tabitha Hudson, all believed to have run the red light on that road.

SAM

How can anybody know for sure?

JIMMY

They can't. Nobody will know unless someone gets the balls to do it themselves. And so far, anyone willing to give it a shot hasn't proven anything because they never make it back.

SAM

You seemed pretty cocky before you started telling me the story, Jimmy. Why don't you get the balls?

JIMMY

I believe in what my eyes tell me, and I'm not about to look like a scared jackass on that road just because some stupid myth says I should. If you think you want to see the ghost of Tabitha Hudson for the sake of finding out the truth, just run the red light tonight for yourself.

SAM

And if she comes?

JIMMY

Hell, ask for an autograph.

SAM

And if she doesn't?

JIMMY

Then I guess I'll see you tomorrow.

EXT. FRATERNITY HOUSE - MIDNIGHT

Nikki, Bekah, and Sam exit through the front door, heading to the driveway.

(CONTINUED)

NIKKI
Who's driving?

BEKAH
I'll volunteer for the hell of it.

NIKKI
Fat chance. Get in the back.
(beat)
Sam, take the keys.

She tosses them. Sam catches them in midair with a clean swiping motion.

SAM
You serious?

NIKKI
Yeah.

SAM
(giddily)
If you insist.

Sam opens the driver's side door and quickly slides in. Bekah follows behind her.

Richard trails after them.

RICHARD
(from the porch)
Nikki, hold up a sec!

Nikki turns.

NIKKI
(contingently)
Yeah?

He approaches.

RICHARD
I'm staying in the dorms, and Jimmy said you'd give me a ride since you're headed that way.

NIKKI
He said that?

RICHARD
Yeah. I'd really appreciate it.

(CONTINUED)

NIKKI
You've got to be kidding me.

RICHARD
I won't be any trouble.

NIKKI
I'm gonna kill Jimmy. Get in.

Richard jumpily hops into the backseat. Nikki groggily follows his lead.

INT. CAR - LITTLE LATER

Sam and Nikki sit up front while Richard and Bekah cram together in the compact backseat.

Trees pass by in the windows -- Mother Nature's flip book to the outside world.

NIKKI
(to Sam)
I'm sorry about Jimmy and Bekah tonight.

BEKAH
(defensively)
What ABOUT me?

NIKKI
That story. You guys shouldn't have said anything.

SAM
Well, outside of the context, I didn't think it was that bad.

RICHARD
Me neither.

NIKKI
Yeah, but you guys are new. They shouldn't do that to somebody who's just settling in.

BEKAH
Somebody was bound to do it to them eventually. Might as well get it over with sooner than later.

(CONTINUED)

NIKKI

Whatever.

Nikki props her feet up on the dash, cradling out and getting comfortable.

RICHARD

(suddenly)

I lied to everyone earlier.

The three girls are taken off guard.

BEKAH

Huh?

NIKKI

You lied?

Feet back down.

RICHARD

Yeah.

NIKKI

About what?

RICHARD

Old Haven Road. I said I didn't know anything about it. That wasn't true.

BEKAH

You knew the story?

RICHARD

Only bits and pieces. But I knew the legend and I knew what would happen if you ran the red light.

BEKAH

So why didn't you say anything?

RICHARD

Well, what would YOU think if I told you I ran the red light?

NIKKI

Personally, I'd think you're full of shit.

RICHARD

Exactly.

(CONTINUED)

SAM

Wait a second. You ran the red light?

RICHARD

Last week.

SAM

And what happened?

RICHARD

What's the point in explaining it if you don't believe me?

NIKKI

Typical answer for a liar.

BEKAH

Nikki, let him talk.

RICHARD

I have nothing else to say. It's as uncomplicated as it sounds. I got in my car. I drove. I ran the red light.

SAM

And you're still alive.

NIKKI

And still a liar. Why did you bring this up, Richard?

RICHARD

I don't know. I thought you guys would like to know.

NIKKI

You're teasing us.

RICHARD

You don't have to believe me.

NIKKI

Well, let's just say in some alternate universe, I did believe you. What happened afterwards?

RICHARD

You mean, did I see Tabitha Hudson?

The girls nod.

(CONTINUED)

RICHARD (cont'd)
What do I get if I tell you?

NIKKI
A ride to the dorms.

RICHARD
And if I don't?

NIKKI
A foot in your ass.

RICHARD
Hard bargain.

SAM
Well, Richard, here's your chance
to get your story straight.

Sam points to the windshield and beyond.

EXT. ROAD

A high-pitched SQUEAL as the car slowly rolls to a stop.

The headlights shine over a street sign partially hidden by overgrown shrubs. Bold white letters, scratched and weathered over years of decomposition, slowly fade through the eerie midnight darkness.

The sign says OLD HAVEN RD.

INT. CAR

All four wide-eyed as Sam puts the car in park.

SAM
Old Haven Road. You guys thinking
what I'm thinking? It's time for a
reunion, Richard.

The foursome takes a moment to admire the road's macabre beauty, the eternal aroma of death lingering over this once prosperous street. It ribbons into the blackness before it disappears into unknown territory.

RICHARD
What are you guys doing?

(CONTINUED)

SAM

If you ran the red light once, than
you would have no problem doing it
again.

(beat)

Riiiiight?

RICHARD

You make your point.

SAM

So what's stopping you now?

RICHARD

I don't think it's up to me.

He gives a piercing stare to Sam.

SAM

Says who?

Nikki and Bekah look at each other, hesitant.

RICHARD

Says the person who's too scared to
see what I've seen.

SAM

And what's that?

RICHARD

The unknown.

BEKAH

Let's just do it.

Sam's smile vanishes, fearful.

SAM

You serious?

BEKAH

What do you think, Nikki?

NIKKI

Guys, I don't know about this.

BEKAH

He would've spoken by now if he saw
something on that road.

(CONTINUED)

NIKKI
 Whatever. I'm not driving.

Nikki glances at Bekah, who nods.

BEKAH
 Let's just get it over with so we
 can go home.

Not another word as Sam, almost in an out of body
 experience, grabs the shift and puts it in drive.

Nikki leans back, getting comfortable as

THE CAR TURNS

and ascends into the blackness of the notorious road. Sam
 smiles as the enveloping darkness engulfs the car with our
 four friends trapped inside.

Nikki braces herself and stares, a face of bewilderment and
 fear.

BEKAH (cont'd)
 This better be good.

EXT. OLD HAVEN ROAD

The car flashes by, gaining speed, picking up roadside
 leaves. They tunnel into the sky, moving like a funnel as
 the car descends deeper on the isolated road.

INT. CAR

The car is utterly SILENT, so quiet, the engine itself seems
 to HUM in a hypnotic trance that we've grown accustomed to,
 almost like it never existed in the first place.

Sam's eyes can't seem to focus on one thing. They dance
 around in front of her, shifting their attention to the
 road's different movements. The swaying tree branches. The
 rustling leaves.

SAM
 I guess now wouldn't be a good time
 to tell you I've been in two
 wrecks.

NIKKI
 (glaring)
 No. It wouldn't.

(CONTINUED)

SAM
Right. Sorry.

Back to SILENCE.

EXT. OLD HAVEN ROAD

The familiar intersection is fast approaching. As chance would have it, the two traffic lights are glowing red.

INT. CAR

All four sit up, their eyes permanently fixed on the road ahead.

SAM
There it is.

BEKAH
It's not too late to change our
minds, Richard.

Even now, Richard appears anxious, UNCERTAIN.

RICHARD
I really don't think you want to
change them.

NIKKI
What did you see, Richard? You
could stop this.

SAM
Too late now!

Sam *FLOORS IT!*

The car accelerates -- the sudden force knocking our leads to the back of their seats.

NIKKI
Shit!

SAM
Hold on for your life!

EXT. OLD HAVEN ROAD

The car speeds by, swerving down the empty ribbon of blacktop like a runaway freight train, relentless and uncontrolled.

INT. CAR

NIKKI

Sam, what are you DOING!?

BEKAH

Slow down!

RICHARD

Shit...

NIKKI

Sam, you're gonna kill us!

SAM

Hang on!

EXT. OLD HAVEN ROAD

The car hightails towards the intersection, mere feet away from the unknown when

THE CAR RUNS THE RED LIGHT!

SCREECHING deafens us as the car comes to rest, the red glow of the intersection reflecting off the body of the vehicle.

INT. CAR

Sam puts the car in park as all four turn their heads to the road already traveled. UTTER SILENCE, the aura of fear permanently lingering over their heads.

BEKAH

Jesus Christ.

RICHARD

I think I need a change of pants.

SAM

You guys see anything?

(CONTINUED)

BEKAH

What were you THINKING, Sam!?

SAM

What's your problem? We all agreed to run it.

NIKKI

Guys, shut up!

(beat)

Listen.

Nikki rolls down the window.

A SCRAPING SOUND

can be heard echoing into the night. The group listens intently, all quiet and observant.

BEKAH

What is that?

RICHARD

Holy mother of Jesus...

BEKAH

What the HELL is that?

The SCRAPING becomes louder, more distinct, slowly turning into echoing THUMPS.

BEKAH (cont'd)

Is that...footsteps?

NIKKI

Sam, get us out of here.

RICHARD

It can't be. No way.

Sam is stricken with paralyzing fear. The footsteps are getting LOUDER, closer, almost entrapping.

NIKKI

Sam, drive the car! Let's go!

Sam snaps back to reality, eyes glazed.

SAM

Yeah...

Sam puts the car in drive, but suddenly freezes.

(CONTINUED)

BEKAH

Sam -- come on -- let's go.

SAM

Be quiet for a second and listen.

(beat)

It stopped.

BEKAH

What?

SAM

It stopped!

BEKAH

But where?

NIKKI

(suddenly)

HOLY SHIT!

The rest of the group looks at Nikki, followed by a unison, blood-curdling SCREAM OF TERROR when they follow her eyes to the windshield.

EXT. OLD HAVEN ROAD

A FIGURE emerges from the darkness, dragging its feet along the asphalt. *SCRAPE. THUMP. SCRAPE. THUMP.*

The figure steps into the beam of headlights, shattering all fears and suspicions in a single instant.

The figure is a HOMELESS MAN, a cardboard sign dangling from his neck with the word 'DENVER' written in black marker.

HOMELESS MAN

You kids heading for Colorado?

INT. CAR

The group recuperates, nervously LAUGHING as the homeless man draws near, happy to be in the presence of other people.

SAM

Sonuvabitch.

NIKKI

I really thought for a second...

The homeless man approaches the car, becoming agitated as the group continues to unintentionally ignore him.

(CONTINUED)

HOMELESS MAN
 (irate)
 Are you heading for Colorado or
 not?

Bekah flips her hand up in a "who gives a shit" fashion.

BEKAH
 Run his ass over!

Sam gently steps on the gas, turning the wheel away from the man.

EXT. OLD HAVEN ROAD

The homeless man watches as the car disappears into the night, red taillights dimming in the darkness.

HOMELESS MAN
 Well, fuck you too, bitch!

He continues walking down the road alone, MUMBLING to himself, a habit only a person of his caliber could understand.

EXT. DORMITORY - PARKING LOT - LATER

The car pulls into the lot, parking in the nearest empty space. The headlights go off instantaneously.

INT. CAR

All four sit in SILENCE, aphasic and unbroken. Finally:

NIKKI
 You knew we wouldn't see anything,
 didn't you, Richard?

No reply.

NIKKI (cont'd)
 I don't know about the rest of you,
 but I think bragging about what we
 did tonight would be completely
 pointless. So to avoid
 embarrassment, I think this should
 die right here, right now.

Another moment of SILENCE.

(CONTINUED)

SAM
 (under her breath)
 God, that was intense.

The others just stare.

SAM (cont'd)
 Didn't you guys feel that rush?
 Didn't you like that feeling of
 having no control? It's like
 surrendering yourself to a higher
 power. Didn't you enjoy it?

NIKKI
 No. I didn't.

SAM
 Why not?

NIKKI
 Because it's not normal. If I put a
 gun to your head right now, would
 you like that feeling of surrender?

SAM
 If you thought you were in any real
 danger, than maybe you should be
 more pissed at this town for having
 that much control over you with a
 stupid story.

Sam exits, slamming the door behind her.

The others are left in quiescence. And even though it's all
 over, the fear is ever-so-present in their eyes.

INT. DORMITORY - NIKKI'S ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

AN ALARM CLOCK BLINKING BETWEEN '1:30' AND '2:00'.

Nikki turns over in bed, half-awake and restless as she
 stares off into the darkness of her quarters.

Her eyes adjust to the filtering moonlight coming in from
 the window. Her focus moves to the nightstand with the alarm
 clock, the red numbers still haphazardly switching between
 the two times.

A HAND

reaches out of the sheets and slaps the alarm clock. The
 time finally settles on '2:00'.

She pulls her hand back and slides it under her pillow -- where something unseen makes her crawl out of her skin.

INT. DORMITORY - BEKAH/SAM'S ROOM

Both girls are sound asleep when

THE DOOR BURSTS OPEN

and Nikki storms inside. She flicks on the light, stomping her feet ANGRILY as she approaches the two twin beds. Something is in her hands, vertically pressed against her side, but it's indistinct as to what it is.

NIKKI
(commanding)
GET UP! GET OUT OF BED!

Both girls roll over, perturbed and startled.

BEKAH
Nikki? What the hell?

Nikki tosses the sheets off of Bekah, moving immediately to Sam's bed for the same course of action.

NIKKI
You guys must think you're really funny.

BEKAH
Jesus. What time is it?

Bekah, half asleep, looks at the clock and frustratingly slumps against the headboard.

BEKAH (cont'd)
Nikki, it's two in the morning.

SAM
What the hell is going on? We were sleeping.

NIKKI
This shit you pulled tonight is low. REALLY low. Even for you guys!

BEKAH
What are you TALKING about?

(CONTINUED)

NIKKI
Like you don't know!

SAM
No, we don't! Couldn't you have waited till morning to bitch about whatever it is?

NIKKI
Right. I'll just pretend this isn't jabbing into my neck all night...

Nikki pulls her arm back and launches

A CROWBAR

to the floor. It lands with an echoing, ominous THUD.

NIKKI (cont'd)
So which one of you masterminds put it in my bed? Huh? Which one of you geniuses pulled it off?

BEKAH
Oh my God.

NIKKI
Come on! Answer me!

BEKAH
Nikki...I...

SAM
Oh, come ON! You don't really think that we put that in your bed, do you?

NIKKI
It sure as shit wasn't the tooth fairy.

BEKAH
Nikki, I swear to God, I didn't do it. Sam might have, but...

SAM
Whoa! Don't even pin this shit on me! Own up to your own actions and speak for yourself.

BEKAH
It wasn't even my idea to run the red light! You were driving!

(CONTINUED)

NIKKI

Shut up, both of you! I don't care which one of you did it or how you pulled it off. But if you EVER come into my room like this again, it's over. You're outta here. I didn't sign up for college to get shit on by a stupid story and the people that believe in it. Leave me out of your fairy tales, and get rid of that thing.

Nikki exits.

The two girls are left alone, both afraid to speak to each other, and both certainly afraid of the thing on the floor.

JIMMY (O.S.)

Maybe it was the tooth fairy.

EXT. AUGUSTUS STATE UNIVERSITY - DAY

Jimmy and Nikki jog around the campus green.

NIKKI

Don't be a smartass. This is serious. You're the only person I can talk to right now.

JIMMY

Well, which one of them do you think did it?

NIKKI

If I knew that, I wouldn't be here.

JIMMY

You mean, here with me. If you're coming to me for advice, you might want to stay on my good side BEFORE I start telling you how to live your life.

They stop, resting on a bench.

NIKKI

I can live my life. I just can't trust the lives of other people, no thanks to you.

(CONTINUED)

JIMMY

There's your problem. Everyone lies, including you. Who you trust more is completely different.

NIKKI

They could both be in on it for all I know. Bekah is my best friend, and my gut tells me she didn't do it. And even though I haven't known Sam that long, I know enough about her to realize when she's being fake and being real. You should've seen them last night when I came into their room. They looked at me like they had no idea. They looked scared, and that scared me.

JIMMY

Bekah is a drama major. It's not that much of a stretch to fake it.

NIKKI

And Sam is majoring in law, which makes her a bonafied liar.

JIMMY

Not to mention she faked it with me.

(beat)

What about Richard? He ran the red light, too.

NIKKI

The odds of him sneaking into our dorm unnoticed aren't very good. And he's not smart enough to think of something like that.

JIMMY

I don't know. He DID get you and your friends to run the red light. Even if it was only for two minutes, you guys were like his puppets. He had you in the palm of his hand.

NIKKI

(frustrated)

Ughhh...I can't think straight.

A pause.

(CONTINUED)

JIMMY
Maybe it really was Tabitha Hudson.

NIKKI
Stop it, Jimmy.

JIMMY
It could happen. Some unknown force
left a crowbar under your pillow
without you knowing about it.
Sounds a little supernatural to me.

NIKKI
I don't believe in ghosts. The only
thing that haunts a person is their
past.

JIMMY
So running the red light might not
have been a bright idea. Maybe it's
just someone trying to tell you to
watch your back and keep to
yourself. Don't stick your nose up
an ass if you're not ready for the
fart. You get what I'm saying?

NIKKI
Yeah. I just don't know what to do.
It's giving me a headache.

JIMMY
For the time being, leave it alone.
Maybe it'll resolve itself and one
of them will own up to it.

NIKKI
And if that doesn't happen?

JIMMY
Then I guess this a headache in
arms reach of Tylenol.

He wraps his arm around her, pulling her close. And for
once, she appears comfortable with him.

INT. MALL - BOOKSTORE - AFTERNOON

THE KAMA SUTRA SLIDING OVER A COUNTERTOP.

The clerk is Bekah. She places a bookmark inside the glossy
pages and snaps it shut, handing it to the unseen customer.

(CONTINUED)

BEKAH

Have a great afternoon. Enjoy your complimentary bookmark.

The customer, AN ELDERLY WOMAN with thinning gray hair and yellow teeth, gives a giddy smile and turns away.

ELDERLY WOMAN

Oh, honey, I won't be needing it!

BEKAH

Lucky you.

The lady exits.

Bekah turns, only to be disturbed by a voice from behind.

RICHARD (O.S.)

Excuse me, ma'am.

Richard enters frame.

BEKAH

(turning)

Yes, sir -- *Richard*? What the heck are you doing here?

RICHARD

I didn't know you worked here.

BEKAH

I didn't know YOU were a stalker.

RICHARD

Only you would be so lucky.

BEKAH

My sad life, right? The only man in my life who doesn't run away is Jack Daniels, and come to think of it, I don't see him around.

RICHARD

I'm not running.

BEKAH

No. You're not.

A comforting smile from both.

BEKAH (cont'd)

You need help with anything?

(CONTINUED)

RICHARD

No. I just came to get a book for class.

BEKAH

(somewhat disappointed)

Oh...OK.

RICHARD

I better get going. I'll see you later.

BEKAH

Hey, Richard?

RICHARD

Hmm?

BEKAH

(struggling)

Did anything happen to you last night?

RICHARD

What do you mean?

BEKAH

Anything...*strange*?

He thinks for a moment, unblinking.

RICHARD

No.

(beat)

Why?

BEKAH

No reason. See ya.

RICHARD

Bye.

INT. DORMITORY - AFTERNOON - LATER

Sam sits on the couch, SILENT and thoughtful.

Nikki enters from the front door. As she closes it, she gives Sam a catty stare and makes her way to the hallway.

SAM

I didn't get much sleep last night.

Nikki doesn't respond, even when she enters the room again.

(CONTINUED)

SAM (cont'd)

I know you think I put it in your bed, and even if you won't talk to me, the least you can do is listen and believe me when I tell you I had nothing to do with it.

NIKKI

Did you see who did?

SAM

No.

NIKKI

And Bekah never left the room?

SAM

Well, yeah. She was practically wasted in the bathroom all night. But that doesn't mean...

NIKKI

So Bekah is the one.

SAM

I'm not saying it's possible or impossible, Nikki. She might have done it when she wasn't in the room. But honestly, where would she get a crowbar? Do you really think either of us would go through the trouble for a stupid practical joke?

NIKKI

Yes.

SAM

I didn't have anything to do with it, Nikki.

NIKKI

Prove it.

Sam stands, walking to the hallway and entering the bedroom. Nikki waits in the living room, unpoised and suspicious, when Sam returns carrying

A DIRTY BROWN CLOAK. It's a woman's jacket with front ties and large buttons, some of which are missing. The entire coat is caked with dirt and covered in black streaks.

(CONTINUED)

SAM
Recognize this?

NIKKI
No. Should I?

SAM
I found this in my closet this morning. I'd never seen it before, and neither had Bekah.

NIKKI
So whose is it?

SAM
Take one guess.

INSERT: The letters T.H. engraved on the front pocket.

EXT. MALL - NIGHT

A huge building with a spacious parking lot, nary a car in view. The building itself is bright and omnipotent, a grand structure three stories tall and ten times as wide. And even though it looks like paradise, there isn't a soul in sight.

INT. MALL - BOOKSTORE

The bookstore is mostly empty except for Bekah and a coworker, THOMAS, closing up for the evening.

THOMAS
I'm heading out.

BEKAH
Alright.

THOMAS
You gonna be okay?

BEKAH
Yes. I'll be fine.

Thomas walks to the front of the store, standing below the CLOSING GATE.

THOMAS
I'm gonna close this, OK?

(CONTINUED)

BEKAH
Yeah. Sure.

THOMAS
See you next week.

BEKAH
See ya.

Thomas pulls the gate down. It makes a stentorious SCRATCHING SOUND as it clicks shut. Thomas leaves.

INT. MALL - BOOKSTORE - LITTLE LATER

Bekah hovers over a COMPUTER; the screen is practically the only light in the open area. Bekah types expeditiously, eyes locked on the monitor.

INSERT MONITOR DISPLAY:

SEARCH: old haven road

BACK TO SCENE

Bekah leans in, an ardent glaze in her eyes.

INTERCUT: MONITOR DISPLAY / BEKAH

The screen loads a page of RESULTS, each with a headline, followed by a brief snippet of information.

FOUND: Real estate options on Old Haven Road.

Bekah SIGHS and CLICKS BACK, typing in a new search, eyes vaulting and urgent.

SEARCH: tabitha hudson

Another moment to load.

BEKAH
Come on.

The results fill the white background.

FOUND: College student murdered; no suspects in custody.

Intrigued, Bekah clicks the headline, and a new window fills the screen. We follow along with Bekah as she reads the article aloud.

(CONTINUED)

BEKAH (cont'd)

Campus officials for Augustus State have confirmed the death of one of their students. The victim, Tabitha Hudson, was found dead on Old Haven Road. Hudson, a full time student and mother...

(beat)

Mother?

The single word grabs her attention immediately. She stops reading, almost in veneration, when...

SCREEEEEEEECH.

Bekah reels, following that blood-curdling noise of familiarity -- the sound of the closing gate being opened.

Bekah wheels in her chair, facing the front of the store. A domino-system of bookcases prevent her from seeing the gate. She stands and walks slowly, cautiously, to the front of the shop.

BEKAH (cont'd)

Hello? Thomas, is that you?

No answer. Bekah continues forward anyway, entering the dark realm of the front of the bookstore. The large bookcases shut out most of the light from the back, but there is just enough to reveal

THE CLOSING GATE

shut and locked, visibly untouched. Bekah isn't convinced, however, as she looks around the store vehemently, eyes darting.

BEKAH (cont'd)

Is anyone here?

Once again, no reply. But there is a NOISE, like a book hitting the floor, and it's enough for Bekah to know she's not alone. Carefully, she slides to the back of the shop.

THE COMPUTER

glows menacingly, casting eerie shadows over the walls and bookcases.

Bekah rushes to the hard drive, reaching for the power button, when something on the monitor catches her eye -- the search bar. What once displayed 'tabitha hudson' now reads:

behind you.

(CONTINUED)

Bekah turns lightning fast, panic hitting overdrive as she stumbles back into a bookcase. She grabs at her mouth instinctively, covering it, trying not to make a sound.

Carefully, she slides into the nearest aisle, her hand smoothly guiding her to the end. She turns the corner, where her eyes adjust on

THE STORE KEYS

sitting on the register countertop.

BEKAH (cont'd)

Shit.

Bekah pinches her lips together, looks around, realizing the only way to get them is to pass by a row of bookcases. Five of them on each side.

Against her better judgment, Bekah starts the march, walking between the aisles, too scared to look in either direction. Her focus remains straight ahead, locked on the keyring sitting so caustically in the distance.

And if she'd just turn by the third aisle, she'd see

THE FIGURE

standing there in a familiar DIRTY BROWN CLOAK, watching her pass. Bekah continues to the register, picking up the pace as the counter draws so tauntingly near.

Finally, she RUNS to the register, frantically snatching up the keyring. She darts to the closing gate, not looking back, knowing only from the LOOMING SHADOW that something is approaching.

She finally grabs the right key, twists it in the lock, pulls the gate up, and slides underneath.

INT. MALL - LOBBY - GROUND LEVEL

Bekah squirms under the metal brace, reaching up and pulling the gate down behind her. It doesn't click shut, but Bekah has already crawled too far away to try again.

Bekah's HEAVY BREATHING slowly subsides as she cups her hands over her mouth. She wipes them over her cheeks and looks back at the gate, the exact moment when her calming expression of relief and amity vanishes when she sees

A CROWBAR

(CONTINUED)

blocking the gate from its latch. It sits unmoving, black as Death and hard as nails. Bekah GASPS, backing away, eyes wide with unmitigated horror.

BEKAH

Oh, God...

SCRAAAAAAAAAAPE.

The crowbar RETREATS as an unseen force pulls it back. It makes an AWFUL SOUND against the metal gate and lobby tile, and just as it slips out of sight,

A HAND

reaches from the darkness of the entryway, wrapping its fingers around the gate's solid frame. In a slow and spectral pull, the hand pulls the gate up.

Without a moment's pause, Bekah stands up and runs, looking back in a shaky view of THE CLOAK stepping out of the shop, chasing after her, crowbar in hand. Bekah SCREAMS and turns the corner, bracing herself against the railing above the basement level.

BEKAH (cont'd)

Somebody help me!

Her desperate CRIES echo throughout the empty mall, her feet POUNDING rhythmically on the tiled floor.

INT. MALL - EXIT DOORS

A night CUSTODIAN mops near the entrance doors, an iPod clipped to his overalls. A crappy rock song on full blast desensitizes him to the feminine SCREAMING getting LOUDER and closer by the second.

INT. MALL - LOBBY - GROUND LEVEL

Bekah rounds another corner, turning onto the main stretch leading to the night custodian. He's dozens of yards away, but close enough for comfort.

BEKAH

Please help! Over here!

The custodian is oblivious to her pleas, so much that he's actually walking away from her and entering the supply closet.

(CONTINUED)

BEKAH (cont'd)
No! Please! I'm over here!

Bekah continues running, the Cloak still giving chase. It's a photo finish when

BEKAH SLIPS

on a wet surface, knocking the unsuccessful WET FLOOR SIGN off its legs. Bekah collapses and violently slams into the glass railing, cracking it down the middle.

On her knees, a dazed Bekah looks back at the Cloak, dangerously close now. She tries to stand, but can't. Her foot is twisted at an awkward angle -- a broken and expendable contrivance.

Bekah grabs at the railing, pulling herself up. She's weak and losing consciousness, but she's still going. She pushes with all her might, lifting her body up just as

THE RAILING BREAKS

sending Bekah and the shattered glass over the edge. Bekah snatches at the air as she falls, just barely grabbing onto a broken glass shard jutting out of the supporting frame. It digs into her palm, breaking the skin, but Bekah can't let go as she clings for her life.

She dangles from the edge of the balcony as a shower of glass plummets twenty feet.

Bekah looks up. The Cloak looms over her now, the crowbar swinging like a hypnotic pendulum. Slowly, it's raised for the kill.

BEKAH (cont'd)
Please...no...

Without remorse, the Cloak gruesomely brings it down on Bekah's face. BONES CRUNCH and BLOOD SPRAYS as the hook of the crowbar hits Bekah in the eye, tearing into her socket, securing itself there.

For a few moments, Bekah's corpse dangles in midair by the metal bar, blood dripping, until the Cloak hoists her back and drags her into the darkness.

EXT. DORMITORY - NIKKI'S ROOM - MIDNIGHT

Nikki sits in her bed, reading a book. Her expression is one of disinterest, as if she's only doing this to get her mind off of something else.

IN THE DOORWAY

A FIGURE passes. Nikki reacts, stares for a moment, listening to the FOOTSTEPS. They get QUIETER, until a door SHUTS and the noise stops altogether.

NIKKI

Bekah?

Nikki stands. Exits the room.

INT. DORMITORY

Nikki enters the hallway, looking around. The door to Sam and Bekah's bedroom is shut.

Cautiously, she reaches for the doorknob. THWACK!

The bathroom door swings open behind her, scaring her witless! Sam steps out and flicks off the light.

SAM

Jesus. You okay?

NIKKI

You scared me. What are you doing up?

SAM

Can't a girl pee around here without an interrogation?

NIKKI

Sorry. I just wanted to talk to Bekah.

SAM

She's here?

NIKKI

She just got in.

Nikki opens the bedroom door. The room is empty.

(CONTINUED)

SAM
You sure she's here?

NIKKI
I could've sworn...

SAM
Don't sweat it. We're both tired...

NIKKI
Do me a favor. When she gets here,
will you wake me up?

SAM
Sure. Goodnight.

NIKKI
Yeah. Goodnight.

INT. DORMITORY - NIKKI'S ROOM - MORNING

Nikki sleeps soundly, even with the morning light pouring in.

Sam stands over her, shaking Nikki, waking her.

SAM
Nikki, wake up.

NIKKI
Huh? Wha?

She's sleepy, groggy.

SAM
Get out of bed. Something's wrong.

NIKKI
(alert)
What?

SAM
Bekah never came home.

NIKKI
What are you talking about?

SAM
I mean, she didn't call or leave a
note. Her car's not outside,
either.

(CONTINUED)

NIKKI
Have you tried calling her cell?

SAM
Twice. She's not answering.

NIKKI
Did you try her at work?

SAM
Yeah. One of the guys said her car wasn't in the parking lot so she must've left after closing up last night.

NIKKI
(more to herself)
Why didn't she come home?

SAM
What if she did leave that thing under your pillow, Nikki? Maybe she feels guilty about it and is too scared to confront you.

NIKKI
Then you don't know Bekah very well. She doesn't feel guilty about anything, even when she's wrong.

SAM
Well, maybe she should for once.

NIKKI
What's that supposed to mean? You don't know she did it, Sam.

SAM
You don't know that she didn't.

NIKKI
We need to get Richard. Maybe he knows where she is.

INT. FRATERNITY HOUSE - AFTERNOON

A KNOCK FROM THE FRONT DOOR.

Jimmy stumbles to the foyer, kicking empty beer cans and dirty clothes out of the way.

(CONTINUED)

JIMMY

Coming!

He opens the door to find it's Nikki and Sam.

JIMMY (cont'd)

Hi, guys.

NIKKI

Hey, Jimmy.

JIMMY

What are you doing here?

NIKKI

Is Richard around?

JIMMY

Yeah. He's in the back.

NIKKI

What about Bekah?

JIMMY

No. I haven't seen her since the party. What's up?

NIKKI

We just need to talk to Richard for a minute.

JIMMY

Sure. Come on in.

EXT. FRATERNITY HOUSE - BACKYARD

RICHARD

So someone's been fucking with you guys and you never even told me?

Richard sits on the deck railing. Nikki and Sam make themselves comfortable on the patio furniture.

NIKKI

I'm hoping all of this is just a really bad prank.

RICHARD

So who do you think is doing it all?

(CONTINUED)

NIKKI

I don't know. It would have to be someone who knows we did it, or...

SAM

Or?

NIKKI

It would have to be one of us.

RICHARD

One of us? Why would you think that?

NIKKI

Well, why would I leave a crowbar in my own bed?

SAM

Why would I leave an ugly old coat in my own closet?

RICHARD

Why not? It would be the perfect reason for both of you to scare the shit out of everyone else who ran the red light.

NIKKI

I didn't put it in my bed, Richard. And Sam didn't do it, either. Somebody else is screwing with us.

RICHARD

To be honest, I don't think anyone here did it.

(beat)

By the way, where is Bekah?

SAM

She never came home last night.

RICHARD

See! There you go! Bekah's the one responsible. She's probably hiding because she knows she's in deep shit.

NIKKI

Bekah didn't do it. I know her better than either of you and I know she wouldn't do something that shitty, especially to me.

(CONTINUED)

SAM

So who's doing it all? Tabitha Hudson?

NIKKI

Don't start with that crap.

SAM

Why wouldn't it be her, Nikki? Her story is the reason we even ran the red light.

NIKKI

Then explain to me why none of this happened to Richard the first time he ran it. Huh?

RICHARD

Because I never did.

A moment's PAUSE.

NIKKI

What did you say?

RICHARD

I never ran it like I said before. I made it up.

NIKKI

You lied to us...AGAIN!?

RICHARD

I didn't think you guys were gonna go through with it. I was just trying to impress you.

NIKKI

To impress us? Are you that selfish!?

SAM

Enough! This isn't gonna help anything if we just keep fighting each other. We need to figure out what's going on, and if Bekah's not responsible, than who is.

RICHARD

So what do you want to do? Keep in a room together and not let each other out of our sight? Is that your master plan?

(CONTINUED)

NIKKI

Until we figure out who's doing this, maybe it's safer to stay together.

RICHARD

Get real, Nikki! This isn't Samara or Freddy Krueger we're talking about. Nobody, especially a ghost, is gonna kill us because we ran a red light. The person doing this is a low-life prankster with nothing better to do. That's all.

SAM

Listen to what Nikki is saying, Richard. Whether you want to admit it or not, something strange is going on. We can't take the risk of acting like nothing is happening.

RICHARD

No. What's happening here is you guys are conforming to the beliefs of this town's bullshit ghost story. Grow up and leave it alone.

With that, Richard walks back inside.

SAM

Don't be a prick, Richard!

Nikki and Bekah stand, staring out into the backyard.

SAM (cont'd)

That went well. Now what?

NIKKI

I just want to find Bekah.

SAM

Even if she's the one doing it?

NIKKI

Especially if she's the one. This isn't gonna stop until whoever's doing this gets caught.

Jimmy walks out on the deck, shyly shoving his hands in his pockets.

(CONTINUED)

SAM

I should leave you two alone.

Sam walks inside. Jimmy approaches Nikki at the railing.

JIMMY

You okay?

NIKKI

No. Not really.

JIMMY

You know classes start soon.

NIKKI

That's the last thing on my mind
right now.

(beat)

I need to ask you something.

JIMMY

What?

NIKKI

Do you believe in ghosts?

JIMMY

Yeah, I guess so. But I don't think
they're THE GHOST AND MR. CHICKEN
people come to expect.

NIKKI

What do you think they are?

JIMMY

Well, they're the things that help
you when you retrace your steps.
They're the ones who help pointing
out the things you missed the first
time around.

NIKKI

The first time around?

JIMMY

You always find something new when
you take a second look.

INT. FRATERNITY HOUSE - LITTLE LATER

Nikki and Jimmy pull on their jackets as Sam and Richard approach from the hallway.

SAM
What are you guys doing?

NIKKI
We're going out.

SAM
Out where?

NIKKI
We'll be back soon. Stay here.

INT. CAR - EVENING

Nikki drives and Jimmy sits nervously in the passenger seat.

JIMMY
I think I deserve to know where we're going.

NIKKI
Back to where this all started.

JIMMY
You're kidding.

No reply.

JIMMY (cont'd)
You're not kidding.

INT. FRATERNITY HOUSE - LATER

Richard sits relaxed watching the weather channel while Sam paces behind him, anxious.

WEATHERMAN (O.S.)
...sixty percent chance of rain and winds as high as fifty miles per hour. Cloudy skies are expected to continue on through the rest of the week...

Richard notices Sam's odd behavior without even having to glance over.

(CONTINUED)

RICHARD
What's wrong with you?

SAM
I'm jittery. I can't sit still.

RICHARD
No shit.

SAM
Did you drive your car here?

RICHARD
What do you care? Nikki told us to stay put.

SAM
(belligerent)
Did you drive your car here or not?

RICHARD
Yeah. I did.

SAM
Where are the keys?

RICHARD
Kitchen table.

Sam quickly grabs the keys from the breakfast nook and walks out the front door.

EXT. FRATERNITY HOUSE - NIGHT

Sam steps outside. The HOWLING WINDS immediately set the mood in the middle of the Stygian darkness.

She walks down the sidewalk, making her way to the car.

INT. FRATERNITY HOUSE

Richard doesn't seem to notice Sam's absence until

TWO HEADLIGHTS

shine through the living room window -- the engine REVVING over the muted HOWL of the wind.

RICHARD
(to himself)
You couldn't be patient, could you?

(CONTINUED)

Richard grabs his jacket and turns off the table lamp, just as the HEADLIGHTS simultaneously go off outside, leaving Richard alone in the dark.

Richard grabs a cell phone, using the GLOWING SCREEN to guide his way to the front door.

EXT. FRATERNITY HOUSE - NIGHT

Richard takes a few moments to adjust to the harsh weather, the distracting winds blinding him of his focus. He takes a step off the porch and walks to the car -- pitch black both inside and out.

RICHARD

Sam, get out of the car!

Richard walks faster, the approaching storm physically shaking him.

RICHARD (cont'd)

I mean it! Give me my keys!

LIGHTNING REVEALS

the car to be empty and off -- Sam and Richard's keys are nowhere in sight.

RICHARD (cont'd)

Sam? Where are you?

THUNDER HITS, just as Richard hears a familiar JINGLING SOUND echoing from the side of the house; the sound of his car keys.

RICHARD (cont'd)

Knock it off, Sam! This isn't funny!

Richard follows the sound, almost perfectly, as if whatever is making the noise is luring Richard away from his element, pulling him closer to the unknown.

RICHARD (cont'd)

Sam, come on. Cut it out.

As he turns the corner, he comes face to face with

NOTHING. The side of the house is dark and empty. Richard turns back, and the noise is already RINGING from a new location. The front of the house.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

JIMMY

Nikki, this is crazy. I think you're getting worked up over nothing.

NIKKI

Over nothing... until I find my best friend, this is the way it is.

JIMMY

Do you really believe the legend is true? Honestly?

NIKKI

What does it matter? We brought this on ourselves. We asked for it.

JIMMY

You think you're the only person in this town who's ran the red light?

NIKKI

Who else would be stupid enough to do it?

JIMMY

I didn't want to tell you this, Nikki, but my whole goddamn fraternity has ran it! It was this year's hazing prank for all of the pledges.

NIKKI

What? You *all* ran it?

JIMMY

Yes. Even me. And nothing has happened to any of us because it's not true.

NIKKI

You told Sam earlier...

JIMMY

We weren't supposed to repeat it to anyone else so we could make it an annual thing. We wanted to make the legend seem real.

(CONTINUED)

NIKKI

Well, someone out there is doing a
much better job than you.

Jimmy suddenly FLINCHES in his seat.

NIKKI (cont'd)

What's wrong?

He reaches down between the cushions and pulls out a
worker's name tag: **BEKAH**. Streaked across the glossy surface
is a dry, brown smear.

JIMMY

Is that...?

NIKKI

Bekah...

JIMMY

Holy fucking Christ.

Both in disbelief, but finally believing, Nikki turns at the
wheel.

EXT. ROAD

The car does a complete one-eighty as it steers towards
campus.

EXT. FRATERNITY HOUSE

Richard surveys the yard, shadows casting over him as he
makes his way to the driveway once again. Frustrated, he
pulls out his cell phone and dials.

RICHARD

I'm not putting up with this.

He raises the phone to his ear and waits.

Sam's RINGTONE blasts from a nearby location -- UNDERNEATH
RICHARD'S CAR.

Perturbed, Richard stalks forward, approaching his car with
uncertainty. Slowly, he gets down on his knees and lowers
his head to peak underneath.

Sam's cell phone BUZZES along the concrete. Richard reaches
his arm under the car, but it's too short. He scoots
forward, inch by inch, until the tip of his finger graces
across the side of the phone.

(CONTINUED)

VROOOOOOOOOM!

The car engine suddenly starts up! Richard panics, stuck halfway under the vehicle, his eyes locked on the FRONT WHEEL.

RICHARD (cont'd)

Shit!

Quickly, he backs away, crawling out from underneath the car, falling on his ass. He looks up at the driver's seat -- empty. The engine CRADLES steadily as Richard rises, looking for the culprit when

A DRAGGING SOUND

arises from behind the idling vehicle, like metal on blacktop, making its way towards Richard.

He leans forward nervously, peering underneath the unmoving car while keeping his distance. And in the gloom of the night approaches

THE CLOAK

dragging a crowbar along the driveway.

RICHARD (cont'd)

Sam...?

It's not. Because just to his left, stuck in the car door like a macabre drapery, is a clump of BEAUTIFUL AUBURN HAIR matted against an oppressing streak of crimson blood.

RICHARD (cont'd)

Oh my God...

Richard leaps to his feet, grabs at the car door handle, and jumps inside.

INT. RICHARD'S CAR

He pulls the shift down to REVERSE while, at the same time, using his foot to release the emergency brake.

EXT. FRATERNITY HOUSE

The Cloak rushes on the car, shoving the crowbar all the way through the back tire rim just as

INT. RICHARD'S CAR

Richard floors it!

EXT. FRATERNITY HOUSE

The crowbar LOCKS tautly into place, stopping the tire's rotation in a DEAFENING BANG. Smoke blows out from under the vehicle as the back left tire SCREECHES against the tarmac.

INT. RICHARD'S CAR

Panicked, Richard puts the car in DRIVE, steps on the gas, and smashes against the dashboard when the crowbar locks into the wheel again, preventing the car from moving forward or back. Richard is stuck.

The Cloak walks away from the passenger window, moving toward the front of the car and AROUND to the other side.

Richard LOCKS the car doors, climbing over to the passenger seat. He reaches for the door handle just as the Cloak

SMASHES THE DRIVER'S WINDOW

in a surprising and powerful blow. Glass falls over Richard as he unlocks the passenger door and pushes it open, falling onto the concrete.

EXT. FRATERNITY HOUSE

Richard crawls back, glass spilling out of the car.

INT. RICHARD'S CAR

The Cloak reaches down at the gas pedal, PRESSING down on it and not letting go.

EXT. FRATERNITY HOUSE

Richard turns on his hands and knees. Stands. Sprints across the lawn.

CLOSE ON BACK TIRE

as the crowbar tightens in the shaking wheel, all of the car's power pushing down on the thinning metal when

THE CROWBAR SNAPS

sending a jagged piece of metal flying through the yard, heading straight for Richard!

RICHARD

Hel --

The broken crowbar HITS Richard in the back of the head, shooting all the way through his skull and out his cheekbone in a gruesome explosion of bone and arterial spray.

Richard stops dead in his tracks, actually aware of what just happened to him, completely absorbed by his own fatality. He reaches up and gently touches the asperous spike jutting out of his face before finally succumbing to the blow, eyes rolling over, DEAD.

His lifeless body hovers in the air for a moment before plummeting to the grass.

EXT. AUGUSTUS STATE UNIVERSITY - NIGHT

Nikki's car drives by, the entire campus a barren landscape.

EXT. FRATERNITY HOUSE

The car pulls into the driveway. Both rush out, running to the front porch.

NIKKI

Sam! Richard!

Jimmy stops at Richard's car, noticing the shattered window.

JIMMY

Nikki, get over here.

She turns and hesitantly walks back. When her eyes set sight on the car, she rushes back to the house, panicked, running inside.

JIMMY (cont'd)

Nikki! Wait!

He chases after her.

INT. FRATERNITY HOUSE

Darkness. Jimmy reaches for the light switch. Flips it up. Nothing. The power is out. With Nikki at his side, he advances into the living room.

JIMMY
Stay close to me.

The two manage their way through the house, practically glued at the hips as they approach

THE KITCHEN.

NIKKI
Sam...?

No reply. Jimmy pulls open a drawer and retrieves a KITCHEN KNIFE. He hands it to Nikki.

JIMMY
Take it.

NIKKI
I can't...

AN OMINOUS NOISE echoes from the other end of the house. Instinctively, Nikki snatches the knife and holds it up.

JIMMY
First sign of trouble, we get the hell out of here. OK?

NIKKI
Yeah. OK.

Jimmy takes another knife out of the drawer. The two exit the kitchen and head to the

HALLWAY.

JIMMY
Richard?

Again, no response. They move past the first bedroom doorway. The room is empty.

JIMMY (cont'd)
Are you guys here?

They walk to the second doorway, knives held at eye level. But it's not the bedroom that retains their focus; it's the TRAIL OF BLOOD stretching from the hallway to the last closed door.

(CONTINUED)

JIMMY (cont'd)
I'd call that the first sign of
trouble, wouldn't you?

They both take a step back.

JIMMY (cont'd)
Let's go. Come on.

He turns...

THWACK!

Something suddenly SMACKS Jimmy across the head, knocking him out cold. Nikki SCREAMS, a pure CRY OF TERROR, eyes vaulting to the open doorway when

THE CLOAK

steps out of the shadows, the halved crowbar in both hands!

NIKKI
Jimmy!

The Cloak swings the HOOKED BAR at Nikki. It connects with the kitchen knife, knocking it clean out of her hands before smashing through a picture frame, IMPALED through the glass and drywall.

Rushing to the end of the hallway, Nikki seals herself in the furthest bedroom. Shuts the door. Locks it.

INT. FRATERNITY HOUSE - BEDROOM

Nikki places a chair under the doorknob as the Cloak POUNCES on the other side.

With no time to think, Nikki rushes to the window. She unlocks it, digs her fingers under the handle, and pulls up. It slides open smoothly, allowing plenty of space for her to slide through.

EXT. FRATERNITY HOUSE

Nikki's head emerges from the window frame, hands braced against the brick. She free-falls into the dirt just as

INT. FRATERNITY HOUSE

HER CAR KEYS FALL INSIDE THE HOUSE.

EXT. FRATERNITY HOUSE

Nikki stands, reaching towards the window, pulling herself back up in an attempt to retrieve the keys.

INT. FRATERNITY HOUSE

Nikki dangles half in/half out of the open window, arms stretched straight out, fingers reaching.

She nudges forward, just enough to grab the keys, but she doesn't.

Something else has her full attention, leaving her petrified. It's SILENT.

The BANGING on the door has stopped.

EXT. FRATERNITY HOUSE

Nikki is suddenly *GRABBED from behind!*

She kicks violently and SCREAMS BLOODY MURDER, but it's no use. The Cloak has her now, yanking her back outside.

Nikki lands hard on the ground, SMACKING her head against the brick.

And as the Cloak stands over her, Nikki blacks out.

FADE TO:

INT. DECREPIT HOUSE - BEDROOM - MIDNIGHT

Nikki AWAKES in a disheveled room: peeling UNICORN wallpaper, splintered floorboards, wilted ceiling.

Slowly, Nikki rises on an ugly old mattress. There are no sheets or blankets on the bed, but strategically placed at the foot of it is a PICTURE, standing upright in a hand-carved frame.

She reaches forward. Picks the picture up. Looks at the MOTHER AND DAUGHTER smiling happily at the camera in a loving embrace.

(CONTINUED)

A NOISE

stirs from within the darkness of the room. Nikki reacts. Drops the picture. It SHATTERS.

VOICE (O.S.)
That was my favorite picture.

That VOICE. So familiar. So feminine.

Nikki glances around the room, eyes wide with shock when she sees

THREE CORPSES

seated along the wall like macabre decorations: Bekah, Richard, and the unknown girl from the beginning of the film.

NIKKI
(through tears)
Bekah...

And just beside the bodies rises

THE CLOAK, watching Nikki's every move like a hawk. The Cloak reaches out to Nikki, who crawls back, hitting the wall. Cornered.

NIKKI (cont'd)
Please...no.

The Cloak removes the tattered jacket, pulling the hood back. And as Nikki watches on with surmise, the person behind the guise reveals their true face.

NIKKI (cont'd)
Sam!

SAM
Surprise.

Nikki's mind does cartwheels, dumbstruck, as Sam, very much alive with a slight trim of hair, paces the room, enjoying Nikki's honest reaction.

NIKKI
What's going on!? Why are you doing this!?

SAM
Because you ran the red light, Nikki. You wanted to see Tabitha Hudson, and you found her.

(CONTINUED)

Sam slides the PICTURE out of the broken frame and holds it up.

SAM (cont'd)
Here she is, Nikki! Tabitha Hudson!

NIKKI
No! It's not true! It wasn't supposed to be anything serious. It's just a story.

SAM
Just a story. You and this town never take anything seriously. You turned a murdered woman's death into a joke, and I consider it an honor to give you and the rest of your putrid fuck friends their due. Was it worth running the red light, Nikki? Was it all worth it to find out the truth about Tabitha Hudson? About my *mother*?

NIKKI
Oh my God...

INT. FRATERNITY HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Jimmy lies unconscious in the hallway. He slowly comes around. Rubs his temple. Picks up a nearby kitchen knife.

INT. DECREPIT HOUSE - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Sam walks to the rocking chair. Grabs the remaining half of the crowbar. Approaches Nikki, waving it near her face.

SAM
This was my room, you know. My mom would sit right over there and read stories to me until I fell asleep. But not anymore. This town took that away from me. And every time someone runs the red light, they take it away all over again.

NIKKI
None of them killed your mother! And none of them are gonna bring her back, Sam!

(CONTINUED)

SAM

Will you quit calling me Sam!? I don't think the real Samantha Collins would appreciate it, do you?

Sam gently graces the crowbar across the corpse of THE GIRL, brushing her hair to the side and revealing her mangled face.

SAM (cont'd)

You wouldn't believe how easy it is to take someone's identity.

NIKKI

You killed her...

SAM

The bitch couldn't drive anyway. Honestly, who runs a red light for a stupid phone call? Either way, it worked. And you welcomed a vicious killer into your home with open arms.

NIKKI

So why them!? Why *me*!? We're not killers! We didn't kill your mother!

SAM

Why would I go through all this trouble if I didn't know who killed my mother? Don't you think I already know the man who killed Tabitha Hudson? I know for a fact you do.

NIKKI

What?

SAM

The killer's closer to you than you think. Would you like to see him?

EXT. OLD HAVEN ROAD

A MAN stands in the center of the intersection. He doesn't move or look up. In fact, he looks like an untouched marionette, staring at the ground with a lifeless demeanor.

The two girls approach, Nikki's hands tied. She squints, trying to discern the man's identity in the shadowy light.

(CONTINUED)

SAM

Do you recognize him yet, Nikki?

NIKKI

Oh my God... *DADDY!*

Nikki rushes forward, but Sam pulls her back, brandishing the crowbar and pressing it into her back. Nikki stumbles, falls on her ass, as Sam continues to drag her along the road.

SAM

I was hoping for that reaction from you.

MR. MALONE, 40ish, finally comes to, looking up with dazed eyes to see his daughter being dragged towards him. It becomes apparent that he has been tied to the intersection, a noose wrapped tightly around his neck and lassoed over the stoplight, the tips of his feet just barely scraping across the asphalt.

The other end of the rope is secured around the pulley of a TOW TRUCK, facing the opposite direction.

MR. MALONE

(weakly)

Nikki?

Sam tosses Nikki to the tarmac like a rag doll. She then advances to Mr. Malone, still wielding the metal bar, placing it against his throat.

SAM

Your daughter's a fighter, Mr. Malone. I honestly wasn't expecting that. I guess she doesn't have as much weight on her conscience to surrender as easily as you did.

MR. MALONE

Leave her alone. She has nothing to do with this.

SAM

Actually, she has everything to do with this. Because just like I had everything to do with my mother, she has everything to do with her father. And when you die, she'll know exactly what I went through.

(CONTINUED)

NIKKI

No!

MR. MALONE

If you're going to do something,
just do it!

SAM

I've waited my whole life for that
moment, Mr. Malone. Isn't the
anticipation grueling? I derive
great pleasure from seeing you
sweat.

(beat)

But first, she needs to know the
truth. Tell her about Tabitha
Hudson. Tell her what really
happened.

Mr. Malone looks at his daughter, tears in his eyes. He
swallows. Bows his head in shame.

Sam advances to Nikki, kneeling. She brings the tip of the
crowbar to Nikki's face, scratching her cheek.

SAM (cont'd)

You ready to hear Daddy's dirty
little secret?

NIKKI

Fuck you.

Sam PUNCHES her. Nikki reels in pain, holding her chin.

SAM

Now *TALK!*

MR. MALONE

Don't hurt her!

SAM

I won't have to if you just tell
her. Or do you want to test me on
that? I'm ready.

Helpless, Mr. Malone looks at his daughter. She nods,
encouraging him.

MR. MALONE

I'm responsible, OK? I'm the one! I
did it! Are you happy?

Sam rises. Grabs Mr. Malone by the throat. Yanks him off the
rope and pushes him to the road.

(CONTINUED)

SAM
Start at the beginning.

MR. MALONE
(starting off weakly)
It was twenty years ago... before you were even born, Nikki. I was pledging for a fraternity I wanted to be in, and I thought I was willing to do just about anything to get it. It was the biggest mistake of my life.

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. AUGUSTUS STATE UNIVERSITY - EVENING

The campus looks the same, but the style of clothing on the students gives away its interim. It's obvious this is the early '90s.

Young MALONE walks along the quad, eyeing a female student seen in the shady distance. TWO FRAT BOYS encourage him, mouthing: "go do it, go do it."

MR. MALONE (V.O.)
The brothers chose a girl on campus for each of us. We had to have sex with whoever they picked to prove we had a backbone. If we didn't do it that night, we weren't in the fraternity.

The girl beneath the shade is TABITHA HUDSON, 20ish, a shy introvert with a venereal allure and beautiful auburn hair. Hanging over her shoulders is a familiar coat.

Mr. Malone approaches her. While her face is unseen, her friendly gestures give her an innocent quality. An open person with a heart of gold.

MR. MALONE (V.O.)
I got Tabitha Hudson. She was waiting for a bus, so I offered to give her a ride home.

INT. MALONE'S CAR - NIGHT

Malone drives, one hand on the wheel with an imperious, yet nervous, attitude.

MR. MALONE (V.O.)
She said yes.

Tabitha rides shotgun, pointing with her finger to the windshield. She's giving directions.

EXT. OLD HAVEN ROAD

Malone's car enters Old Haven Road. It looks just like it did the night Preston Richardson died.

INT. MALONE'S CAR

Tabitha continues pointing. She mouths "go straight."

MR. MALONE (V.O.)
She told me she was just going home. Then she started talking about how lonely she was since her boyfriend left. I took that as a sign. I thought she was flirting. I stopped the car and made my move. It all happened so fast from there.

Tabitha confusedly shakes her head as the car slowly comes to a halt at the side of the curb. "What's going on?"

Malone moves forward, grabbing her around the waist, pulling her close. She REACTS, pushing him away, pointing back to the road. "Drive."

He persists, pulling her in again, preparing for a kiss.

Tabitha CLOCKS him! Undoes her seatbelt. Reaches over Malone and pops the trunk.

MR. MALONE (V.O.) (cont'd)
She hit me and got out of the car. I was so scared she was going to run off and call the police, so I chased after her.

EXT. OLD HAVEN ROAD

Tabitha rummages through the trunk of the car. She grabs her school books as Malone approaches from behind. He turns her around, trying to stop her. She SWINGS violently, dropping the books. "Leave me alone!"

He continues to grab at her. Calm her down. It only makes her more fretful. She reaches back into the trunk and produces a CROWBAR. She parades it in front of Malone, ready to strike.

MR. MALONE (V.O.)

She got a crowbar from my trunk and started swinging. I didn't know what to do. I panicked. I just wanted to calm her down and apologize. To take her home like she wanted.

Malone POUNCES in an attempt to steal the crowbar.

Tabitha STUMBLES back. Loses her balance. Falls hard on her back, graphically SMACKING her head against the lethal tarmac. Dazed, she rolls over, patting her BLEEDING HEAD.

Malone kneels over her, trying to help. Tabitha doesn't respond well to this. More kicking and SCREAMING as Malone tries to examine the head wound.

MR. MALONE (V.O.) (cont'd)

I knew it was bad as soon as her blood got on me. And I knew if I took her to the hospital, my future would be over.

HEADLIGHTS ILLUMINATE from the end of the road. A car is approaching fast.

Malone calculates, mind racing, before reaching down and grasping Tabitha by the ankles, pulling her across the road.

Tabitha SHRIEKS, clawing at the blacktop, filing her fingertips down to bloody stumps as she's dragged into the darkness of the aligning woodlands.

MR. MALONE (V.O.) (cont'd)

I just wanted to get her off the road long enough to let the car pass.

Tabitha SCREAMS, thrashing wildly, trying to free herself from Malone's arms.

(CONTINUED)

The approaching car BARRELS by, speeding through the RED LIGHT and into the night, completely ignorant to Tabitha's cries.

MR. MALONE (V.O.) (cont'd)
 When they didn't stop at the red light, I thought that might have bought me enough time to help her myself.

Malone looks down. The screaming woman in his arms has suddenly turned SILENT. Motionless.

MR. MALONE (V.O.) (cont'd)
 (choking up)
 But she was already dead.

BACK TO PRESENT

MR. MALONE
 I left town the next day and never came back. I never meant for it to go that far. I never meant for her to die.

SAM
 But you killed her. Nice job fucking that up!

MR. MALONE
 I didn't kill her! She killed herself!

SAM
 But it was you who brought her there. It was you who avoided arrest and left her alone. She died, and you didn't give a shit!

Sam ties the noose around Mr. Malone's neck. Turns back to Nikki.

SAM (cont'd)
 What do you think, Nikki? Does injustice have a limit? What about justice?

Sam leans in towards the back tires of the TOW TRUCK. A cinder block has been placed behind the wheel like a contemporary brake. She removes it.

(CONTINUED)

The giant vehicle begins its slow descent through the intersection. With each passing second, the rope attached to Mr. Malone becomes more taut over the stoplight, pulling the defenseless man up off his feet, choking him.

SAM (cont'd)

Let me know when I'm taking this too far, Nikki.

NIKKI

Stop it! Please, God! What do you want!? I'll do anything. Just let him go!

Sam produces the crowbar. Holds it up to Nikki once more, cradling Nikki into her arms.

SAM

Did you know I was there the night Tabitha Hudson was murdered?

Nikki flexes, trying to pry herself free.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. DECREPIT HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

TABITHA'S DAUGHTER awakes in her bed, hearing the MUTED SCREAMS of someone nearby.

The clock on her bed reads "1:30".

EXT. OLD HAVEN ROAD - LATER

Concealed in the shadowy woods, the daughter creeps forward and helplessly watches Malone drag her mother into the ditch, fighting for her life.

EXT. OLD HAVEN ROAD - LITTLE LATER

The daughter pulls Tabitha's lifeless body to the middle of the intersection, stricken with grief.

BACK TO PRESENT

SAM

Can you imagine a girl seeing one of her parents die in cold blood, right before her eyes?

(CONTINUED)

No response. Just silent tears. Sam grabs Nikki by the chin. Lifts her head up. And as Nikki opens her helpless eyes, a sudden light ignites in her when she sees

JIMMY

hiding behind the tow truck, knife in hand, waiting. He puts his finger over his mouth, silencing her from afar, and quietly scoots forward. Oblivious, Sam continues talking.

SAM (cont'd)

I certainly couldn't imagine losing a parent at a young age, not even when it happened to me. But when I kill your dad, please let me know what it's like for you.

NIKKI

Eat shit.

SAM

Such foul language. We were doing good for a while.

Jimmy secretly hands the knife to Mr. Malone, who frenetically presses the blade against the rope and rakes it back and forth, attempting to saw through it.

Slowly, Jimmy advances to Sam, ready to salvage the crowbar.

NIKKI

You're never gonna get away with this. The police will catch you.

SAM

Oh, Nikki, you amuse me. How can I get caught if I don't exist? Do you even know my real name? What does it matter if I get caught, anyway? Will it bring your friends back? Let's stop with the imputations. They're giving you false hope. Sometimes the justice you think you want for someone is the last thing you need. I know from experience.

Sam turns...

Jimmy PANICS, sliding back behind the tow truck, just in time.

(CONTINUED)

NIKKI

So what kind of justice is this?

SAM

You still don't get it, do you? Do you have any idea what happens to homeless kids... how long they spend in a foster home?

She doesn't answer.

SAM (cont'd)

It's a long fucking time, Nikki. It takes a lot out of a person, even when there's nothing left inside.

Sam stops. Her face turns solemn. Her eyes deadly serious. On the verge of tears.

SAM (cont'd)

The man who adopted me was not a good man, Nikki.

FLASHBACK TO:

DISTORTED, VERTIGINOUS IMAGES

of a MAN, Sam's adoptive father, grabbing YOUNG SAM by the feet, pulling her across a bed... her screams pleading for mercy as he undoes his belt and spreads her legs...

BACK TO PRESENT

Sam quivers. Releases Nikki. Wraps her arms around her own body, embracing her very being.

SAM

Taking care of him was the easy part.

With her free hand, she forms the shape of a gun. Fires. She then points to the tow truck.

SAM (cont'd)

And it looks like he served a better purpose in death than he ever did when he was alive.

NIKKI

It looks like you have everything figured out.

(CONTINUED)

Jimmy ascends, taking baby steps, ready to snatch the crowbar from behind.

NIKKI (cont'd)
There's one thing you're forgetting, though.

SAM
Oh yeah? What's that?

Nikki looks back at Jimmy. Both are ready for a counterattack. She whispers. Sam leans closer.

NIKKI
You ran the red light, too, bitch.

Jimmy POUNCES on Sam!

Both hit the ground, Jimmy's hands snatching for the weapon. He grabs it, a celestial face of empowerment.

But Sam gets the upperhand with a quick THRUST of the other end of the crowbar, hitting Jimmy across the head. He clutches his face, stumbling back, letting go. And as Sam raises the instrument for one final hit...

MR. MALONE

tackles her, free from his imprisonment, knife poised. Sam returns with a quick retaliation, smacking Malone in the arm with the crowbar. He drops the knife, watching it slide to

NIKKI

who squats with tied hands, fingers reaching for the handle.

NIKKI (cont'd)
Jimmy! Help me! Please!

Jimmy comes to, finding his balance. He stands. Runs to Nikki. Grabs the knife and saws at her confined hands. The rope breaks in two.

NIKKI (cont'd)
Hurry! My dad!

JIMMY
It's too late! Come on!

Sam grips the crowbar, pinning Malone to the road with her free hand, bashing the man's face in with blunt instrument.

JIMMY AND NIKKI

(CONTINUED)

run to the tow truck, hurriedly throwing the door open.

A BODY

tumbles out of the truck, a discernible bullet hole wedged right between the dead man's eyes, and yet he retains a face of acknowledgment and understanding.

INT. TOW TRUCK

Shaken, Nikki and Jimmy pull the body aside and climb aboard. Nikki searches, persevering.

NIKKI

The keys! Where are the keys!?

JIMMY

Here! Hurry!

EXT. OLD HAVEN ROAD

Sam rises, the victor, MADDENED and covered in blood.

She grabs the crowbar. Walks away from Malone's body as

HEADLIGHTS

brighten Old Haven Road, blinding her.

The tow truck REVS, engine HUMMING, as Nikki makes herself known from the driver's seat.

INT. TOW TRUCK

Nikki keeps her foot on the brake for several beats, a classic standoff.

JIMMY

Run her over.

Jimmy braces himself in the passenger seat.

JIMMY (cont'd)

Nikki, what are you waiting for!?
HIT HER!

Nikki doesn't budge. Hands glued to the wheel. Her eyes appear different. Malevolent.

Finally, she adjusts the shift...

EXT. OLD HAVEN ROAD

...and the truck *REVERSES*!

INT. TOW TRUCK

JIMMY

Nikki, what are you *DOING*!?

But the truck keeps pulling away, getting further from Sam, and Nikki doesn't seem phased at all.

JIMMY (cont'd)

What the fuck!? Nikki!?

She suddenly slams on the brake. Jimmy slouches forward, hands on the dash.

Nikki immediately throws the shift to *DRIVE*, and does exactly that. She *FLOORS* it!

EXT. OLD HAVEN ROAD

The truck instantly shoots forward, burning rubber, heading straight for Sam!

But Nikki hits the brake at the last second. The massive vehicle *SKIDS*, tires locked, as it slowly rolls to a stop...

...just coming short of the white line before the intersection. Above, a few meters away, is the glowing red traffic light, and just under that, is Sam, awaiting with the crowbar positioned at her side.

INT. TOW TRUCK

Jimmy is seething, baffled.

JIMMY

What the *FUCK*!? You're supposed to run her over!

Nikki remains *SILENT*, focused. Waiting.

EXT. OLD HAVEN ROAD

Sam smiles. Takes a step closer to the truck.

SAM

I knew you didn't have it in you.

As she takes another step, the glowing red light, for the first time, suddenly turns GREEN.

And the idle tow truck FIRES UP!

Sam stops, eyes wide. And all her attention focused on...

INT. TOW TRUCK

...Nikki leering through the windshield. She unhesitatingly steers the truck towards Sam. Full power.

EXT. OLD HAVEN ROAD

The truck PLOWS INTO SAM, obliterating her body in a grisly explosion. Her knees buckle, pulling her collapsing body under the tires, spitting her out in a gory heap.

The truck stops. Nikki rushes out to her father, frantic. Miraculously, the brutalized man is still alive.

NIKKI

Dad? Daddy, can you hear me?

MR. MALONE

Nicole...?

NIKKI

Oh, thank God...

He's weak. A busted cheekbone swells most of his face.

JIMMY

(to Nikki; urgent)

My car is at the end of the road. I think my cell is in it. We can call the hospital from there.

Nikki leans over her father, gently rubbing her fingers through his hair.

NIKKI

We're gonna get you help. We'll be back as soon as we can. Just hang tight, OK?

(CONTINUED)

Jimmy climbs inside the truck. Nikki hasn't moved.

JIMMY

Nikki, come on! We've gotta go!

He's right. She quickly stands and runs to the truck. She stops just short of Sam's twisted corpse. Spits on it. Climbs inside the truck.

INT. TOW TRUCK - FURTHER DOWN THE ROAD

Jimmy clicks on the windshield wipers, wiping the blood from the glass. He grabs Nikki's hand from the driver's seat. An embracing hold. Both are comforted.

JIMMY

Did you have to wait for the light to turn green?

NIKKI

No.

JIMMY

So why did you?

NIKKI

What did I learn if I was just going to run the red light again?

JIMMY

You know, more people are going to run it because of this.

NIKKI

Yeah, but will the story be any truer then?

JIMMY

I guess you'll have to ask those coming back.

The radio suddenly turns on by itself. Jimmy reaches for it, fumbling with the knob. It doesn't seem to work.

JIMMY (cont'd)

What the hell?

The voice of a NEWS ANCHOR echoes through the cabin.

NEWS ANCHOR

(over radio)

...this breaking story, reporting live from Cancun, Mexico. A group
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

NEWS ANCHOR (cont'd)
of vacationing college men, all
believed to have been fraternity
brothers, were tragically killed in
a car accident just hours ago on
Route 17.

Jimmy and Nikki look at each other, surprised, that
familiarity hitting so close to home.

NEWS ANCHOR (cont'd)
The circumstances of their death
are still a mystery, but eye
witness accounts say the car
suddenly veered off the road
without any indication of trouble,
crashing through a guardrail and
falling into a ravine, killing all
six passengers. The names of the
victims have not yet been
released...

Overcome, they just stare at each other. The radio clicks
off on its own.

NIKKI
Jimmy, didn't you say you all ran
the red light?

In the backseat...

...A FIGURE RISES.

BLACKOUT!

END