

THEM

By

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FADE IN:

INT. SHERIFF'S STATION - NIGHT

A thunder storm RUMBLES outside. Rain hammers the windows.

DONALD LUMBAR, 36, a disheveled wreck of a SHERIFF, hat and all, sits on his desk, sweat beads dot his brow.

DONALD

No name. No residence. No family.
Girl's a ghost.

CATE, 32, a downplayed beauty with worn down eyes, goes over a police file, sighs.

DONALD

She's no one.

CATE

She has to be someone. People don't just drop outta the sky.

DONALD

Or wind up in the middle of the road in the dead of night.

Donald looks across the room --

HOLLY, 13, distant and perfect, sits in the corner, wet hair drapes down her cardigan, a towel wrapped around her body.

Thunder ROARS. Whips of lightning illuminate the place.

DONALD

She's making me nervous.

CATE

She's just a kid.

DONALD

Look at her.

Cate looks over, fear falls over her face, and she looks away quickly.

The lights flicker.

DONALD

She hasn't said a word since we brought her in. She just sits there, staring.

Cate tries the phone, the error tone sounds. She sits the phone on the hook.

CATE
Line's still down.

The shutter FLAP against the windows. Another thunderous ROAR outside.

Holly looks over at them, her eyes reddened, unblinking.

Donald shudders, looks away from the girl.

DONALD
We should drive her to town.

CATE
In the middle of a storm? No.

DONALD
I'm not gonna sit on my hands all night. I got a kid at home.

A whip of lightning exposes SHADOWS, stop-motion crawling along the walls.

DONALD
Did you see that?

CATE
See what?

Donald walks over to the blinds, checks --

-- a tree branch SCRAPES across the window pane. The fence RATTLES. Barrels CLATTER against one another.

CATE
Get some shuteye.

Donald looks over at Holly -- she stares at him.

DONALD
I'm not leaving you alone with her.

Cate nods to her holstered gun, on the table.

CATE
I'll be fine, just go.

LATER

Holly stares directly at the wall, motionless, as the storm continues to batter the place.

Cate sits at the desk, feet up, gun close by, reading a fitness magazine.

Cate lifts a coffee mug to her lips, looks over at Holly.

Water drips from Holly's hair. The girl does not move.

MOMENTS LATER

Cate bins the cup, at the kettle. She YAWNS.

CATE

You want a drink?

Holly remains still.

CATE

You can talk to me, you know. I won't bite.

Thunder RUMBLES.

Cate kneels down beside Holly, touches her shoulder.

CATE

It's okay.

Holly stares at her, blood dripping from her nose.

CATE

Oh my...

Cate heads over to her desk, plucks tissues from a box, and returns to Holly's side.

The blood is gone, no sign it ever existed.

Something SHRIEKS outside. A loud THUMP hammers the roof.

Cate grabs her gun, passes Holly.

CATE

Stay here, okay?

EXT. SHERIFF'S STATION - NIGHT

A parked SUV sits by the chain-link fence, which RATTLES in the heavy wind.

Cate shines her flashlight around, CRUNCHES shingle beneath her heavy step.

CATE

Hello?

Another SHRIEK alerts her.

She plays her flashlight along the small building, slowly rounds the corner.

A barrel SCRAPES against the other non-stop.

Cate sighs, lowers her flashlight, and shakes her head.

SOMETHING watches her from the shadows. It lingers for a moment... then disappears.

INT. SHERIFF'S STATION - NIGHT

The kettle WHISTLES. Steam rises from the spout.

Cate fills up her coffee mug, plucks a spoon from the counter, stirs.

Holly remains seated, staring at the wall.

Cate takes a seat at her desk, gets comfortable, and raises the mug to her lips.

The mug SHATTERS in her hands. Hot coffee spills down her body, SIZZLES on her clothes.

Cate jumps up, YELPING.

CATE

Shit... shit...

LATER

Donald wraps a bandage around Cate's burned hand. She MOANS in pain.

DONALD

Don't be a girl.

Cate flashes him a sarcastic look.

DONALD
We'll have to get that looked at in
the morning.

Donald's eyes navigate to Holly.

DONALD
She said anything yet?

CATE
Not a peep.

Donald nods, stands up.

DONALD
Go get some sleep. I'll take watch.

CATE
I'm fine.

DONALD
That wasn't a question. Go.

Cate ambles through a door, nursing her hand.

Donald passes Holly, fixes himself a cup of Joe. Aims a worried look Holly's direction.

DONALD
You want a drink?

Holly says nothing.

DONALD
I got a son your age, he gives me
the silent treatment too.

Donald stifles a chuckle.

DONALD
You remind-

Holly is gone.

DONALD
Uh... girl?

Donald walks around, checks desks, behind the curtains, finds nothing.

DONALD
Sure...

He pivots, GASPS.

Holly is back in her seat, dripping wet, head to the side, aiming a piercing stare his direction.

DONALD
How did you do that?

Donald approaches her, takes a knee.

DONALD
Hey.

A window SMASHES. All the lights go out.

DONALD
Crap.

INT. SHERIFF'S STATION - BOILER ROOM - NIGHT

A dead RAT lies on the ground. Maggots crawl over it.

Cate holds the flashlight, as Donald flips the breakers, receiving no response.

Donald slams his hand on the wall.

DONALD
If nothing else could go wrong tonight.

CATE
It's storm season. This was bound to happen.

DONALD
I'd rather it'd happened when I was at home.

Donald sighs, rubs his brow.

DONALD
That girl, she disappeared, Cate.

CATE
What do you mean?

DONALD
She vanished. Gone. I started looking around, and there she was, back in the seat.

CATE
You're tired.

DONALD
I was wide awake. I know what I
saw... or what I didn't see.

INT. SHERIFF'S STATION - NIGHT

Holly stares blankly at the wall. Her head twitches.

DONALD (V.O)
She hasn't said a word all night.
We found her in the middle of
nowhere. We need to start thinking.

CATE (V.O)
She's a scared girl, Don. She's not
the Antichrist.

Holly's head twitches again. Her fingers CRACK and curl.

DONALD (V.O)
She's certainly not normal. Have
you seen her eyes.

Blood trickles from Holly's eyes.

DONALD (V.O)
It's like they're staring through
your soul.

CATE (V.O)
She looks like a normal, scared
little girl to me.

Holly opens her mouth -- fangs, dozens, where teeth should
be, appear, sharper than daggers.

DONALD (V.O)
I don't like this one bit.

CATE (V.O)
We've got guns if she turns out to
be some psychopathic "Hills Have
Eyes" killer. Relax.

Holly HISSES.

DONALD (V.O)
But we're blind.

CATE (V.O)
So light a candle.

LATER

Donald lights candles, places them on desks, counters.

Holly stares at the wall, motionless.

Cate uses a candle to light a cigarette. The cherry brightens in the darkness.

Donald takes a seat, waves his hand through the air.

DONALD
I hate that.

CATE
You hate everything.

DONALD
No, just things that can kill you.

Donald acknowledges Holly for a second, looks away.

Cate fiddles with a pack of smokes, taps them on the desk.

DONALD
Gimme one of those.

Donald snatches the pack, sparks one up.

CATE
I thought you hated it?

DONALD
Yeah, well...

Donald looks across at Holly.

DONALD
I'm on edge.

Cate takes a drag, kicks back in her chair, and sits her feet on the desk.

LATER

Wind WHISTLES through cracks in the window-frames. Candles flicker around the room.

Donald SNORES, slumped in a chair, file over his face.

Cate sleeps, tosses slightly, GROANS, as she blinks awake, and comes --

-- face to face with Holly, standing over her, staring.

Cate GASPS, falls out of her chair. Holly twists her head to the side, twitches.

Cate looks up at the girl.

CATE
You scared me.

HOLLY
They're here.

CATE
What? Who's here?

A furious whip of lightning blinds Cate momentarily. When she comes to, Holly is back in the chair.

CATE
What the...

Child's LAUGHTER echoes around the room.

CHILDREN (O.S)
(as one, eerie, sing-song)
Tick-Tock goes the clock.

The clock on the wall TICKS.

CHILDREN (O.S)
(sing-song)
And we shall rise.

The walls bleed. Fresh blood drizzles down, onto the floor.

Holly's head twitches.

CHILDREN (O.S)
(sing-song)
Tick-Tock goes the clock.

The windows SMASH. Glass rains down around the place.

CHILDREN (O.S)
(sing-song)
And everybody dies...

The front doors fly open. A large gust of wind flows in, knocks the kettle off the counter, blows out the candles.

Cate GASPS, grabs her gun, and shakes Donald.

CATE
Don, Don, wake up!

Donald fumbles the newspaper.

DONALD
Huh, what?!?

Both Sheriffs stand side-by-side, eyes on the doorway.

Light light-bulbs, red-eyes turn on, illuminating the darkness beyond. There's dozens of them.

CATE
Oh my god...

CHILDREN, soaking wet, all monotone in appearance, pale skinned, bags under their eyes, stand there.

DONALD
I was about to do the same.

CATE
What?

DONALD
Hold your hand, I mean.

Cate looks at her hand, she's not holding his.

CATE
I'm not holding your hand.

Donald looks down, finds Holly standing there, smiling.

DONALD
Cate...

Holly's head twitches, her fangs appear, and she HISSES.

DONALD
Holy f-

Holly BITES his hand, rips his thumb clean off.

Cate SCREAMS, backs off.

DONALD
(crying, painful)
My thumb! Oh!

Blood spurts from Donald's thumb-stub, like a fountain.

Cate covers her mouth in horror.

CATE
Don!

The Children surround him.

He looks around, WINCES, recoils, right into the desk, cornered like a rat.

Holly's head twitches, showing her true form - CHANGELING.

HOLLY
Sshh...

Holly BITES his neck.

The other children pile onto the frenzy, blood spurts, bones CRACK. Donald SCREAMS.

Cate shoots Holly in the back, but the bullet phases through and strikes the desk.

Holly snaps her gaze on Cate, crunching an eyeball between her teeth.

CATE
Christ...

EXT. SHERIFF'S STATION - NIGHT

Cate runs across to the SUV, fumbles the keys.

CATE
Shit, shit!

Cate scoops the keys off the ground, makes it to the SUV, unlocks the door.

INT. SUV - NIGHT

Cate panics, trembles fiercely, tries to fit the keys into the slot multiple times.

CATE
Come on! Come on!

Cate looks in the side-mirror: Holly is there.

Cate SCREAMS, turns the keys. The engine RUMBLES to life.

EXT. SHERIFF'S STATION - NIGHT

The SUV reverses, knocks a trashcan to the ground, garbage spills out.

The children watch from the doorway, statuesque.

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD - NIGHT

Wind hurls rain everywhere. Lightning illuminates the sky.

The SUV barrels down the hill at top speed, CRUNCHING shingle, and then asphalt.

It makes a sudden turn, scrapes a barrier.

INT. SUV - MOTION - NIGHT

Cate looks in the side mirror, the rear-view, panic etched across her face.

She turns the wheel, slams on the gas.

Cate looks in the rear-view again: Holly is in the back.

Cate SCREAMS, rips the wheel frantically.

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD - NIGHT

The SUV crashes through a barrier, slides to the side, and rolls down the hill.

Twisted metal and glass fly into the air.

EXT. LAKE - NIGHT

The SUV wraps around a tree, upside down. Metal CRIES.

Cate crawls out of the wreckage, boasting cuts, scrapes, and a broken arm.

She COUGHS blood, tries to stand, topples, and SPLASHES into the lake.

The water bubbles.

HOLLY
You're here.

Cate wearily looks up.

HOLLY
Come to us.

Cate raises her gun, shoots.

The bullet phases through Holly, clips a tree. Bark sprays.

The CHILDREN appear, behind and beside Holly.

HOLLY
Come home, mommy.

They drag Cate into the lake. She wriggles, squirms, as a dozen hands pull her under.

Bubbles rise to the surface until -- none rise at all.

CUT TO BLACK:

SUPER:

THEM