

THE THING THAT WASN'T

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

A two-story colonial home in an affluent neighborhood. The distant boom of THUNDER signals an approaching storm.

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

COURTENAY, 8, white-blond hair and blue eyes, sits in front of the coffee table painting her nails.

HEATHER, 19, enters from the kitchen holding her Android phone. She's the type of girl who wears UGG boots and a tweed pub hat to a babysitting job.

COURTENAY

What do you think?

Courtenay proudly flashes her sloppily painted nails. Green polish drips down her fingers.

HEATHER

Did you even hit a nail?

COURTENAY

What's wrong with it!?

HEATHER

Nothing. Here.

Heather grabs a tissue and hands it to her. Courtenay wipes the excess polish from her fingers.

COURTENAY

(re: phone)

What did my mom say?

HEATHER

They'll be home late. The weather's pretty bad.

COURTENAY

So what do you wanna do now?

HEATHER

Well, I am going to stay up and watch a movie. You are going to brush your teeth and go to bed.

COURTENAY

It's barely nine thirty!

HEATHER

Your bedtime was nine. Besides,
your mom would kill me if I let you
watch this movie.

COURTENAY

What movie?

HEATHER

I'm not telling you.

COURTENAY

Is it scary?

Heather glares.

COURTENAY (CONT'D)

It is, isn't it? I love scary
movies!

HEATHER

Sure you do.

COURTENAY

No, really!

HEATHER

Oh yeah? What's your favorite?

Courtenay, stumped, turns silent. Heather grins.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

I thought so. Time for bed.

Heather guides Courtenay to the stairs.

COURTENAY

No! I really do like scary movies!
I watch them all the time!

HEATHER

Uh-huh.

Courtenay back-pedals up the stairs. Heather follows her.

COURTENAY

I promise I won't get scared! Put
one on and I'll prove it!

HEATHER

Fat chance. Your mom said you get
nervous around storms. You think
I'm gonna throw a scary movie at
you on top of that?

A lightning bolt's white glow fills the room.

COURTENAY

I was scared of storms when I was four.

HEATHER

It's not happening, Courtenay.

COURTENAY

What can I do to prove it to you? Come on, I'll do anything.

HEATHER

I said no.

COURTENAY

You know I'm not gonna stop until you change your mind.

They reach the top of the landing.

COURTENAY (CONT'D)

Come on, Heather, please?

Courtenay's face drops. Sincere.

COURTENAY (CONT'D)

Please.

Heather bites her lip.

HEATHER

You really think you're up for it?

Courtenay smiles. Thunder BOOMS.

INT. HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Beneath a vaulted ceiling sits a large king-sized bed.

Heather enters and flicks on the bedroom light. Courtenay walks in behind her.

COURTENAY

What are we doing in here?

HEATHER

You said you'll do anything, right?

Heather moves to another door in the room, flicks the switch next to it, and opens the door. It's a large walk-in closet.

COURTENAY

What do I have to do?

Heather looks thoughtfully at the closet.

HEATHER

When I was your age, my parents would stay up late every Friday night and watch a scary movie. I used to beg them to let me stay up and watch one with them, but they said no. One night, I asked again, thinking they would say no and send me to bed like they always did, but they didn't. Instead, they took me into their bedroom and made me a deal.

Heather looks back at Courtenay.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

They said if I could stay in their closet with the lights out by myself for two minutes, I could stay up and watch the movie.

The light of the storm blooms through the bedroom windows.

COURTENAY

Did you do it?

HEATHER

I only made it for one minute. I got scared and made them open up the door.

Heather clicks off the closet light.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

But now that I'm older, I know there's nothing to be afraid of. And if you're as mature as you seem to think you are, you'll stay in this closet for two minutes like my parents made me.

COURTENAY

In the dark?

HEATHER

In the dark.

Courtenay looks at the closet for a moment, then FLINCHES at the crack of THUNDER.

HEATHER (CONT'D)
I didn't think so.

Heather begins to close the door.

COURTENAY
Wait!

Heather pauses and looks back at Courtenay.

COURTENAY (CONT'D)
If I can stay in the closet by
myself, in the dark, for two
minutes, I can stay up and watch
the movie.

Courtenay extends her hand.

COURTENAY (CONT'D)
Deal?

Heather stares for a moment, surprised, then shakes
Courtenay's hand.

HEATHER
Deal.

Heather turns on the closet light, opens the door, and ushers
Courtenay inside.

COURTENAY
Got the time?

Heather pulls out her phone. Taps the screen.

HEATHER
Stopwatch set. Last chance to
change your mind.

COURTENAY
Nope. I'm doing it.

HEATHER
Your call...

Courtenay takes a deep breath and steps into the closet. She
looks warily at the walls around her and folds her arms.

Heather clicks off the light.

HEATHER
Remember...it's only two minutes.

Heather shuts the door.

INT. HOUSE - CLOSET - CONTINUOUS

Darkness.

Soft yellow light sneaks in from the cracks of the door.

Courtenay stands frozen in place. She BREATHES heavily.

INT. HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Heather sits on the bed and stares at the stopwatch.

00:13, 00:14...

INT. HOUSE - CLOSET - CONTINUOUS

Courtenay hasn't moved an inch. She rubs her hands up and down her folded arms.

INT. HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Heather wiggles her green-painted nails. She smiles.

INT. HOUSE - CLOSET - CONTINUOUS

Courtenay lets her arms drop. She takes a step forward.

CLINK...CLINK...

A noise. Soft but palpable, somewhere in the closet.

Courtenay's labored breathing abruptly STOPS.

INT. HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Heather checks the time.

00:58, 00:59...

Heather stands up.

HEATHER

One minute! Still alive?

Heather laughs at herself, then looks up and acknowledges the SILENCE. She steps closer to the door and leans in.

HEATHER

Hey, you okay?

No response.

HEATHER
Courtenay?

Heather reaches for the doorknob. Twists it. Locked.

HEATHER
Courtenay, open the door.

Heather twists harder. Shakes the door back and forth.

HEATHER
Please, open the door. I was
kidding.

Heather SMACKS the door frame and steps back.

HEATHER
This isn't funny, Courtenay! Open
the door! Last chance!

Silence. The door doesn't open.

HEATHER
Damnit!

Heather PUNCHES the door and picks up her phone from the bed.

01:19, 01:20...

HEATHER
I'm not putting up with this! Let's
call your mom and see what --

BOOM!

Something hits the closet door, hard.

Heather JUMPS, whips around, eyes wide.

Heather drops her phone on the bed and hesitantly approaches
the closet door.

HEATHER
Courtenay?

Heather turns her head to the side and presses her ear
against it.

BOOM!

The door violently REBOUNDS and knocks Heather back. Heather stares at the door, horrified, then moves in again. She mercilessly POUNDS on the door.

HEATHER

Courtenay, what's going on!?

More sounds -- THUMP! SCRAPE! -- from inside the closet. Like the room, or something else, is being ripped apart.

HEATHER

Courtenay, please answer me!

Heather KICKS the door, JIGGLES the handle. No use.

Heather runs back to the bed and grabs her phone. She pulls up the keypad. Manages to press 9 when --

DEAD SILENCE.

Heather sets her phone down. Walks to the closet door.

Lightning blossoms through the sheer curtains.

HEATHER

Courtenay...?

No reply. Heather hesitantly reaches for the knob --

BOOM!

The door swings open on a CRASH OF THUNDER, and there stands Courtenay smiling in the darkness.

COURTENAY

Boo!

Courtenay steps out of the closet. Her white-blond hair is tucked into a tweed pub hat she wears on her head. She points to it.

COURTENAY

Look what I found! I knew my mom had one somewhere. Now we're like sisters!

Heather, still shaken, narrows her eyes and angrily tosses her phone on the bed.

HEATHER

Goddamnit, Courtenay!

Courtenay's eyes soften.

HEATHER

What the hell happened in there!?
Why didn't you answer me?

COURTENAY

I'm sorry --

HEATHER

You scared the hell out of me! I
was about to call the police!

COURTENAY

You were?

HEATHER

What were you doing in there!?

COURTENAY

I saw this hat on the top shelf. I
accidentally knocked over a few
things trying to get it.

Heather gives the dark closet a quick look over. It appears untouched.

COURTENAY

I put everything back.

HEATHER

I really thought you were hurt. You
should've answered me.

COURTENAY

I'm sorry. Really.

Heather shakes her head. Takes a moment to regain her composure.

HEATHER

So you're okay?

COURTENAY

Yeah, I'm okay. Are you okay?

Heather nods.

COURTENAY

So...did I make it?

Heather grabs her phone from the bed. Turns the screen over for Courtenay to see.

03:07, 03:08...

Courtenay smiles.

COURTENAY

I'll get the movie ready!

Courtenay runs out of the room.

Heather taps STOP and tosses the phone onto the bed.

She walks to the bedroom door. Looks out. Courtenay is gone.

Heather looks back at the closet, unconvinced. She walks up to it. Flicks on the light.

INT. HOUSE - CLOSET - CONTINUOUS

Nothing appears to be out of order. Clothes on their hangers. Boxes on their shelves.

Heather, disappointed, reaches around for the switch.

CLINK...CLINK...

Heather turns. Follows the sound to the back of the closet.

On the right, two empty metal hangers gently sway back and forth on the rack, TAPPING against each other.

Heather walks deeper into the closet. Toward the hangers.

Heather cautiously reaches out. Touches one hanger. The noise stops as they begin to settle.

Heather looks down, notices --

TWO FEET

standing on the other side of the clothes rack. Bare, covered in blood, muscles and tendons all exposed.

Heather's eyes bulge when --

A SKINLESS HAND

reaches out from the clothes rack and GRABS HER as the entire bloody figure FALLS FORWARD!

Heather SCREAMS and jumps back, stuck between the wall of the closet and the skinless thing on the floor, trapped.

Heather cups her hands over her mouth. Eyes unblinking, locked on the thing lying motionless on the carpet. Humanesque, small-framed, and no taller than four feet.

The top of the thing's hairless skull glows in the light of the closet.

The thing TWITCHES. Heather SHRIEKS against the wall.

Heather glances at the open closet door. She can just barely see her phone sitting on the edge of the bed.

Back at the thing. Unmoving.

Heather bends down. Reaches out a trembling hand to touch it. Thinks better of it. Pulls her hand back.

Heather looks up at the open door again. At her phone.

Slowly, Heather crawls over the thing. She places both hands on the other side of the carpet. Pushes her body forward.

Halfway over, Heather suddenly freezes. She looks down, leans closer, getting a better look at --

THE THING'S FINGERNAILS.

They're painted green.

Heather looks at her own fingers, and her entire face drops with the sudden realization.

HEATHER

Oh my God...Courtenay?

The light goes out. Heather looks up.

Courtenay's silhouette stands in the open doorway. She grins in the light of the storm.

COURTENAY

Remember...

Courtenay takes off her hat. Her white-blond hair, caked with blood, falls in front of her face.

COURTENAY

...it's only two minutes.

Courtenay shuts the door.

Heather SCREAMS.

FADE OUT.

END