

WHERE THE BAD KIDS GO

By

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Based on the short story
"Where the Bad Kids Go"
By Sean Elwood

WGA # 1938391

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FADE IN:

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - BASEMENT - UNKNOWN TIME

A dark, dank place. Cold. A void.

A light bulb hangs in a corner and shines dully with a HUM over the foot of wooden stairs that line one wall.

Cinderblock walls wait for proper insulation.

The ceiling is the exposed underside of the house--lines of wooden beams and piping.

The floor, a slab of concrete.

And then...

The CRAWLSPACE. An old, wooden door flap built into the far wall of the basement, shrouded in darkness.

Something about this crawlspace seems wrong. Bad.

This place reeks of evil.

(O.S.) The door to the basement BURSTS open, and a boy SCREAMS, BEGS, PLEADS.

 YOUNG JESSE (O.S.)
 Mommy no! No!

(O.S.) STOMPING down the stairs.

 YOUNG JESSE (O.S.)
 Don't take me down there! Please!

(O.S.) DRAGGING. KICKING. More BEGGING.

HELEN LAMBERT (30s) drags YOUNG JESSE (8) across the floor and toward the crawlspace as he KICKS and SCREAMS.

She swings the door flap open and hooks it to the ceiling.

She picks Young Jesse up and shoves him inside. He COUGHS and GROANS as he writhes on the dirt floor of the crawlspace.

Darkness surrounds him, save for the dull light spilling in from the open door flap.

Helen unhooks the door flap. She lets it fall.

Young Jesse pushes himself toward the crawlspace entrance.

YOUNG JESSE

NO!!

The door flap SLAMS shut.

CUT TO BLACK.

TITLE: WHERE THE BAD KIDS GO

OVER BLACK:

JESSE (V.O.)

It's been sixteen years since my
mother tried to kill me.

FADE IN:

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - HELEN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Helen sits upright in her bed. She's thin, getting pale, and has bags beneath her eyes.

A liquor bottle sits on her bedside table.

A lamp on the table shines dully, basking her in light but leaves everything else in darkness.

JESSE (V.O.)

She suffered from depression that
got worse once she had me. Her
boyfriend at the time, Trent, never
really wanted a kid, but he was
left with taking care of me,
anyway.

ARGUING begins to fade in...

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - JESSE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

ARGUING (O.S.)

Young Jesse (3) hides under the bed with his hands over his ears. He sobs quietly as he stares out his bedroom door and down the hall into Helen's bedroom.

JESSE (V.O.)

My mother once told me that one
night, when I was three, they
became tangled in a heated
argument...

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - HELEN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Helen (late 20s) and TRENT WILLIAMS (late 20s), half-empty bottle in hand, SCREAM at one another.

JESSE (V.O.)
...and he attacked her.

SMASH CUT TO:

On the bed, Trent on top of Helen, hands wrapped tightly around her throat.

She claws at his arms, tries to pry his hands off, CHOKES and WHEEZES.

Police SIRENS fade in from outside of the house. Trent hears them and jumps off of Helen, who rolls over and continues to COUGH for air.

He runs to the window and opens it. He hops out.

He runs into the darkness of the night.

JESSE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
He was found two days later. He served in prison and was slapped with a restraining order of 350 feet.

As he disappears into the night, everything...

FADES TO BLACK.**OVER BLACK:**

JESSE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
The attack only made her depression worse. Which made her alcoholism worse. Which ultimately made her behavior worse.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - OVER TIME**BEGIN MONTAGE**

1) **KITCHEN** - Helen BACKHANDS Young Jesse, which nearly knocks him onto the floor.

CUT TO:

2) **HALLWAY** - She YANKS him forward. He trips over himself and SMACKS into a wall, and onto the floor.

She KICKS him toward his bedroom.

CUT TO:

3) **BASEMENT** - A FLASH of Young Jesse's frail body as it TUMBLES down the basement stairs.

Helen begins her descent down the stairs into the dark basement.

JESSE (V.O.)
And then one night, she tried to
kill me.

END MONTAGE

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - JESSE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Young Jesse (11) sleeps in bed. He tosses and turns in his sleep.

He shoots up, awake now, and looks around his room. He stops his gaze at a dark corner. Someone stands there.

It's the silhouetted figure of Helen (30s), skinny and frail. She shakes almost uncontrollably, and WHISPERS incoherently.

She steps forward, her WHISPERS becoming more understandable. She repeats the same words again and again.

HELEN
(quietly)
I'm sorry...

She takes another step forward. She raises her arms above her head.

In her hands, a large kitchen knife.

In a flash, Young Jesse jumps out of bed.

Helen HISSES through gritted teeth as she watches him sprint out of the bedroom.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Young Jesse snatches a cordless phone off of a half-moon table in the hallway.

He runs into the hallway bathroom and SLAMS the door shut. It CLICKS locked from behind.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Young Jesse sits in the bathtub with the cordless phone at his ear. His face is red from crying. Tears stream down his cheeks.

In the bright light of the bathroom, bruises and scratches and scars are noticeable all over his body.

On the other side of the door, Helen PLEADS and BEGS for him (O.S.)

HELEN (O.S.)
I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry...

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Helen sits on the floor and leans against the bathroom door. She continues to PLEAD and BEG.

Behind Helen, police officers enter the hallway with guns drawn and flashlight beams on her. They BARK orders at her.

One police officer picks her up off the floor and handcuffs her.

Another officer shines their flashlight into Young Jesse's bedroom. The knife glimmers on the bed.

As the officers lead Helen out of the hallway...

JESSE (V.O.)
When asked why I didn't call the police sooner, I told them what my mother had always told me if I ever did.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE**FLASHBACK**

CLOSE UP: Helen's stained teeth and chapped lips centimeters from Young Jesse's ear.

HELEN
(maliciously)
I'll slit your fucking throat open the moment they arrive.

BACK TO PRESENT

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A police officer guides Young Jesse out of the hallway and through the living room. Helen sits on the couch, her hands still handcuffed.

His gaze meets Helen's, and she stares at him with nothing but ill intention as she watches him walk through the room.

JESSE (V.O.)

My mother never received jail time.
However, my bruises, her behavior,
and the obvious signs of alcoholism
was enough evidence to have Child
Protective Services come and take
me away...

Young Jesse looks back at Helen as he walks through the front door. She doesn't take her eyes off of him as the door begins to close.

JESSE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

...from her.

The door slowly CLICKS shut.

CUT TO BLACK.

TITLE CARD: 2015, Sixteen Years Later

FADE IN:

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - DAY

JESSE LAMBERT (26) lanky, still a bit boyish, sits at his desk and writes in a journal. He wears a Turkish evil eye necklace.

His classroom is full of third graders. They color on sheets of paper as they TALK amongst one another.

The bell RINGS. The kids clean up their desks.

JESSE

Alrighty kiddos, have a fun summer
break! Remember, you're going to be
fourth graders! Get excited!

The kids drop off their drawings at Jesse's desk.

Jesse exclaims how great each drawing is when it's laid on his desk.

Each kid says goodbye to him and leaves the classroom. Hugs galore.

LATER

The classroom is empty now.

Jesse packs his things into his bag, including the drawings.

His phone RINGS. He answers it.

JESSE (CONT'D)

This is Jesse.

DEPUTY CONNORS (V.O.)

Hi, Jesse. This is Deputy Connors calling with the Travis County Police Department. Do you have a moment?

JESSE

Yes? What is it?

DEPUTY CONNORS (V.O.)

I, uh...I have some unfortunate news about your mother.

JESSE

Oh God, my mother? What about her?

DEPUTY CONNORS (V.O.)

We...Found her in the basement of her house...She's gone, Jesse... She committed suicide.

Jesse falls into his chair--relieved.

JESSE

(speechless)

Wow.

DEPUTY CONNORS (V.O.)

Now, I know this might be a bit of a shock to you--

JESSE

No, no, we...How did she...?

DEPUTY CONNORS (V.O.)

Are you sure you'd like to know?

JESSE
Is it that bad?

Deputy Connors SIGHS.

DEPUTY CONNORS (V.O.)
(hesitant)
She lit herself on fire.

JESSE
Jesus. Are you sure it was a
suicide?

DEPUTY CONNORS (V.O.)
Well, at first we thought maybe it
was her ex, your dad Trent
Williams...

JESSE
Oh, yeah. Him.

DEPUTY CONNORS (V.O.)
Right. We thought maybe he broke
his restraining order, but he had
an alibi when we investigated
further. Plus, there was no forced
entry or any sign of a struggle.
Now, we need somebody to make the
funeral arrangements, and somebody
to clean up the house and sell it.

VOICES (V.O.)
(very faint)
Do it.

Jesse lifts his head up at the VOICES.

DEPUTY CONNORS (V.O.)
Would you be willing to, Jesse?

JESSE
I, uh...

DEPUTY CONNORS (V.O.)
Go back to the house, Jesse.

JESSE
What?

DEPUTY CONNORS (V.O.)
I said we have the key to the
house. It wasn't hard to find. She
had it on as a necklace. We can
(MORE)

DEPUTY CONNORS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 send somebody to drop it off when
 you arrive.

Jesse is hesitant.

DEPUTY CONNORS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Jesse?

JESSE
 Sure. I'll do it. I'll head out
 tomorrow.

DEPUTY CONNORS (V.O.)
 Great. We'll see you then. Oh, and
 Jesse, I'm sorry for your loss.

JESSE
 I'm not.

Awkward beat.

DEPUTY CONNORS (V.O.)
 Uh, you take care, okay?

JESSE
 Bye.

Jesse hangs up. He sits back in his chair and fidgets with
 his necklace. VOICES whirl around his head...

VOICES (V.O.)
 (very faint)
 Go back to the house. Go back to
 the house. Go back to the house.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

Jesse drives along miles and miles of the desolate Texas
 roads.

Fields drift by. Cattle graze on grass. Oil wells scatter
 about the lands. Plains that stretch for miles.

He arrives to...

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

It's a small neighborhood not too far off the highway.

The houses look similar to one another, but it's no Stepford
 Wives.

Jesse's car travels down a street toward a cul-de-sac. Once he reaches it, he parks in front of...

EXT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - DAY

Jesse's childhood home.

The house is one story, longer than it is wide. It sits in the middle of the cul-de-sac.

Behind the house is a small field, and further beyond is a patch of woods.

The wooden sidings of the house are sun-faded. The grass is overgrown. Dark, dusty windows make the house more uninviting than it already is.

Yellow police tape crisscrosses the front door.

Crows sit atop the roof and CAW at Jesse's car as it HUMS to a stop.

Jesse stares at his childhood home. His car CLINKS and CLANKS in the silent neighborhood as the engine cools.

In his sideview mirror, a police car approaches the cul-de-sac. The vehicle drives past Jesse's car, rounds the curve of the cul-de-sac, and comes to a stop.

The door opens, and out steps MARCO VALENCIA (27), Hispanic, handsome, and in uniform. He wears aviators, with his black hair slicked back. He takes the aviators off.

Jesse climbs out of his car.

JESSE

Marco?

MARCO

(smiling)

Polo.

Marco opens his arms and invites Jesse in for a hug. They embrace.

MARCO

I heard you were coming back into town.

JESSE

I heard you left.

MARCO
This is my home. Realized I
couldn't leave. Something held me
back.

JESSE
You've barely changed since I've
last seen you.

MARCO
Look who's talking.

JESSE
So you're a cop now.

MARCO
Just like how we talked about when
we were kids. What about you?

JESSE
Third grade teacher.

MARCO
Good for you. Summer break?

JESSE
Yeah.

Jesse stares at the house. Marco stares with him, then looks
back at Jesse.

MARCO
I hope you're handling this well.

JESSE
I'm here. It's a start.

MARCO
Yeah.

JESSE
I think it'll be good for me, ya
know?

They stare at the house for a moment longer.

Jesse SIGHS and walks to the trunk of his car. He opens it
and pulls out a suitcase with a GRUNT.

MARCO
Let me help you with that.

JESSE
I got it, I got it...

Jesse closes the trunk. He rolls the suitcase up the cracked pathway to the front porch. Marco follows.

MARCO
So how long are you here for?

JESSE
Depends on how long it takes to clean out the house and fix it up. I've got the whole summer.

Jesse stops at the police tape and contemplates going inside.

MARCO
Would it make you feel better if I went inside with you?

Jesse hesitates to answer.

MARCO (CONT'D)
It's been sixteen years, Jesse.

JESSE
I know.

Marco takes a key out of a small envelope. He holds it out to Jesse.

MARCO
Here's the key.

VOICES (V.O.)
(very faint)
Do it.

Jesse reluctantly takes the key.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

The front door opens. A slight breeze flows through as if the house itself took a breath.

The blinds are shut, but the light from the doorway spills into the dirty, trashed living room.

Jesse and Marco walk in and open the blinds.

Alcohol bottles everywhere. Dirty clothes and towels pile up in corners. Trash crudely piles the floor.

Drink stains speckle the carpet. Even more stains from who knows what are on the couch. A pile of more old clothes sits on one side of the couch.

The living room is mostly empty--no TV, no artwork or decoration, just a couch and a coffee table.

The trash easily fills up the room.

JESSE

Jesus...It's like that show
'Hoarders'...

They walk through the cluttered living room.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Jesse and Marco's shoes SHLICK along the sticky floor.

Old food-stained plates pile in the sink and on counter tops. Fruit flies hover over the sink.

The counter tops are littered with more alcohol bottles and trash.

The trash can overflows with trash stomped as far down as possible. More trash crowds the floor.

Marco opens the oven and looks inside. It's stained beyond belief with old, charred food.

Jesse opens the fridge and retches back in disgust. It's full of expired foods and drinks

JESSE

This is gonna be a bitch to clean
up.

MARCO

No kidding. Christ, I didn't think
it was this bad.

JESSE

Neither did I.

Jesse opens the blinds to a sliding glass door of the kitchen. He looks outside.

The door opens up to the field behind the house, and the woods that extend past it.

Marco walks up next to Jesse and also looks out.

EXT. FIELD - DAY**FLASHBACK**

Young Jesse (11) and YOUNG MARCO (11) run across the field.

EXT. WOODS - DAY**BEGIN MONTAGE**

The two boys having an adventure.

Climbing trees. Sword fighting with sticks. Splashing in a stream. Watching frogs and other wildlife. Walking and talking. Being kids.

END MONTAGE**EXT. WOODS - LATER**

The two boys stand next to a large creek full of water. They take their clothes off.

YOUNG JESSE

What do you wanna be when you grow up?

YOUNG MARCO

I wanna be a cop. Like the ones in the TV shows. I think I'd be real good at it.

YOUNG JESSE

I think you would too.

YOUNG MARCO

I already do karate. I could beat up a bad guy right now! What about you?

YOUNG JESSE

I don't know what I wanna be.

YOUNG MARCO

You could be my trusty sidekick.

YOUNG JESSE

What does a sidekick do?

YOUNG MARCO

He's the guy's partner who drives the car and helps with the cases. I think you'd be really good at it.

YOUNG JESSE
You think so?

Young Marco smiles, then turns around as he takes his underwear off to go skinny dipping.

Young Jesse takes a peek.

Young Marco notices. He smirks.

YOUNG MARCO
What are you looking at?

YOUNG JESSE
(sheepishly)
Nothing...

YOUNG MARCO
C'mon.

He runs into the water. Young Jesse, now naked too, also follows. They splash in the water.

They talk as they relax in the water. Young Marco caresses Young Jesse's shoulder.

BACK TO PRESENT

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

Jesse and Marco enter the dark hallway. The very first door is immediately on their left, at the closer end of the hallway. Jesse opens the door to...

HELEN'S BEDROOM

JESSE'S POV: It's suddenly nighttime. Helen sits in bed. The lamp shines dully on her, and everywhere else in the room is bathed in shadow. Something else is in the room with her, barely seen in the shadows.

She looks at Jesse in the doorway.

HELEN
What are you looking at, maggot?

BACK TO SCENE

Jesse stops and shakes the vision away. When he opens his eyes, Helen is not in bed.

Jesse and Marco walk in.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - HELEN'S BEDROOM - DAY

The room is just as empty as the living room--just a bed with a mattress, sprinkled with more various stains.

Sheets lie piled on the mattress. Clothes lie scattered about the floor.

Next to the bed is a bedside table with a lamp and more alcohol bottles.

A closet with a sliding door, cracked open, is opposite of the bed. A chair sits in the corner next to the closet.

Nothing spectacular here. The two turn around to leave.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

Jesse and Marco slowly walk down the hallway.

Jesse passes a closed door. Marco stops in anticipation and watches Jesse continue forward.

Jesse stops in front of the hallway bathroom door.

He twists the doorknob.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - BATHROOM - NIGHT**FLASHBACK**

Young Jesse (8) slowly opens the door and peeks in.

Helen lies in the tub. She looks a bit pale, and there are bags beneath her eyes. Her hair looks like she had gotten a poor night's sleep.

A few bloody fingerprints speckle her face.

She looks over at Young Jesse with dilated pupils.

HELEN

Don't you look at me like that, you pig.

Young Jesse crosses his legs.

YOUNG JESSE

I have to go to the bathroom.

HELEN

(mocking)

I have to go to the bathroom.

(maliciously)
Shut the goddamn door before I shut
your fucking head in with it.

Young Jesse cautiously shuts the door.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Young Jesse listens from the other side of the door.

(O.S.) Helen WHISPERS an unintelligible conversation with herself.

BACK TO PRESENT

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - BATHROOM - DAY

Jesse walks inside.

The medicine cabinet mirror is smashed. Dried, black blood smears across the glass. Jesse looks into the mirror, and a dozen reflections stare back.

The sink, the toilet, and tub have brown water stains.

The shower curtain is red and brown with mildew.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

Jesse and Marco walk to the end of the hallway, where the very last door stands closed.

Jesse's childhood bedroom.

He tries the knob, but it's locked.

He runs his fingers along the dusty top of the door frame, but there is no key.

JESSE

Why would she keep my bedroom door
locked?

MARCO

I'm not sure.

JESSE

You guys didn't bother checking in
here?

MARCO

I don't know anything about this
case.

JESSE
What are you doing here then?

Marco almost looks offended.

MARCO
I volunteered to give you the key.
I wanted to see you again.

VOICES (V.O.)
--and your disgusting life--

Jesse blinks the thought away.

MARCO
Besides, she did it in the
basement.

Jesse looks past Marco and at the closed door.

MARCO (CONT'D)
You wanna go down--

JESSE
(sternly)
No.
(beat)
Not now. Not yet.

Jesse stares down the closed basement door.

EXT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Jesse walks Marco out the front door.

He stops at the foot of the porch while Marco walks down the steps.

Marco turns around and winces at the sunlight. He puts his aviators on.

MARCO
You sure you're gonna be okay here?

JESSE
Yeah.

Marco pulls a small notepad out of his pocket. He scribbles something on a piece of paper and hands it to Jesse.

It's a phone number.

MARCO

Let me know if you need any help.
Or company.

Jesse smiles bashfully.

JESSE

I think I'll be okay.

MARCO

Maybe we can catch up sometime
while you're here. Over a drink, or
some coffee?

Jesse hesitates.

JESSE

Now's not the time. I'll let you
know if I change my mind though.

MARCO

I'll still be happy to help clean
up the house. I can see if some of
the guys from the station want to
volunteer.

JESSE

Thanks.

Marco waits for Jesse to say anything else. Finally, he
turns and begins walking away.

JESSE (CONT'D)

(sputters)

It was great seeing you, Marco.

(beat)

You look good in a police uniform.
Just how I imagined when I was a
kid.

Marco smiles.

MARCO

Maybe we can go catch a few bad
guys sometime.

Jesse smiles back.

Marco makes his way to his patrol car, gets inside, and
drives off.

Jesse watches the car drift away. He turns around and walks
back inside the house.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Jesse stands in the living room and takes another look around at the trashed place.

He SIGHS shakily, fidgets with his necklace.

He turns on the ceiling fan and opens the windows.

The house CREAKS and GROANS as the air shifts.

CLICK. A door from somewhere SQUEAKS open. It catches Jesse's attention.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

Jesse peeks into the hallway.

The door to the basement is ajar.

VOICES (V.O.)
(very faint)
Do it.

Jesse walks down the hallway to the door.

He hesitates as he stands in front of it.

His shaky hand reaches for the doorknob.

He pushes the door open, and it SQUEALS on old hinges.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - BASEMENT - DAY

Jesse steps onto the platform of the wooden staircase. He stares down into the black abyss of the basement.

He hesitates at the top. Then, he begins his descent.

Each footfall causes the steps to CREAK.

Jesse COUNTS each step as he descends.

He reaches the bottom and steps on the cold, concrete floor.

JESSE
(with a breath)
Twelve.

Jesse bumps into the light bulb and pulls the drawstring. The dull bulb poorly lights the interior of the basement.

This time, boxes clutter the basement.

Jesse looks around, and stops his gaze on...

The crawlspace.

The door flap, as well as the wall surrounding it, is charred black from the fire. The ceiling above it is also charred.

JESSE (CONT'D)
That's safe...

Jesse walks through the boxes and toward the crawlspace.

The closer he gets, the shakier his BREATHING becomes.

He stops and stares at the door flap. Childhood memories begin to flood his head...

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - BASEMENT - UNKNOWN TIME

FLASHBACK

Helen gently leads Young Jesse (8) down the stairs. They stop at the bottom and she kneels down to his level. She attempts a smile.

HELEN
You're a good boy aren't you,
Jesse?

Young Jesse nods.

Helen's face drops. The light bulb above them makes her eyes look sunken.

She looks away from Young Jesse and at the crawlspace.

She stands back up and guides Young Jesse through the basement. They stop at the crawlspace.

HELEN (CONT'D)
This is where the bad kids go.

YOUNG JESSE
What's in there?

Helen doesn't respond. She looks at the door flap with a hypnotic stare.

Young Jesse's voice ECHOES through her head.

YOUNG JESSE (CONT'D)
Mommy? Mommy?

Helen SNAPS out of her trance. She looks down at Young Jesse.

HELEN
You'll find out one day.

Young Jesse stares curiously at the crawlspace.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY - SOME TIME LATER

SMASH!

A cocktail glass SHATTERS on the kitchen floor.

Young Jesse, barefoot, jumps back.

(O.S.) STOMPING. Louder and LOUDER.

Helen rushes into the kitchen. Her body is stiff, her hands are curled in half-fists. She grits her teeth, just now starting to stain.

HELEN
Look at what you did! Look at the mess you made, you little rat!

YOUNG JESSE
I'm sorry!

Helen snatches Young Jesse by the arm and yanks him across the floor.

The glass shards PUNCTURE the bottom of his feet. He SHRIEKS in pain.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - BASEMENT - DAY

The door swings open. Helen STOMPS down the steps with Young Jesse tight in her grip.

She rushes through the basement, dragging Young Jesse behind her.

Helen pulls the crawlspace door flap open and hooks it to the ceiling.

She turns back to Young Jesse, who stands there terrified.

YOUNG JESSE
 Mommy, I don't want to go in there.

She ignores him and picks him up.

YOUNG JESSE (CONT'D)
 No, wait!

Too late. She shoves him inside.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - CRAWLSPACE - DAY

Young Jesse rolls onto the floor. He looks back at Helen.

Her body is silhouetted against the dull light bulb. Her shadowy body looks almost animalistic.

She grabs the door flap, and lets it SLAP shut.

Darkness engulfs Young Jesse, save for the light that spills through the cracks of the door flap.

(O.S.) The door flap CLICK-CLACKS locked. Then, STOMPING as Helen makes her way back upstairs.

Silence.

Then...

SCRATCHING. Almost like fingernails against a stone surface.

Something within the crawlspace DRAGS itself across the dirt.

(O.S.) Helen THUMP, THUMP, THUMPS across the living room floor upstairs--the ceiling of the crawlspace.

More SCRATCHING.

A low CHUCKLE.

HELEN (O.S.)
 (whispers)
 Come here...

YOUNG JESSE
 I'm scared!

HELEN (O.S.)
 (mocking)
 I'm scared!
 (normal)

(MORE)

HELEN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 There's a monster in here. And it
 loves to eat bad, little kids like
 you.

Young Jesse searches for the voice in the dark.

He notices slivers of light on the other side of the
 crawlspace. It's the front porch, and sunlight spills
 through the cracks.

BANG!

Young Jesse SHRIEKS.

(O.S.) Helen CACKLES. It transforms into a deep, guttural
 CHUCKLE.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Helen stands on the couch. With her back hunched, she prowls
 the living room floor.

She then jumps off the couch and lands on the floor with a
 loud BANG.

(O.S.) Young Jesse SCREAMS.

She CACKLES.

CUT TO:

CLOSE UP: Helen's mouth against one of the floor vents. She
 whispers roughly into the vent.

HELEN
 It's gonna get you. And it's gonna
 eat you.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - CRAWLSPACE - DAY

Young Jesse listens in horror as she continues to WHISPER
 terrible things through the vents.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - OVER TIME

BEGIN MONTAGE

1) **BASEMENT** - the door flap SLAMS shut.

CUT TO:

2) **BASEMENT** - it SLAMS shut, again.

CUT TO:

3) **BASEMENT** - And again.

CUT TO:

4) **BASEMENT** - And AGAIN.

CUT TO:

5) **LIVING ROOM** - Helen jumps off of the coffee table and lands on the floor with a THUD.

CUT TO:

6) **BASEMENT** - Young Jesse SCREAMS (O.S.) from within the crawlspace. Helen CACKLES (O.S.).

CUT TO:

7) **LIVING ROOM** - Helen WHISPERS maliciously into the floor vents.

CUT TO:

8) **CRAWLSPACE** - Young Jesse WHIMPERS in fear. He looks into the deep crawlspace and listens to something DRAG itself across the dirt. Wet POPS and CRACKS emit from the darkness.

(O.S.) The THUD of Helen's footsteps from above. Another BANG!

Young Jesse SCREAMS.

END MONTAGE

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

FLASHBACK

Young Jesse (11) and Young Marco (11) walk down the street with backpacks on as they talk.

They walk to the house.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Young Jesse and Young Marco walk inside. Helen sits in the kitchen with a bottle next to her.

YOUNG JESSE
(to Helen)

Hi.

HELEN
Who's that?

YOUNG JESSE
This is Marco.

YOUNG MARCO
Hello.

HELEN
(unimpressed)
So you're the boy Jesse always
talks about.

Marco looks at Helen cautiously. Helen looks back with nothing but malice.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - JESSE'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Young Jesse and Young Marco sit on the bed.

YOUNG MARCO
I got you something.

He pulls out a Turkish evil eye necklace from his backpack. The same necklace that present-day Jesse wears.

Happiness overcomes Young Jesse. Young Marco hangs the necklace around Young Jesse's neck.

YOUNG JESSE
Wow! Thanks!

Young Marco pulls out a Playgirl magazine. He smiles.

YOUNG MARCO
Look at what else I got.

Young Jesse's smile fades.

YOUNG MARCO (CONT'D)
What's wrong?

YOUNG JESSE
I dunno...What if we get caught?

YOUNG MARCO
I'll take the blame.

Young Jesse shakes his head.

YOUNG MARCO (CONT'D)
I can take it.

YOUNG JESSE
Can you just put it away? Please?

Beat.

YOUNG MARCO
Yeah. Sure, no problem.

Young Marco moves to put the magazine in his backpack, but stops and puts it in Young Jesse's backpack instead.

YOUNG MARCO (CONT'D)
For later. I'll let you borrow it.

Young Jesse accepts it silently, anxious, uncomfortable.

Young Marco looks around the room.

YOUNG MARCO (CONT'D)
You got any games or anything?

Young Jesse pulls out a deck of cards.

YOUNG JESSE
I don't really have any toys or games, but we can play cards.

YOUNG MARCO
Why don't you have anything to play with?

Young Jesse shrugs.

YOUNG JESSE
I just never got anything, I guess.

YOUNG MARCO
Sure, we can play cards.

YOUNG JESSE
Great! I'll deal.

Young Jesse deals the cards. Young Marco looks out the open bedroom door and down the hallway.

Helen peeks from around the corner to the living room. She watches them angrily.

Young Marco can't help but stare.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - JESSE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Helen BURSTS through the bedroom door. It startles Young Jesse, the Playgirl magazine open before him.

HELEN

What did I say about leaving the
goddamn door shut?!

Jesse attempts to hide the magazine, but Helen notices.

HELEN (CONT'D)

What is that?

YOUNG JESSE

Nothing!

Helen yanks Young Jesse's hair, who YELPS. She snatches the magazine from him, looks at the cover.

Without taking her eyes off of him, she rolls the magazine into a tube.

SMACK. She hits him with it. Again. And again.

He blocks her drunken blows...until the magazine falls from her hand. She continues to slap. Harder. HARDER.

Her hands turn to fists.

She wails on Young Jesse drunkenly. SMACK. WHACK. CRACK.

She grabs him by the hair and YANKS him off the bed.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Young Jesse attempts to pull from her grasp.

YOUNG JESSE

Don't take me down there! I'm
sorry!

Helen reaches the basement door and BURSTS through it, dragging Young Jesse with her.

He grabs the doorframe and pulls away from Helen, but she snatches his leg and yanks it upward. Young Jesse SMACKS onto the stairwell platform.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT

Helen descends the stairwell and drags Young Jesse behind. His head BOUNCES against each step, TWELVE TIMES. It knocks him into a daze.

She leaves him on the floor at the foot of the stairwell and walks to the crawlspace.

She swings the door flap open and hooks it to the ceiling. She turns around, expressionless.

Young Jesse struggles to crawl up the stairs.

She walks over, picks him up, and drags him across the floor.

HELEN

He's not your friend. That faggot.
You two will rot in Hell. You make
me sick.

She hoists him up and into the crawlspace.

He COUGHS and GROANS as he writhes on the dirt floor.

The door flap SLAPS shut.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - CRAWLSPACE - NIGHT

Young Jesse gets up.

YOUNG JESSE

Mommy! Let me out! Please!

No response.

YOUNG JESSE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry! Let me out! I won't do
it again, I promise!

Still no response.

He shoves his shoulder into the door flap, but to no avail. He finally gives up.

He SOBS quietly.

HELEN (O.S.)

It's in there. I can feel it.

Young Jesse's SOBS subside as something else inside of the crawlspace grabs his attention.

It DRAGS itself across the dirt floor.

It WHEEZES dryly.

Wet, sickening POPS of arthritic joints. It gets Closer.

CLOSER.

Heavy, labored BREATHING.

Louder and LOUDER...

A low, guttural CROAK.

Some...THING. In the dark. Right next to Young Jesse.

It lasts for what feels like an eternity.

The door flap SWINGS open.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT

Young Jesse spills out from the crawlspace.

The door flap SLAPS shut.

Helen stands at the crawlspace entrance. Young Jesse scrambles to his feet and stares at her.

She stares back, terrified.

He scrambles up the stairs.

BACK TO PRESENT

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - BASEMENT - DAY

Jesse continues to stand in front of the crawlspace. He stares at it, almost in a trance.

CUT TO BLACK.

INT. FUNERAL HOME - LOBBY - DAY

The inside is bland. Furniture sits in the lobby. Vases with fake plastic flowers sit on tables. SOFT MUSIC plays overhead.

The receptionist, GABRIEL (70s), sits at the front desk.

Jesse sits in one of the chairs in the lobby.

A heavysset man, RICK, approaches Jesse. He breathes a bit heavily, and sweat stains peek from beneath his pits.

Jesse stands.

RICK
Hi there, Mr. Lambert. I'm Richard,
but you can call me Rick.

VOICES (V.O.)
(multiple)
Fat fuck--
(another voice)
--feeds on the grieving.

Jesse subtly shakes the thoughts away.

JESSE
Uh, Jesse.

He shakes hands with Rick.

RICK
Before we begin, I want to give my
condolences. I'm sorry for your
loss.

Jesse bites his tongue.

JESSE
Thank you.

RICK
Gabriel, what room are we in?

GABRIEL
Three.

RICK
(to Jesse)
Right this way.

INT. FUNERAL HOME - ARRANGEMENT ROOM - DAY

Rick and Jesse enter and take a seat. Rick sets a
legal-sized manila folder on the table.

RICK
Can I get you a water or some
coffee? Maybe a snack?

JESSE
I'm fine, thank you.

Rick clicks out a pen.

RICK

Okay, let's get started. I'll have to ask for some information that'll be going in Helen's obituary and memorabilia, and if you don't know some of the information, you can always call us any time after this appointment once you've obtained it. Before we begin, why don't you tell me a little bit about your mother? What was she like?

Jesse almost glares at Rick and bites his tongue.

Rick leans forward and rests his hands on the table.

RICK (CONT'D)

I know this may be hard for you.

Jesse CHUCKLES in disbelief.

JESSE

Hard for me? Oh spare the theatrics, Rick. My mother was a bitch. I hated her. I still do.

Rick's mouth unhinges a bit. He clears his throat.

RICK

Okay, I understand. If you don't mind me asking, how did Helen pass?

JESSE

Suicide. She lit herself on fire.

RICK

Oh wow. That's terrible...

Rick takes a quick glance at Jesse for a reaction.

RICK (CONT'D)

What ceremony plans were you thinking?

JESSE

She wanted a burial. I want just the burial.

RICK

Well, we have plenty of beautiful caskets aesthetically built and specifically for closed-casket funerals. Would you like to go into

(MORE)

RICK (CONT'D)
our showcase room and take a look
at what options we provide?

JESSE
No. Give me your cheapest option.

Jesse grits his teeth.

JESSE (CONT'D)
Put her in the dirt.

INT. FUNERAL HOME - LOBBY - LATER

Rick walks Jesse out of the arrangement room and through the lobby. Rick shakes his hand tightly.

RICK
You take care of yourself, Jesse.
We'll see you on Thursday.

Rick hastily walks down the hallway.

Jesse walks toward the entrance when Gabriel stops him.

GABRIEL
Hey, kid.

Jesse walks up to the front desk.

GABRIEL
Did everything go okay in there?
Rick didn't say anything to offend
you, did he?

JESSE
No? Why?

Gabriel motions Jesse toward him. Jesse leans inward.

GABRIEL
When he got up to print off some
paperwork, he came out here and he
said that you had this look on your
face. Like he said something that
made you angry, even though he was
just following his usual routine,
ya know?

JESSE
I don't remember.

GABRIEL

Don't go tellin' him that I'm rattin' him out. He said that you looked mad the entire time whenever he mentioned your mom's name, or asked about her. Like you really hated her.

JESSE

That's none of your business.

GABRIEL

Sorry, sorry...Look, honestly, I'd take it as a compliment. Rick thinks he's a hotshot around here, and sometimes he can be an ass. I'd never seen him look so shocked, or was he nervous? Embarrassed?

Gabriel waves his lingering thoughts away.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

Anyway, he was a little freaked out. Are you sure he didn't say anything to piss you off?

JESSE

(flatly)

I'm sure.

GABRIEL

Okay, well, you tell me if something went wrong. I just want to make sure that you had a good experience while you were here. I try to make sure everyone here has been taken care of. I mean, I am the first person everyone talks to when they walk in or call!

The phone RINGS.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

Ah! Speak of the devil.

As Gabriel spouts his usual scripted introduction into the receiver, Jesse walks to and through the front door.

He looks ANGRY.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

A cloudy, rainy day.

The only attendees for the funeral are Jesse, Rick, and the PASTOR.

The pastor reads from a binder. Everybody looks solemn, heads bowed.

As the pastor reads, Jesse looks up from the grave. He sees a scraggly MAN (40s), watching the ceremony from afar, leaning against a beat up pickup truck.

The man perplexes Jesse, knowing that he is here for the ceremony.

The man gets in his pickup truck and drives away.

Soon, everyone departs the gravesite.

MOMENTS LATER

Jesse walks to his car. From another area of the cemetery, he sees Marco leaning against the patrol car.

Jesse waves. Marco waves back.

They both leave the cemetery.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - OVER TIME**BEGIN MONTAGE**

1) **LIVING ROOM** - Jesse picks up the dirty clothes, cleans up the trash, clears the liquor bottles, cleans the windows, dusts.

CUT TO:

2) **KITCHEN** - he clears the countertops, washes the plates, cleans out the refrigerator, mops the floor, scrubs the oven.

CUT TO:

3) **LIVING ROOM** - he sprays air freshener around the room, scrubs the carpet of its stains, vacuums, cleans the couch, cleans the coffee table.

CUT TO:

4) **BATHROOM** - he scrubs the sink, scrubs the toilet and tub, scrubs the tile floor; he wipes sweat from his brow, COUGHS from the fumes.

CUT TO:

5) **KITCHEN** - he opens the cabinets to put away clean dishes. One cabinet has shelves full of liquor bottles, partially drunk or not even opened. He stares at them for a moment, then slowly shuts the cabinet door.

END MONTAGE

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Jesse lies wide awake on the couch, which is covered with a sheet.

The house CREAKS and GROANS.

TAPS emit from the walls.

KNOCKS come from other rooms in the house.

(O.S.) A door SQUEAKS open.

Jesse sits up at the sound, listens intently, then lies back down. He folds a pillow over his head as he attempts to fall asleep.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Jesse sits up groggily. He rubs his stiff neck in pain.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

Jesse walks to Helen's bedroom. Before he opens the door, he looks down the hallway at the basement door.

It's cracked open.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - HELEN'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Jesse piles the dirty clothes and sheets into a basket. They're stained with old vomit, piss, and shit.

He straightens the mattress and shuts the closet door.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - KITCHEN - LATER

The sheets and clothes tumble inside of the dryer, which sits in a utility closet within the kitchen.

Something inside CLICK-CLACKS loudly.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Jesse sits on the couch. He sorts through bills, all printed with red PAST DUE or FINAL NOTICE.

The CLICK-CLACK continues (O.S.). CLICK-CLACK. He twitches.

CLICK-CLACK. CLICK-CLACK. His hands turn to fists.

CLICK-CLACK. CLICK-CLACK. CLICK-CLACK. He grits his teeth.

CLICK-CLACK!

Jesse jumps to his feet.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

He opens the dryer and sifts through the clothes. Soon, he finds a key from a Kwikset.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

Jesse walks down the hallway toward his childhood bedroom. He uses the key to unlock the door. It squeaks open, and he walks inside.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - JESSE'S BEDROOM - DAY

It looks untouched, just how it was when Jesse was taken away by CPS.

The bed is made. The floor is clean. Everything looks to be in place. There aren't any toys in the room.

Jesse walks through the room, taking everything in. He walks to the corner of the room where a desk and chair sit.

On top of the desk is a school photo of Young Jesse (8). His smile looks strained, almost forced. Jesse sits on the bed with the photo and stares at it.

A moment passes before he sets the photo back on the desk and walks to the bedroom door. He takes one more look at the room.

He shuts the door.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - HELEN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Moonlight spills through the blinds and lightens up the room a bit.

Jesse lies in bed and tosses and turns to a nightmare.

Muffled SCREAMS and horrible WHISPERS whirl around his head. They get louder and Louder and LOUDER.

Jesse snaps awake, covered in a thin layer of sweat. He sits up, but stops when he notices...

Helen. She sits in the chair in the corner of the room, hidden in the darkness. She's thin, her hair is a mess, her head hangs low and sad.

She lifts her arm up and points toward the open bedroom door. Her voice BUZZES with static.

HELEN

There's something in the house with us.

Jesse looks at the bedroom door. There's nothing but darkness beyond it.

He gets out of bed and walks to the door.

Helen remains in the chair with her arm raised.

Jesse walks out of the room.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

The walls and ceiling and floor twist and turn and morph as Jesse floats down the hallway, toward his childhood bedroom.

He reaches the door and listens. Something TAPS rhythmically from the other side.

Jesse grabs the doorknob and opens the door. The hinges SQUEAL.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - JESSE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The door bounces against the door spring, creating a loud, low RUMBLE. It morphs into a BUZZ.

The TAPS continue. They come from the corner of the room.

Sitting at the desk in the dark corner, is a man. He stares at the third grade photo of Young Jesse.

His fingers TAP from thumb to pinky like someone who waits impatiently. The fingers are abnormally long. Skeletal. Clawed.

Jesse takes a step forward before he is frozen in place.

The man at the desk stops tapping his fingers. He lifts his head up, now alert of another presence.

He begins to stand.

The BUZZING grows louder, and begins to sound like a SWARM OF FLIES.

The man's fingernails carve grooves into the surface of the desk. The sound emits SCREAMS of torture.

His knee joints POP as he stands further. He grows taller and taller.

This THING is not human.

It's bald head almost touches the ceiling.

Long, lanky arms hang by Its side.

It EXHALES a dry SIGH as if standing is a painful chore.

It twists Its body to turn and face Jesse.

Just before Its face is seen--

Jesse wakes up.

He stands in the same spot in the bedroom. The corner of the room is empty.

He breathes a shaky SIGH of relief and backs out of the bedroom.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - HELEN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jesse looks inside Helen's bedroom, at the corner where he saw Helen. She is no longer in the chair.

He SIGHS in relief again, but it's short lasted when he hears a box SCRAPE against the floor (O.S.)

He looks back down the hallway.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

The basement door is cracked open.

Another sound of a box SCRAPING along the cement floor comes from within the basement.

Jesse cautiously walks toward the door. He opens it, and grabs a flashlight that sits at the top of the stairwell platform.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT

Jesse turns the flashlight on and points it down the stairwell.

It's quiet down there in the dark. No more noises.

He carefully steps down the stairs and cringes at the SQUEAK of each step.

Jesse reaches the bottom and pulls the drawstring of the light bulb. The basement glows unimpressively.

He shines the flashlight around the basement and notices two boxes that are now open. Someone has rummaged around down here.

Jesse walks over to one of the boxes and looks inside. A Bible sits atop other books and movies packed away. He picks it up.

He opens the Bible to the First Letter of Peter, bookmarked with a wad of folded paper. He sets the Bible back in the box.

He shines his light around the basement: from the far wall where the charred crawlspace is, along the boxes, and then at the stairwell.

A BLUR of white jumps out from beneath the staircase!

MAN

Who the fuck are you!?

It's the scraggly man from the cemetery, with a switchblade in one hand and a small flashlight in the other.

Jesse drops his flashlight with a CLACK and presses himself against the wall, afraid.

MAN

Huh!?

JESSE

I called the cops.

MAN

Bullshit.

JESSE

They'll be here any minute.

MAN

I could gut you before they showed up. Answer the fucking question.

JESSE

I'm just here to clean up my mom's house! I swear!

The man shines the flashlight on Jesse's face. He lowers his knife and takes another step forward.

MAN

Jesse?

JESSE

Who are you?

MAN

Holy shit...I thought you looked like her. I never thought I'd see you again for the rest of my life. Believe it or not, I'm your dad.

Jesse stares at TRENT WILLIAMS for a moment.

JESSE

Trent? My dad?

TRENT

You're goddamn right. Happy family reunion, eh?

JESSE

Can I ask what the fuck you're doing here?

Trent looks at a box and walks over to it. He opens it.

TRENT

Taking back what's mine from that bitch you called your mother.

Jesse notices a tattoo on the underside of Trent's wrist:
6-27-2005

JESSE

You do know she's dead, right?

TRENT

No shit, Sherlock. Why else do you think I'm here? Her restraining order's expired. Like her cold, rotting corpse.

JESSE

You got lucky with that restraining order. Your attack turned her into a drunken psycho, and I was the one who took the beatings.

Trent stops rummaging through the box and shines his flashlight back on Jesse's face.

TRENT

You think I attacked her?

JESSE

That's what she told me.

Trent SNORTS.

TRENT

Your mother was a fucking liar.

JESSE

How?

TRENT

She attacked me, in some kind of...rage, or I don't know what. I had passed out after we had another argument, and when I woke up, I saw her standing over me with a knife in her hand.

(beat)

Sound familiar?

Jesse shudders.

TRENT (CONT'D)

She said, 'I'm going to kill you. And then I'll kill Jesse. And then I'll kill your fucking whore of a wife.' I swear, when she said that, it was not her, and it was

(MORE)

TRENT (CONT'D)

definitely not her voice. Then she jumped on me and just started... slashing into the air. I managed to knock the knife from her, but she grabbed a pillow and shoved it on my face. She was strong. I remember it felt like there were two people on top of me like someone else was helping her out.

JESSE

She was drunk. The cops would've known right away it wasn't you who attacked her.

Trent becomes excited now. He paces back and forth.

TRENT

That's the thing! She didn't have a lick of alcohol that day! When I managed to knock her off me, I saw her on the bed, on her back and convulsing or something. I swear I saw the mattress around her sunken in like something was on top of her. She was squirming around and wheezing like she couldn't breathe--

JESSE

And you didn't help her?

TRENT

What would you expect me to do, huh? I was scared shitless. I've never seen anything like it before. And her laugh...it was like a witch or a hyena or something. She sat up and just started laughing at me, and I saw the bruises around her neck that looked like hands. I heard the sirens and realized that she planned the whole thing, to make it look like I had tried killing her. I reeked of alcohol, and I knew that the cops would bust me right away. Her prints might've been on the knife but I'll bet my life that she was going to tell the cops that she tried using it in self defense.

JESSE

Christ...

TRENT

When I escaped through the bedroom window, I looked back at her one more time, just to make sure that I wasn't going crazy or anything. I saw something in there with her, Jesse. It was in the closet. I don't know what it was but I've never forgotten what it looks like.

Trent looks at Jesse intensely, tears in his eyes.

TRENT (CONT'D)

You've seen it too, haven't you?

JESSE

I don't know what you're talking about.

Trent opens his mouth to speak when a box SLIDES out from beneath the dark stairwell.

The two look at the staircase, and the darkness that engulfs the space beneath it.

Trent holds his knife up.

TRENT

(whispers)

I...I see it...

JESSE

(whispers)

See what?

TRENT

(whispers)

There It is. Under the stairs. Do you see It?

Jesse holds his flashlight up to shine at the stairs. Trent HISSES at him.

TRENT (CONT'D)

Don't shine your light on It!

The two continue to stare at the darkness beneath the stairwell.

TRENT (CONT'D)
 (whispers)
 It's not real...It's not real...
 It's not real...

Trent sidesteps toward the foot of the stairs. He continues to repeat the same thing.

TRENT (CONT'D)
 (whispers)
 It's not real...It's not real...
 It's not real...Oh my God.

He reaches the foot of the stairwell and looks at Jesse.

TRENT (CONT'D)
 I'd get the fuck outta here if I
 were you.

Trent runs up the stairs two steps at a time.

(O.S.) The THUMPING of his footsteps as he runs through the house. The front door SLAMS shut.

Jesse continues to stare at the darkness beneath the stairwell.

The darkness seems to grow and engulf the basement.

Like father, like son, Jesse sidesteps across the basement floor and runs up the stairs two steps at a time. He doesn't turn the light bulb off.

He doesn't want to be left alone in the dark with THE THING.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Marco stands at the front door.

MARCO
 You do realize you should've called
 actual 9-1-1 instead of me, right?
 You're lucky I'm on duty.

He steps inside of the house.

JESSE
 (lying)
 I figured it would've been easier
 for me if someone I knew was taking
 the report.

Marco stops in the middle of the living room and does a full 360. He nods in approval.

MARCO

Nice job at cleaning this place up.

JESSE

Cleaning helps with my anxiety.

Marco looks at the cleanliness once more before he sits on the couch and pulls out his notepad and pen. Jesse sits with him.

MARCO

Okay. So, your dad, who you haven't seen in over twenty years, broke into your home. Did he try to hurt you? Did he have any weapons?

JESSE

He had a knife, but he didn't try to hurt me with it.

MARCO

Christ, Jesse, why didn't you call the police right after this happened? You realize this man has been booked multiple times before, right? He attacked your own mother, for God's sake! The man isn't safe. Do you want to file a report?

Jesse hesitates.

JESSE

No.

MARCO

Are you sure?

JESSE

He didn't do anything. I'm fine, he's gone and probably not coming back--

Marco shoots to his feet. Defensive. Protective.

MARCO

Like hell he's not coming back--

JESSE

Calm down--

MARCO

You don't know what people can be capable of. Next time he could have a gun.

JESSE

What makes you think he'll come back to try and kill me? He doesn't want anything to do with me or my mom.

Beat. Jesse hesitates to talk any further. Marco sits back down, caring now.

MARCO

What?

JESSE

Something was in that basement last night, Marco. My dad saw it, and whatever it was, it scared the absolute hell out of him. That's why I don't think he'll be coming back.

Marco leans in, interested.

MARCO

What was it?

JESSE

I don't know. I didn't see it.

Marco sits back up. He exhales a frustrated CHUCKLE.

MARCO

So the guy was seeing things. He was probably high on something. Great.

JESSE

And what if he wasn't? I saw his face, Marco. He looked scared shitless. There was something in that basement with us. I could feel it. Ever since I stepped foot in this stupid house, I've felt like there's something else here. Something bad.

MARCO

It's an old house. Bad things happened here. People have died. Stuff lingers. I'm not a complete skeptic, and considering the circumstances, I wouldn't be surprised if there was something more to this place. But I have to

(MORE)

MARCO (CONT'D)
be rational here, Jesse. It's my
job.

JESSE
(hesitant)
I had a nightmare before my dad
broke in. It was strange.

MARCO
Okay. What happened?

JESSE
I saw my mom sitting in the corner
of her room. She said that there
was someone in the house.
Someone...or something was sitting
at my desk in the corner of my
bedroom. A monster. When I woke up,
I was standing in the same exact
spot in my bedroom that I was in my
dream. That's when I heard my dad
in the basement.

MARCO
Do you think your dad saw the same
monster that you saw in your dream?

VOICES (V.O.)
(one voice)
Tell him--
(another voice)
--he won't believe you--

Jesse bows his head in embarrassment.

JESSE
Yes.

Marco changes the subject.

MARCO
So you got your bedroom unlocked?

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - JESSE'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Jesse walks Marco into the bedroom. They both look around.

MARCO
I haven't been in here in years.

JESSE
You and I both.

Marco looks at the desk in the corner.

MARCO
Is that where It was?

JESSE
Yeah. And I was standing here.

MARCO
She kept this room in good shape.
You think that's why she kept it
locked? To preserve how it was when
you left?

JESSE
(sarcastically)
I was taken away by CPS. Not
killed.
(beat)
She didn't care about me, so why
would she care about this?

Marco continues looking around while Jesse walks up to the desk. He picks up the school photo. Marco looks at it over Jesse's shoulder.

MARCO
You were a cute kid. Now you're
just older.

Jesse smiles bashfully.

He sets the photo back on the desk.

That's when he notices the FIVE CLAW MARKS carved into the surface of the desk.

Marco's radio CRACKLES in with the voice of a POLICE OFFICER.

POLICE OFFICER (V.O.)
Valencia, do you come in, over?

MARCO
(to Jesse)
Excuse me.

He walks to the doorway of the bedroom.

MARCO (CONT'D)
Copy that, over.

POLICE OFFICER (V.O.)
You're friends with that Jesse
Lambert kid, right? Wanna deliver
him some bad news?

Jesse turns his attention to Marco, who lets Jesse listen
in.

MARCO
Uh, copy that. What's the bad news?

POLICE OFFICER (V.O.)
We found his dad, Trent Williams,
dead in his apartment.

Jesse and Marco stare at each other in disbelief.

MARCO
Can you repeat that?

POLICE OFFICER (V.O.)
We found his father dead. Never
seen anything like it. It ain't
pretty. He's missing his tongue.

Marco turns away from Jesse.

MARCO
Uh. Copy that.
(to himself)
Christ...

JESSE
Christ...

MARCO
Anything else I should know?

POLICE OFFICER (V.O.)
Mr. Lambert needs to go down to the
city coroner's office at the end of
Main Street to identify the body.

MARCO
Copy that.

Marco turns back to Jesse.

MARCO (CONT'D)

Is there something you're not telling me?

JESSE

I have no idea what they're talking about.

MARCO

You're sure you saw your dad last night?

JESSE

Yes!

MARCO

And he ran off? You didn't follow him, did you?

JESSE

I swear, I've been here this entire time. He ran off and that was the last I saw or heard from him.

MARCO

You're telling the truth?

JESSE

I don't even know where the guy lives! This is just a bizarre coincidence and now I'm suddenly the bad guy.

MARCO

Nobody said anything.

(beat)

At least he won't be coming back. If it turns out that he was high on something, you got lucky, Jesse. You could be dead.

The two stand in silence.

INT. CORONER'S OFFICE BUILDING - HALLWAY - DAY

Fluorescent lights BUZZ.

Jesse follows behind an AUTOPSY TECHNICIAN who carries a clipboard in hand.

JESSE

What happened to him?

AUTOPSY TECHNICIAN

Right now the cause of death is still unknown. We're waiting on the blood results to come back in, see if there was anything in his system when he passed. It could explain his disfiguration, too. Maybe he did it to himself, but...I just can't picture any man doing that to himself. You do know about that, correct?

JESSE

I know he's missing his tongue.

AUTOPSY TECHNICIAN

Yes. That too.

They approach a large metal door, and the technician opens it.

INT. CORONER'S OFFICE BUILDING - FREEZER ROOM - DAY

Metal drawers line one wall, which HUM as cold air keeps them cool.

The technician walks Jesse toward the back of the freezer room.

They stop in front of a drawer with a personalized label typed in Courier font: **WILLIAMS, TRENT**

AUTOPSY TECHNICIAN

Just as a forewarning, his face may be a bit shocking.

The technician hesitates as he grabs the drawer handle.

Finally, he pulls the drawer open. Trent's body lies on the drawer, covered with a sheet.

AUTOPSY TECHNICIAN (CONT'D)

Would you like for me to step out and give you your privacy?

JESSE

Please.

AUTOPSY TECHNICIAN

I'll be down the hall near the front desk if you need anything. Once you've properly identified his body, sign this paperwork where the

(MORE)

AUTOPSY TECHNICIAN (CONT'D)
X's are and you can leave it here
when you're finished.

The technician hangs the clipboard on the face of the drawer.

He walks out of the room as Jesse stares at the body.

With shaky BREATHING and a shaky hand, Jesse reaches for the sheet.

He's mere inches away from pulling it away and revealing Trent's face, when he stops.

He remembers: the tattoo.

He uncovers Trent's wrist and grabs it; he immediately retreats his hand at how cold it is.

With a DEEP BREATH, he turns Trent's wrist over, revealing the tattoo. Good enough.

Jesse hastily signs the clipboard and hangs it back on the drawer face. He turns around and begins to walk away.

Suddenly, the sound of someone BREATHING IN AIR. RASPY. DRY. COLD. It comes from Trent.

Jesse slowly turns around.

The fluorescent light above Trent's body HUMS loudly.

Jesse cautiously steps closer to the body. The fluorescent light flickers; it CLICKS and BUZZES with every shutter.

Another icy breath slowly SUCKS IN. The throat RATTLES. Trent's chest rises upward.

Jesse backs away as he stares in disbelief.

Another loud INHALE from the body. The sheet pulls inward into the mouth.

JESSE
(whisper)
It's not real...

Jesse turns around and walks toward the freezer room door.

He's about to reach the door when--

TRENT
 (deep grumble)
 Jesse.

Jesse freezes in his tracks.

He begins to turn around.

The fluorescent light HUMS even LOUDER. It morphs into the BUZZ OF FLIES.

Jesse turns around. He stumbles backward and against the wall.

Trent's body, still covered in the sheet, HOVERS next to the drawer.

The fluorescent light SURGES with light, then burns out with a BUZZ. Darkness bathes Trent's body.

Trent's yellow, unkempt toenails SCRAPE along the floor as his body begins to move across the room.

JESSE
 (whisper)
 It's not real.

A second set of fluorescent lights flicker out as his body floats beneath them.

JESSE (CONT'D)
 (whisper)
 It's not real.

The last set of fluorescent lights directly over Jesse begin to flicker.

Jesse pleads silently for the lights to remain on. The bulbs threaten to burn out any moment.

Trent's body stops feet from where Jesse trembles.

TRENT
 (deep, demonic)
 Go back to the house. Go back to
 the house. Go back to the house...

As he repeats himself, his voice deepens into the DEMONIC GRUMBLE OF SOME OTHERWORLDY CREATURE.

TRENT (CONT'D)
 Go back to the house. Go back to
 the house. Go back to the house...

Jesse closes his eyes as he listens in horror. He inches his way across the wall toward the door.

The sheet covering Trent begins to slide downward to the floor.

Jesse grabs the door handle.

The sheet falls to the floor.

Jesse opens his eyes. He SCREAMS.

The fluorescent light SURGES with light as it burns out.

The quick FLASH lasts only a second, and reveals TRENT'S DISFIGURED FACE.

It's TERRIFYING.

CUT TO BLACK.

SECONDS LATER

From the hallway, the technician and his RECEPTIONIST flee into the room and find Trent's body missing from the drawer, lying face down right at their feet. They look over and see Jesse cowering in the corner.

AUTOPSY TECHNICIAN

What the hell happened here?!

Jesse scrambles to his feet and grabs the technician by his collar.

He looks down at Trent's body, and his outstretched arm. It looks like it could grab Jesse's foot at any moment.

Jesse backs out of the freezer room without taking his eyes off Trent's body.

Jesse backs into the hallway, turns, and sprints away from the freezer room.

The technician CURSES at Jesse as he and the receptionist watch him run away.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Jesse paces back and forth as he WHISPERS to himself.

JESSE

It was an anxiety attack. That's what it was.

JUMP CUT TO:

JESSE (CONT'D)
It wasn't real. It's not real. It's
not real...

JUMP CUT TO:

JESSE (CONT'D)
But then how did his body move from
the drawer? Did I move him myself?

JUMP CUT TO:

JESSE (CONT'D)
Yeah. Yeah, that's what happened. I
moved him myself.

JUMP CUT TO:

JESSE (CONT'D)
It's not real...It wasn't real...

JUMP CUT TO:

JESSE (CONT'D)
I'm done with this town. I'm done
with this house.

JUMP CUT TO:

JESSE (CONT'D)
It's this house. This stupid
house...

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - HELEN'S BEDROOM - LATER

Jesse packs Helen's clean clothes into a few boxes.

He pushes the boxes into the back of the now empty closet.

He backs away from the closet and falls onto the mattress.

A corner of the fitted sheet pops off the mattress,
revealing a deep slice made by a blade.

Jesse notices something inside. He sticks his fingers in the
slice and pulls out a folded up piece of paper. He unfolds
it. It's a letter.

He begins to read.

HELEN (V.O.)

March 4, 2015. It all started when we moved into this stupid house. Stupid house. We needed the space for the baby and a voice whispered in my head and told me to do it, to buy the house. The voice never went away. It told me that Trent would run away when the baby was born, and that I would eventually kill myself under the stress of taking care of a dumb baby. It told me that I would just be a struggling single mom that couldn't do anything with her life. When I stared at myself in the mirror all I could see was what a dumb, ugly bitch I was, and had a boyfriend that didn't love me and a kid that cried and cried.

CUT TO:

A FLASH of BABY JESSE crying.

BACK TO SCENE

HELEN (V.O.)

I hated him when he cried, which was all the time. The voice told me again and again to wrap my hands around his throat to make it stop crying forever.

CUT TO:

A FLASH of Helen STRANGLING Baby Jesse, who is not seen.

BACK TO SCENE

HELEN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

It said I would be happy again if I killed him. I wanted to be happy again...I started to drink. I can't really remember much that happened whenever I drank. It's all a blur, I swear. Just a blur. But I see flashes of him as I stand over him and he's crying. I hear the awful things that I'm not actually saying to Trent. It's saying them, not me, I swear. It's all a blur.

Jesse sits up as he reaches a more intriguing part of the letter.

HELEN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Usually It shows Itself in nightmares. That's when I first saw It, when I had a dream that I was in the crawlspace with Jesse as an adult. I knew it was him. The stupid house was on fire--

CUT TO:

A FLASH of Jesse in the crawlspace surrounded by flames.

BACK TO SCENE

HELEN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 --and he was trapped in the crawlspace surrounded by flames, and shadows of demons danced around him. That's when I saw It, in the corner. It watched him burn, and It laughed.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT

FLASHBACK

Helen stands in front of the open crawlspace.

HELEN (V.O.)
 I woke up and I was standing at the crawlspace looking into it. I think It lives down there. It says that's where the bad kids go.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - HELEN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

FLASHBACK

THE THING'S POV: Helen lies in bed, on her back. The Thing walks out of the closet, toward the bed, onto the bed...

HELEN (V.O.)
 Last night, I was awake when It walked out from the darkness. It crawled from the end of my bed and laid on top of me, and It breathed against my neck and whispered into my ear all night long, and I couldn't move. I couldn't breathe. I said the Lord's prayer in my head
 (MORE)

HELEN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 and the bed began to shake. I
 thought It was finally taking me
 away as It promised all along.

The Thing's POV is now mere inches from Helen's face.

Helen's eyes are wide with fear.

BACK TO PRESENT

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - HELEN'S BEDROOM - DAY

Jesse looks up at the closet and the darkness inside.

HELEN (V.O.)
 I can see it in the closet as I
 write this. It knows that I haven't
 had anything to drink in a few
 days. It's this stupid house. I
 have to destroy It.
 (beat)
 I'm sorry.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - JESSE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

FLASHBACK

A FLASH of Helen's silhouetted body. She holds the knife
 above her head.

HELEN
 I'm sorry.

BACK TO PRESENT

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - HELEN'S BEDROOM - DAY

Jesse notices something else in the slice in the mattress.
 He pries deeper into the slice and pulls out another note.

CLOSE UP: the second note:

"1999

*stupid kid keeps crying when ever I look at him says im
 scaring him and i hit him becaus he wont stop crying*

PUT HIM IN THE BASEMENT.

why

DO IT.

why

HE IS A BAD KID. HE DESERVES IT."

BACK TO SCENE

Jesse looks up from the letters.

He drops the letters to floor. He buries his face into his hands at the realization that his mother was crazy.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - HELEN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The moonlight spills in through the open blinds.

Jesse lies on his back as he stares up at the ceiling, wide awake.

Moments go by as he lies in SILENCE. Then...

A low RUMBLE fades in.

The bedroom grows darker and darker.

STATIC crunches in Jesse's mind.

The house seems to VIBRATE.

(O.S.) THUMP. THUMP. THUMP. Coming from the basement. Heavy FOOTSTEPS. THUMP. THUMP. THUMP. Something struggles up the stairs. Jesse counts the steps in his head.

THUMP.

JESSE (V.O.)
(whisper)
Seven.

THUMP.

JESSE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
(whisper)
Eight.

THUMP.

JESSE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
(whisper)
Nine.

THUMP. Louder.

JESSE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 (whisper)

Ten.

THUMP. LOUDER.

JESSE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 (whisper)

Eleven.

THUMP. LOUDER.

JESSE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 (whisper)

Twelve.

Jesse's eyes remain fixated on the bedroom door.

The RUMBLING is deafening.

Suddenly--SILENCE.

(O.S.) Something DRAGS itself down the hallway.

It gets closer and CLOSER.

The Thing presses itself against the door. It WHEEZES.
 Agonized. Tortured. Dead.

The handle TREMBLES. The door CLICKS open.

SCREAMS and TORTURED SHRIEKING emit from the blackness
 beyond the opening door.

The room grows even DARKER.

Jesse looks down at the foot of his bed.

A SKELETON HAND WITH SPIDER-LIKE FINGERS snakes across the
 covers toward Jesse.

CUT TO BLACK.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - HELEN'S BEDROOM - DAY

Jesse lies in bed and stares at the ceiling. He looks
 exhausted and sad.

JESSE (V.O.)
 I woke up from a dreamless sleep.

The light travels across the room as morning turns to
 afternoon, which turns to evening.

JESSE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 I laid in bed for hours. Days. I
 didn't sleep. I couldn't sleep. I
 stayed beneath the covers, away
 from the world...
 (beat)
 ...away from the light.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - DAY

BEGIN MONTAGE

1) **HELEN'S BEDROOM** - the blinds SLAP shut.

CUT TO:

2) **LIVING ROOM** - one by one Jesse YANKS the blinds closed.

CUT TO:

3) **JESSE'S BEDROOM** - the blinds FWAP closed, basking Jesse
 and the room in darkness.

END MONTAGE

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - DAYS LATER

Jesse sits on the couch in the dark living room. His hair is
 greasy, disheveled. Bags hang beneath his eyes. His head
 rests in one hand. He is depressed.

His journal sits open in front of him on the coffee table.

JESSE (V.O.)
 All of this time allowed me to
 think. I thought of how my life had
 turned out. How I wanted to be
 someone. But I was a nobody in this
 stupid world. I never amounted to
 anything and wasted time trying.
 Wasted time, that's all my life had
 ever been.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - BATHROOM - LATER

Jesse stares into the shattered bathroom mirror. A dozen of
 his eyes stare back.

JESSE (V.O.)
 I saw a loser. A loser who didn't
 have any friends. A loser who'd
 never had a relationship because
 his anxiety cockblocked him. I
 (MORE)

JESSE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 looked at my ugly face, and the
 ugly bags beneath my ugly eyes.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - HELEN'S BEDROOM - LATER

Jesse sits on the edge of the bed, letters in one hand, and
 stares at the wall.

He suddenly tosses the letters to the floor and jumps to his
 feet, paces back and forth.

JESSE
 I can't believe it. He just ran off
 without me. Left me with
 that...that--

VOICES (V.O.)
 --whore--
 (another voice)
 --bitch--
 (another voice)
 --WHORE--
 (another voice)
 --BITCH--

JUMP CUT TO:

JESSE
 --fucking father, yeah right--

JUMP CUT TO:

JESSE (CONT'D)
 --glad he's dead--

JUMP CUT TO:

JESSE (CONT'D)
 --wish I was dead--

JUMP CUT TO:

JESSE (CONT'D)
 --I hope they dumped his ashes in
 the ditch off I-35--

JUMP CUT TO:

JESSE (CONT'D)
 --bastard--

VOICES (V.O.)
 --BASTARD--

JUMP CUT TO:

JESSE
 --perfect for my mother--

JUMP CUT TO:

JESSE (CONT'D)
 Bitch--

JUMP CUT TO:

JESSE (CONT'D)
 --she deserved it--

VOICES (V.O.)
 --deserved it--
 (another voice)
 --DESERVED IT--
 (another voice)
 --do it--
 (another voice)
 --DO IT--

JUMP CUT TO:

JESSE
 --I can't believe it. I can't
 fucking believe it--

JUMP CUT TO:

JESSE (CONT'D)
 --I'm the son of a psychotic
 woman--

JUMP CUT TO:

JESSE (CONT'D)
 --a schizo. A joke. A joke!--

JUMP CUT TO:

JESSE (CONT'D)
 --nobody wants this--

JUMP CUT TO:

JESSE (CONT'D)
 --not even Marco.

VOICES (V.O.)
 You're fooling yourself--
 (another voice)
 --a fool--
 (another voice)
 --nobody wants you--
 (another voice)
 --nobody wants a fool--
 (another voice)
 --you'll always be alone--
 (another voice)
 --alone--
 (another voice)
 --ALONE--

Jesse falls to the bed as the VOICES get louder.

VOICES (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 --kill yourself--
 (another voice)
 --Kill Yourself--
 (another voice)
 --KILL YOURSELF--

JESSE (V.O.)
 (whisper)
 I should kill myself.

He sits up, and the VOICES fade away, but don't completely disappear.

JESSE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 I sat up at the thought. It was
 mine. I think.
 (beat)
 It was right though, I should kill
 myself. Just like my mother did.

JUMP CUT TO:

JESSE
 --she deserved it--

JUMP CUT TO:

JESSE (CONT'D)
 --whore--

JUMP CUT TO:

JESSE (V.O.)
 I deserved it, too. I'm not good
 enough. I wasn't even good enough
 to be in a nice, Christian foster
 family.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - BATHROOM - LATER

Jesse stands in front of the shattered mirror. A dozen of
 him stare back.

JESSE
 ...fucking loser--

JUMP CUT TO:

JESSE (CONT'D)
 --you're nothing--

JUMP CUT TO:

JESSE (CONT'D)
 --I am nothing--

JUMP CUT TO:

JESSE (CONT'D)
 --nothing--

JUMP CUT TO:

JESSE (CONT'D)
 --NOTHING.

JUMP CUT TO:

JESSE (CONT'D)
 You're an embarrassment.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT - DAYS LATER

It's dark in the kitchen. Not a single light is on in the
 house. Moonlight spills through the half-shut blinds.

Jesse stands at the counter in silence. He looks miserable.

THUMP. He looks behind him, and at a closed cabinet door.
 The cabinet with the liquor bottles. He turns away.

Another THUMP. Jesse looks back behind him. He walks to the
 cabinet and opens it.

Inside, the liquor bottles, almost calling to Jesse...

VOICES (V.O.)
 (multiple)
 Do it.

Jesse stares at the bottles, contemplates them.

MOMENTS LATER

Jesse DOWNS a glass of whiskey.

JESSE
 Nice and sweet. I can see why she
 liked the stuff.

JUMP CUT TO:

JESSE (CONT'D)
 --bitch.

He pours himself another glass.

Then another.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - BATHROOM - LATER

Jesse VOMITS into the toilet.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER

He drinks from just the bottle now.

CUT TO:

He now paces back and forth as he has an incoherent conversation with himself.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - HELEN'S BEDROOM - LATER

Jesse talks incoherently to the chair in the corner, bottle in hand.

CUT TO:

He lies passed out on the bed. The bottle of whiskey sits on the bedside table.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - HELEN'S BEDROOM - DAY

Jesse sits on the edge of the bed. He drinks from the bottle of whiskey.

Incoherent VOICES whirl in his head.

He SLAMS the bottle on the bedside table.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - BATHROOM - LATER

Jesse stares at his reflections in the shattered mirror.

They LAUGH back at him. Eyes sunken. Teeth elongated. Wide smile. They CACKLE.

Jesse PUNCHES the shattered mirror.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - HELEN'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Jesse wraps his hand up with a pillow case.

A KNOCK (O.S.) at the front door makes him HISS.

EXT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - DAY

Jesse opens the front door just enough to see through the crack.

It's Marco, dressed in casual street clothes, hair relaxed, not on duty.

MARCO

Long time, no see.

JESSE

What are you doing here?

MARCO

I'm just checking on ya. I haven't heard from you in a bit.

Marco looks down at Jesse's injured hand. Jesse hides it behind his back.

MARCO (CONT'D)

Are you hurt?

JESSE

I cut myself while doing some repairs. I'm fine.

MARCO

(jokingly)

You look pretty pale. You get queasy around blood?

JESSE

(coldly)

I said I'm fine.

Marco is slightly taken aback.

MARCO

Anyway, I was hoping I'd catch you at a good time. I just wanted to check up on you. I know it's been a shitty month considering what's happened, so I'd love to help out with anything you need. I'm sure you're pretty stressed out. I mean, and no offense, you look terrible.

JESSE

I think I can do this on my own.

MARCO

It would be a good way to catch up, too. I can only imagine what you've been up to all these years.

Jesse glares at Marco.

MARCO (CONT'D)

Please, let me help with something. Really, I'm more than happy to.

Marco gently pushes the door open. Jesse LUNGES outward with a HISS.

JESSE

Get away!

Marco stumbles back a couple of steps.

MARCO

You're drunk. I can smell it.

JESSE

So what if I am?

MARCO

After everything you went through with your mother?

JESSE

You don't know anything.

MARCO

I do, Jesse. I read the file when I heard that you were coming in to clean this place up.

(beat)

Why didn't you say anything? How could you let that happen without telling me?

JESSE

What would a dumb kid like yourself know what to do then?

MARCO

We could've ended this a lot sooner than it did. Now look at you. You've been stuck in this house by yourself for two weeks cleaning up the crap that your mom left behind. All of this trauma, these memories, and nobody to talk to while you pack it all away. Drinking sure as hell won't help, especially when you're alone.

Jesse remains quiet. Marco hesitates.

MARCO (CONT'D)

It's been sixteen years. Sixteen years since one of my best friends left. And not just a friend, Jesse. Don't think I've forgotten. You were someone I really enjoyed being around as a kid. There's so much to catch up on. To get to know each other again.

JESSE

My mom and dad are dead. I have a house that I've been trying to clean and get ready to sell. I have so much shit to sort through, contractors to meet with, realtors and maintenance, and all you're worried about is 'catching up'?

Jesse opens the door and steps onto the porch. Marco takes a step back.

JESSE (CONT'D)

What else did you want to do, rent a motel room and screw through the night? That's how you like it, by keeping it a secret, huh? As you have for the past sixteen years. It doesn't make a difference. In the end you're still a faggot.

Silence.

Marco looks at him in defeat.

MARCO
I understand. I'm sorry. I
shouldn't have gotten involved.

Marco walks away while Jesse stands and watches.

He gets in his car and drives away.

EXT. MARCO'S CAR (TRAVELING) - DAY

Marco drives down the street.

He looks back one more time at Jesse, in case it's the last.

Jesse still stands on the porch.

And then, a MASS OF SHADOW washes over his shoulders...

...and pulls him back into the house.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Jesse, now sobered up, paces back and forth while he stares
at his cell phone.

JESSE
God, I can't believe I said those
things to him...Why did I say those
things--

JUMP CUT TO:

JESSE (CONT'D)
--because it's true--

VOICES (V.O.)
--BECAUSE IT'S TRUE--

JUMP CUT TO:

JESSE
--no it's not true--

JUMP CUT TO:

JESSE (CONT'D)
--it's not real--

JUMP CUT TO:

JESSE (CONT'D)
It's all a blur...all a blur...

JUMP CUT TO:

Jesse looks at the piece of paper with the phone number on it that Marco had given him.

VOICES (V.O.)
--he doesn't want to talk--
(another voice)
--DOESN'T WANT TO TALK--
(another voice)
--talk to you anymore--
(another voice)
--DOESN'T WANT TO TALK TO YOU
ANYMORE--

Jesse shakes the voices away.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - HELEN'S BEDROOM - DAY

Jesse walks inside and FLOPS onto the mattress.

He looks at the letter again.

He looks past the foot of his bed. At the closet on the other side of the room. The sliding door is cracked open.

Jesse gets up, walks to the closet, and shuts the door.

CUT TO BLACK.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - HELEN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jesse lies in bed, on his back.

He stares at the ceiling for what feels like a long time.

Then...

A HUM fades in. It begins to RUMBLE.

The house TREMBLES. Like a FREIGHT TRAIN passing right next to it.

STATIC.

Jesse can't move. His eyes look down at the foot of his bed.

The closet door slowly and silently slides open.

Jesse's eyes widen.

The RUMBLE grows LOUDER.

Something inside of the closet moves.

The STATIC morphs into a BUZZ--the familiar sound of a SWARM OF FLIES.

The room THUNDERS.

From the dark of the closet emerges THE THING.

Tall. Pale. Thin beyond starvation.

Head curiously cocked.

Atrophied arms unfold from its chest.

Clawed fingers branch from massive hands, fanning apart as It presents Itself.

JESSE (V.O.)
 (whisper, panicked)
 It's not real. It's not real. It's
 not real...

Gangling legs slowly carry The Thing across the room.

Slits of moonlight flutter across Its SKELETON FACE.

JESSE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 (panicked)
 IT'S NOT REAL. IT'S NOT REAL. IT'S
 NOT REAL...

The Thing climbs onto the bed.

It crawls toward Jesse on spidery arms and legs.

JESSE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Oh my God.

Jesse looks up at the ceiling, eyes wide with fear.

JESSE'S POV: The Thing's silhouetted head silently sneaks into his vision, ENGULFING HIM IN DARKNESS.

FADE TO BLACK.

OVER BLACK:

Anguished CRIES. Inhuman SCREAMS of TORTURE. Grotesque GURGLES. Sickening SPLATTERS. PLEADS to God. WAILS of TERROR and MISERY. Sharp HISSES of WHISPERS, incomprehensible or insulting.

They get louder and Louder and LOUDER.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - HELEN'S BEDROOM - DAY

Jesse's eyes SNAP open. He remains in the same spot as the night before.

He sits up and looks at the closet. The door is open.

He scrambles out of bed and SLAMS the door shut.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Jesse cleans up the coffee table, getting rid of a couple empty whiskey bottles and dirty cocktail glasses.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Jesse pours the whiskey down the sink drain.

VOICES (V.O.)

--drink it--
 (another voice)
 --DRINK IT--
 (another voice)
 --makes you feel better--
 (another voice)
 --FEEL BETTER--

Jesse attempts to shake the VOICES away but they get LOUDER.

VOICES (V.O.) (CONT'D)

--you'll be--
 (another voice)
 --SOMEBODY--
 (another voice)
 --do it--
 (another voice)
 --DO IT--
 (another voice, YELLS)
 --DO IT!!--

Jesse brings the bottle to his lips, but he stops. The VOICES stop. He contemplates for a moment.

He continues pouring the whiskey down the drain.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Jesse paces back and forth with the letters in his hand.

JESSE
 --if some...thing really lives
 here--

JUMP CUT TO:

JESSE (CONT'D)
 --It tormented my mother and now
 It's coming after me--

JUMP CUT TO:

JESSE (CONT'D)
 --It was waiting for me, all these
 years--

JUMP CUT TO:

JESSE (CONT'D)
 --now It's after me!--

JUMP CUT TO:

JESSE (CONT'D)
 --and It lives in this house--

JUMP CUT TO:

JESSE (CONT'D)
 --stupid house--

JUMP CUT TO:

JESSE (CONT'D)
 --It lives in this stupid house--

JUMP CUT TO:

JESSE (CONT'D)
 --in the basement--

JUMP CUT TO:

JESSE (CONT'D)
 --in the crawlspace--

Jesse looks at the letters.

CLOSE UP: *"It's this stupid house. I have to destroy It."*

CLOSE UP: *"I have to destroy It."*

JESSE (CONT'D)
 (reading with the close up)
"I have to destroy It."
 (beat)
"I have to destroy..."

HELEN (V.O.)
 ...It.

Jesse stops pacing and looks up from the letters.

JESSE
 She wasn't trying to commit
 suicide. She tried to burn the
 house down, starting from the
 basement crawlspace.
 (beat)
 To destroy...It...

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

The sun starts to set.

Jesse fills up two 10-gallon gas canisters and puts them in the trunk of his car.

INT. JESSE'S CAR (TRAVELING) - DAY

Jesse drives back home.

He pulls out his phone and speed dials Marco's number.

The phone call goes to voicemail.

JESSE
 Hey...It's Jesse...I want to
 apologize for what I said the other
 day. That wasn't me. I'm sure you
 know that...I'm sorry. I'm sorry
 that we haven't had the chance to
 catch up. It's been a really
 stressful couple of weeks for me.
 I'm sure you know that as well...

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - HELEN'S BEDROOM - DAY

Jesse packs away all of his belongings into his suitcase. He zips it up.

JESSE (V.O.)
I'm going to sound crazy when I say
this, but you have to believe me.
Please, believe me, 'cause you're
the only person who I can talk to
about it.

He opens the only window in Helen's bedroom.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Jesse opens up all of the windows in the living room.

JESSE (V.O.)
Something isn't right. It's this
house, Marco. It took my mom, and
now It's coming after me. It...It
won't leave me alone. And there's
something in It that won't stop
until It takes me, too.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - JESSE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Jesse opens up the windows in his childhood bedroom.

JESSE (V.O.)
I have to do this, Marco. It's the
only way to stop It. The voices.
The hate.

EXT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - NIGHT

The sun has set completely, with the dying light quickly
fading away.

Jesse tosses his suitcase in the trunk of his car and SLAMS
it shut.

He grabs the two gas canisters and stands in front of the
house.

JESSE (V.O.)
I'm going to burn It down, Marco.
The house. It's the only way to
stop It. I have to destroy It.

Jesse walks toward the house.

INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Marco walks into the station and clocks in.

He greets fellow colleagues as he grabs the keys to his assigned patrol vehicle.

EXT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

As Marco walks to his assigned vehicle, he listens to the voicemail left by Jesse.

Marco stops at his car and listens intently. When the voicemail is finished--

MARCO
(to the phone)
What?!

Marco listens to the voicemail again. Jesse's VOICE is incoherent, but obviously distressed.

Marco jumps into his patrol car and speeds off.

INT. PATROL CAR (TRAVELING) - NIGHT

Marco calls Jesse on his cell phone. It RINGS.

INT. JESSE'S CAR - NIGHT

Jesse's cell phone sits in the passenger seat of his car. It RINGS.

INT. PATROL CAR (TRAVELING) - NIGHT

The phone call goes to voicemail.

MARCO
Jesse, it's Marco. Whatever you do, do not follow through with whatever plan it is that you have. It's not worth it. You have to think about what you're doing. Please listen to this before you go through with it. Please. Call me back as soon as possible, but please, do not do anything until I get there!

Marco hangs up and turns on the SIRENS.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Jesse dumps gasoline all over the living room floor. Soaks the couch. Splashes it against the walls and in every corner.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

He covers the counter tops with gasoline, and the floor, and all of the walls and appliances.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - HELEN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jesse RUSHES into the room and douses the floor and bed with gasoline.

He covers the entire inside of the closet with the gas as well. He backs out of the closet with a COUGH from the fumes.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Jesse splashes the floor and walls with the last of the gas from the first canister.

He tosses the empty canister into the hallway bathroom as he walks to the end of the hallway.

The second canister awaits him outside of...

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - JESSE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jesse opens the door and steps inside with the canister in hand.

He takes one last look-around before he SOAKS the bedroom in gasoline.

The bed. The walls. The floor. The desk with the claw marks. His third grade photo.

Doused.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT

Jesse opens the basement door slowly and cautiously. He looks down the stairwell.

The light bulb at the bottom, still lit, SWAYS slightly, as if someone has been down there already.

Jesse descends the stairs. He splashes gasoline on each step. He smiles as he covers each step in gas, and the further he descends, his smile turns into a LAUGH. Maniacal. Crazy.

He reaches the bottom and tosses gasoline all over the walls, all over the floor.

He circles his way around the dark basement, soaking everything in gasoline. Until he reaches...

...the crawlspace.

With the little gasoline left, Jesse splashes the crawlspace entrance and the burnt surroundings.

Behind Jesse, the light bulb begins to HUM.

Jesse finishes off the gasoline. He tosses the canister to the side and steps backward. He bumps into a box. He looks inside the box and sees the Bible from before.

As he reaches for it, the light bulb HUMS louder.

Jesse grabs the Bible--

The light bulb BURSTS. SPARKS rain down onto the floor, IGNITING THE GASOLINE.

The flames WHOOSH up the stairs, across the basement floor. Jesse stumbles backward as his surroundings explode in flames around him.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - NIGHT

The flames RUSH through the house and engulf every corner, every wall, everything.

The house ROARS.

EXT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - NIGHT

Marco's patrol car ZOOMS down the street and SCREECHES to a halt in front of the house.

He hops out of the vehicle with the radio receiver in hand. He YELLS into the radio receiver for backup.

He stops and stares at the burning house, as if he's never seen anything more beautifully haunting.

He snaps out of his trance and runs to the front porch.

The flames SHOOT from the front door and nearly scald Marco. He backs away from the immense flames.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT

The flames burn at the ceiling. It gets WEAKER from already being damaged before.

Jesse grabs an old shirt from another box and holds it to his mouth. The Bible is in his other hand.

He looks up at the sound of CRACKING.

The ceiling CAVES IN with a THUNDEROUS RUMBLE.

Jesse falls backward and onto his ass as the ceiling NEARLY CRUSHES HIM.

EXT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - NIGHT

Marco runs to the backyard and toward the open sliding glass door that leads into...

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

He stops suddenly at the gaping hole in the middle of the kitchen. The hole opens up to the...

BASEMENT

...where Jesse stands to his feet. He notices Marco.

JESSE

Marco!

MARCO

Jesse! Are you hurt?

JESSE

No! I'm trapped!

MARCO

There has to be another way out!

Jesse COUGHS as he begins to choke. He looks at Marco with desperate eyes. This is it.

Marco looks back helplessly.

Jesse closes his eyes and THINKS.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - CRAWLSPACE - DAY**FLASHBACK**

A FLASH of the slits of sunlight coming through the front porch.

BACK TO PRESENT**INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT**

JESSE

The front porch! The crawlspace is under it!

MARCO

What?

JESSE

The crawlspace! You can break through the front porch!

Marco nods understandingly. He backs away as the kitchen begins to fall apart around him.

Jesse turns to the crawlspace entrance. He only has so much time to hesitate going back inside.

Back to where the bad kids go.

The house begins to CRUMBLE around him.

Jesse quickly opens the door flap and scrambles inside.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - CRAWLSPACE - NIGHT

Fire FLICKS at his feet as the door flap SLAMS shut.

The glow from the fire peeks through the cracks of the door flap and illuminates the crawlspace, albeit poorly.

It's cavernous. Dirt floor. Cinderblock columns. A claustrophobe's nightmare.

Jesse COUGHS as smoke begins to seep in through the cracks. It quickly fills the crawlspace, which becomes hazy.

Jesse weakly pulls himself across the dirt floor while he COUGHS and WHEEZES.

The glow from the fire grows as the flames begin to eat the door flap away.

Jesse's fingers snake through the dirt floor. He suddenly hits--

A wall. A dead end. Lost in the haze of the smoke.

Jesse pushes himself up against the wall and COUGHS WEAKLY.

The fire flicks into the crawlspace. The ceiling of the crawlspace slowly begins to CRUMBLE away.

Jesse looks in the far corner and sees--

THE THING. It lies in a tangled heap of skeletal arms and legs. Beady, reflective eyes watch Jesse. It LAUGHS.

EXT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - NIGHT

Flashing lights of firetrucks, police vehicles, and an ambulance greet Marco.

Families from other homes emerge to watch the circus.

The firemen hop out of the truck and begin to do their work.

Marco runs up to a FIREMAN who carries the nozzle of a hose toward the house.

MARCO

Hey! Hey!! The front porch! You have to get through the front porch! He's in the crawlspace!

FIREMAN

We need to contain the fire before we can get inside! How many people are in there?

MARCO

One! He's beneath the house!

FIREMAN

Once we get the flames at the front porch under control, we'll axe our way through! Now get the hell back!

Marco stumbles away from the burning house.

The firemen release the water from their hoses. The water begins to extinguish the fire.

SCREAMS of TORTURE emit from the extinguished flames. The house WAILS through the open doors and windows.

Everybody in the area listens in HORROR.

FIREMAN (CONT'D)

(to Marco)

How many people did you say were in there?!

MARCO

Just one!

FIREMAN

Just one!? Christ, it sounds like there's more people in there!

MARCO

It's the house.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - CRAWLSPACE - NIGHT

Jesse covers his ears at the sounds of the SCREAMS. He SCREAMS but it gets lost in the whirl of other SHRIEKS.

He looks back at The Thing. It breathes heavily, weakly, now that help has arrived and intervened with Its plans.

Jesse uses the shirt to cover his nose and mouth. He continues weakly crawling across the dirt floor, along the wall.

The crawlspace grows brighter from the impending flames.

Jesse's fingers slide through the dirt once again. They uncover something from the dirt. Jesse picks it up.

In the haze, it's impossible to tell what it is. He looks closer at the dirt-covered, limp...

...TONGUE. TRENT'S.

Jesse throws the tongue at his feet in disgust.

He COUGHS and WHEEZES, losing oxygen by the second. Everything becomes more hazy, more blurry.

Something at his feet moves. The dirt. It crumbles upward as something pushes its way through.

FINGERS. A HAND.

BURNED TO A CRISP.

A BODY pulls itself from the ground. A WOMAN. Her body CHARRED.

It's HELEN LAMBERT.

She CRAWLS toward Jesse, who presses himself against the wall of the crawlspace and watches in horror.

Her skin CRACKS and CRUMBLES with every movement.

She pulls herself up toward his face. Her jaw POPS open as she WHEEZES:

HELEN
Jeeeeehhhhh-sssssseeeeeee....

Jesse looks away. It's not real...

HELEN (CONT'D)
Look at me.

Her voice is suddenly ANGELIC. He ignores her.

HELEN (CONT'D)
Look at me, Jesse. Don't let It
make you see what It wants you to
see.

Jesse is afraid and hesitant.

HELEN (CONT'D)
Look at me.

Slowly he opens his eyes and looks at her.

Instead of a horrific, burnt corpse, Helen Lambert is a beautiful woman who looks as if she's never touched a drop of alcohol in her life. Her skin is full of life. Her hair is neat. She looks healthy.

He stares at her in disbelief.

JESSE
Are you real?

She nods. Jesse reaches out and touches her cheek. She is real.

HELEN
I'm sorry--

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - JESSE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

FLASHBACK

A very quick FLASH of Helen standing over Jesse with the knife over her head.

BACK TO PRESENT

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - CRAWLSPACE - NIGHT

HELEN
--please, forgive me.

The flames around them seem to move in slow motion.
Everything has gone SILENT. Time is at a standstill.

HELEN (CONT'D)
I'm so sorry, Jesse. Please forgive
me.

Jesse can't help but stare.

HELEN (CONT'D)
Neither of us can move on unless
you do.

Jesse looks past Helen and at The Thing. It STRUGGLES to
BREATHE, and stares at Jesse with weakened eyes.

HELEN (CONT'D)
Don't look at it.

She gently pushes his gaze away from The Thing.

The moment she touches him, he is filled with a euphoria, a
happiness that only a mother's love could bring.

He cries.

HELEN (CONT'D)
Please forgive me.

Jesse stares into her eyes. A moment that lasts forever.

JESSE
I forgive you.

Suddenly, a FIREMAN grabs him. The ROAR of the fire EXPLODES
in Jesse's ears. Flames lick at Jesse's feet.

He struggles in the smoke, and he COUGHS and CHOKES as he
loses air.

His mother is nowhere to be seen.

He looks over at the far corner. The Thing is not there
either. Another FIREMAN blocks his view.

They drag him through the CRUMBLING crawlspace. The ceiling
COLLAPSES after them as they RUSH toward the front porch.

The ceiling CAVES IN FASTER.

The firemen YANK Jesse out of the exposed hole in the front porch.

EXT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - NIGHT

The entire house caves inward and collapses.

The firemen pull Jesse away from the burning house and down the front lawn. PARAMEDICS rush to his aid.

They put an oxygen mask over his face and lay him on a stretcher. As they roll him to the ambulance, Marco follows by Jesse's side.

Firemen continue to spray the hose onto the burning house. Or, what's left of it.

The paramedics check their straps one more time as Jesse looks at Marco.

The moon sits behind Marco's head like a halo.

JESSE
(faint)
You saved me...

The paramedics load Jesse into the back of the ambulance. Marco hops in his patrol car.

The ambulance ZOOMS off with SIRENS blaring. Marco's patrol car follows behind, SIRENS also on.

Police officers escort the neighbors away from the scene. Party's over.

Soon, firetrucks leave the scene. Then the other police cars.

The cul-de-sac is quiet once again. One house gone.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. HOSPITAL - PATIENT ROOM - DAY

Jesse lies in bed, asleep. Marco sits in a chair next to the bed, also asleep.

Jesse stirs awake and COUGHS quietly. Marco wakes up and smiles.

MARCO
Hey there.

JESSE
(weakly)
Hey.

MARCO
How are you feeling?

Jesse shrugs. Marco frowns.

MARCO (CONT'D)
You know I hate you right now. You almost got yourself killed.

JESSE
I had to.

MARCO
You didn't have to do anything, Jesse. What were you thinking?

JESSE
It was the house.

MARCO
It was cabin fever. You barely ever left the place. You were stressing out. It didn't help that that place had nothing but bad memories in it.

JESSE
That's not true.

MARCO
Then what was it?

Jesse COUGHS.

JESSE
Can we please not talk about this right now?

MARCO
When you're able to talk, there's a man here to question you. I've talked to him a little bit about what I know.

JESSE
What did you say?

Marco hesitates.

MARCO
I told him you needed help.

JESSE
You don't believe me.

Beat.

MARCO
I don't know what I believe.

JESSE
It really was the house.

Marco remains quiet and runs his fingers through Jesse's hair.

JESSE (CONT'D)
If you saw my mom's note...

MARCO
She wasn't stable. You know this.

Jesse remains quiet.

MARCO (CONT'D)
You know, you could be in serious trouble. For Christ's sake, you could be charged for this! If you're lucky, you'll just get community service.

Jesse looks away.

Marco runs his fingers through Jesse's hair once more.

MARCO (CONT'D)
Oh, and...

He grabs the Bible. He hands it to Jesse.

MARCO (CONT'D)
You dropped this as they pulled you from the house. Thought you'd might want it back.

Jesse opens the Bible and pulls out the wad of paper.

JESSE
Did you read this?

MARCO

No.

Jesse stares at the wad of paper before putting it back into the Bible.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Marco's patrol car glides down the street toward the cul-de-sac.

He stops in front of where the house once stood. The basement and crawlspace is a pit of ash and burnt remains. Smoke still smolders from some areas of the ashes.

Jesse and Marco get out of the car and begin to walk around the property. Jesse carries the Bible in his hand.

They stop at one point of the perimeter of the house.

MARCO

What are you thinking?

JESSE

I dunno. It feels different here. Better. Like something has finally been released.

MARCO

There was a lot of negative energy here. It lingered for a long time. It's got no place else to stay now. All of these bad memories are a thing of the past. A clean slate.

Jesse opens the Bible to the First Letter of Peter and takes the wad of paper out. He unfolds it.

MARCO (CONT'D)

What is it?

JESSE

It's another letter. To me. The day before she died.

He begins to read it.

HELEN (V.O.)

June 6, 2015. Dear Jesse, I am writing this letter to you, for myself.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - HELEN'S BEDROOM - DAY**FLASHBACK**

Helen (20s) stands in front of a mirror and admires her pregnant belly.

HELEN (V.O.)

I saw a light when I found out I was pregnant with you. I'd never been so happy in my life. I never thought I was going to be somebody, but then I became a mother.

Faint WHISPERS fade in and whirl around her. She looks around her empty room, aware of the voices.

HELEN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

That's when I also started to hear these...voices...

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - HELEN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT**FLASHBACK**

Helen sits upright in her bed. An alcohol bottle sits on the bedside table.

She stares down the hallway toward Jesse's bedroom.

Baby Jesse lies in his crib, asleep.

HELEN (V.O.)

They made me so afraid to hold you. I wanted to so bad. Why was I thinking these things? Such awful things!

Tears fall down her cheeks.

HELEN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

They would repeat--

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - JESSE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Helen BEATS Young Jesse (not seen) in a drunken fury.

HELEN (V.O.)

--"Hit him. Hit him. He deserves it. You hate him. Hit him. Do it. Do it. DO IT."

Young Jesse writhes on his bed in pain.

HELEN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
The only way to make It stop was to
obey It.

Helen backs away as she stares at Young Jesse, who looks at her with pleading eyes.

A quick, shocking FLASH of Young Jesse's face morphed as THE THING'S FACE.

Helen grits her teeth. She continues to BEAT Young Jesse.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - JESSE'S BEDROOM - DAY

FLASHBACK

Helen (30s) stands in the doorway and looks around the clean, undisturbed room.

HELEN (V.O.)
After you were taken away from me,
I locked your bedroom permanently.
It was the only way I could think
of to keep It from tormenting you
as It has with me.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

She locks Jesse's bedroom door from the inside, and then shuts the door. She tests the handle to make sure the door is locked.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - JESSE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

FLASHBACK

Helen (40s) sits at the desk in the corner. She admires Jesse's third grade photo.

HELEN (V.O.)
Last night, I had a dream that I
was in your bedroom, sitting at
your desk in the corner and
admiring your third grade school
picture. I heard someone walk in,
so I stood up and when I turned
around, I saw you as a child.

Helen stands up and turns around. Young Jesse (8) stands at the doorway. He looks frightened.

HELEN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 And you look so scared, and it made
 me so sad that that was how you saw
 me. How you always see me. As a
 monster.

Helen looks back at him, sad.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - HELEN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

FLASHBACK

Helen sits on the edge of her bed and CRIES.

HELEN (V.O.)
 It is a demon. It found me and It
 consumed me. It scared Trent away.
 It took you away from me. It ruined
 my life. I can never forgive myself
 for this. It is me. I am the demon.

She looks over at the open closet door, and the darkness
 that lies beyond it.

HELEN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 It hasn't said anything to me
 today. I think it's because It
 knows what I'm going to do.

INT. THE LAMBERT HOUSE - BASEMENT - UNKNOWN TIME

FLASHBACK

Helen walks down the staircase with a gas canister in her
 hand.

HELEN (V.O.)
 I'm going to destroy It.

She walks up to the crawlspace and opens the door flap. She
 hooks it to the ceiling, then looks inside the crawlspace.

HELEN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 I'm going to stand in front of the
 crawlspace where It lives and wait
 until It comes out and becomes me,
 and I'm going to destroy It.

She stares into the darkness, in a trance.

She holds the gas canister above her head...

...and begins to pour.

BACK TO PRESENT**EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY**

Jesse continues to read the letter. He cries.

HELEN (V.O.)

Jesse, you are my baby. You always will be, no matter what. I know I said and did terrible things to you, but that wasn't me. I want you to grow up happy. Please be a good person. I'm sorry that I wasn't. I love you so much. I hope you know this. I'm sorry. Please forgive me.

CLOSE UP: written at the bottom of the letter is the Bible entry: "*1 Peter 5:8*"

BACK TO SCENE

Marco caresses Jesse's shoulder.

JESSE

God, she just wanted to be happy. To be normal. To be somebody.

MARCO

I'm sorry, Jesse.

JESSE

Nobody deserved any of this.

MARCO

I know.

JESSE

I feel so guilty.

MARCO

Why?

JESSE

Because I've hated her all these years, when she suffered just as much as I did.

Jesse looks at the letter once more. Then he folds it up.

He kicks some ash away and uncovers glowing embers. He sticks the letters onto the embers. It catches fire.

Jesse tosses the burning papers into the pit of the basement.

JESSE (CONT'D)
That was the last thing left from
my past. That, and this.

He holds up the Bible, then pauses. He thinks for a moment.

He buries the Bible in the ashes.

Jesse SIGHS in relief, and looks at Marco. They smile at each other.

MARCO
You okay?

JESSE
Yeah. I think I'm going to be okay
from now on.

MARCO
C'mon.

Marco puts his arm around Jesse.

The two make their way back to the cars. They stop at Marco's patrol car.

MARCO (CONT'D)
When do you leave?

JESSE
Tomorrow morning.

MARCO
Keep in touch, okay?

JESSE
I will.

Beat.

JESSE (CONT'D)
It was really great seeing you,
Marco.

MARCO
You too, Polo.

Jesse smiles. He turns toward his car, but stops and turns back to Marco.

JESSE
Do you want to get dinner tonight?
My treat.

Marco smiles.

MARCO

I'd love to. I'd love to catch up
with you.

JESSE

Yeah, me too.

MARCO

And in return, I'll get you a room
for the night. No funny business
included.

He winks. Jesse smiles bashfully.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Jesse and Marco sit at a table and chat. The restaurant is
full.

DISSOLVE TO:

An empty restaurant with just Marco and Jesse.

The two continue to talk, laugh, catch up.

EXT. HOTEL - NIGHT

Jesse and Marco stand outside of the building. They embrace.

Marco kisses Jesse on the cheek. Jesse smiles shyly.

Marco waves goodbye as he walks away. Jesse watches him walk
to his patrol car.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

A beautiful, sunny day. Jesse drives through the cemetery.

MOMENTS LATER

Jesse stands at the gravesite that now blends in with the
rest of the grass. He lays a bouquet of flowers on the
gravesite.

JESSE

I love you, and I forgive you.

He bows his head and says a short, silent prayer.

JESSE (V.O.)

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world.

He stands for a moment longer at the gravesite. Then he turns and walks away.

JESSE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

This is for those in need of help but do not have the courage to speak. For those who call for help but fall on deaf ears. For those that seek help and are invisible to the eye. And for those who we've lost when help has come too late. You are not alone.

(beat)

We all have our demons. Sometimes they just happen to be real.

FADE OUT.

THE END