

WIDOW'S WALK

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FADE IN:

EXT. COAST - NIGHT

Moonless. Lightning cuts the darkness. Wind lashes a cliff. Waves crest on the shore. Briny foam reaches up to a HOUSE. Victorian. Forgotten. A salt stained memory crowned with a WIDOW'S WALK wrapped in a wrought iron balcony. Fog gathers. A lightning bolt illuminates boards nailed over a window. A faint amber glow within lights the gaps between the boards.

INT. FOYER - CONTINUOUS

A cobweb coated OIL PAINTING presides over a wide STAIRCASE.

OIL PAINTING:

Beach. EDWARD, 50s, Irish, steel eyed, stands behind DEBORAH, 30s, porcelain skin and blonde hair. MILES, 10, moon faced and benign, sits in a small WHEELCHAIR beside Deborah. A clipper ship holds station at sea in the background.

Edward wears a leather sword belt and CUTLASS.

A small bronze plaque at the base of the frame reads:

The Stantons. Bly's Cove. 1910. Family first. Family forever.

A MAN, 30s, sleeps in a wooden wheelchair. It is too small for him. It is the wheelchair from the painting. The man wears MODERN CASUAL attire.

The wheelchair rests against a BRASS POLE in the center of the FOYER. The pole extends up into the ceiling.

TEN RED CANDLES surround the wheelchair. The candles are arranged in a PERFECT CIRCLE. They shed light on the foyer's dingy checkered marble floor.

Silence. A candle flame waivers. Deborah draws a breath.

She is kneeling at the foot of the circle. Deborah looks at the sleeping man, her visage softens.

DEBORAH  
Miles, my angel.

The man shifts in the chair. The worn wicker seat creaks.

Deborah smiles and reaches out to him. A candle flickers. She retracts her hand. The flame steadies.

Deborah caresses a SILVER LOCKET that hangs around her neck.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)  
 (sings a lullaby) Shambling leaves  
 against our door...Heed not the  
 whispering breeze...Lonely waves  
 swallow the shore...Shades walk on  
 All Hallow's Eve.

The man stirs some.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)  
 (sings) Awake my angel, at my  
 breast...'Tis a mother's arms round  
 you...Make yourself a snug, warm  
 nest...Feel my love forever new.

The man opens his eyes. He pitches forward, eyes OPAQUE with a milky silver film, trembling hands grip the chair.

MAN (CHILD'S VOICE)  
 (whispers) Who's there?

Deborah smiles. A candle extinguishes on its own.

DEBORAH  
 It is me, darling.

MAN (CHILD'S VOICE)  
 Mommy? Is that you? Where are you?

DEBORAH  
 Yes, precious. I'm right here.

MAN (CHILD'S VOICE)  
 I'm scared of the dark, Mommy. He  
 comes back to hurt me when it's  
 dark.

The man reaches out. He breaks the plane of the circle. A candle flickers and goes dark. He retracts the hand.

DEBORAH  
 Be still, sweetheart.

MAN (CHILD'S VOICE)  
 Please don't let him hurt me. I  
 want to be good, Mommy. I'm sorry  
 I'm so weak.

The storm outside intensifies. The man shivers and whimpers.

DEBORAH

He does not see your strength, but  
I do, my child. I always have.

The man raises his forearms, palms outstretched.

MAN (CHILD'S VOICE)

My hands, frozen in stone in the  
cellar. Find the fire box. He's too  
strong in the dark, Mommy.

DEBORAH

Everything will be alright, the  
candles will keep you safe.

A candle goes dark. Seven of the ten still flicker bright.

MAN (CHILD'S VOICE)

Not for long. We need the light.

INT. CELLAR - CONTINUOUS

The wood plank door creaks open. Deborah holds a LANTERN in  
front of her. Stairs twist downward into darkness.

Deborah descends into the dank room.

A wind gust rattles the BULKHEAD on the far end of the  
cellar. The double door exit leads out into the storm.

Deborah raises the lantern to her face and scans the wall.

A thunder clap rattles the bulkhead. Deborah gasps and turns.

She scans the jagged rock wall. A smooth cement seam buffers  
the wall against the ceiling.

A lightning flash reveals the partial silhouette of a figure  
outside the bulkhead. Water flows in through the door cracks.

Deborah sees TWO LITTLE HAND PRINTS pressed into the cement.

DEBORAH

(to herself) Hands frozen in stone.

She notices a SQUARE SHAPED ROCK below the prints. Deborah  
runs her fingers along the edge of the rock.

Chunks of drift wood float in the shallow water like corpses.

Bang! The bulkhead shudders.

Deborah recoils and looks at the bulkhead.

BANG! The bulkhead double doors buckle.

She puts down the lantern and pulls on the rock.

INT. FOYER - CONTINUOUS

The man in the wheelchair cowers alone, his lips tremble.

MAN (CHILD'S VOICE)  
(whispers) Father has returned.

INT. CELLAR - CONTINUOUS

The bulkhead doors fly open!

A flash of lightning silhouettes Edward wielding a cutlass. Sea water drips off the blade. The cutlass glows a faint silver. Edward is a sea choked echo of the family portrait.

DEBORAH  
Please, leave us in peace.

Edward pauses, then descends into the cellar.

Deborah pulls on the rock hard, it's almost free.

Edward closes in on her. He raises the cutlass. Thunder clap.

Deborah sees a small TINDERBOX behind the rock.

She grabs the box and ducks the cutlass swing!

The blade hits the wall. Foamy sea water spills from the stones like blood from a fresh wound.

Deborah runs for the stairs. She pockets the tinderbox.

Edward hisses at her. Water oozes up the stairs in pursuit.

INT. FOYER - CONTINUOUS

Deborah bolts the cellar door shut.

A candle goes out. Six still glow. The man bites his lip.

Deborah returns to the circle. A bolt of lightning highlights the neglected family portrait over the staircase.

MAN (CHILD'S VOICE)  
Mommy?

DEBORAH  
Yes, darling, I'm here.

MAN (CHILD'S VOICE)  
Did you find the fire box?

Deborah pulls out the tinderbox and slides the top open.  
Inside the tin box is a FLINT and an IRON STRIKER.

DEBORAH  
Right where you said it would be.

Thud! Cellar door hinges shake.

Sea water seeps under the door and into the foyer.

A candle dies out. Five remain lit.

MAN (CHILD'S VOICE)  
I can feel the darkness. He's  
coming for both of us.

Thud! She shakes her head and sobs.

DEBORAH  
I know, my angel, I'm so sorry.

THUD! The door cracks.

Deborah chokes back tears and pockets the tinderbox.

She looks at the BRASS POLE extending up through the ceiling.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)  
Mommy is going to make the darkness  
go away, forever.

THUD! The door buckles.

Another candle goes dark. Four shine.

MAN (CHILD'S VOICE)  
Hurry Mommy!

THUD! The cellar door breaks.

Deborah crosses the foyer and runs up the STAIRCASE. She  
passes the family portrait and trips. Lightning flash.

The man screeches. Deborah looks down through the bannister.  
She sees Edward at the circle, cutlass poised to strike.

DEBORAH  
Edward!

She rises to her feet. Edward turns toward her.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)

Look at me, dear husband. I could not abide by you any more. So, I snuffed out the beacon. I wrecked your precious ship. I took your wicked pathetic life and dashed it on the rocks!

Edward's eyes glow bright with crimson hate.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)

I'm the one you want, Edward.

Edward moves toward the staircase. Deborah climbs the steps.

Water slithers across the marble floor and flanks the circle.

INT. WIDOW'S WALK - CONTINUOUS

The brass pole from the foyer rises into the center of the small square. Four salt stained windows expose the space. A wrought iron balcony surrounds it all.

A GLASS BEACON is fixed upon the large pole. A handle on each side can be turned. The beacon houses a large WICK.

A WOODEN ENTRY HATCH in the far corner opens. Deborah pulls herself up into the tiny space. She locks the hatch.

She opens the beacon and frays the wick some.

Deborah looks at the stormy seas and clutches her locket. She pulls out the tinderbox and removes the flint and striker.

Deborah raises the flint rock above the iron striker.

THRUNK! The hatch lifts a crack. The lock bolt holds.

She almost drops the flint. Deborah moves away from the hatch. She strikes flint to iron. Nothing.

THRUNK! The hatch shudders. The lock holds.

She sparks the flint, but the wick does not light.

DEBORAH

Please, light.

She strikes the flint. Nothing. Again. No spark.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)  
Please! Light!

THUNK! The hatch cracks. The lock bolt shudders.

Deborah drops the flint rock. It lands on top of the hatch.

Silence.

She kneels and reaches for the flint.

The cutlass blade pierces up through the wooden hatch!

Deborah recoils and screams.

INT. FOYER - CONTINUOUS

The man whimpers and trembles in the creaky wheelchair.

The water touches a CANDLE BASE. The flame dies out. Another base, another flame extinguished, only two left.

MAN (CHILD'S VOICE)  
The candles are dying! Mommy!

The water touches the wheelchair. The man stiffens.

INT. WIDOW'S WALK - CONTINUOUS

The cutlass oozes sea water on the hatch. The steel's silver aura illuminates the unearthly water.

Deborah grabs the flint and gets to her feet.

The hatch withers, as if it were under water for decades.

The wood groans and warps.

The lock bolt decays and pops off.

Deborah holds the striker by the wick and sparks the flint.

The hatch snaps open!

The striker ignites the wick.

Edward rises up through the hatch.

Deborah closes the beacon.

The amber glow strengthens.

Edward levels the cutlass at her, poised to strike.

Deborah turns the glowing beacon towards Edward.

DEBORAH  
Leave us alone!

Edward drives the blade deep into her torso!

The beacon glow blossoms into a white hot blast of light!

All four window panes shatter outward.

EXT. WIDOW'S WALK - CONTINUOUS

White columns of light cut through the stormy sky in all four directions.

Deborah falls and lands on the small balcony, the open wound oozes briny water and seaweed like fresh entrails.

Edward is thrown through the opposing window. He lands on the wrought iron spikes. His screams twist into primal cries. The impaled shape writhes and burns to ash.

The white shafts of light fade to an amber glow.

A thunder clap rumbles.

Waves collapse on the shore.

The soft light of the beacon pierces the darkness.

INT. FOYER - MOMENTS LATER

The shallow water recedes.

One candle is still burning.

Deborah kneels at the circle, her torso damp with sea water.

The man leans forward and reaches out to her. They touch.

MAN (CHILD'S VOICE)  
I don't feel the darkness, Mommy.

DEBORAH  
He can't hurt you anymore.

MAN (CHILD'S VOICE)  
Now we can be together?

DEBORAH

For as long as we want.

MAN (CHILD'S VOICE)

I'm so tired, can we sleep now?

DEBORAH

Yes, my angel, it's time to rest.

She exhales and releases her grip.

Deborah collapses.

The man slumps back into the wheelchair, eyes closed.

The last candle goes out. Darkness.

Wind and waves serenade the night.

Dawn's first light seeps into the foyer.

The man awakens. The milky film over his eyes is gone. They are now a deep blue, much like Deborah's.

MAN

(sings in a man's voice) Shambling  
leaves against our door...Heed not  
the whispering breeze...Lonely  
waves swallow the shore...Shades  
walk on All Hallow's Eve.

The man looks at the family portrait.

A CELL PHONE rings. The ringtone sounds like the lullaby.

The man pulls the phone from his pocket.

MAN (CONT'D)

(man's voice into the phone) Hello?

He smiles and nods.

MAN (CONT'D)

Of course, I know what day it is,  
dear. I haven't forgotten.

Deborah's body is gone. The silver locket is on the floor.

MAN (CONT'D)

A distant relative was in town for  
just one night and I wanted to help  
them resolve a very old family  
issue that's been bothering them.

The man rises from the wheelchair and leaves the circle.

MAN (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, but this was something I  
needed to do, for me too.

He picks up the silver locket and looks at it.

MAN (CONT'D)

I've been thinking a lot about what  
you said and you're right. It's  
time to let go of the past. So, why  
don't you call back that realtor  
and tell them to put the Bly estate  
on the market.

The man listens, then chuckles a bit.

MAN (CONT'D)

Yes, I mean it. It's not a trick.  
I'll be home soon, I love you.

Man ends the call and pockets the cell phone.

He walks over to the family portrait and looks at Deborah and  
Miles portrayed in oil.

A gentle breeze blows through the neglected foyer.

He opens the locket, the oval unfolds like a clam shell.

Inside one half is a PHOTOGRAPH:

Deborah and Miles. Happy. Safe. Together.

An INSCRIPTION on the opposing half reads:

May love's light always guide you home.

Traces of sunlight shine through the fading storm clouds.

DEBORAH (V.O.)

(sings) Sleep now my angel, at my  
breast... 'Tis your mother's arms  
round you... Make yourself a snug,  
warm nest... Feel my love forever  
new.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END