

EXT. MAINE - ISOLATED ISLAND - NIGHT

Howling wind drives rain at a steep angle and lashes the white pines covering the island. Occasional FLASHES OF LIGHTNING streak across the cloud-occluded sky and the THUNDER RUMBLES seconds behind it. Atop the hill dominating the island lie the ruins of a burned-out house. Only a stone fireplace sill stands amid the rubble and weeds.

EXT. RUNDOWN CABIN - NIGHT

The wood-frame cabin sits at the base of the hill and overlooks a small boat dock. The peaked roof sags at one end and the porch rails wobble in the wind. Yellow light from some oil lamps shines through the dirty windows.

EXT. DOCK - NIGHT

A dinghy powers through the wind-tossed waves and bangs to a stop at the dock. While GEORGE ties off the boat, MICHELLE climbs the short ladder. Both are in their 30s and of fading attractiveness.

She wraps a raincoat tighter around her and starts up the slightly angled ramp that leads up to the cabin entrance.

George clambers up the ladder onto the ramp and hurries to catch up to Susan.

GEORGE

Now isn't this better than going to that silly costume ball at the St. Pierre?

MICHELLE

Right, George. Meeting with my crazy brother instead of spending time with quality people is always on the top of my list.

GEORGE

I see your point, Michelle. By the way you looked very natural in that witch's costume you bought.

They step up onto the porch.

MICHELLE

And you looked quite at home in that tutu.

George goes up on his toes and holds his arms overhead.

GEORGE

I am light on my feet.

Michelle shakes her head in disgust and turns the door knob but it doesn't open. George puts his shoulder to it and the door scrapes open.

INT. CABIN - NIGHT

The room is only about 15 feet wide by 20 feet long but the few pieces of old furniture don't take up much room. Over the rear half of the room is a sleeping loft that's reached by a turning staircase at the back.

On the left is a small kitchen alcove that extends the cabin by another 5 feet, and next to it is a slightly-askew door that leads to the bathroom.

Against the back wall is a small fireplace that is sputtering to life with much smoke and a few sparks. Trying to bring it to life is a man in a wheelchair. PARKER is a year older than Michelle and has started putting on weight. He puts aside the tire iron he's using on the fire and spins the wheelchair around to face the newcomers.

PARKER

The happy couple arrives.

MICHELLE

Hah! I'm filing the papers next week. The only reason George is here is because I refuse to handle a boat in this storm.

She starts unbuttoning her raincoat while behind her George struggles to close the door.

GEORGE

Consider it the last thing I'll ever do for you, honey-bunny. Just think, Parker, you won't have to invite me to the family Thanksgiving dinners anymore.

PARKER

So then there is no downside to your divorce. How nice.

Michelle dumps her wet raincoat on one end of the couch and sits on the other end.

MICHELLE

So how'd you get out here, Porky?

PARKER

Believe it or not, there are people -- often referred to as "friends" -- who help you do things. And don't call me that name.

MICHELLE

Okay, Parker. Now would you mind telling me why I have to spend a tedious evening with you in this crap shack in this crap weather when I could be drinking expensive booze at the country club? I paid a lot of money for my costume.

PARKER

And here I forgot to buy candies for all the kids looking for treats. I hope they don't play any tricks on us.

George finally kicks the door shut and starts undoing his raincoat.

GEORGE

Any alcoholic beverages in this cozy little cottage?

PARKER

Try the cupboard in the kitchen.

MICHELLE

Porky -- I mean, my dear brother Parker, comes here once a year to drink himself blind. Don't you?

PARKER

Not tonight, dear sister.

George rummages through the cupboards.

GEORGE

What's so special about tonight?

PARKER

It's the anniversary of a friend's death. Way back when Michelle and I were still in high school.

George lets out a whoop when he finds a quart bottle of whiskey. Then he starts looking for glasses.

GEORGE

Don't mind me -- go on with the story.

Parker reaches down for a log from a wood holder and carefully places it in the fire.

PARKER

Her name was Sarah. Prettiest girl in school. She was coming over to pick up Michelle so they could go to the masked ball at the school gym -- we really do things up big out here in Maine, George.

George nods as he finds a glass and dusts it off.

GEORGE

Yes, I've heard Maine is often mistaken for the state of Texas.

PARKER

I would've taken Michelle and picked up Sarah at her place, but I was helping fix up the gym for the dance.

MICHELLE

Oh, God, do we have to re-live that horrible night again?

George puts a healthy dose of the medicine in the glass and gulps it down in one swallow.

GEORGE

Just what the doctor ordered. Can I get you folks one? Assuming I can find another glass or two.

Parker shakes his head. Michelle turns her nose up at him.

PARKER

She never made it here, according to Michelle. Next day they found the dinghy drifting in the bay. All they found in it were her clothes and purse.

George pours himself another slug of whiskey.

GEORGE

That sucks, man. Did you know her well?

PARKER

She was my girlfriend. And Michelle's best friend. Wasn't she, Michelle?

MICHELLE

Yes, she was. But for your information, Casanova, she had the hots for Danny O'Brien.

GEORGE

One of those triangle things, huh?

PARKER

More like a rectangle: Michelle had it "hot" for Danny, too.

GEORGE

Ah, my predecessor. Was he anything like me?

Michelle gives him a withering look.

MICHELLE

Not really. He was handsome and smart.

GEORGE

Ouch.

He finishes off his second glass and fills it again.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

So all they found were her clothes? That's bizarre.

Michelle crosses to George and takes the glass out of his hand.

MICHELLE

The police think she was putting on her costume in the dink to surprise me when she got here. They think a big wave hit the boat and knocked her overboard.

She knocks the glass back and swallows the contents at one gulp.

GEORGE

Man, that's friggin' sad. Uh, just out of morbid curiosity, what kind of costume was she going to wear?

PARKER

They never found out. Sarah wanted it to be a surprise. Not even her parents knew.

MICHELLE

She was coming as the bride of Frankenstein.

The men look at her strangely and her face hardens.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

I helped her with it, alright? She was my best friend.

PARKER

Was she?

MICHELLE

What the hell do you mean by that?

Parker holds his hand out and George gives him the bottle. He takes a drink straight from it, his eyes on Michelle the whole time.

PARKER

I visited mom last Sunday at the institute.

MICHELLE

Call it what it is, Porky. The nut house. Her brain's been scrambled for years.

PARKER

She's occasionally lucid. Last Sunday was one of those times.

He lets the silence drag out, until Michelle can't take it any longer.

MICHELLE

Well, what did she say?

PARKER

That night was stormy, just like tonight. She knew Sarah was coming over to pick up Michelle and she was worried about her. So mom had her binoculars trained on the dock.

Michelle breaks eye contact with Parker and turns her back to him.

MICHELLE

You can't believe anything she says. She was already losing it back then.

PARKER

I haven't told you what she said, yet.

George takes the bottle from Parker and refills his glass, then steps next to Michelle so he can see her face.

GEORGE

What did she say, Parker?

Parker moves his wheelchair so he flanks Michelle on the other side.

PARKER

Mom saw Michelle meet Sarah at the dock. Mom saw Michelle hit Sarah with something -- probably the fireplace tool -- we never saw it again after that night.

MICHELLE

You're insane. Just like mother.

She steps away from them, her breathing suddenly short, her eyes swivelling about as if looking for a way out.

PARKER

You really wanted Danny all for yourself, didn't you?

GEORGE

You killed your best friend?

MICHELLE

Oh, shut up. Danny was big and strong and he liked me. More than Sarah liked you, Porky.

Parker and George exchange glances, unable to believe what they're hearing.

GEORGE

Wow, did I marry a peach or what?

PARKER

That's why you never come back here on this "special" night, isn't it? You're scared.

Michelle lets out a brittle laugh, but she is scared.

MICHELLE

Don't be stupid, there's nothing to
be scared about. Maybe you believe
in ghosts, but I --

A FLASH OF LIGHTNING and a CRASH OF THUNDER rattle the cabin,
and in the momentary flare of light, through the window
nearest the door, they see the silhouette of a woman in a
wedding gown with a tall pile of hair on her head stepping
onto the porch.

In the preternatural silence that follows the thunder, they
hear a measured KNOCKING on the door. Then in a sweet soprano
voice:

SARAH (O.S.)

Trick or treat.

The three people back away from the door as it starts opening
with a TERRIFYING SCREECH.