

A WRITTEN DESCENT

By

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FADE IN

INT. DARK ROOM -- NIGHT

Almost pitch black. A figure lies on a table, its features are undefined. A light fills the room as a door opens.

A man walks down a staircase to the floor. He is a young ROOKIE OFFICER, 22. He flips a light switch but no light turns on.

ROOKIE OFFICER
(sniffs)
Christ... that smell.

The Rookie Officer takes out his flashlight. He shines it at the table. He glimpses the features of the figure. It is a man who has been severed in half, his bottom half is gone.

ROOKIE OFFICER
Fuck! Oh fuck!
(vomits)
Adams... Officer Adams!

The Rookie Officer runs back up the stairs. He leaves the door open.

ROOKIE OFFICER
Oh god... Officer Adams?

There is a sound of a police radio. Another figure begins to fade in from the darkness.

ROOKIE OFFICER
Officer down, officer down. Yeah...
uh, he's got a large cut down his
head. Another body is also in the
basement. How the fuck should I
know the person? He's uh... he's
been... just hurry, please!

The figure continues to slightly fade in. The features still aren't visible.

CUT TO BLACK

TITLE FADES IN OVER BLACK:

A WRITTEN DESCENT

TITLE FADES OUT

FADE IN

EXT. LONG CROSSROAD -- NIGHT

A figure stands in the center of a crossroad. Both ways are never-ending.

It notices another figure on the other road.

The figure runs as blood rains from the sky.

INT. LIVING ROOM -- DAY

ETHAN, 33, walks out of the house. He is a skinny, black-haired and timid man. He wears an old Johnny Cash shirt.

He chuckles as he thinks of the dream. Sweat comes down his face

EXT. TWO-STORY HOUSE -- DAY

He struts over to the driveway and picks up a newspaper. He turns to head back inside but takes a moment to breath in the air.

SUPER: MONDAY

Ethan takes out his smart phone and begins typing. A ringing comes from the phone.

ETHAN

Hey Dave.

DAVE (V.O.)

Well, Ethan Green, how have you been man?

ETHAN

I need some more sleep but besides that I couldn't be happier.

DAVE (V.O.)

How did the move go? Everyone make it there alive?

ETHAN

Eh, I had to give Grace some mouth-to-mouth to keep her going but yeah, we all made it. Michael's still trying to get used to the house but I guess that's to be expected when you drag your son to the middle of nowhere.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. BAR BATHROOM -- NIGHT

Ethan scrapes together two lines of cocaine on a sink. He presses his nose to the powder and snorts.

BACK TO:

INT. STUDY -- MORNING

Books line the walls of the room. A sculpture of tragedy and comedy sit on a wooden desk.

Dave sits in his study. He is an older man, 44, graying hair, on the larger side and glasses.

DAVE

He's only seven so it'll take a bit.

ETHAN (V.O.)

Yeah... I know, I just hope this move will be a positive thing for him. Moving a few states over, new neighbors, new friends. I just don't want it to be too tough for him.

DAVE

Hey, I moved there with my parents when I was nine. It's a nice town and I'm sure he'll find a way to adapt.

ETHAN (V.O.)

I guess I should think positive like you do.

EXT. TWO-STORY HOUSE -- DAY

Ethan walks back to the front door.

DAVE (V.O.)

It does wonders for the body. So
how are the meetings going.

ETHAN

(sigh)

I told you Dave, I stopped going.
I'm fine now, I don't need anymore
help. Two years was plenty for me.

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. BAR -- NIGHT

Ethan holds a beer bottle. He stumbles out of a wooden door.
He drops the bottle of beer.

He opens a cigarette box. He begins to smoke.

BACK TO:

EXT. TWO-STORY HOUSE -- DAY

Ethan sits on a porch chair.

DAVE (V.O.)

Well... just don't screw it all up,
okay?

ETHAN

I won't, I promise.

DAVE (V.O.)

(sigh)

Okay, I'll take that for now. So do
you think you can find some
inspiration for that next book up
there in the woods?

ETHAN

Not sure. Never ending forests
aren't the usual in my novels.

DAVE (V.O.)

Sorry mister "I only write serious
mystery novels." I'm sure you can
think of some crazy murder in the

(MORE)

DAVE (V.O.) (cont'd)
woods and some blow hard detective
goes searching for the killer.

ETHAN
(mocking)
Hey you haven't copyrighted that
yet have you?

DAVE (V.O.)
Very funny, tell Grace and Michael
I said hi.

ETHAN
Will do.

Ethan hangs up his phone. He opens the front door.

INT. KITCHEN -- DAY

The kitchen has a backdoor that leads into the backyard.
Ethan walks past his son MICHAEL, 7, same black hair, small
size and wide eyes. He wears a HULK shirt. He sits in front
of a television.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. CHILD'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

A younger Michael, 5, is slapped by a stumbling Ethan. He is
picked up by Ethan and shaken around.

ETHAN (CONTD)
Stop crying goddammit! Be a man!

Ethan slaps Michael again.

BACK TO:

INT. KITCHEN -- DAY

Ethan pulls him a few feet from the television.

ETHAN
Not too close buddy.

Ethan walks over to his wife GRACE, 30. She has blond hair
and a face that shows age from stress.

The window illuminates her as she washes dishes. Ethan walks
over and wraps his arms around her.

ETHAN

Do I tell you that your beautiful
too much?

GRACE

A little, but please don't stop.

ETHAN

Well then young lady, you are
beautiful.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT

Grace runs in and picks up Michael. Ethan and Grace yell at
each other. Ethan massages his forehead.

ETHAN

Make him shut the fuck up!

GRACE

Can you shut up! He's a kid! Christ
I can smell the alcohol on you!

BACK TO:

INT. KITCHEN -- DAY

Ethan kisses Grace on the lips. Michael turns away from the
television and looks at the two.

MICHAEL

Can you please do that when I'm not
in the same room.

Ethan walks over to Michael.

ETHAN

But then there's no fun because I
don't get to see you get
embarrassed.

MICHAEL

That's fun?

ETHAN

The best fun. I remember when you
were six I found you trying to kiss
little Eva in the backyard and you
got so embarrassed that you turned

(MORE)

ETHAN (cont'd)
 as red as a tomato! Hey I think
 it's working right now!

Michael slightly blushes. He realizes this and turns back to the television.

MICHAEL
 Shut up dad.

ETHAN
 Love you too kiddo. Hey honey, your
 bother says hi.

GRACE
 (putting dishes away)
 Really? Did he help you with your
 next book?

ETHAN
 What's the difference between
 helping and being a smart ass
 again?

Grace smiles and Ethan moves back to her. He kisses her on the cheeks.

Ethan glances over to a bottle of rum.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. BATHROOM -- NIGHT

Grace runs to a bathtub with a bottle in her hand. She dumps out the alcohol in the bottle.

Ethan rushes in after her. He grabs onto Grace. They struggle as Ethan reaches for the bottle.

BACK TO:

INT. KITCHEN -- DAY

ETHAN
 So any luck with that job over at
 the store?

GRACE
 Oh yeah, eleven dollars an hour to
 take groceries. Every girls dream
 come true.

ETHAN
Hey it'll only be for a little
while.

GRACE
(smiles)
Promise?

ETHAN
Promise.

GRACE
So did you write anything last
night?

ETHAN
You would be proud, a full three
pages!

GRACE
I smell a bestseller on the way.

Michael walks over and puts a dish into the sink.

MICHAEL
What's the book going to be about
dad?

ETHAN
Well... I'm not to sure right now,
I have the main character and
setup... I just don't know where to
go. But I'm sure it'll be great!

GRACE
Is the main character a writer?

ETHAN
No, a little to Murder, She Wrote.
Nobody likes to read about a writer
for four hundred pages.

Grace hugs Ethan.

GRACE
Well I think writer's are
fascinating, I just got one that
happened to be sexy.

MICHAEL
Will this one make money dad?

ETHAN

Michael, the other one made plenty of money, just not enough for the old home, so we moved here. I get some extra inspiration and you get the biggest backyard a kid could ask for.

MICHAEL

It is pretty big...

ETHAN

Yeah, just don't go to far, the woods are so large here we'd never find you. Promise?

MICHAEL

(sigh)

Promise. But you have to make me a tree house this weekend.

ETHAN

Anything for you bud.

MICHAEL

What are you going to write about?

ETHAN

Honestly... I'm not sure yet!

INT. BEDROOM -- NIGHT

The bedroom is lighted by a small lamp next to the bed. Ethan shaves his face in the bathroom. Grace lies in bed.

ETHAN

Hey, so is this mirror going to be fixed?

GRACE

I don't think you can fix these mirrors, there are way to many cracks.

ETHAN

I think we should consider suing the movers. They see fragile on it and they continue to break every single mirror we own.

GRACE

What makes you think it was the movers?

ETHAN

Who else touched our stuff?

Ethan washes off his face.

GRACE

Are you coming to bed tonight?

ETHAN

(still shaving)

Well... I would like to get about two more pages done tonight.

(ironically)

My inspiration is flowing here.

(walks to bed)

Maybe I'll have a book done in five years, I'll be writing it on napkins because we had to sell everything else.

Grace turns over to face Ethan. He's on his knees next to the bed.

GRACE

Don't joke about that please.

ETHAN

It might as well be true... I can't support my son or my wife because I have writers block. Pathetic right?

Grace leans in and kisses him.

GRACE

Only a little. Don't beat yourself up so much. I can support us for a while and I know you can finish your book in no time. I mean how long did it take you to write Grappler?

ETHAN

First draft was done in two months. Published only a year later to great reviews and mediocre sales!

GRACE

But you want too know something?

ETHAN

What?

GRACE

No matter how long it takes to finish this I'll never stop loving you... and neither will Michael.

ETHAN

I just hope I can promise him a happy life.

GRACE

He has a happy life now because you're with us. After you finished your first book you spent all of your time with us. I don't think he wants anything but his dad to be there for him... and you have.

ETHAN

God I love you.

GRACE

Now go write so you can come to bed with me!

ETHAN

Yes sir!

INT. WRITING ROOM -- NIGHT

There is a laptop on a desk in the corner of the room. There is a small television set on the floor. Ethan sits down and turns on his computer.

There are birthday cards on the desk. One writes "Happy 2nd Birthday E! Stay clean!"

A small group of key chains line the wall. They have the writing "NA" on them.

He begins unpacking boxes and puts up posters of films. He pulls out a few copies of his first book "Grappler." He puts them on the computer table. The clock next to them says 9:38.

He takes out his phone and calls Dave.

DAVE (V.O.)

Hey Ethan! How's the writing?

ETHAN

You want the truth? I'm two pages in and I have a tremendous case of writers block.

DAVE (V.O.)

Well don't lose hope, it happens to the best of us.

ETHAN

How are the sales going for Grappler?

INT. STUDY -- NIGHT

Dave look on his computer. He drinks from his coffee mug.

DAVE

Well it's picked up from last week but I'm not going to give you the numbers.

ETHAN (V.O.)

Why not?

DAVE

It's not good for one of my friends to wallow in the past, okay?

ETHAN (V.O.)

I don't think it's good for my friend turned agent to withhold my sales.

DAVE

Listen, I'm not trying to be a dick here okay? I want to help my brother-in-law and I think it's best if you don't know right now. Trying to think about sales is not going to help your writers block.

INT. WRITING ROOM -- NIGHT

Ethan sits in front of the computer. He looks over at his copies of "Grappler."

ETHAN

(beat)

Yeah well neither is being dirt poor and unable to support my own family.

DAVE (V.O.)

Come on man don't act like that.

ETHAN

Sorry Dave... I don't mean to be a jerk about this. I just hoped I'd have some money to support Grace and Michael.

DAVE (V.O.)

It's just not in the cards right now I guess. I'm sure with this next book, sales will be fantastic and maybe Grappler will make a few more than usual.

Ethan picks up a pencil. He twirls it around his fingers.

ETHAN

Listen Dave... could you maybe lend me-

DAVE (V.O.)

No Ethan, I told you that it was the last time. I'm sorry but if you're in such financial straits you should consider a small side job.

ETHAN

I... I just can't.

DAVE (V.O.)

You can't keep lying to her. Either you tell her or I will. I'm sorry but if that's the way it needs to be.

ETHAN

It won't Dave, I promise.

DAVE (V.O.)

Good. Now after all of that negative talk, I've got good news. Tomorrow morning a man named Herb Dual is going to call you.

ETHAN

And who is this Mr. Dual?

DAVE (V.O.)

Manager of a book distribution company. He says he's very

(MORE)

DAVE (V.O.) (cont'd)
interested in acquiring you. It means he'll pay us up front instead of going off of sales like we have been.

ETHAN
But why would he want to talk to me? The business thing is more your strong suit.

DAVE (V.O.)
Well Mr. Dual is a little different. He would like to have a conversation with you. To see if he likes you or not. He's a little old so just humor the man and be who you are.

ETHAN
(mocking)
A dirt poor idiot who's putting his family life in danger because he never wants to work a regular job.

DAVE (V.O.)
Oh shut up Ethan. You know what I mean. So talk to you later?

ETHAN
Always Mr. Agent!

DAVE (V.O.)
Good, keep that ringer on tomorrow.

INT. WRITING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

The clock shows 11:26. Ethan slowly types on his computer. The page count says Page 5 of 5. Ethan stops typing and leans back.

ETHAN
(beat)
Coffee break.

INT. KITCHEN -- NIGHT

Ethan walks to the kitchen. He starts up the coffee maker. He looks out of the kitchen window to the forest in the backyard.

He stares into the forest and sees a branch break off of a tree. Startled Ethan turns on the back light. He looks around the cupboard and pulls out a flashlight.

He opens the backdoor and goes into the backyard. He moves the light over the woods searching for any movement.

EXT. BACKYARD -- NIGHT

The backyard leads into a dark forest.

ETHAN

Hello?

Ethan grabs a baseball bat lying on the back door. He walks over to where the branch had fallen over. He moves the flashlight over it.

The branch appears to have naturally fallen off from a fungus. Ethan breathes out relieved. Suddenly a twig breaks.

He moves the flashlight farther down into the woods. Ethan begins to move deeper into the woods.

ETHAN

Hello? Listen, if there's someone there-

Ethan trips and slides down a small hill. His phone leaps out of his pants onto the ground. It slides down the wet leaves. Ethan lands on the ground.

The light lands near him and illuminates the area in front of him. Ethan jumps and gasps when he sees a squirrel. The squirrel, startled, runs into the woods.

ETHAN

It's just a squirrel, Ethan. Just a squirrel.

Ethan reaches for his phone as it's sliding closer to a pond. He makes a grab but misses and the phone falls into the pond.

Ethan makes a grab into the water. He pulls out the phone, water drips off of it.

Ethan breathes. He looks into the pond. A small figure appears at the bottom. Ethan jumps and splashes the water. The small figure disappears.

He picks up the flashlight and baseball bat.

INT. KITCHEN -- NIGHT

Ethan walks in and puts the flashlight and bat down. He pulls out a towel and begins dry off his phone. He holds down on a button but the phone won't turn on.

ETHAN

Crap.

Ethan kicks a table and hurts his foot.

ETHAN

Oh Jesus.

INT. BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Ethan puts on a new pair of clothes. He crawls into his side of the bed. Grace's arm wraps around his body.

GRACE

(sleepily)

How many pages honey.

ETHAN

I... only got three done tonight.

GRACE

(sleepily)

It's okay... maybe tomorrow.

ETHAN

I uh... I may have broken my phone.

GRACE

(beat)

I guess we'll get a new one tomorrow.

ETHAN

Yeah.

Ethan begins to open his mouth.

ETHAN

I don't think we should spend anymore-

Ethan shuts his lips to stop himself.

GRACE

(sleepily)

What was that?

ETHAN
(beat)
Nothing... I love you.

GRACE
(sleepily)
I love you too babe.

INT. MOVING VAN -- MORNING

The family van pulls up in front of an elementary school. Michael opens the back van door and is about to jump out.

SUPER: TUESDAY

ETHAN
Hey young man, where do you think you're going? Kiss your mother.

MICHAEL
Dad...

ETHAN
(smiles)
Do it.

Michael kisses Grace and leaves the car.

GRACE
(smiles)
Why do you do that to him?

ETHAN
Because I love embarrassing him.

The van pulls away and it drives down the street.

GRACE
So... about you're phone.

ETHAN
Well I dropped it in a pond.

GRACE
How did it end up in a pond.

ETHAN
I went into the woods and a squirrel scared the... well, it scared me. Making me drop my phone.

GRACE
A squirrel?

ETHAN
It was a big squirrel.

The van stops in front of a supermarket.

GRACE
Well I guess your interrogations
over for today.

ETHAN
But I was hoping we'd get to the
bad cop routine.

GRACE
Not today. I'll see you tonight,
with a new phone I hope.

ETHAN
Love you.

Grace closes the door. She struts to the store. She turns
and blows Ethan a kiss.

INT. ELECTRONICS STORE -- DAY

Ethan looks around at many phones. An ATTENDANT walks to
him.

ATTENDANT
Looking for something?

ETHAN
Um... yeah do you maybe have a...
cheaper phone than what's here?

ATTENDANT
We do sell used phones, follow me.

The two walk to the front of the store. The Attendant goes
behind a return table. He digs around and pulls out a
smartphone.

ATTENDANT
It's about three years old but
it'll get the job done.

ETHAN
How much?

ATTENDANT

One fifty.

ETHAN

Can you go one twenty?

ATTENDANT

(beat)

Alright, this things been in holding for a while, boss will be happy that I got rid of it.

ETHAN

You're the best...

(looks at name tag)

Phil!

PHIL

No problem sir.

EXT. HOUSE -- DAY

The van pulls into the driveway of the house. A person walks up to Ethan as he gets out of his car. Robert is 67.

ROBERT

Nice to meet you son.

ETHAN

(hesitant)

Nice to meet you too...

Robert looks at him confused and smiles.

ROBERT

Oh right... my names Robert. I'm your neighbor.

ETHAN

Hello Robert, I'm Ethan.

ROBERT

I take it by the van you have a family.

ETHAN

Good guess, my wife's Grace and my son is Michael. I'll be getting them this afternoon.

ROBERT
So you bought the house...
surprising.

ETHAN
(beat)
Why's that?

ROBERT
Well I thought someone told you
already. Murders happened in there.

Ethan looks at him with a spark of interest.

ETHAN
Really? When was this?

ROBERT
Only about a year ago. Man rented
the house and kidnapped these
random people throughout the town.
He did some terrible things to
them... horrible things.

ETHAN
Like what?

Robert looks confused by the question.

ROBERT
Why the hell would you want to
know?

ETHAN
Well I'm a crime writer and this
... peaks my interest.

ROBERT
Oh, a writer! Well sorry to say
that the police kept most of that
stuff locked up. Good reason for
that I suppose.

ETHAN
Good reason?

ROBERT
Well we don't want any copycats
running around. Kids these days can
be pretty fucked up.

Ethan looks up at his house and back to Robert.

ETHAN

(smiles)

I guess. I need to start getting back to writing so I'll see you around Robert.

ROBERT

(smiles)

Well, it was nice meeting you Ethan.

INT. WRITING ROOM -- DAY

Ethan sits. He stares at the computer screen.

ETHAN

(sigh)

Nope, not going to work out at all.

Ethan hits the delete button. The words and page numbers go down. Ethan huddles in his chair.

ETHAN

Come on Ethan, think!

Ethan leans back in his chair. He pulls out his phone. He scrolls through the pages. He taps the contact numbers. There is one single number on the phone.

ETHAN

Someone forgot to delete their number.

He almost hits the home button but stops. He puts his thumb over the call button. Ethan smiles slyly. He taps the call button.

He moves the phone over his ear. The phone rings. Ethan looks around his room. The phone rings. He stares at the computer screen. The phone rings. Then utter silence.

There is a sound of breathing in the phone.

ETHAN

Um... hello?

The breathing stops. Ethan looks confused. Suddenly a loud scream pours out of the phone.

ETHAN

Jesus Christ!

Ethan drops the phone. He stares at it. He slowly gets out of his chair and picks up the phone. Ethan puts the phone back to his ear.

ETHAN

What the hell was that?

He waits for a reply. The breathing continues.

VOICE

(breath)

Found you.

The phone hangs up.

PHONE SERVICE

Connection terminated.

Ethan leans back in his chair.

ETHAN

What is wrong with people?

Suddenly his phone vibrates. He looks at it. He receives a text message from the same number. He opens up the text and a single image appears.

The picture shows a BALD MAN tied to a chair. The man is naked and has a long cut from his head to his stomach. There is a slash across his neck, the blood has already dried.

Ethan stares at the picture. He is repulsed by the image. His phone vibrates again. A video is attached.

He pulls out a cable. He attaches the cable between his phone and computer. Ethan hesitantly touches the play button. The video starts.

INT. BATHROOM -- NIGHT

The sound of music is clear but a greater sound of a mans cries break through. The same Bald Man is tied to a chair.

BALD MAN

What... what do you want?

A hand holding a blade rises into view.

BALD MAN

No... please no.

The blade slashes across his neck.

INT. WRITING ROOM -- DAY

Ethan averts his view from the video. The mans grumbled shouts can be heard. Ethan looks back at the video. He immediately turns away as another slash is made.

Ethan closes the video. He puts his hand over his mouth. He looks at the phone. His eyes drift to the copies of Grappler on his desk.

ETHAN

Police.

He picks up the phone and types 911. The phone rings and he looks over to the books. He looks at a picture of Grace and Michael. He stops the call.

ETHAN

Maybe an idea has sparked in your mind, Mr. Green.

Ethan stands up and pushes back his chair.

ETHAN

Elderly detective is on the search for a mysterious killer. The killer has a fascination with cutting people... diagonally.

(smiles)

A bestseller in the making. The critics love it. "Ethan Green's best work."

Ethan sits back down in his chair. He leans toward his keyboard and begins typing.

The page number goes up and up. It stops at 17.

Ethan leans back and smiles. He picks up his phone.

ETHAN

Inspiration in a psychopaths pictures.

He smiles and puts the phone down.

ETHAN

(sigh)

Just perfect.

(beat)

Mr. Dual!

Ethan quickly calls Dave's number. The phone rings. Dave answers with a sigh.

DAVE

Dammit Ethan I'm trying to help you! What happened? I've been calling for the past two hours.

ETHAN

Dave listen. I know I missed the meeting. My phone broke last night so I got a new one. I forgot to call you this morning because I... found my inspiration.

DAVE

Well I guess this wasn't a total lose. How many pages?

ETHAN

You'll never believe it... seventeen.

DAVE

You're right, I don't believe you. Send them to me.

The phone hangs up. Ethan sends Dave the pages. The clock shows 10:36 a.m.

DISSOLVE TO:

The clock shows 11:32 a.m. Ethan is in the kitchen. He drinks coffee when his phone rings. He answers it.

ETHAN

Good, right?

KILLER

Hello.

ETHAN

(beat)

Who is this?

KILLER

I think you know who this is.

ETHAN

Him?

KILLER

The killer? Yes.

ETHAN

Why are you calling me?

KILLER

I want to know who the man I send my artwork to is. Now I do.

ETHAN

Congratulations. Now don't call me ever again or I will call the police.

KILLER

No you won't. You don't want to lose your inspiration do you? Think about how disappointed Grace and Michael will be.

ETHAN

How the hell do you know about them?

KILLER

A fan has to know everything about his favorite writer. That's all you need to know for now Mr. Green. I know this art of mine is very different from what you're used to, novels and all of that. Honestly though, how do you like my pictures?

ETHAN

I think you're a disgusting human being who should consider not talking to me again.

KILLER

(sigh)

I was afraid you'd feel that way. It's a shame though... I had many more pictures to give you your rather disturbed inspiration.

Ethan leans back. He glimpses at the computer to the page count, 17.

ETHAN

(angered)

What do you want, your name on the dedication page?

KILLER

Mr. Green, tut tut. I don't want an attitude, it's ill advised with me. No, I want you to show the people who I am.

ETHAN

I guess I have my killer then.

KILLER

Yes... I suppose you do. Expect more from me soon.

The Killer hangs up the phone. Ethan stares at his phone in disbelief.

ETHAN

What the hell am I thinking?

INT. KITCHEN -- DAY

Ethan walks over to a cabinet. He takes out a bottle of rum. He finds a small glass and fills it with the rum.

He puts the glass to his lips and drinks. He finishes the drink and puts the glass onto the table. He takes out his phone and types in a number.

The number is 911. He hovers his hand over the call button. He locks the phone and puts it into his pocket. The phone rings.

Ethan answers it.

DAVE

Well I read the pages.

ETHAN

And?

DAVE

Have I ever told you you're my favorite brother-in-law?

ETHAN

Once or twice.

DAVE

Well you are. You have a great start here.

ETHAN

Thanks.

DAVE

Yeah that gore scene though... you went into some graphic detail. Almost like you have a picture of it.

Ethan's eyes widen.

ETHAN

(beat)

Well... actually...

He looks at the rum bottle.

ETHAN

I just have a good imagination.

DAVE

With imagination like this I smell controversy. But today, controversy sells, so keep running that imagination.

ETHAN

You bet.

DAVE

Don't pull out the rum bottle yet. You have about three hundred more pages to write before I can sell this to the masses.

ETHAN

Yeah... I can wait for the celebration.

INT. BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Ethan lies in bed with Grace. He leans over to her.

ETHAN

So Grace, guess what.

Grace turns to face him.

GRACE

What?

ETHAN

I finally got over my block. I
wrote seventeen pages today.

GRACE

(smile)

Great job babe. I knew you could do
it.

EXT. LONG CROSSROAD -- NIGHT

Ethan stands at the center of the road. He looks around at
the roads. Both ways have no end. A figure stands at one of
the roads.

Ethan suddenly moves his legs. He looks down as if he can't
control them.

His hand reaches into his pocket. It pulls out a long knife.
He continues to run at the figure.

EXT. STREET -- NIGHT

Ethan opens his eyes. He looks around to see he is on his
street. He looks over to see his house.

Ethan wipes his face with his hand. Red blood wipes on his
face. He looks at his hands, both of them are covered in
blood.

INT. BATHROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Ethan runs into the bathroom. He washes his hands off
quickly.

ETHAN

(whisper)

Jesus... what the hell? What the
hell happened?

The medicine cabinet is open. He glances at a white bottle.
He stares for a short time.

A quick flash of one of the pictures appears. He hurriedly,
as if in pain, averts his eyes from the bottle.

INT. WRITING ROOM -- DAY

SUPER: WEDNESDAY

The clock says 4:00 p.m. The rum bottle is next to the clock, almost half of it is gone. Ethan's hair is disheveled.

Ethan rapidly types on his computer. The front door to the house opens. Ethan looks at the clock.

ETHAN

Dammit.

INT. LIVING ROOM -- DAY

Ethan walks out to the front door. Grace puts her purse on the couch. Michael glimpses at Ethan and walks to his room.

ETHAN

Grace, I'm sorry.

GRACE

(beat)

I waited for one hour after work, Michael waited two. I had to ask one of the other workers to drive me home.

ETHAN

Grace... I found my inspiration and I just got lost in it. I've been writing for the past six hours and I've finished nearly fifty pages. Fifty.

GRACE

Well that's fine and dandy but I just wish you'd remember you have a family.

ETHAN

I know. I promise it won't happen again, okay?

Grace stares at him for a minute.

GRACE

Never again?

ETHAN

Never.

GRACE

(sighs)

You have been forgiven. But you
might need to work on your son.

ETHAN

Right.

INT. MICHAEL'S BEDROOM -- DAY

Michael lies in his bed. Ethan opens the door. He sits on
the bed next to Michael. Michael turns away.

ETHAN

Hey buddy.

Michael stays silent.

ETHAN

(sighs)

I take it your mad. I'm sorry son,
I just got... sidetracked. It won't
happen again.

Michael still looks away. Ethan leans over and kisses him on
the cheek.

ETHAN

I'm sorry bud. I love you.

Ethan walks out the door and starts to close it.

MICHAEL

I love you too dad.

Ethan stops the door. He slightly smiles then closes the
door.

INT. KITCHEN -- DAY

Grace cooks food on the stove. Ethan walks over to her.

GRACE

So fifty pages in a day. Must be
some record right.

ETHAN

Don't know about that but I do know my hand aches like hell. Might just take it easy tonight.

Grace looks at Ethan, unconvinced.

GRACE

You're a terrible liar. You'll be up all night working on your book. Do you ever sleep?

ETHAN

Only when there's a cute girl in my bed.

GRACE

Oh, Mr. Green! You sure know how to compliment a girl.

ETHAN

With that attitude I'd that you aren't angry with me?

GRACE

I suppose. Mistakes happen to people all the time. I understand, you got so wrapped up in your writing that you just spaced out.

ETHAN

I'll try to make sure it never happens again honey.

GRACE

We should really consider having two cars. Make life a lot easier.

ETHAN

Well... we can wait until we have a better standing in the world of money.

GRACE

We have a good standing now right?

ETHAN

(beat)

Yes, but I mean a better standing.

GRACE

Don't scare me like that, okay? The way you said it implied we were dirt poor.

Grace looks over to Ethan.

GRACE
You'd tell me if we were in some
financial trouble, right?

ETHAN
(stutters)
Yes, of course I would Grace.

Grace looks suspiciously at him. She smiles.

GRACE
Well, good!

Ethan walks to his writing room. Grace looks in a cupboard.

GRACE
Hey, didn't we have a whole bottle
of rum?

ETHAN
I don't think so.

GRACE
Weird, I could of sworn I bought
some. I hope you like flavorless
pork chops.

ETHAN
My favorite!

INT. KITCHEN -- NIGHT

Michael and Grace eat together in the kitchen. Ethan walks over to them. He sits down and puts the food onto his plate.

GRACE
Thought you would be writing.

ETHAN
I've always got time for my family.

Grace smiles. They all eat together and Ethan's phone vibrates. He stands and goes into the hallway.

ETHAN
Hello?

VOICE
How's the pork chops?

Ethan stops the call.

INT. WRITING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Ethan leaves the phone on the desk. He walks back to the kitchen. The phone vibrates again. The clock shows 6:33 p.m.

DISSOLVE TO:

The phone vibrates. The clock shows the time 7:20 p.m. Laughter can be heard from the kitchen.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT

Ethan, Grace and Michael are sitting on the couch watching television. "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" is playing. Michael stares, enthralled by the movie.

MICHAEL

So, was one good and the other evil or what?

ETHAN

Well, one idea is that Dr. Jekyll is trying to hide his inner evil and that Mt. Hyde was his hidden evil realized. All people have both good and evil in them.

MICHAEL

What's the other idea?

ETHAN

That in any person there is a civilized side and an animalistic side. They're just different sides of the same person. Dr. Jekyll is just Mr. Hyde repressed, afraid of the consequences from civilized society. Mr. Hyde is that repressed emotion released.

Michael shakes his head in agreement.

MICHAEL

(smiles)

I don't really get it dad.

ETHAN

(smiles)

No, I didn't think you would. Maybe when you're a little older.

GRACE

Told you we should of watched
something he would like.

MICHAEL

Mom... I like it, I just understand
all of it.

Ethan looks at his watch.

ETHAN

You know what you do understand
though?

MICHAEL

What?

ETHAN

It's bedtime. Go brush your teeth.

MICHAEL

Come on, one more hour?

ETHAN

(smiles)

Go.

Michael walks to the bathroom. Grace kisses Ethan on the
cheek.

GRACE

That was interesting. Who would of
thought you knew so much about Dr.
Jekyll?

ETHAN

A writer has to know something
about classic literature.

GRACE

(smiles)

Here's hoping your books will be
classic literature in the future!

ETHAN

With a slight change.

GRACE

What would that be?

ETHAN

I would like to be famous before I
die.

INT. WRITING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

The light turns on. The clock shows 10:02 p.m. Ethan walks over to his desk and picks up the phone. The phone shows thirteen missed calls.

ETHAN
Go screw yourself buddy.

INT. BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Ethan crawls into bed. Grace turns over to face him.

GRACE
No writing tonight?

ETHAN
I'm taking your advice. I need some rest. My hand aches pretty badly.

GRACE
Want me to kiss it and make it better?

ETHAN
(smiles)
Please do.

Grace grabs his hand and kisses it. She moves her lips over to his own. They kiss passionately.

EXT. HOUSE -- DAY

SUPER: THURSDAY

Grace and Michael are in the car. Ethan walks up to the car window to Grace.

ETHAN
Thanks for doing this Grace.

GRACE
Your welcome. But you will get back to driving us once the book is finished.

ETHAN
(smiles)
Promise. See you later buddy.

MICHAEL

Bye dad.

The car backs up and they drive out of view.

INT. WRITING ROOM -- DAY

Ethan picks up his phone. He notices the thirteen missed calls. The phone instantly starts ringing.

ETHAN

Hello?

KILLER

If you ever fucking do that again I will kill you and your family so slowly that-

(beat)

I'm sorry Mr. Green, but please do not do that again or I will be forced to take... undesirable action.

ETHAN

Well I wanted to be with my family so I'm sorry that I didn't feel like writing.

KILLER

Didn't "feel" like it?

ETHAN

Listen to me.

KILLER

No, you fucking listen! I feel like killing someone because you didn't "feel" like writing. How would that make you "feel," Mr. Green?

ETHAN

Listen... fine I'll keep writing.

KILLER

Oh that's not enough. You have to promise to keep writing my story. You won't stop until it's done. Understand?

ETHAN

But-

KILLER

There's no fucking but about it!
Either you agree or I'm going to
kill your little family.

Ethan rubs his forehead.

ETHAN

Dammit... okay, I'll do it.

KILLER

Good to hear, Mr. Green. Now get
started.

The phone hangs up. Ethan puts the phone down. He cries into his hands. The phone vibrates, a new picture.

Some type of animal has been brutally killed. The body is too beaten to know what species it is.

Ethan quickly runs out of the room.

INT. BATHROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Ethan runs to the toilet. He opens up the lid. He throws up into it.

He stands over the sink and washes his face. He looks into the broken mirror.

ETHAN

Come on Ethan... you've got to do
this.

He opens the cabinet. He grabs the bottle. He turns it over revealing the words "Oxycontin."

He puts the bottle back.

ETHAN

You're better than that.

INT. WRITING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Ethan sits down in his chair. He pulls out the bottle of rum and a small glass. He pours out a drink. He types onto his keyboard.

The phone vibrates, more pictures arrive. Ethan continues to type. One more picture arrives. As Ethan is about to check it, the doorbell rings. The clock shows 11:16 a.m.

INT. LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Ethan opens the door. Robert looks around the driveway. Robert almost jumps when Ethan opens the door.

ROBERT

Jeez, don't spook an old man like that.

ETHAN

Robert, how have you been?

ROBERT

Fine, getting older. So how's the book coming along?

ETHAN

Really well. Just finished page seventy-one, it's only taken me two days.

ROBERT

Impressive. Then again, I don't write so you could be going slow as hell and you'd still impress me.

ETHAN

(chuckles)

I suppose.

Ethan looks at Robert's left hand. He is holding a bottle of Jack Daniel's whiskey. Robert notices.

ROBERT

Oh, this little baby right here? It's a welcome to the neighborhood present! Do you drink?

ETHAN

Well I-

ROBERT

If not, I have no problem with buying you some soda. Save me a pretty penny.

ETHAN

No I do, just don't tell the wife.

Robert throws the bottle to Ethan. Ethan clumsily catches it.

ROBERT
Consider it our secret.

INT. LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Ethan and Robert talk to each other on the couch. Half of the Jack Daniel's bottle is gone.

ROBERT
So I complimented her rather busty body and two years later we're married! Thirty-five years together.

ETHAN
Wow, that's pretty impressive.

ROBERT
How long have you and Grace been together?

ETHAN
Uh... ten years next January. I met her at a friends party. We had a good night. Dated for a few years and she got pregnant.

ROBERT
You didn't feel obliged to marry her did you?

ETHAN
No, nothing like that. I loved her enough that the pregnant part was more of a reason to ask her to marry me a little bit quicker.

ROBERT
You still love her now don't you?

ETHAN
Of course I do. I mean we have fights like anyone else.

ROBERT
Well I have the cure for that.

ETHAN
Cure for making your wife angry?

Robert leans towards Ethan.

ROBERT
Sing to her, and then dance. My
wife Dana loved that stuff.

ETHAN
You do know how cheesy that sounds?

ROBERT
Believe me, I do. But for some
reason it actually works. Some
women fall for the cheesy stuff.

ETHAN
I'll have to give it a try when I
accidentally piss her off.

ROBERT
Good idea.
(stands)
So until next time.

ETHAN
Going already?

ROBERT
Already? We've been chatting and
drinking for a long time. It's 1:30
right now Ethan.

ETHAN
Okay, but visit again tomorrow,
okay?

ROBERT
You bet.

INT. KITCHEN -- NIGHT

Michael sits at the dining table. Grace walks over with a
bowl of macaroni and cheese.

MICHAEL
Is daddy not eating with us
tonight?

GRACE
He needs to write tonight honey.

MICHAEL
Can I get dad his coffee?

GRACE
(smile)
Sure.

INT. HALLWAY -- CONTINUOUS

Michael walks with a cup of coffee in hand. He knocks on Ethan's writing room door.

Ethan opens the door. He takes the coffee.

ETHAN
Thanks bud.

MICHAEL
You're welcome daddy.

Ethan closes the door.

INT. LIVING ROOM -- DAY

SUPER: FRIDAY

Ethan sits with Robert. They both have drinks.

ETHAN
Hey, can I ask you something about
this killer for the book?

ROBERT
Sure.

ETHAN
Did anyone know where he did the
killings?

INT. BASEMENT -- CONTINUOUS

Ethan opens the basement door.

ETHAN
The basement?

ROBERT
Yep, the basement.

ETHAN
I'm not going down there alone.

ROBERT

What do you think a ghost is down there? You really want to give me a heart attack don't you? Have any of you been down here since you moved in?

ETHAN

No, the basement was the least of my problems.

They both go down the stairs, Ethan goes first. Robert hits the light switch.

The room illuminates. A single black table is in the center. The table has tools and equipment on it. The walls are painted white.

ROBERT

Well, looks like the police thought if they left you some tools you'd feel better about the whole murder thing.

Ethan walks over to the table.

ETHAN

This was definitely less than what I expected.

ROBERT

You wanted bodies lying around?

ETHAN

No... but something. The killers weapon, a note, something.

Ethan starts up the steps. Robert touches one of the walls.

ROBERT

It's a shame.

Robert knocks on the wall. An echo comes from it. Ethan runs back down the steps.

ROBERT

I take it that you heard the echo.

ETHAN

Is this a false wall?

ROBERT

Why would the police leave up a
fake wall?

ETHAN

No... not the police. The killer
probably hid something behind here.
Something he didn't want the police
to know about.

Ethan points to the table at a sledgehammer.

ETHAN

Bring me that sledgehammer.

Robert brings over the sledgehammer. Ethan looks at Robert.

ETHAN

Well?

ROBERT

Boy, I'm sixty-seven. Your ass can
do it.

Ethan grabs the sledgehammer. He hits the fake wall. The
wall breaks apart. Eventually he makes it through.

The opened space doesn't reveal much. A similar room painted
with black walls.

Ethan walks in to the room. There is a similar table, white,
in the center of the room. Unlike the other room, a mask
lies on it.

Ethan picks it up.

ROBERT

What is it?

ETHAN

Some kind of mask.

ROBERT

The killers?

Ethan holds the mask in the light. Half the mask is white,
the other side is black. The bottom of the mask is open for
a mouth.

The mask resembles a crude remake of a plague doctor's mask.
The long nose is also color-split.

INT. LIVING ROOM -- DAY

Ethan and Robert stand at the front door.

ETHAN

Thanks for the help Robert. I guess I'll hear from you soon?

ROBERT

Sure, but are you going to give the police that mask?

ETHAN

Maybe, I don't think the local sheriff would appreciate me bringing him out here because I found a mask that may not even be the killers.

ROBERT

I see. Well I won't say anything, be happy my wife isn't alive or else everyone would know that you drank whiskey and found a mask with me. Till next time!

Robert walks out of the door. Ethan looks at the mask. He flips it around. Inside the mask is a store name, Mark's Masks.

INT. WRITING ROOM -- DAY

Ethan types in the name of the store. There is a single store matching the name located in his town. Ethan is about to get up but he sits back down.

ETHAN

Grace has the car.

Ethan looks at his phone. He opens the last text. The image shows the pale white table in the basement. The same mask is on it.

ETHAN

(smiles)

So it is yours, you bastard.

His phone vibrates. Ethan checks the text. There is no picture, just two words: "Write now."

Another text follows: "Consequences if you don't."

Ethan stares at the text and frowns. He moves over to his computer and begins to type.

DISSOLVE TO:

The clock shows 2:53 p.m. Ethan looks at the page counter, 103. Ethan stands up and leaves the room.

INT. KITCHEN -- DAY

Ethan makes a sandwich. The front door opens. Michael runs into the kitchen. Ethan hands him the sandwich.

ETHAN
Welcome home buddy.

MICHAEL
What kind is it?

ETHAN
Your favorite, peanut butter and
jelly...

MICHAEL
And?

ETHAN
(laughs)
You thought I forgot. With honey
mixed with the peanut butter.

Michael grabs the sandwich and hugs Ethan.

MICHAEL
Thanks daddy.

Ethan hugs him back. Grace walks in. Michael runs to the living room. Grace looks at Ethan.

ETHAN
Home all day, least I can do is
make the kid a sandwich.

Grace gives him a quick kiss.

GRACE
Good job Mr. Green.

ETHAN
Please don't call me that.

GRACE

Why? That is our last name isn't it?

ETHAN

Yeah... but someone I really dislike used to call me Mr. Green all the time.

GRACE

You disliked someone, I'm shocked.

ETHAN

It happens. So can I use the car tomorrow?

GRACE

Can you drop us off and pick us up all in one day?

ETHAN

I think I'll manage.

GRACE

Then it's yours! Don't make the same mistake please.

Ethan's phone vibrates. The message is from Dave.

ETHAN

Your brother sent me a text about a meeting with a book publisher. A major book publisher.

GRACE

Oh really? When is it?

ETHAN

Next Wednesday, over the phone.

EXT. LONG CROSSROAD -- NIGHT

Ethan continues to run at the figure. The knife is in his hand.

The figure turns revealing the mask of a plague doctor.

Ethan lifts the knife towards the masked man. He brings it down.

EXT. WOODS -- NIGHT

Ethan stands near a small pond. He holds a knife in his hands.

 ETHAN
Crap, again?

INT. BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Ethan lies back down in bed. He brings a cup of rum. He drinks the whole cup.

Grace begins to turn. He hides the cup under the bed.

 GRACE
 (sleepily)
What's wrong babe?

 ETHAN
I just had to use the bathroom.

 GRACE
Oh.

She turns back around.

 ETHAN
 (beat)
Grace... do you think I need a
psychiatrist?

 GRACE
Everyday.

 ETHAN
Thought so.

Ethan closes his eyes.

EXT. GROCERY STORE -- DAY

SUPER: SATURDAY

Grace gets out of the car. Ethan watches as she gets into the store. Ethan pulls out a small bottle of beer and sips from it.

INT. MARK'S MASKS -- DAY

Ethan walks into the small mask shop. He is holding onto the plague doctor's mask. He walks to a man behind the cash register.

MARK, 43, is a much larger man than Ethan. He has a permanent smile on his face to attract the customers.

ETHAN

Hi. I was wondering if you've ever sold this type of mask.

MARK

We'll sure. Last one I sold was about a year ago.

ETHAN

Really... do you remember who purchased it?

MARK

Wait, give me a minute.

Mark walks into a back room. He comes back out with a small receipt.

ETHAN

(whispers)

I know your name you bastard.

MARK

I kept the receipt. The guy left it. I held onto it in case he ever came back.

ETHAN

Thank you, but do you remember what he looked like?

MARK

Kind of small guy. Wore a big trench coat, probably to look bigger. Didn't speak much, he had a low voice.

ETHAN

His face?

MARK

I don't know. He had a scarf around his face and sunglasses over his eyes. Said he was sick and didn't

(MORE)

MARK (cont'd)
want people to catch it. I guess
the mask was to keep the plague in,
right?

ETHAN
Alright, well... thank you for your
time.

MARK
Wait! He drove a white van. It
didn't have any side windows
though.

ETHAN
Did you see the license plate?

MARK
No. What did he do? Was he a
pedophile.

ETHAN
No, I just wanted to know. Thank
you sir.

INT. ELECTRONICS STORE -- DAY

Ethan walks up to Phil.

PHIL
Hey Mr. Green, how's the phone?

ETHAN
It's fine. I have a question
though. Does anyone know who traded
in the phone?

PHIL
I think we have a receipt for it.
We keep them in the back. Can I ask
why?

ETHAN
I think I may actually have known
the person who owned it before me.

PHIL
Small world.

Phil walks out to the backroom.

He comes back with a receipt.

PHIL
Here it is.

ETHAN
Thanks.

Ethan looks at the receipt. A name is printed at the bottom, Robert Stevenson. Ethan slightly smiles.

ETHAN
Okay Phil, I appreciate this.

Ethan hands Phil the receipt.

PHIL
Have a good day Mr. Green.

ETHAN
Oh, I will.

EXT. ROAD -- CONTINUOUS

Ethan drives the van down a road. He takes out a can of beer. He sips from it.

A deer jumps into the center of the road.

ETHAN
Jesus Christ!

Ethan swerves the car off of the road and into a tree.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

Ethan's vision blurs as he focuses.

OFFICER MORGAN
Mr. Green, are you listening?

Ethan is sitting in the back of a police cruiser. Then OFFICER MORGAN, 53, shakes Ethan.

OFFICER MORGAN
You okay son?

ETHAN
Yeah... yeah I'm fine.

OFFICER MORGAN

Good to hear. Now do you remember anything about the crash?

ETHAN

Uh... a deer jumped onto the road... I swerved and hit a tree. How's the van?

OFFICER MORGAN

Well Mr. Green, you're going to need a replacement car from the looks of it.

ETHAN

Crap.

(beat)

I didn't hit the deer did I?

Officer Morgan looks at Ethan, astounded.

OFFICER MORGAN

Now a Mr. Robert Frost has offered to drive you home. Do you know him.

ETHAN

Yeah, he's my neighbor.

OFFICER MORGAN

Perfect. Okay Mr. Frost, you can take him.

ROBERT

Thanks officer. You have a good day now.

Robert lifts Ethan up from the seat.

OFFICER MORGAN

You too Robert. And Mr. Green.

Ethan looks up at Officer Morgan.

OFFICER MORGAN

I noticed that you had alcohol on your breath. I'm going to be nice here. This accident doesn't appear to involve alcohol abuse so I'll let it slide. Let it happen again and it may be prison time. Understood?

ETHAN
Understood officer.

OFFICER MORGAN
I've read your book by the way.

ETHAN
Wait... my book's not finished yet,
Mask of A Killer.

OFFICER MORGAN
No, I read Grappler, good book.

ETHAN
(smiles)
I'm happy someone read it.

A LARGE OFFICER approaches.

LARGE OFFICER
We got a murder at Mark's Masks.

OFFICER MORGAN
Your kidding, who was it?

LARGE OFFICER
The owner himself.

OFFICER MORGAN
Jesus.

Ethan stares at them as Robert leads him to the car.

INT. LIVING ROOM -- DAY

Robert walks back and forth. Ethan sits on the couch. He rubs his eyes.

ROBERT
What the hell do you mean you were
there?

ETHAN
The mask was bought from the store.
I visited it and asked if he'd
remember the killer.

ROBERT
Why should you care Ethan? You are
writing fiction. Even if you did
know, how would that help your book
at all?

ETHAN

It's not just for the book.

ROBERT

No? Then what is it for. From my perspective it seems like your messing with things that shouldn't be messed with. This killer, whoever he is, knows what you did and killed a man because of it.

ETHAN

I messed with this thing as soon as I got here.

ROBERT

What do you mean?

Ethan pulls out his phone.

ETHAN

Day one, I broke my phone. Day two, I buy a new one. Later that day I call the number. Now that number is apparently the killer who committed the murders here.

ROBERT

How would you know.

ETHAN

Because he told me so! He's been sending me these pictures of his murders and has been forcing me to write this book. And you know what the craziest part is?

ROBERT

This all sounds pretty crazy, but go ahead.

ETHAN

I think I want to finish the book to. I... want to work with him to get this book finished. These pictures, the killer, have given me what I was missing after I finished my first book.

ROBERT

Yeah well they've taken something else. Your common fucking sense. Call the police, show them the

(MORE)

ROBERT (cont'd)
pictures and we can get this over
with.

ETHAN
No, I can't!

ROBERT
Why the fuck not Ethan? Your
careers more important than human
lives?

ETHAN
No... no of course not. I tried to
but he threatened to kill Grace and
Michael.

ROBERT
Jesus... how long has this been
going on?

ETHAN
Three days today. He hasn't called
today yet.

ROBERT
God, why is he doing this?

ETHAN
I don't know. He knows I'm a writer
and he's abusing the hell out of
it.

Ethan looks at his watch.

ETHAN
I need to pick up Grace and
Michael.

ROBERT
Yeah, I'll pick up them up. You
can't drive right now.

ETHAN
What do you mean by that?

ROBERT
Your cars been impounded.

ETHAN
Oh, right.

ROBERT
I'll tell Grace what happened okay.

ETHAN
Don't tell her what the officer
said about the alcohol.

ROBERT
Kid, with whats happening, that's
going to be the least of your
worries.

Robert leaves the house. Ethan sits back on the couch. He
stares at the ceiling. The phone rings.

KILLER
A man.

ETHAN
Don't you dare attack him.

KILLER
Who? Mark? I thought you knew he
was already dead.

ETHAN
I... I knew.

KILLER
Then who could you possibly be
talking about?
(beat)
You know what? It's not important
right now. What is important is
that you've started to snoop
around, and it's hurting people.

ETHAN
You make me sick.

KILLER
The feeling is mutual. A man who is
willing to let someone else boos
him around. A man who sells the
lives of others just to sell a
book.

ETHAN
Yeah, well I'm done.

KILLER
Ethan... think about what you're
saying.

ETHAN

I am, and you know what? I'm happy
I'm saying it. If you come near my
family I will kill you.

KILLER

As you wish, Mr. Green.

The phone hangs up.

INT. WRITING ROOM -- DAY

Robert gives Ethan a drink of rum. Ethan pushes it back.

ETHAN

I think that should wait.

Robert walks over to the "NA" key chains.

ROBERT

You're in the program?

ETHAN

Yeah, I had some trouble with drugs
early on. Went for about five
years. Something happened and I
just knew that was it.

ROBERT

If you don't mind me asking... what
did happen?

ETHAN

When Michael was five I was taking
Oxycontin. The alcohol didn't help
my judgment that well either. He
hadn't stopped crying for days and
days, so one day I was high and I
hit him. Then put him into the
bathtub.

Ethan takes a moment and breathes.

ETHAN

I filled up the bathtub with water.
Michael kept screaming. I just... I
shoved him underwater. It's like I
couldn't control myself. I tried...
I fucking tried! But I couldn't
stop. Grace ran in and pulled me
off of Michael. He was fine. We
didn't talk for a few days. She

(MORE)

ETHAN (cont'd)
 said she wouldn't forgive me unless
 I did something to stop the urges,
 so I did. Two years later and I
 feel perfectly comfortable drinking
 alcohol without the worry of using
 drugs again.

ROBERT
 I'm actually happy to see someone
 know when they are flawed and try
 to fix themselves.

Robert takes the glass he put next to Ethan.

ROBERT
 Even so, I don't think I'd feel
 comfortable leaving a drink with
 you.

ETHAN
 I understand.

INT. KITCHEN -- DAY

Grace and Michael walk in. They both run to Ethan. He hugs
 them both.

GRACE
 Thank God your okay.

ETHAN
 Yeah. I'm sorry I wrecked the car.

GRACE
 It's okay. We can try to get
 another one okay? Robert offered to
 drive Michael and I until we have a
 new car.

ETHAN
 Good.

MICHAEL
 Dad?

ETHAN
 Yeah bud?

MICHAEL
 I love you.

Ethan's eyes turn red.

ETHAN
I... I love you too.

INT. KITCHEN -- NIGHT

Ethan sits at the dinner table. Grace walks in. She sits next to him.

ETHAN
How is he?

GRACE
A little emotional, but he'll be fine. So I guess we should start looking for a new car?

Ethan shudders.

ETHAN
Yeah... well Grace... I don't think we have the money.

GRACE
What do you mean?

ETHAN
Remember those sales numbers I showed you, the sales on Grapppler?

GRACE
Yeah.

ETHAN
Those were false. They were a mistake. I didn't find out until the night before we finished packing up.

GRACE
And you didn't tell me?

ETHAN
I... I didn't want you to worry.

GRACE
Good job. Now we have to worry that we have no money.

Grace stands up from her chair.

GRACE

This is a joke... right? This is a joke. Don't worry me like that Ethan.

ETHAN

It's not a joke.

Grace stares. She frowns.

GRACE

You son of a bitch.

ETHAN

Grace... please don't say that. I thought things would get better.

GRACE

That's no excuse to not at least tell me! I thought we agreed that for the time being we could live well enough with the sales and the money I make from work.

ETHAN

It was a mistake I admit that. We can dig out of this.

GRACE

When you finish the book.

ETHAN

I think I'm going to start another one. This one just won't work.

GRACE

Are you crazy? How can you say that? That's your defense?

ETHAN

I didn't say it was a good one.

Grace runs out of the room. She closes their bedroom door.

INT. BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Ethan slowly opens the door. Grace lies in the bed. She has been crying. Her eyes are red. Some tears roll down her face.

ETHAN

Grace?

Grace pulls on the blankets. Ethan walks by and puts his computer on top of a clothes cabinet.

ETHAN

Grace? Please listen to me.

GRACE

What do you want?

ETHAN

To apologize. I made a stupid ass decision when it came to not telling you the truth. I know how much our financial standing matters, especially with Michael.

(sighs)

I'll keep writing the book. Once I finish that one, I'll start another and another. Anything to make you happy.

GRACE

I'm sorry, I feel like such a bitch. Money has nothing to do with it. Yeah, I want Michael to have a good life, but you're what makes us have such a good life Ethan. You try to make everyone happy, even with all of your faults... I still love you.

ETHAN

I love you too. How about this I'll keep writing the book. Once I finish that one, I'll start another and another. Anything to make you happy.

GRACE

Having you makes me happy. I don't want you writing if you don't want to.

Ethan grimaces. He frowns and quickly turns it to a smile.

ETHAN

Of course I want to, nobody can force me to write a book.

Ethan kisses her. They both embrace each other. Ethan quickly pulls back.

ETHAN
I'm sorry I've been such an idiot.

GRACE
(smiles)
Oh shut up.

She pulls Ethan back in. Ethan jumps up and runs to the computer. He clicks a button and suddenly music comes out.

The song is "Only You" by the Platters.

GRACE
You've got to be kidding me.

ETHAN
Yep, the song we danced to at our wedding. Thought I'd forget, didn't you?

Ethan picks her up from the bed. They dance together.

ETHAN
(trying to sing)
Only you and you alone, can thrill
me like you do!

GRACE
(giggles)
You're such a dork.

ETHAN
That's why you love me.

They both kiss. They start to undress.

ETHAN
Wait.
(kisses)
There's something I have to tell
you.

Both fall together into the bed.

GRACE
It can wait.

She pulls up the sheets.

FADE OUT

INT. BEDROOM -- NIGHT

FADE IN:

Ethan and Grace are both asleep. Ethan's phone vibrates. Ethan jumps awake. He moves over and grabs it.

The text says: "Say anything, it's her."

Ethan opens the image. The picture is of Grace sleeping.

Ethan jumps out of the bed and turns on the light. The room is completely empty.

He moves over to under the dresser. He pulls out a small safe. He opens it and pulls out a gun. He hold the gun.

INT. HALLWAY -- CONTINUOUS

Ethan walks down the hallway. He looks down both ways. He walks over to Michael's room.

He opens the door and looks around. The room is empty except for Michael in his bed. Ethan closes the door.

A loud noise bangs. Ethan runs down the hallway.

INT. LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Ethan looks around the room. The window blind bangs against the open window. He quickly slams down the window and locks it.

EXT. HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

Ethan runs out of the front door.

ETHAN

If you come here again I'll kill
you! You hear me?!

A dog barks in the distance.

Ethan turns to walk back into the house. He stops. He looks over to Roberts house. The front door is wide open.

Ethan has another text. He opens it. It's a video. He hits play.

VOICE
 (whisper)
 This is only the beginning, Mr.
 Green.

The image goes into Roberts front door.

INT. ROBERT'S HOME -- CONTINUOUS

Ethan follows the path of the video. He goes up the stairs. He turns on the hallway light. Blood streaks are against the walls.

Ethan follows into Roberts bedroom.

INT. ROBERT'S BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Ethan turns on the light switch. Robert's neck has been slashed open. A dividing cut goes down his face.

ETHAN
 No, Robert!

Ethan drops the phone onto the floor. The video plays showing Robert's neck being slashed with a knife.

Ethan puts his hand over Robert's neck wound.

ETHAN
 Come on you bastard, come on!

EXT. ROBERT'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Paramedics put Robert into the ambulance. Ethan leans on a police cruiser with Grace and Michael holding him. Officer Morgan approaches him.

OFFICER MORGAN
 Mr. Green, we meet again.

ETHAN
 I'm not trying to make it a habit officer. How's Robert?

OFFICER MORGAN
 He's lost quite a lot of blood.
 He's lucky you got there when you
 did, a few more minutes and it
 would have been all over.
 (takes out a cigarette)

(MORE)

OFFICER MORGAN (cont'd)
Paramedics say he's critical.
(lights it and smokes)
It's fifty fifty right now.

ETHAN
Jesus.

Officer Morgan surveys Ethan. He takes out another cigarette and gives it to Ethan.

ETHAN
No, I've tried to stop.

Ethan looks at the cigarette. He takes it. Officer Morgan looks at him.

ETHAN
I can let it slip for now.

Officer Morgan lights up Ethan's cigarette.

OFFICER MORGAN
Mr. Green, would you know anyone who may have wanted to hurt Mr. North?

ETHAN
None that I know of, but I haven't known him for that long so maybe I'm not the best person to ask.

OFFICER MORGAN
You're the only person who knows him here. No living relatives and the old codger doesn't have any friends... except for you. So tell me, do you have any enemies who may be trying to get to you through others?

Ethan drags on his cigarette.

OFFICER MORGAN
(sighs)
Anything at all that can help with our investigation?

ETHAN
(beat)
No sir. You could try a Mr. Robert Stevenson, he may still be in town.

OFFICER MORGAN
Oh, why would that matter?

ETHAN
I think he may have been calling
me... leaving threats. I think he
was the one who broke into my
house.

OFFICER MORGAN
Any ideas why?

ETHAN
Crazed fan? Hell if I know.

Officer Morgan writes on his notepad.

OFFICER MORGAN
Robert Stevenson. I'll see if there
may be some one in town with that
name. Nothing to do with the writer
correct?

ETHAN
Excuse me?

OFFICER MORGAN
Robert Stevenson... Robert Louis
Stevenson? He wrote Dr. Jekyll and
Mr. Hyde.

ETHAN
(stares)
No, of course not.

Ethan walks over to Grace and Michael.

ETHAN
I'd like to get my family inside.
I'll be back out in a minute.

OFFICER MORGAN
That won't be needed. You get some
rest, don't have to worry about any
thing. Myself and about two
detectives and five officers will
be here until morning.

ETHAN
Thanks.

OFFICER MORGAN
Until next time.

INT. LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT

Michael sits down on the couch. Grace hugs Ethan.

GRACE
That was terrible... our own
neighbor. What happened?

ETHAN
They think someone got into his
house and tried to kill him.
Thankfully Robert has a chance to
make it.

GRACE
Nobody tried to get in our house,
right?

Ethan looks at Michael. He turns back to Grace.

ETHAN
No... no one tried to get in.
Whoever did this was focused on
Robert.

GRACE
Who would want to do something like
this to an old man.

ETHAN
A demented asshole.

GRACE
(scolding)
Ethan, not in front of Michael.

MICHAEL
It's okay mom, I hear that word all
the time at school.

Grace looks at Ethan with concern.

ETHAN
Come on honey, kids will be kids.
We can't be up all night stressing
about whats happened.

GRACE

No, we need to stay up in case the
guy comes back.

ETHAN

The police are going to be here
until morning. We'll be fine.

Grace hesitates then sits down on the couch.

GRACE

We're all going to sleep in the
living room for the night.

MICHAEL

Oh come on mom.

ETHAN

Michael, no grief to your mother.
If it'll make you feel better
honey, fine.

MICHAEL

But I need my blanket.

ETHAN

We'll both get it then. Let's go
buddy.

GRACE

I'm going to watch some TV.

INT. MICHAEL'S BEDROOM -- DAY

Michael is pulling on a blanket from off the bed. The
blanket won't come off. Ethan nudges the mattress and the
blanket comes loose.

Michael looks at Ethan. He sits down on his bed and grips
the blanket.

MICHAEL

Dad... can I tell you something?

ETHAN

Of course you can bud.

MICHAEL

Well...

ETHAN

What is it.

MICHAEL

I've kept it a secret so you can't tell mom. Promise?

ETHAN

(sighs)

Promise.

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. FRONT OF SCHOOL -- DAY

Michael sits on a curb. He reads a small book.

MICHAEL (V.O.)

On the first day of school, while I was waiting for you, a man drove up to me.

A white van drives up to the curb in front of Michael. The windows are darkened.

MICHAEL (V.O.)

He was in a white van. I couldn't see his face but he talked about you dad, like he knew you. He said his name was Robert Stevenson

The man has his face hidden behind the window. He wears a black hat, sunglasses and a bandanna covering his mouth.

MICHAEL (V.O.)

He told me to get in the car and I wouldn't... he yelled at me and cursed.

The man pulls out a knife. Michael runs into the school.

MICHAEL (V.O.)

He said he would cut me if I didn't. I ran inside the school and stayed with a teacher.

EXT. SCHOOL PLAYGROUND -- DAY

The man stands at the parking lot. He doesn't move and stares at Michael at the playground.

MICHAEL (V.O.)

He was there today, during lunch time. He was wearing this creepy mask and a big coat.

The man waves his hand for Michael to come with him.

MICHAEL (V.O.)

He waved at me to come to him... but I didn't!

Michael walks over to where the man was. He picks up pictures on the ground.

MICHAEL (V.O.)

After he left I walked to where he was. There were these pictures... of people being cut up.

Michael drops the pictures. One falls away from the others. Michael picks it up. the picture shows Ethan with writing on it.

MICHAEL (V.O.)

I dropped them and I saw another one...
(cries)
but this one was a picture of you. He wrote on it. It said that you were next after Robert.

INT. MICHAEL'S BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Ethan is looking at Michael. He pulls away and stands up.

ETHAN

Why didn't you tell me?

MICHAEL

I was scared... that if I told you he would get you.
(cries)
I didn't want him to get you.

Ethan pulls Michael towards him. They hug.

ETHAN

No ones going to get me son,
nobody.

Ethan stares out of Michael's window into the backyard. A figure is standing outside of his house. Ethan lets go of Michael.

ETHAN

Go to your mother buddy.

MICHAEL

Okay.

Michael drags his blanket behind him. He goes through the door. He turns around to Ethan.

MICHAEL

I love you dad.

Ethan doesn't turn around. He continues to look out of the window. Michael's head drops. He walks out of the room.

INT. KITCHEN -- NIGHT

Ethan opens grabs the baseball bat. He grabs the door handle.

GRACE

(from living room)
Where are you going?

ETHAN

I'm going out for a smoke.

GRACE

I thought you quit.

ETHAN

So did I.

He opens the door and goes outside.

EXT. BACKYARD -- NIGHT

Ethan lifts up the baseball bat. The Killer stands by the trees.

ETHAN

You fucker. Get out of here right
now or I will kill you!

KILLER

Ethan, calm down. I just came here to remind you of your commitment.

ETHAN

You can take your commitment and shove it.

Ethan struts to the Killer. He lifts the baseball bat to swing. The Killer pulls out a handgun.

KILLER

Ethan, Ethan. I thought I could trust you to do it yourself with a small push. But sadly that does not appear to be the case. I hurt the old man hoping it would give you a shove in the right direction. Now you come to attack me, your inspiration!

ETHAN

Put away the gun.

KILLER

Why? So you can bash me in the head? I'm sorry but no. So I hope Robert's near death can convince you to continue.

The Killer backs away into the woods.

KILLER

And if it doesn't, Grace... Michael... well, you don't want to know.

Ethan throws the bat to the ground. He pulls out a cigarette and lighter. He smokes it.

ETHAN

Shit.

INT. LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT

Ethan lies down on the couch. Grace and Michael are asleep together.

Ethan slowly closes his eyes.

EXT. LONG CROSSROAD -- NIGHT

Ethan is back on the road.

ETHAN
Jesus Christ!

KILLER (O.S.)
Welcome to the inside of your head,
Mr. Green.

Ethan turns over to see the Killer.

ETHAN
You brought me here?

KILLER
That is for you to decide.

Ethan pulls out a knife.

ETHAN
I guess this is the part where I
get the revenge for the torture
you've put me through.

The blood rain falls.

KILLER
Perhaps.

Ethan charges the Killer. He tackles the Killer. Ethan stabs
down into his body.

The Killer's mask falls off. Ethan stops stabbing.

He looks into the Killer's face. It's his own face looking
back at him.

INT. LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT

Ethan wakes up. He sweats down his face. He looks around and
realizes he is standing.

Grace and Michael still sleep.

Ethan looks at his hand. He is holding a knife.

INT. KITCHEN -- CONTINUOUS

Ethan puts the knife away. He grabs onto his forehead, the pain is growing.

ETHAN
(whimper)
This is so fucked up.

He looks over to the pantry. He takes out the rum.

INT. BATHROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Ethan stumbles to the bathroom cabinet. Bottles drop down to the table.

He pulls out a small white bottle. He turns it to a sticker.

ETHAN
Oxycontin.

He opens the bottle and takes out two pills. He leans back his head and drops the pills into his mouth. He swallows them.

He stumbles and grabs the toilet.

GIRL
Mister?

Ethan looks up. He turns to the bathtub.

ETHAN
Hello?

GIRL
Can you help me?

ETHAN
Um... yeah I can.

GIRL
I'm stuck. I can't move.

ETHAN
I'll help you.

Ethan walks over to the bathtub. He pulls aside the cover. He jumps back and let's out a yell.

A GIRL, 6, is in the bathtub. The center of the face has been torn open. A bloodline of flesh separates the opposite sides of her face.

She tries to pull herself up. Razor wire holds her neck down.

GIRL

Am I good enough for your book?

Ethan shuts the cover. He rubs his eyes and temples.

GIRL

Mister?

Ethan takes several breathes. He quickly opens the cover with his eyes closed.

ETHAN

Don't worry, I'll help you.

He opens his eyes. The girl is gone. Ethan closes the bathtub cover.

He grabs the bottle of Oxycontin.

INT. WRITING ROOM -- NIGHT

Ethan leans on his desk. He holds the bottle of rum in his hands. The Oxycontin bottle is tipped over on the table. Pills pour out.

The door opens. Grace walks in to find Ethan.

GRACE

What the fuck?!

ETHAN

(turns to Grace)

Oh shit!

Grace grabs the bottle of Oxycontin.

GRACE

Ethan what is this?

ETHAN

Grace, you have to understand-

GRACE

Oh, I understand! Ethan you swore you wouldn't do this again. You swore you were done with these drugs!

Ethan stands up and drops the rum bottle.

GRACE

(gasp)

Two years... two years! You were clean for two years!

ETHAN

And I still am baby.

GRACE

I told you to never drink again, never to take those damn pills again! It always lead to you going back to that!

ETHAN

Grace, I can fix this.

GRACE

Where did you even get those pills?

ETHAN

They were in the cabinet.

GRACE

Like hell they were! You probably bought them yourself!

Ethan tries to hug Grace. Grace pushes him away.

GRACE

Don't touch me! The last time this happened you nearly killed Michael. You promised after that you would never do this shit again!

ETHAN

Grace... I'm going through a rough patch. I needed something to help me.

GRACE

And you didn't think about your promise?

ETHAN

Of course I did. I just had to do it, to clear my head and think clearly.

Grace holds back her tears.

GRACE
I'm taking Michael.

ETHAN
Grace... please don't do that.

GRACE
No! I told you what would happen
the next time you did this.

Grace runs out of the room. Ethan quickly follows.

INT. LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Grace wakes up Michael.

GRACE
Come on sweetie, I need you to pack
up some clothes and some games,
okay?

MICHAEL
Why?

GRACE
Just do it for me.

Ethan runs into the room. Michael walks out to his bedroom.

ETHAN
Grace, please! I know I fucked this
up but please don't do this!
(cries)
I love you.

GRACE
I love you too but you can't do
this stuff Ethan. Not with me and
especially not with Michael around.

Michael walks in with a bag.

MICHAEL
Is dad coming too?

GRACE
No, dad's going to stay here for a
little while.

ETHAN
Hey buddy.

Ethan crouches and hugs Michael. Ethan holds back his crying.

ETHAN

(whimper)

Mom want's to visit grandma for a little bit. You know how much I don't like grandma, remember?

MICHAEL

(sleepy)

Yeah.

ETHAN

Well, mom want's at least one young man to take her, so she wants you.

MICHAEL

At four in the morning?

ETHAN

(smile)

Yes, even at four in the morning. Goodbye Michael.

MICHAEL

Okay, bye dad. I'll see you soon. Love you.

Michael kisses Ethan's forehead.

Grace grabs Michael's hand. She opens the front door.

GRACE

I'll call you.

The door closes.

ETHAN

I love you too buddy.

Ethan kicks into the ground.

ETHAN

Goddammit!

He slumps to the floor and cries.

FADE OUT

INT. LIVING ROOM -- DAY

FADE IN:

Ethan wakes up. He holds the rum bottle. An Oxycontin bottle lies empty on the table. Another one is open.

SUPER: TUESDAY

He takes out his phone. He punches in numbers.

ETHAN

Yes I'd like to visit a Robert North.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM -- DAY

Robert sits in a hospital bed. His neck has a gauze wrapped around it. Ethan sits next to him. Officer Morgan is in the room holding a notepad and pen.

ETHAN

Robert, I need to know something. Did you see who did this to you?

Robert grunts and wheezes.

ROBERT

I didn't get a good look. I could barely make out some features on his face.

ETHAN

Can you tell the officer and I.

ROBERT

He had a coat on. His face was pretty hidden.

OFFICER MORGAN

(sigh)

Anything else?

ROBERT

He said something. A word or a... a number. He said twenty eight.

OFFICER MORGAN

Twenty eight. Any significance?

ROBERT
Not to me.

ETHAN
That's how old I was when Grace and I got married.

OFFICER MORGAN
I'm not sure that's what the killer means but I will consider something. He may be after you now.

ETHAN
You see a connection?

OFFICER MORGAN
A very faint one, one that I don't think is even there. But to be a good officer I'll try to figure out something.

A nurse walks in.

NURSE
Time to leave.

ROBERT
Wait... Ethan, you have to get Grace to work and Michael to school. My keys are on that desk over there.

Ethan walks over to a small tray. He picks up the keys.

ETHAN
You don't have to do that Robert.

ROBERT
Consider it a gift of friendship.

ETHAN
(smile)
Thanks.

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Officer Morgan and Ethan walk out into the room.

ETHAN
Well thanks for being here Officer Morgan but I really have to get home.

OFFICER MORGAN

You've got a good friend there. Old man like him getting nearly killed and still wants to help.

ETHAN

Yeah, he's a good man.

OFFICER MORGAN

So you don't see any connection with the number?

ETHAN

No, not yet sir.

OFFICER MORGAN

One more thing before I let you go. I saw your wife and son leave your house last night. What happened?

ETHAN

(beat)

Well, this whole thing about a murder so close to home spooked her. She wanted to take my son to a safer place. I agreed to stay and watch the house.

OFFICER MORGAN

Quite the good person eh, Mr. Green? Now if you could keep your drink in check then we'd have no problem.

ETHAN

I'm working on that.

OFFICER MORGAN

See that you do. That's all I need to know. I'll see you later Mr. Green.

ETHAN

Goodbye.

INT. WRITING ROOM -- DAY

The sky outside is gray. Ethan stares at a piece of paper. He has taken notes on it. "Robert Stevenson" and "28" are written on it.

ETHAN

Robert Stevenson wrote Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. Twenty eight is how old I was when I got married. What's the connection?

Ethan's phone rings, Dave is calling.

DAVE (V.O.)

Ethan, Grace called. She told me about what happened. Rough time brother?

ETHAN

Good to hear from you Dave. Yeah, it wasn't exactly perfect.

DAVE (V.O.)

And with such events, I'm coming to visit.

ETHAN

Really, when?

DAVE (V.O.)

I'll be up in two days. Already booked my room.

ETHAN

Dave, you could have just stayed with me.

DAVE (V.O.)

No, you don't need me around all day. I'll just be in town to check up on you for a little bit. Keep you away from... well you know.

ETHAN

I'm trying to work on it. Where are you staying?

DAVE (V.O.)

A little hotel, um... I think it was Jekyll or Hyde Hotel. Not sure which.

Ethan's eyes widen, he quickly gets on his computer.

ETHAN

Listen Dave, that's great but I have to go.

DAVE (V.O.)
Inspiration hit?

ETHAN
You bet.

DAVE (V.O.)
Okay, see you soon.

Ethan hangs up his phone. He quickly searches Jekyll Hotel. No results come up. He types Hyde Hotel. He gets one result in town.

ETHAN
Worth a shot.

INT. BEDROOM -- DAY

Ethan finds the gun. He puts it into his pocket. He pulls out a rum bottle. He takes a long drink from it.

EXT. HYDE HOTEL -- DAY

Snow starts to cover the roads. The hotel's "VACANT" light flashes with it's red neon bulbs.

INT. CHECK-IN ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

A YOUNG WOMAN sits at the desk. She is reading a book when Ethan walks in.

ETHAN
I'm here to meet a friend.

YOUNG WOMAN
Well, why don't you go meet him?

ETHAN
I don't know what room he's in.

YOUNG WOMAN
(sarcastic)
Right.

She moves over to the computer.

YOUNG WOMAN
What's the name.

ETHAN
Robert Stevenson.

She types onto the keyboard.

YOUNG WOMAN
He would be in room twenty eight.

ETHAN
Excuse me?

YOUNG WOMAN
Twenty eight. You know, the second
floor, eighth room.

ETHAN
Oh... right. Thank you.

YOUNG WOMAN
Yeah sure.

EXT. DOOR TO ROOM 28 -- CONTINUOUS

The snow leaves patches on the cement.

Ethan stands in front of the door. He lifts his hand to knock. He pulls back and pulls out a cigarette. He lights it and smokes.

He leans on the railing. The rain is still falling down. He takes out the handgun. He checks to make sure it's loaded. He drops the emptied gun on the ground.

He quickly picks it up. He puts the ammo back in and shoves the gun back into his pocket. He throws the cigarette over the railing.

Ethan knocks on the door.

KILLER
It's unlocked.

Ethan hesitates then opens the door.

INT. HOTEL ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

The room is almost pitch black. There is a desk with a small light turned on. Two chairs surround the desk. The Killer is sitting on one of the two chairs.

Ethan approaches him. A gun shines into the light from the Killer.

KILLER
Hello Mr. Green, happy to see you
found my hiding spot.

ETHAN
You made it easy for me.

KILLER
Did you like my name?

ETHAN
Very clever.

The Killer's gun points to the seat opposite.

KILLER
Have a seat Mr. Green.

ETHAN
How do I know you won't just shoot
me?

KILLER
Have faith.

Ethan hesitates but sits in the chair.

ETHAN
Why me?

KILLER
What?

ETHAN
Why the fuck would you be doing
this to me?

KILLER
I'm a fan. I read your book,
Grappler. It was a good fucking
book but no one read it. You got
left in the gutter and you let your
family down.

ETHAN
So you give me ideas for a novel?
That's it? You kill people just to
inspire some novel?

KILLER
Don't sell it so short Mr. Green. I
wanted you to succeed. We both know
how much work you put into it and

(MORE)

KILLER (cont'd)
yet, the general public couldn't
find the time to appreciate all of
your hard work.

ETHAN
You threatened to kill my family.

KILLER
That was a way to give you a push.
The only reason I even tried to
kill the old man was because you
were falling off track. You
couldn't focus on your work.

ETHAN
You make me sick.

KILLER
Well as a fan of your work I can
say the same of you right now. Look
at you. Your hair is disheveled,
you reek of alcohol and cigarettes.
A major fall from grace, I heard
you had three years clean from
alcohol and kicked cigarettes since
your wife was pregnant.

ETHAN
You read the interviews I was in?

KILLER
Of course I did. I practically know
everything about you, hell I may as
well be you!

The Killer aims his gun at Ethan.

KILLER
I could kill you right now, walk
back home and you know what? Grace
and Michael... even Dave, would
accept me as you. The greatest fan
can become the greatest you.

The Killer puts the gun away in his jacket pocket.

ETHAN
A psychotic fan? You're not the
first one that's haunted a writer.

KILLER

You're right, I'm not. I'm just the best.

ETHAN

You know something though? Unlike other writers and how they handle psychotic fans...

Ethan pulls out his gun which shines in the light. He stands up, the chair falls over.

ETHAN

I'm willing to kill mine.

KILLER

Ethan, I'm shocked at this. That's not how you treat a fan. I've been trying to help you.

ETHAN

Yeah, you've done a great fucking job at that.

KILLER

Ethan... put the gun down.

ETHAN

No more Mr. Green? Losing your cool?

The Killer stands up from his chair. He puts his hands up.

KILLER

Don't kill me Ethan, I don't think you could handle it.

Ethan suddenly collapses to the ground.

ETHAN

Shit!

He sees quick flashes of the pictures. He grabs his head.

KILLER

Thinking about all the pictures? Or are we experiencing withdrawal from our drinks and drugs? Good.

The Killer rushes out of the front door.

Ethan aims his gun. His vision blurs. He puts the gun down. He pulls himself up from the ground.

EXT. HYDE HOTEL -- CONTINUOUS

Ethan hugs himself against the walls. He runs along the walls.

The Killer runs down the stairs. Ethan slowly follows.

The Killer jumps into a small white van. Ethan stumbles down the staircase to the ground.

The Killer turns the van on and drives away. Ethan uses the railing for support. he pulls himself up and gets into his car.

He starts it up.

ETHAN

Robert, please forgive me if I
crash this car.

He pulls out of the parking lot.

EXT. ROAD -- CONTINUOUS

Ethan drives down the road at a fast speed. The white van is barely visible in the distance.

The snow makes the road barely visible. The van swerves away from the road.

Ethan pulls off the same way.

CRASH!

Ethan stops the car on the side of the road. The white van has crashed into a tree. Ethan looks over to see a deer hop away, the same deer that caused Ethan to crash.

Ethan takes out his handgun. He walks around the car. He approaches the drivers side.

He crouches by the door. He slowly opens it. He hops out. The gun points at an empty seat. Blood is on the seat.

A bullet hits into the chair. Ethan ducks behind it. He looks over to see the Killer running into a forest. The Killer has a slight limp.

Ethan runs around the crashed van. He runs into the forest.

EXT. SNOWY WOODS -- CONTINUOUS

The Killer quickly runs by trees. Ethan pulls onto the trees to give himself momentum.

The Killer looks back to Ethan and runs into a branch.

Ethan runs up to the Killer who is on the ground.

ETHAN

Got you.

Ethan takes out his handgun.

The Killer kicks Ethan in the stomach. Ethan collapses to the ground.

The Killer gets up and runs.

Ethan coughs and spits. He grabs a tree and pulls himself up.

He looks deep into the woods. He notices a man bound to a tree. The man has been split in half.

Ethan runs at the man. He blinks then slows down. The man is gone.

ETHAN

Drugs.

He grabs hold of a tree.

POV of Ethan as his vision blurs.

The Killer runs across a snow covered field.

Ethan gets to the field and can see the Killer reaching the end.

Ethan takes out his gun. He fires it. The bullet misses.

ETHAN

Shit!

Ethan grips the gun as he runs across the field. He gets back into the woods.

EXT. SNOWY WOODS -- CONTINUOUS

The Killer trips but hurriedly gets back up. Ethan runs across the path.

A loud rushing noise can be heard.

The Killer stops as he almost runs into a rushing river.

Ethan runs out of the forest and tackles the killer.

ETHAN

You son of a bitch!
 (punches Killer)
 I fucking got you!

Ethan repeatedly beats the Killer.

ETHAN

(continues punching)
 You motherfucker! You threaten my
 family, you threaten me! See where
 it gets you!

KILLER

Ethan... please... stop.

The Killer's face has been beaten beyond recognition. Blood pours from many cuts and bruises.

Ethan gets off the Killer. Ethan pulls the Killer up.

He shoves the Killer near the river.

Ethan takes out his handgun and aims.

ETHAN

I have to do this.

Ethan puts his finger over the trigger. He relaxes his finger.

KILLER

You can't do it, can you? You can't
 bring...
 (wheeze)
 yourself to kill me. Shame...
 (cough)
 because I can.

The Killer pulls into his pocket and takes out his gun. Ethan tenses his finger.

BANG!

A single bullet is shot. Ethan and the Killer don't move.

The Killer shudders. He staggers backwards. He trips over a rock and falls into the rushing river.

Ethan sits down onto the dirt. He lights a cigarette. He sighs and laughs.

The river continues to rush by.

INT. BATHROOM -- NIGHT

Ethan opens the shower curtains.

ETHAN

No dead person in the tub... a good sign.

Ethan takes out a bottle of rum and whiskey. He uncorks them. He pours the alcohol down the bathtub drain.

He turns on the shower and lets the alcohol wash away.

He takes out bottles of Oxycontin. He dumps the pills into the sink.

FADE OUT

A sound of paper ruffling.

FADE IN

INT. BOOKSTORE -- DAY

A new stack of books are put onto a table. The title reads "Mask of A Killer." The name under it says "Ethan Green."

SUPER: 6 MONTHS LATER

EXT. BOOKSTORE -- DAY

The regularly quite streets of the mountain town are alive. Car's fill the streets. A line of people wait from the doorway holding copies of the same book.

EXT. LIVING ROOM -- DAY

A television set shows Ethan talking to a SHOW HOST. The Show Host holds up the same novel.

SHOW HOST

We have Ethan Green with us tonight. He's written this fantastic crime drama about an aging detective and his search for a demented killer. So tell me Ethan, what inspired you to write this novel?

ETHAN

Well I found inspiration from these pictures that the police force of Small Rock, Idaho provided. They were these pictures of unsolved crimes that they suspect were caused by the same person. The pictures just kind of... gave me that needed push.

SHOW HOST

Do you ever think that this unknown killer will ever want credit?

ETHAN

(smile)

Uh, no I don't think he or she would.

SHOW HOST

So how's your relationship with your family been since this novel was released?

ETHAN

It's been... fine.

SHOW HOST

How fine?

ETHAN

Just fine.

SHOW HOST

Now how do you feel that the sales to this book have been fantastic. New York Times Bestseller is no small feat. After the disappointing sales of Grappler, how does this make you feel?

Ethan sits on a couch watching the television. He turns it off.

INT. CLASSROOM -- DAY

Ethan sits in a chair. Ten other people are in the room with him. A taped sign says "AA."

ETHAN

It's been six months since I quit. I realized that the relapse was not only effecting me but my family as well. I'd do anything for my family. The nightmares I had, the quick flashes of horrific images stopped. My marriage is stable, my life is stable, even my income is stable.

Ethan pulls out a carton of cigarettes.

ETHAN

I'm still working on those cigarettes but... we have to tackle on thing at a time. I owe a lot to you all for helping me... for guiding me through all of this. My name is Ethan Green and I'm an alcoholic.

GROUP

Thank you Ethan.

INT. CLASSROOM -- DAY

Dave walks up to Ethan.

DAVE

(smile)

Hey man! Happy to see you've been doing well.

ETHAN

(smile)

Dave? When did you get here?

DAVE

I just drove in last night. Wanted to visit you for a minute while I'm here.

ETHAN

Thanks Dave... that means a lot.

INT. BOOKSTORE -- DAY.

Ethan sits at a desk with a line of people holding his book.
A YOUNG MAN walks up to him.

YOUNG MAN

This is my favorite book! I read
Grappler too, they were both
awesome.

ETHAN

(smile)

Thanks man.

The Young Man hands him the book.

YOUNG MAN

I'm like your top number one fan!

Ethan signs the book and hands it to the Young Man.

ETHAN

(beat)

Yeah, I guess. Here you go.

EXT. BOOKSTORE -- DAY

Ethan takes out a cigarette and lights it. He takes a breath
of the nicotine. He looks around the calm mountain town
streets.

Dave walks out of the bookstore. He stops next to Ethan.

DAVE

Good job today brother. Five
hundred signatures, must be a
record.

ETHAN

(smile)

Yeah, my wrist can agree to that.

DAVE

So I'll see you tomorrow for the
next interview?

ETHAN

You bet.
(cough)
Tomorrow.

DAVE

You need to quit those things man.
Don't need my brother dying of lung
cancer when he needs to take care
of my sister and nephew.

ETHAN

Don't worry, I'm working on it.

DAVE

Promise?

ETHAN

I've already promised Grace.

DAVE

Good enough for me.

EXT. HOUSE -- DAY

Grace walks to the driveway. Ethan drives his car into it.
He gets out of the car.

GRACE

Good to see you.

ETHAN

Um, yeah. Good to see you too.

GRACE

Can I ask why you're here and not
getting Michael at school?

ETHAN

I wanted to talk about my time with
him.

GRACE

You have two days with him.

ETHAN

Two days? Seems like a short time
to see my own son. I'm pretty sure
I can prove to the courts that I
haven't touched any substances in
months.

GRACE

I'm sure, but for now it's a safety precaution.

ETHAN

Safety? From what? His own father?

GRACE

In a way... yes. When you took those drugs, when you got drunk... you became someone else.

ETHAN

I know... but I got better.

Ethan holds Grace's hand.

ETHAN

Please honey... let me have more time.

GRACE

(beat)

I'll talk to the courts and try to convince them for more time during visits.

ETHAN

Thank you Grace. Is he still at school?

GRACE

Yeah.

ETHAN

Okay, I'll go get him. See you later.

Ethan gets back in the car. The driver window goes down.

ETHAN (CONTD)

I... I love you Grace.

Ethan backs up the car. He drives away.

Grace stares at him as he drives. She starts to cry.

INT. ETHAN'S CAR -- DAY

Ethan holds a cigarette. He takes a smoke of it.

Michael opens the car door. Ethan throws out the cigarette.

MICHAEL

Hey dad!

ETHAN

Hey kiddo, how was school?

Ethan turns on the car.

MICHAEL

It was great! Me and Tommy made these awesome clay monsters in class today! I get to bring it home tomorrow and show you.

ETHAN

(smile)

Really? That's great buddy.

Tears start to come down his face. He drives away from the school.

INT. CHILD'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Michael sleeps in a small race car bed. Ethan puts the blankets over him. He kisses Michael on the forehead.

INT. BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Ethan sits on his bed. he takes out his phone. He sees the number of the Killer. Ethan hovers his finger over the call button.

ETHAN

Just get it out of your system.

Ethan calls the number. It continues to ring. Phone Service answers.

PHONE SERVICE

We're sorry. The number you are trying to call has been disconnected.

Ethan hangs up the phone. He deletes the number.

INT. KITCHEN -- NIGHT

Ethan opens the refrigerator. He takes out orange juice. He drinks from the carton. He puts it back. He suddenly stops. He drops the carton.

In the refrigerator is a bottle of rum. Ethan pulls it out. The bottle is full with the liquor.

ETHAN

I... I didn't buy that.

INT. KITCHEN -- NIGHT

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ETHAN

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INT. BATHROOM -- NIGHT

Ethan runs to the toilet. He opens the lid. The cork of the rum is popped. He starts to dump it. He stops.

ETHAN

Come on... fight it.

Ethan trips over and falls to the ground. He picks up the bottle. He puts it down on the table. He rubs his eyes.

An image flashes as he rubs his eyes. Robert getting cut.

ETHAN

Fuck!

He rubs his forehead.

He digs around in the medicine cabinet. He slips and hits the mirror. It cracks. He continues to dig around.

ETHAN

Come on, come on! Something for the pain.

Ethan pulls out a bottle of pain pills. He picks up the rum bottle.

INT. BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Ethan sits down on the bed. He sets the drink and the pain pill bottle down.

He looks over to a wall hangar. A group of "AA" and "NA" keychains are there.

ETHAN

Ethan... what are you doing?

He looks down at the drink and bottle.

ETHAN

The right thing.

Ethan chugs down the rum. He swallows a group of pills.

His vision blurs.

ETHAN

(smile)

There's the feeling I missed.

Ethan opens a drawer at his desk. He pulls out the plague doctor's mask. He puts it on.

ETHAN

Ha... look at me, the killer.

Ethan throws the mask off.

ETHAN

Fuck you. Robert Stevenson, funny.

Ethan juggles the pill bottle. The bottle drops.

Ethan jumps up. He immediately trips and falls. The mask sits in front of him.

ETHAN

Dr. Jekyll.

Ethan puts on the mask.

ETHAN

And who could forget Mr. Hyde?

Ethan grabs his forehead. He sweats from pain.

ETHAN

What the hell is going on?

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. MARK'S MASKS -- DAY

Ethan talks to Mark.

ETHAN (P.O.V.)
Before I go...

Ethan digs in his pocket.

MARK
Yes, Mr. Green-

Ethan stabs Mark in the throat.

BACK TO:

INT. BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Ethan rolls on the ground.

ETHAN
Jesus Christ!

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. RIVER -- DAY

Ethan pulls out his handgun.

ETHAN (P.O.V.)
You can't do it, can you? You can't
bring...
(wheeze)
yourself to kill me. Shame...
(cough)
because I can.

He shoots the gun at the air.

BACK TO:

INT. BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Ethan pulls himself up. He stumbles.

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. MICHAEL'S SCHOOL -- DAY

Ethan drives a white van up to Michael. He has a bandanna over his mouth.

ETHAN (P.O.V.)
Hey kid, I know your dad, Ethan
Greene, right? Well, my name is
Robert Stevenson.

BACK TO:

INT. BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Ethan waves his arm around. He grabs onto the edge of the bed. He pulls himself up.

He slowly walks to his desk. He opens a drawer and pulls out a knife. It shines in the moonlight.

ETHAN
(smile)
Mr. Green.

MICHAEL (O.S.)
Dad?

Ethan pulls the mask onto his face. He walks over to his computer. He plays the song "Only You." His smile is still visible.

CUT TO BLACK

ETHAN
Found you.

The song still plays.

THE END