FADE IN:

INT. CLOSET - NIGHT

Too dark to see well. The whimpering cries of --

JESSICA (14), scared, alone -- echo about the small space.

She fumbles about for something, anything. Something falls to
the floor. She reaches for it. It's nothing.

FOOTSTEPS are heard from outside, growing closer... closer.

She puts a hand to on the door. It opens.

The adjoining room is dimly lit. A MAN is revealed -- he's in
his sixties, thick glasses, gray hair flipped in a comb over. Wears
nothing but a blue bathrobe and slippers --

This is CARL GOTTLIEB. He smiles and steps in with her.

Jessica tries to scream. A hand covers her mouth, she
struggles until --

    CARL
    I'm gonna kill your parents if you
    scream. You hear me. Now, shhh...

She stops fighting, out of breath.

    JESSICA
    Don't hurt me.

Only his BREATHING is heard...

    JESSICA
    What do you want?

    CARL
    You're so pretty and sweet. So
    innocent. Do you realize how beautiful
    you are?

No answer. Beat. He strikes a match, lights a candle and
places it on the floor.
CARL
When I saw you sleeping I -- I knew I had to save you. Save you from the demons who'd try to take you from me. Do you understand?

She can do nothing but look at his leathery face, his icy pale blue eyes.

From outside, a cat MEOWS.

JESSICA
You have cats?

CARL
Oh yes. I have three. They watch over her.

Jessica's eyes dart back and forth. A tear runs down her cheek. The light flickers.

JESSICA
I have cats. I miss them so much.

CARL
My cats are very friendly. They're my babies. You can get to know them. They're all that I have left now...

Carl gazes over her head. He's lost in thought --

Jessica grabs the candle, stuffs it wick-first in his face. She pushes it deep inside his mouth.

Carl's arms flail, eyes wide. He falls back. The door swings open. Jessica falls on top of him.

He reaches out, grabs her hair. She kicks at his head. THUMP! THUMP! THUMP!

He lets go, gags on the candle. Vomit oozes from his mouth.

Jessica finds her feet. Grabs onto a bed post.
On the bed, covered with a blanket -- a human form. Two feet protrude -- black skin, cracked yellow nails. Wetness surrounds the body... almost like it's melting.

A CAT sits on the bed, alert. Looks at Jessica.

She scrambles out of the room. Footsteps down the hall.

Carl's gurgles are heard off screen, then stop.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

The front door flies open. Jessica sprints out, her weak legs trying to support her.

She runs into the street. Approaching headlights appear from off in the distance.

She runs towards the car.

FADE OUT.