

DAYLIGHT

by

Aaron Ridenour

Copyright (c) 2022 This screenplay may not be used or reproduced for any purpose including educational purposes without the expressed written permission of the author.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Closed shops. Abandoned cars. A RADIO CRACKLES.

An empty playground. Silence echoes from the school. No children in sight.

Sunlight. Everywhere.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

An empty swing sways in the breeze. The sun sets over the nearby forest.

INT. MADISON'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

ALARM: "9:00 PM." MADISON (34), already awake, turns it off.

She rolls over, rests her hand on JACOB (10), pulls the blanket over his pale, skinny body.

She runs her hand through his shaggy hair, kisses his head.

MADISON

Be right back.

JACOB

Be safe.

She steps from the bed. A nurse's badge hangs on the dresser: "MADISON."

She snatches a nearby rifle.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Darkness. Madison steps outside, tightens her collar.

Flashlight. She scans the treeline, raises the rifle as she steps around the corner.

Chipped paint. Deep gashes run along the house.

She steps passed a makeshift grave: "BEN."

She kneels, checks traps hidden in the tall grass between the house and the treeline.

Cans stringed together stretch in different directions.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Every window is covered. Madison opens a can of beans, dumps it into a pot on the stove. She lights a match.

She stirs as Jacob enters. He shuffles to the table, sits.

JACOB

Do you want me to get Papa?

MADISON

Let him sleep a little longer.

Jacob sniffs.

JACOB

Ugh. Kidney beans? Again?

MADISON

We don't have a lot of options. And I'd rather not go into town.

Madison slides a bowl of food to Jacob. He doesn't touch it.

MADISON

What's wrong?

JACOB

I wonder how Sarah's doing.

Madison takes his hand.

MADISON

I'm sure she's fine.

JACOB

You don't know that, Mom.

MADISON

We're going to get through this, Jacob. I promise.

JACOB

You can't promise anything.

MADISON

I'll never lie to you. I can promise I'll do anything to protect you.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Madison smiles as she pushes Jacob on the swing. She glances to PAPA (70) in a nearby chair.

He doesn't move, eyes locked on the ground. A flashlight sits illuminated on his lap.

MADISON
You okay, Papa?

Papa stirs.

PAPA
Carol? Is that you?

Madison's smile fades.

MADISON
Carol's not here.

Tears fill Papa's eyes.

PAPA
Carol...

He trails off, lost in thought as he glances to the forest.

MADISON
Let's go inside and play--

CANS RATTLE!

Madison snatches the rifle, aims at the treeline. Nothing.

MADISON
Jacob, take Papa in the house.

A TWIG SNAPS!

MADISON
Go! Now! And lock the door!

Jacob paces to Papa, helps him from the chair. They both shuffle into the house, LOCK the door.

Madison paces toward the treeline, rifle raised. Nothing.

She stares into darkness. Something RUSTLES in the grass. The gun trembles in her hands. Finger hovers over the trigger.

Waits. Something emerges--

A raccoon scampers from the woods.

Madison slowly lowers the rifle, breathes a sigh of relief.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Madison moves toward Jacob, medicine syringe in hand. Jacob opens his mouth. He's used to this routine.

She injects the medicine into his mouth.

He swallows as she sets the syringe on the coffee table.

JACOB

How much do we have left?

Madison cuddles with Jacob on the couch.

MADISON

We're good for a few months.

Papa sits in a nearby chair. He glances to the empty syringe briefly, turns back to the television.

Riots in several cities flash across the screen. Chaos.

The NEWS REPORTER (40) shifts in her chair on screen.

NEWS REPORTER

(on television)

--introduce Dr. Faraday, a physicist from the University of Michigan working with organizations to study the phenomenon.

DR. FARADAY (55) anxiously rubs sweat from his forehead.

NEWS REPORTER

(on television)

What can you share with our viewers regarding your research so far?

DR. FARADAY

(on television)

I can't share the specifics of--

JACOB

It's getting worse.

MADISON

We just need to be patient.

DR. FARADAY

(on television)

We're close to solving this thing.

NEWS REPORTER
 (on television)
 Authorities continue to urge
 everyone to stay indoors--

Jacob shakes his head.

JACOB
 We're on our own.

NEWS REPORTER
 (on television)
 --and do not, under any
 circumstances, go into the light.

INT. FOYER - DAY

Silence. "11:00 AM" on the grandfather clock.

INT. MADISON'S BEDROOM - DAY

Madison lies next to Jacob, fast asleep. A soft CRASH echoes.

Madison starts to stir. CRASH. She rolls over, confusion etched on her face as she glances to Jacob.

CRASH!

She tosses the blankets aside.

KITCHEN

Madison bursts in. Broken medicine bottles lie strewn across the floor--

Jacob's medicine.

Papa stands in the middle of the room. Fire burns in his eyes as he searches, empties more cupboards.

MADISON
 Dad, what're you doing?!

PAPA
 They're trying to poison me, Carol!
 Don't you see it?!

He brandishes Jacob's empty syringe, throws it aside. He grabs more bottles, tosses them to the floor. CRASH!

PAPA

They're probably spying on us right now! We have to get rid of it before--

Madison snatches his arm, wrestles the bottle from his hand.

MADISON

Dad, listen! I need you to stop!

Papa shoves Madison into the wall, raises his fist. Madison covers her face.

Papa's entire demeanor changes: confusion replaces anger.

PAPA

Madison? Is that you?

Tears swell in Madison's eyes as she nods.

PAPA

What're you doing on the floor?

Tears stream down Madison's cheeks as he pulls her from the floor. She throws her arms around him as she sobs.

PAPA

What's wrong, little firefly?

MADISON

Nothing, Papa. I'm just happy to see you, that's all.

She holds him. Tightly. She doesn't want to let go.

Papa suddenly pulls away.

PAPA

You're not Carol. Who are you?

Madison stares at the broken medicine bottles strewn across the floor.

There's nothing left.

INT. MADISON'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Madison slips a small pocketknife into one of her gloves.

She checks the rifle, glances at ammunition sitting on the dresser: two bullets. She sighs.

INT. FOYER - NIGHT

She zips her coat. Jacob props himself in the doorway.

MADISON

I know what you're going to say.

JACOB

Don't go.

MADISON

I have to, sweetie. I'm not risking you having a seizure.

JACOB

I'll be fine. I don't need it.

She kisses him on the head, ruffles his hair.

MADISON

I'm not willing to take that chance.

JACOB

Then let me come with you.

MADISON

No. I need you to stay here.

He hesitates.

JACOB

Could you please check on Sarah for me? I'm worried about her.

MADISON

Of course. I don't mind checking on your girlfriend.

Jacob blushes.

JACOB

She's not my girlfriend, Mom.

MADISON

Sure, bud. Keep an eye on Papa for me. And do your math homework.

Jacob LAUGHS.

JACOB

Sure, Mom.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Dark homes. Overgrown yards. Madison shines her flashlight in all directions.

A dog BARKS in the distance.

She pauses in front of a house: "TURNER" on the mailbox. Eyes widen. The front door sits wide open.

TURNER RESIDENCE

She bursts into the foyer. Darkness.

MADISON

Sarah?!

No response. She raises her gun, glances into the nearby family room. A lone chair sits in the middle.

She ascends the stairs.

HALLWAY

She slowly steps down the corridor. WOOD CREAKS.

Her flashlight scans the wall. Massive cuts gouge the plaster.

A picture of Sarah Turner with her brothers, Thomas and Kyle, and her parents, Nick and Emma.

She scans the floor. Blood stains the wood, snakes down the hallway.

She swallows hard as she rounds the corner.

SARAH'S BEDROOM

Madison enters, gun raised. VOMITS.

Bodies twist together like a macabre sculpture. Blood covers the walls. Contorted faces. Flesh molded together--

Sarah. Her brothers. Dead.

Flies scatter. Madison covers her nose, stumbles back into the hallway.

STREET

Madison paces to the sidewalk, VOMITS again. She slumps to the curb as she sobs uncontrollably.

A dark figure watches from a window of the Turners' home.

INT. PHARMACY - NIGHT

Madison pushes through the front door, scans the darkness.

Nothing moves.

She steps to the back of the store, past the counter. She searches different shelves, checks labels, pauses--

Levetiracetam.

She opens her backpack, shoves in every bottle. She snatches a couple plastic bags, grabs as many medications as she can.

CLINK. Her eyes dart over her shoulder, listens.

Silence.

MADISON

Hello?

No response. She quietly sets the bags on the floor. She slides the backpack over her shoulder, clenches the rifle.

She moves past the counter, scans the ransacked shelves with her flashlight.

CLINK. Two aisles over. She moves around the corner, steps carefully.

She takes a deep breath, whips around the corner and--

Nothing.

CLINK! Behind her. She quickly turns--

Massive hands grab her coat, SLAM her against the shelf.

Madison winces as she's thrown against the wall. The rifle and flashlight slide away from her.

She slams against the tile, dazed.

The dark figure sprints for the rifle.

Madison snatches the flashlight as the figure grabs the rifle, turns. Madison illuminates her attacker--

NICK TURNER (35). Sarah's father.

MADISON

Nick?!

Another figure strikes the back of her head. She slumps to the tile. Her eyes slowly close.

Darkness.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

BEN (37) steps onto the porch, adjusts his tie. Madison steps behind him, already in her scrubs.

He kisses her. Passionately.

He moves toward his truck, glances over his shoulder. He smiles at Madison.

Madison smiles back. For a moment, they're the only two people in the world. And then--

Sunlight breaks over the trees. Ben is bathed in light.

Madison's smile fades. Terror.

She SCREAMS.

INT. FAMILY ROOM - NIGHT

Madison jerks awake, winces. She attempts to reach for her head--

Her hands are fastened behind a chair.

WOMAN (O.S.)

You're awake.

Madison scans the darkness. Moonlight breaks through draped windows. A figure steps from the shadows--

EMMA TURNER (33). Sarah's mother. She's disheveled. Worn. A sinister smile.

EMMA

Just in time.

MADISON

Emma?! What the hell are you doing?!

Nick steps behind Madison, rests his hands on her shoulders.

EMMA

We're here to help you.

Madison struggles against her restraints. It's hopeless.

Nick leans close to her ear.

NICK

Don't fight it.

Madison sees her backpack in the faint light of the doorway.

Nick steps around Madison, retrieves her handgun from a small table across the room.

NICK

Why carry an unloaded gun?

MADISON

I didn't want to hurt anyone.

Nick puts the gun down, joins Emma at her side.

EMMA

It's a different world now. The ones who survive are the ones who can make the hard decisions.

Madison secretly reaches into her glove, retrieves the small pocketknife.

MADISON

Nick. Emma. Please let me go. I need to get back to Jacob.

She opens the blade, quietly saws at the rope wrapped around her wrists.

EMMA

Don't worry. We'll take care of Jacob and your father after we help you.

MADISON

What happened to Sarah? And your boys?

NICK

We helped them see the light.

Madison's shoulders drop. Tears trickle down her cheeks.

MADISON

Please. You're both...sick.

EMMA

Sick?

Emma steps toward the window, touches the drapes.

EMMA

You're the one who's sick, Madison.
Thinking you're living a life. Day
after day in the darkness.

She GIGGLES. It's unnerving.

Madison continues to cut through the rope.

EMMA

But we can save you. All of you.

She rips the drapes open. She moves around the room, opens every drape. Moonlight spills across the floor.

MADISON

What're you doing?!

EMMA

It's the only way.

MADISON

You'll kill us all!

EMMA

It'll be dawn in an hour. Then
they'll come for you.

Madison sprints as fast as she can.

EMMA

Don't you see? It's the only way to
save us. To give in to the light.

MADISON

You're not saving anyone! You
killed your own children!

Emma pushes back tears, shakes her head.

EMMA

Every parent has to make hard choices.

She hunches over Madison, their faces just inches apart.

EMMA

The question is: What are you willing to do to save your son?

MADISON

Anything.

The rope behind Madison's back SNAPS!

Madison drives the pocketknife into Emma's side, shoves her across the room.

Emma stumbles into the small table. The gun bounces across the floor.

Nick grabs Madison, tosses her into the wall. CRASH!

He hoists her from the floor. She knees him in the crotch.

He doubles over. Madison knees him in the face. He collapses to the floor. Blood oozes between his fingers.

Emma pulls the knife from her side, SCREAMS as she charges Madison.

Madison grabs the chair, BREAKS it across Emma's head. She collapses to the floor. Unconscious.

Madison snatches her handgun from the floor, fumbles for the bullets in her pocket.

Nick wipes blood from his face, rushes toward her.

Madison loads the gun, turns, and--

TWO GUNSHOTS!

Nick's lifeless body tumbles on top of her. She shoves him to the floor.

She glances between her watch and Emma, still unconscious.

MADISON

I'm sorry, Emma.

She snatches her backpack and sprints for the door.

STREET

Madison breathes heavily as she sprints through abandoned cars, eyes locked on the horizon.

She's tired, but she doesn't stop.

FOREST

Sunlight edges over the horizon.

Madison breaks through the trees. She's exhausted. Her house is about 75 yards away. Leaves RUSTLE behind her and--

BAM!

Madison tumbles to the ground.

She rolls over, eyes widen as Emma pounces on top of her.

Emma pins her arms to the ground, smiles.

EMMA

Let them come for us.

Madison squirms, attempts to break free. Emma punches her, wraps her hands around Madison's neck.

They only have seconds left.

Madison's eyes roll back into her head when--

Papa wraps his arms around Emma, pulls her from Madison.

Emma squirms, fights with everything she's got. Papa doesn't let go as they tumble to the ground.

PAPA

Madison, go!

EMMA

No!

Madison COUGHS, jumps to her feet as she glances to the horizon. Her eyes dart over her shoulder at Papa.

One. Last. Time.

MADISON

Dad!

Papa smiles. Tears in his eyes.

PAPA

I love you, little firefly.

Sunlight peeks over the treeline. It spills across the grass, bathes Papa and Emma in light.

Madison sprints for the house as an unseen entity hoists Papa and Emma into the air.

Their eyes widen. Blood covers their clothes as they twitch, contort in different directions.

Bones CRACK as their flesh molds together.

Sunlight races across the grass behind Madison as she bounds for the house.

The front door is already open. Jacob stands in the doorway.

MADISON

Jacob, get back in the house!

PORCH

Jacob slides back inside as Madison quickly scales the steps, sunlight on her heels.

FOYER

She bursts in, quickly LOCKS the front door, and--

BANG!

Something SLAMS against the door from the outside.

Madison shoves Jacob back as she steps away from the door.

BANG! The front door splinters slightly.

White liquid oozes through the broken wood. And then--

Silence.

Madison embraces Jacob as they both SOB.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Madison SLAMS the door closed, hunches over the sink. Blood stains her hands.

She frantically flicks the water on, scrubs. Red spills into the sink.

She flicks the water off, locks eyes with herself in the mirror. She stares at her reflection in silence.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Madison drops her backpack on the table, rips it open. She unpacks as Jacob shuffles in, wipes tears from his cheeks.

JACOB
What about Papa?

MADISON
We'll bury him tonight.

She retrieves a syringe from the cupboard, extracts medicine from one of the bottles, and injects it into Jacob's mouth.

MADISON
You're safe. That's all that matters.

JACOB
Who was that lady?

Madison continues to pull containers from her backpack.

MADISON
I don't know.

JACOB
Did you see Sarah?

Madison freezes.

MADISON
She's at her house.

JACOB
When can I go see her?

MADISON
I don't know.

JACOB
I can make the journey, Mom, I just--

Madison SLAMS her fists into the counter, whips her head toward Jacob.

MADISON
Not. Now. Jacob.

Awkward silence.

JACOB
You promised you'd never lie to me.
Is Sarah okay?

Madison hesitates.

MADISON
Yes.

INT. MADISON'S BEDROOM - DAY

Madison enters, closes the door, LOCKS it. She slumps to the floor and SOBS.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

Sunset. Wind races across the grass. Shadows creep over the house and then--

Darkness.

THE END