

HOARDER

Written by

Creepy

FADE IN:

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

Decorated for Halloween to within an inch of its life. Gnarly spiders affixed to windows, faux skeletons scaling the brickwork, draped cobwebs, and the obligatory jack o'lantern.

INT. HOUSE - LOUNGEROOM - DAY

Laptop open, WHITNEY, 35, and BEN, 7, pour over Halloween costumes on the Internet.

WHITNEY

Okay, what about this?

BEN

Oh, Ma!

WHITNEY

What? It's Spiderman.

BEN

Everyone will be going as Spiderman.

WHITNEY

Okay... Well, what about -

BEN

No Superman, no Antman, no Dracula, no Ninja Turtles and no Woody from Toy Story. I want something really, really, really scary.

WHITNEY

Really, really, really scary. Okay. Maybe we could make something? Get some fake blood... I've got some paper mâché somewhere.

BEN

Oh, Ma!

WHITNEY

Okay, I'm guessing nothing home-made.

Ben vehemently shakes his head.

WHITNEY

You know what? I think Daddy might know just the thing.

Whitney grabs her cell phone, dials his number.

WHITNEY (ON PHONE)

Hey, remember all those classic Halloween costumes your dad kept?

PAUL (ON PHONE)

The place is a death-trap, Whit'. I need to go over before anybody -

WHITNEY (ON PHONE)

Your son is having a meltdown here. He wants to be really, really, really scary for Halloween.

PAUL (ON PHONE)

- God knows what state the costumes will be in.

WHITNEY (ON PHONE)

They'll be good. They're the one thing I remember your dad said he treasured. And treasured memories went into the attic, remember?

PAUL (ON PHONE)

Okay, but...

WHITNEY (ON PHONE)

We'll be careful. I promise.

EXT. DERELICT HOUSE - DAY

Long grass and mountains of rubbish bags piled high against shuttered windows, a rusted old Dodge, a kid's tricycle, graffiti splashed across a 'No Trespassers' sign.

WHITNEY

Okay, so we get in and we get out. Right, Captain?

Ben giggles, and salutes.

WHITNEY

And, no running off. You stick with me, okay?

EXT/INT. DERELICT HOUSE

Whitney uses her full weight to push the front door open against the hoarded rubble behind it.

It's dark except for slivers of light creeping in around narrow cracks in the windows. Roaches and mice and rats run for cover. Something scuttles around Whitney's ankles, she jumps, squeals.

WHITNEY

Shit!

Ben giggles, until his eyes go wide when he whips his head around to find himself face to face with a mongoose biting a cobra, one of a collection of bizarre taxidermy animals.

WHITNEY

Your Gramps' had some very interesting hobbies.

As they venture past the kitchen, Ben pinches his nose in disgust.

WHITNEY

Wait in the car if you want?

BEN

No way.

Ben holds onto Whitney's skirt as they navigate the labyrinthine maze of junk, some of it piled to the ceiling.

STAIRWAY

Traversing more hazards on the rickety steps to the second story. A long hallway leads to the ceiling hatch, where Whitney lowers a retractable ladder -

ATTIC

Ben looks around at boring cardboard boxes. He sighs.

While Whitney's eyes are drawn to an old oak wardrobe in the corner of the room. She throws the doors open instantly catches sight of a clothing bag marked: *Halloween 1982*.

WHITNEY

There it is.

She strains to reach the upper shelf, Just out of reach -

Jumps up and yanks it. The bag falls to the floor.

WHITNEY

Gotcha!

Something heavy drops with it.

An ornate trunk with a gilded cover, its flimsy rusted lock so corroded it pops open upon impact, contents spilling out.

A watch, a pendant, an anklet - another watch - Whitney delves into what appears to be a false compartment and -

A half dozen driver's licenses fall out, all issued in the 80s and all in different states Florida, California, Washington DC.

Whitney tenses. How long has she been sitting examining this stuff... She looks around.

WHITNEY

Ben...?

She stands, checks to see if Ben's playing Hide and Seek behind the myriad of boxes and bric-a-brac.

BASEMENT

Ben pushes on the door and it miraculously creaks open. A few tentative steps down into the dark abyss -

Hands feeling around for the light-switch.

Light floods the room.

Cracked walls, sunken floor, reinforced beams buckle under the weight of the floors above. Unlike the chaos that is the rest of the house the basement is neat and orderly.

A sink in the center of the room, bags and bags of sand, plaster, alginate, bandages.

A 3D Printer.

And something else...

Ben puzzles over it, can't make out what it is. He steps forward.

ATTIC

Whitney shuffles the licenses in her lap. Faces of the smiling young women flash before her eyes.

A sharp intake of breath when the word she's struggling to find suddenly dawns on her - "souvenirs".

Discovering a draw-string bag, she jiggles it upside down - tips out car-keys.

Another false drawer reveals more items - a cherry-red lipstick, a scarf, a Snoopy keychain, a St Christopher medal.

Whitney reaches further into the back of the wardrobe to something wedged at the back. She pulls hard to dislodge it

A tower of magazines topples to the floor - we catch glimpses of titles as they fall - hard-core pornography amidst other more learned titles: *Advanced Taxidermy*, *Surveillance 101*, *Famous Torture Devices in History*, *Memento mori...*

Whitney now totally spooked looks around the room.

WHITNEY

Ben...?

Nothing.

WHITNEY

Ben, answer me!

BEN (O.S.)

I'm here, Ma.

The faint sound of his voice echoes through the house.

WHITNEY

I told you not to leave my sight!

Whitney rushes out of the room.

BASEMENT

She stands at the top looking down. Not a sound from below.

WHITNEY

Ben, honey, where are you?

No response. She hurries down the stairs and into the room.

WHITNEY

Are you down here?

Whitney scans the basement, her eyes flitting between the incongruous objects in the room - sand, cement, sink, 3D printer - finally landing on a feature wall ahead of her.

Difficult to make out what it is she's looking at.

She edges closer towards it. Not wanting to see what it is, but edging closer still.

A Shadow Box takes up the entire back wall, spotlights illuminating each item on display. Whitney finally gets close enough to focus on what the objects actually are.

Five death-masks perfectly reproduced. She leans in, touches one - real skin, real hair. Instinctively she recoils.

Hand to her mouth she stifles a scream.

WHITNEY

Ben...? Where are you, honey?

A tear rolls down her cheek and she shakes with fear.

WHITNEY

Ben, please come out.

An interminable wait and then -

A figure jumps out from behind the far wall.

Not Ben, can't be Ben...

Because what Whitney sees in that moment is not the smiling face that flashes in front of her eyes but a macabre ghastly face frozen in time. A face caught at the exact and agonising moment of the victim's death.

Whitney does scream this time, a blood curdling terrified scream causing her to collapse to the floor. Ben runs to her.

BEN

Ma. It's just me.

Cradling his mother in his arms, he rocks her back and forth.

BEN

(still wearing the mask)
This is really, really, really
scary, isn't it, Ma?

FADE OUT.