

MEAT THE NEIGHBORS

Written by

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INT. AUTO REPAIR SHOP - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE: Atlanta, Georgia. Early '90s.

The WHIZZ of power tools, CLANK of metal against metal, FLURR of giant shop fans, and UNDERGROUND RAP on a radio. The shop buzzes with activity as AUTO MECHANICS perform their craft.

LAMONT (20s), holds a VHS camcorder on his shoulder and his watch in front of the lens.

LAMONT
Three, two, one...go!

INT. AUTO REPAIR SHOP - CAMCORDER POV - DAY

NATE (20s), laden with grease stains and red knuckles, lays in the driver seat of a vehicle and races to disassemble a steering column.

LAMONT (O.S.)
Come on man, you're lagging, let's go!

Nate groans and sweat beads on his forehead.

NATE
Lamont!

His screwdriver slips! He snatches it off the floorboard.

NATE (CONT'D)
Fuck!

LAMONT
Yo Nate, I think you just screwed yourself sideways.

Nate takes a breath and focuses as his hands work away.

INT. AUTO REPAIR SHOP - DAY

Nate and Lamont walk through the garage like victorious gladiators. Lamont carries the camcorder and flips a VHS tape in his other hand.

Auto Mechanics take notice, stop what they're doing, and watch as Nate and Lamont approach an eight-spot bracket on a whiteboard outside an interior office.

LAMONT

Eddie's gonna flip his lid. The old man's record is done! A new breed-Kings of Atlanta, baby!

NATE

Just make sure you get that pot money from Tommy, you know how he is.

LAMONT

Ain't that the truth.

Nate draws in his name and time on the semi-final bracket.

AUTO MECHANICS

Bullshit. God damn it! No f'ing way, man!

Auto Mechanics shake their head, drop tools or look on in disbelief.

Nate and Lamont snicker and enter the office as if they just tagged a wall.

The door closes behind them. A shiny new sign reads: MANAGER'S OFFICE, NATE FISCHER AND LAMONT MIMMS.

INT. AUTO REPAIR SHOP - OFFICE - DAY

Two desks face each other. Nate's family photos line his desk.

Nate changes out of his mechanic suit into clean clothes.

LAMONT

You might actually win this one. Eddie never got over the first time you beat him, and now twice? Man, he might quit.

Lamont takes out the VHS tape from the camcorder, labels it with Nate's name, and puts it in a desk drawer with others.

NATE

He ain't gonna quit.

Nate drops into an office chair and looks at his family photos.

NATE (CONT'D)

Remember the first time I won?

LAMONT

Yup, we were barely swinging wrenches.

NATE

I remember I put my name on the same board out there- Bob called me in here, told me Lozen was pregnant with Jerry. I couldn't move, I was terrified. I'm still fuckin' terrified.

Lamont laughs.

LAMONT

What's there to be terrified of? We are independent business owners. Our fate is in our hands, man! Right here! We did it. The dream. Start at the bottom, work hard, and you get somewhere. We made our somewhere, baby. You and me.

Lamont clenches his fists and shakes them.

Nate grins. A flash of pride fades into worry.

LAMONT (CONT'D)

What, you wanna be like Tommy out there? He's good. Sure. But he's minimum. Give minimum, get minimum. That's all there is to it.

Nate gets up and looks out the blinds into the bays.

NATE

While I was working so hard I missed Jerry's first steps. Mom was his first word. I wasn't even his tenth. He'd cry when he saw me for a while. Probably thought I was some stranger. Tommy goes home at five.

LAMONT

Can Tommy afford the finer things for his kids? You can't think like that. I've told you a million times, bro-

NATE

I know, I know.

LAMONT

Ya'll get out of that tiny ass apartment yet? I still don't get why you don't invest in buying a house.

Nate drops back into his seat.

NATE

Things are just tight. Maybe in a year-

His eyes shift off to a wall clock. He jumps back out of his chair.

NATE (CONT'D)

Shit. Gotta go. I'll be back to lock up later- can you check to see if Tommy got those tires unpackaged and racked?

Lamont opens up a ledger and puts on a pair of readers.

LAMONT

You know nobody likes that micromanaging bull, get the fuck outta here.

Nate rushes to the door.

NATE

Habit. See ya.

Lamont doesn't look up from the ledger as he waves Nate off. The door closes.

On the corner of Lamont's desk a computer and peripherals in shipping plastic pulls his attention.

Lamont closes the ledger and studies the computer.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

An older four unit apartment building, barely a notch above a slum on the far reaches of a large city.

Other apartment buildings, also aged, bookend on either side. Metal bars cover the front door and first floor windows.

Nate and LOZEN, a Native American woman with a Walkman clipped on her belt and headphones around her neck, stand on the side walk and look up at the building.

Lozen smiles at Nate looks at the metal bars on the building and the surrounding buildings in concern.

NATE

It's not great. Maybe twenty years ago it was.

LOZEN

It is for now. And listen...

Nate listens and shrugs, "what?"

LOZEN (CONT'D)

Exactly. It's quiet!

NATE

It's got bars on the door and all the windows.

Lozen jiggles his hand.

LOZEN

We both grew up in a place just like this. I'm excited. And if your wife is excited then her husband should be...

NATE

Worried.

Lozen grins, slaps his arm and pulls him along toward the front door.

LOZEN

You should be worried.

NATE

What?

Lozen pushes the door buzzer.

LOZEN

Of what I'm gonna do to you once we get moved in.

Nate's eyes light up.

NATE

Find me a pen.

The front door whips open and WILBUR (60s), a perpetually dissatisfied grump, eyes Nate and Lozen.

WILBUR
The Fischer's.

NATE
We're the Fischer's.

WILBUR
I just said that, didn't I? Is it
just you two?

LOZEN
We have a son, his name is Jerry,
but he's staying with his grandma
for the weekend. Are there are
other kids here?

Wilbur stares at Lozen.

NATE
Mister, you ok?

WILBUR
No vacancies.

Lozen and Nate glance at each other in confusion.

JUNE (O.S.)
I got it, Wilbur, you go on now.

Wilbur rolls his eyes and opens the door.

June (late 60s), everyone's favorite grandma, smiles at
Wilbur as she waddles with a cane towards the front door. Her
shoes, made for clubbed feet, scrape across the floor with
every step.

JUNE (CONT'D)
Thank you. The light in the
hallway?

Wilbur checks his mail at a cluster mailbox.

WILBUR
I said I'd get to it.

JUNE
(musical)
Thank you.

June stands in the doorway and measures up the couple.

JUNE (CONT'D)
Well aren't you two just the most
beautiful couple.

An inviting smile cracks wide on June's face.

JUNE (CONT'D)

Get in here so Mama June can have a
look at you.

Lozen and Nate look at one another with surprise and excitement on the warm greeting.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

June turns and hobbles up the stairs. She waves them to follow.

STALKER, hidden by shadow with hairy with pointed wolf-like ears, short, peeks from behind a wall down the hallway.

STALKER POV

Heavy breaths.

Nate and Lozen follow June up the stairs.

LOZEN

Was that your husband, Wilbur?

BACK TO SCENE

June laughs.

JUNE

No. Him and Sandy live in number
two. Now I live downstairs- you'll
see boys and girls of all kinds
comin' in and out. I foster kids,
just not as many as I used to.

NATE

Downstairs? The basement?

STALKER POV

Stalker creeps along the hallway, careful to stay quiet and in the shadows.

BACK TO SCENE

JUNE

Now it sounds weird when you say it
like that, doesn't it? It used to
be an official Civil Defense
Fallout Shelter, but it's so much
nicer now.

June pauses and catches her breath.

NATE
I didn't mean-

JUNE
Oh I'm just messing, silly. With
all the kids I needed the space and
besides, you'll all want to huddle
up in Mama June's apartment when
the summer heat comes around!

RAMESH (40s) leads a procession of the remaining family down
the stairs.

RAMESH
Good morning, June.

He glances at Lozen and Nate, but holds longer on a Nate. A
brief lock of their eyes and dislike brews, instantly.

STALKER POV

Stalker takes notice of the Ramesh's voice, stops before the
stairs and retreats backwards.

BACK TO SCENE

JUNE
Good morning Ramesh. So wonderful
to see everyone so bright and
early. Priyanka, you're as
beautiful as a morning rose. Look
at you!

PRIYANKA (40s), Ramesh's wife and clothed in traditional
Indian garb, follows behind Ramesh and smiles at June and the
Fischer's.

The grandparent, VIKRAM (late 60s), follows behind Priyanka.

JUNE (CONT'D)
Oh, these stairs.

June rubs her leg.

JUNE (CONT'D)
(to Vikram)
You know what I'm talking about.
Folks my own speed right here.
Ya'll have a wonderful day now.

Vikram smiles politely as one might when they don't understand what's being said. He nods and smiles to the Fischer's.

June stops at the top of the stairs and catches her breath again.

ARUNA (18), a princess in her own estimation, takes her time catching up to her family.

Aruna looks Lozen and Nate up and down, finds them unworthy of any more attention and descends the stairs.

JUNE (CONT'D)
Hey there, Aruna.

Aruna waves behind her without looking.

June hmphs and walks on towards an apartment door, apartment #3.

STALKER POV

Stalker watches from the end of the hallway as Aruna heads to the front door.

Aruna stops and looks at her reflection in glass of the door. A few strands of hair are tossed. Her movements slow as if she knows she's being watched-

She looks over shoulder at an empty hallway.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - SECOND FLOOR - DAY

June pauses at the apartment door.

JUNE
Their children are a little...
older. They were above school age
when they first moved in. So nice
to have a young one coming to the
building. You got to cherish the
years before they turn into
teenagers and get mean with all
those hormones firing this way and
that.

Lozen whispers to Nate, who scrunches his nose at a smell.

LOZEN
I was a terrible teen. Do you
think...?

NATE

I was fuckin' evil. Maybe two negatives equal a positive?

LOZEN

God, I hope so.

June stops at an apartment door.

JUNE

Here we are. Apartment three.

NATE

I'm sorry, Mama June, I gotta ask-
what's that smell?

Wilbur steps onto the landing with a screwdriver and lightbulb as June unlocks the apartment door.

WILBUR

Better get used to it, son. And more of them are coming to take our jobs, too. They work twice as hard for half the pay.

JUNE

Now Wilbur, you know my rules.
(whispers to the Fischer's)
As if his parents aren't full blooded immigrants themselves.

June throws her head back and laughs.

Wilbur side eyes June as he works on the light fixture beside Apartment #4.

JUNE (CONT'D)

Your neighbors are the
(mispronounce)
Randa's. You gotta try this stuff
they call
(mispronounce)
gulab jamun. Honey, now I've got
diabetes to add my list of
maladies.

June laughs and pushes through the apartment door.

Wilbur descends the stairs and slides his screwdriver in his pocket.

He pauses at the last step and looks around, but nothing, and disappears into his apartment.

STALKER POV

Stalker hurries through the hallway, up the stairs and stops abruptly at the door to apartment #3.

It stares at the apartment door and sniffs the air as a wolf would.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Nate and Lozen sit on the stoop and fill out tenant paperwork. Lozen wraps an arm around Nate's shoulders and watches him fill out the form.

Nate hovers his pen over the 'race' question.

LOZEN

Just do Caucasian.

NATE

Caucasian? I'm not Asian, my parents are German. I'm American. I think she gave us the wrong form.

LOZEN

No, it just means White.

NATE

Oh. If that's true then where's Native American?

LOZEN

Just put Caucasian.

Nate marks down Caucasian.

NATE

What do you think about the neighbors?

LOZEN

They're probably wondering the same thing we are about them.

NATE

What about that guy Ramesh? I don't see him giving us a cup of sugar if our lives depended on it.

LOZEN

I think you're fishing for reasons now, Mr. Fischer.

Nate shrugs.

LOZEN (CONT'D)
I also think... we should take June
up on her offer.

Nate squints and works through the form.

NATE
What offer?

LOZEN
To babysit. We're gonna need it if
I get that promotion.

NATE
With all those foster kids I guess
she knows what she's doing.

Lozen stares off.

NATE (CONT'D)
Hey... you're gonna get that
promotion. You're THE fucking
nurse. I'm serious.

Lozen loops her gaze to him and sighs. A smile breaks out.

LOZEN
Would you sign it already?

Nate signs and looks back at her. Her smile widens.

LOZEN (CONT'D)
We did it.

They kiss.

Behind blurry lobby glass the shadowy face of a WARTHOG WOMAN
appears!

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Wilbur stands at the mailboxes and thumbs through his mail. A
letter reads: RAMOS INSURANCE CO., APPLICATION ENCLOSED.

Wilbur looks at the letter as if a heavy decision awaits.

Steve's Apartment's door cracks open. STEVE, a giant of a man
in both height and weight, surveys the main floor through the
door crack, his cleft lip briefly visible.

Wilbur side eyes the door.

WILBUR

I'll leave in a minute. Don't get
your panties in a twist.

Nate enters through the front door with a moving box. Steve's
Apartment's door slams shut.

Nate looks at the door, quizzical.

Wilbur glances over his shoulder and shoves his mail in a
pocket.

WILBUR (CONT'D)

That's Steve. Goddamn recluse. I
can't fix a damn kitchen sink
without him locking himself in this
bedroom. But he keeps to himself
and don't bother me much.

Wilbur eyes Nate, as if asking "are you going to both me
much?"

NATE

If you have a sec, could you hold
the door- this next box is really
heavy.

WILBUR

It's damn near 8PM.

NATE

What?

WILBUR

My show is on at 8PM. Every
weeknight.

Wilbur brushes past Nate.

WILBUR (CONT'D)

Remember that.

Wilbur opens his front door and pauses.

SANDY (60s), with a hip floral pattern moo moo and hair up in
Conair Hot Stick rollers, sits on the edge of a couch and
pounds numbers in a phone.

WILBUR (CONT'D)

Sandy, get off that goddamn
shopping network!

Sandy jumps and juggles the phone in her hand.

SANDY

Wilbur you almost gave me a heart
attack! You're suck an asshole.

Sandy scrambles to enter the last bit of numbers into the
phone.

WILBUR

I wish you would! Buying luggage?
Why the-

Wilbur's Apartment's door slams and an indiscernible argument
continues behind it.

NATE

(to himself)

What a dickhead.

Nate glances at Steve's door. Two shadows, feet, block light
from underneath the door.

Nate turns to Steve's door and he takes a step toward it.

NATE (CONT'D)

Hey Steve. I'm Nate. Apartment
number three. Right above you, with
my wife Lozen and son Jerry. If you
need anything, just hollar. Bang on
the ceiling, whatever.

The feet leave.

Nate, unsure what to make of it, turns to the stairs.

NATE (CONT'D)

(to self)

Am I the dickhead?

INT. FISCHER'S APARTMENT - DAY

GRRRNK. Keys pull out from the other side of the door.

The front door opens and JERRY (5) springs through the door
with keys in hand.

Lozen, in nurse scrubs, enters and balances two cakes,
grocery bags and her purse.

LOZEN

Jerry, get the door please.

Lozen enters the kitchen.

JERRY

OK!

Jerry closes the door, thinks, and reopens it. He removes the keys and meanders into the kitchen.

INT. FISCHER'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - DAY

Jerry watches Lozen with an innocent face. Too innocent.

JERRY

Whatcha doin'?

LOZEN

Waiting on your dad.

Lozen pulls out birthday party materials from the grocery bags.

Jerry slides the keys onto the counter.

JERRY

Why?

LOZEN

I heard someone's birthday might be tomorrow, but mommy and daddy want to celebrate first with just the family.

JERRY

(coy)

Whose birthday?

LOZEN

You are clearly your father's son.

Jerry grins and runs off. Lozen shakes her head.

She pulls out a candle in the shape of a number five from a grocery bag and looks at it in thought.

INT. AUTO REPAIR SHOP - DAY

A 1969 Chevrolet Chevelle sits in a bay as the engine idles and HARD ROCK blasts from a boom box.

Lamont leans out the window and pushes the gas. VROOM!

Nate leans over the Chevelle's engine bay and looks around at various angles.

NATE

I hear it, but I can't fuckin' see it.

LAMONT

Come on, man, this is our reputation on the line. They don't call us the Big Bad Greasy Boys for nothin'.

NATE

Rev it up again.

Nate leans forward, stops and scrunches up his face. He leans back. He yells out over the engine revs.

NATE (CONT'D)

Wait, who calls us that?

BA-DANG! A metal fan blade sticks out of the hood and vibrates inches from Nate's head.

EXT. AUTO REPAIR SHOP - REAR OF SHOP - DAY

Nate and Lamont sit on oil drums and tires. They smoke.

LAMONT

You're one lucky son of a bitch.

NATE

If you hadn't of made up that stupid name, I'd be dead.

LAMONT

So I saved your life?

NATE

No, not really.

LAMONT

Dude, I saved your life. Get over it.

NATE

Oh shit, what time is it?

LAMONT

Quarter till six.

NATE

Fuck, I'm gonna be late. Can you lock up once the boys are done?

LAMONT

I got you. The boys and I will finish up. You gotta chill.

Nate flicks the cigarette.

NATE

You ever think we got this wrong?

LAMONT

Four-one-one me, what're you talking about?

NATE

It's gonna sound retarded.

LAMONT

You ever gonna stop using that word?

Nate shrugs.

NATE

I thought I'd have more time to spend with Jerry and Lozen, at home. We hired that assistant manager and swear to God I feel like I work twice as much.

LAMONT

He'll appreciate it when he's older, trust me.

NATE

Thanks for closing up, Lamont.

LAMONT

Anytime, bro.

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - NIGHT

Nate buys a carton of cigarettes from a CASHIER (19), stoner nephew of the owner. Behind him is a board of missing persons, mostly kids, and a myriad of for sale ads.

Nate leaves the counter and notices the board.

He scans the board.

Two Kids of around age five, one very tall, the other short, smile in a missing person ad. They both wear circular lockets with a hummingbird imprint. The title reads: MISSING: ANGELA AND TILLY PERKINS.

The Cashier notices Nate looking at the ad.

CASHIER
They don't look like that now.

NATE
What do you mean?

CASHIER
The mother comes in every month and puts a new one up. Like, before I was even born. Before you ask- I'm nineteen.

NATE
I was gonna- nineteen years? That's a long time.

CASHIER
Faith and love dude, dude.

NATE
By now you they gotta be... you know.

CASHIER
Can't tell the momma that.

NATE
Guess not.

DING. The door opens and someone passes behind Nate towards the counter.

Nate glances and sees Ramesh at the counter. He glowers at the ad board and deliberates whether he should say hello or not.

Nate turns and takes in a breath, but before he can get the words out Ramesh passes by him and out the door without a word or glance.

NATE (CONT'D)
Jesus...

Nate glances at the Cashier who stares at back, a Twizzler hangs and wriggles from his mouth.

INT. FISCHER'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Nate plunges a fork into the remnants of a small birthday cake. The birthday candle threatens to fall off.

NATE
Hey, did I tell you we got the loan
for that brake lathe? No more
paying Smithy down the road to do
our resurfacing.

Lozen enters and slides her arms around Nate. He hurries a
last big bite into his mouth.

LOZEN
Oh really? You'd rather eat cake
than kiss your wife?

Lozen thumbs icing off the corner of his mouth and into her
own.

NATE
(mouthful)
I'll do both.

He goes to kiss her but Lozen lens back. She pauses and looks
at him, serious.

Nate looks around as if he's in trouble, but doesn't know for
what.

LOZEN
I did it.

Nate grins and swallows the cake.

NATE
You got the promotion? Aw, baby,
that's great! You did it!

LOZEN
Good things come in threes, you
know.

NATE
You know I don't believe in that
stuff.

They kiss and smile at one another.

NATE (CONT'D)
So proud of you.

Lozen packages up the cake. Nate watches, something on his
mind.

NATE (CONT'D)
We've come a long way, you know.

LOZEN

Mhm.

NATE

Sometimes I worry I spent all this time chasing this dream that I missed out on things.

LOZEN

You did what you had to do for you and your family. You know that.

Nate looks unsure, guilty. Something comes to him.

NATE

Hey, have you heard these crazy German bed time stories June's been telling the kids? Kids getting their thumbs cut off and for sucking their thumbs? Oh, and yesterday- she forgot my name. Nate. It's four letters.

LOZEN

Seriously?

Lozen chuckles, "you must be joking."

NATE

I'm serious.

LOZEN

Nate.

NATE

Can we at least think about getting someone else to watch Jerry?

LOZEN

She does seem to have more trouble getting around lately. I don't want her to feel obligated, either.

NATE

Just think about it.

LOZEN

I'll think about it if you can least agree... good things come in threes?

Lozen nods and plucks the candle off the cake. She sucks off the icing from the candle, seductively.

NATE

If the third thing is what I think
it is, I so agree.

He reaches for her but she evades, giggles and runs out. He follows in a dash.

The pantry door cracks open. Tiny fingers wrap around the door.

Jerry peeks out, visible from his eyes up, and snuffles. His eyes relay a sad guilt, as if he'd done something wrong.

He shuffles out of the pantry and clutches action figures.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - BACK - NIGHT

A field of high grass, brush, and a few trees- once a nice park shared by the surrounding apartment buildings.

A dilapidated playground with a swing set, more of a tetanus opportunity, falls victim to nature's growth.

Nate sucks hard on a cigarette. He looks at what's left of the cigarette- one more long drag.

ERRNNT. URRNNT.

Nate glances up and makes out a TALL THIN FIGURE, pale, on one of the swings. He can't quite make it out.

Nate draws on his cigarette and burns through the filter.

NATE

Ow, fuck!

He flicks it away and rubs his lips.

Nate glances back to the swing set but the figure is gone. The swing sways.

A rusted access cover in the far back of the park with an unlocked chain lifts.

Two long slender HANDS, pale with long sharp fingernails, pulls the chain ends together and closes an old rusted lock between two chain links.

The Hands slither back in and the access cover drops shut.

INT. FISCHER'S APARTMENT - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

A digital clock displays: 02:49AM. The clock flips to 02:50AM. Snore and the whirl of a ceiling of fan are the only sounds.

Nate sleeps. The other side of the bed lay empty, covers thrown off.

LOZEN (O.S.)
(whisper yell)
Nate. Nate wake up.

Nate murmurs.

A shoe sails through the air and hits Nate. He lifts his head and looks at Lozen in the doorway.

LOZEN (CONT'D)
June's in the stairwell.

Nate shakes his head and shrugs.

LOZEN (CONT'D)
Nate. Something's weird.

Nate sighs and drops his head into his pillow.

INT. FISCHER'S APARTMENT - FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

Nate stands at the door in his boxers and looks through the peephole. Lozen looks on from the kitchen doorway in concern.

NATE
I don't see anything. Everything's fine.

Nate turns to leave, until-

JUNE (O.S.)
You get down here right now, mister.

Lozen points toward the door.

Nate gives Lozen a look, "I know", and unlocks the door without a sound. He cracks the door.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - SECOND FLOOR - NIGHT

June looks out of an open roof access door.

Nate notices Randa's Apartment's door cracks open. Ramesh peeks through and they give each other indifferent looks.

HOWLS, like from a werewolf.

JUNE (O.S.)
Stop that, shh! Get in here!

Ramesh opens up his door and steps out in a robe.

RAMESH
June. What is this?

June scrambles out of the door and closes it.

NATE
Everything OK, Mama June?

JUNE
I am so sorry, folks, one of the kids had a little too much sugar today. He thinks he's a werewolf, can you believe it?

Ramesh sighs.

RAMESH
What do you need?

NATE
Do you need any help?

Ramesh and Nate look at one another.

JUNE
No, no. Ya'll go back to bed. The kind of hours you both work, you need it. Don't worry.

Ramesh steps forward to help, insistent.

JUNE (CONT'D)
(cold)
I said don't worry.

Ramesh stops, put off by the tone. He nods and glances at Nate again on his way back into his apartment. The door closes.

INT. FISCHER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Nate and Lozen, behind the closed front door, share a look of worry.

JERRY (O.S.)
What's wrong, mommy?

Jerry stands in the hallway and rubs his eyes.

LOZEN
Oh, nothing baby. June just needed
some help.

Lozen turns Jerry around and guides him down the hall.

INT. FISCHER'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Nate pours a glass of water.

INT. FISCHER'S APARTMENT - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Nate takes a drink from the water as he walks down the hallway. He hears whispers from Jerry's room.

Nate stops and listens from outside the door.

JERRY (O.S.)
Snip! Snap! Snip! the scissors go;
And Conrad cries out - Oh! Oh! Oh!
Snip! Snap! Snip! They go so fast
that both his thumbs are off at
last.

Nate opens the door.

Jerry flips the covers over his head and fake snores.

Nate eases the door closed and shakes his head.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - PARK - DAY

KIDS run around and play tag. Jerry runs from the "it" toward the playground.

June sits in a lawn chair and fans herself with a newspaper.

JUNE
Hey now Jerry you stay away from
that playground, it ain't safe!

Jerry swerves away from the playground.

JERRY
Yes, Mama June.

INT. FISCHER'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - DAY

Nate wears an apron and moves hot dogs around a skillet with salad tongs.

CHATTER and LAUGHTER from the other room.

Lozen opens the front door and Nate glances.

LOZEN
Hey Lamont. Where's Jakey?

Behind the door Lozen hugs someone.

LAMONT (O.S.)
His momma decided to switch weekends on me. Again.

LOZEN
That's too bad. Come on in - Nate's in the kitchen grilling.

LAMONT
Do what in the kitchen now?

Lamont closes the front door, spots Nate and joins him.

NATE
How's it hanging?

They dap.

LAMONT
This is some low rent shit- what are you doin'? I know you can afford a grill. Hell, I got two.

NATE
The whole building has to agree to have a special area designated for grilling out. Can you take those hot dog buns out and put them on that tray? Plus, we got Lozen's school loans, Jerry's college fund... you fucking name it.

Lamont does as asked.

LAMONT

I get why you need a degree for all that but my uncle, the plumber, makes as much without a degree. Know what I'm saying?

NATE

I hear ya. But if Jerry decides he wants to be a doctor, we'll have at least some of that covered.

Lamont eats a hot dog and shrugs.

LAMONT

Who didn't agree- that dick cheese in two?

NATE

Straight across from us.

LAMONT

The Indian guy?

NATE

He's always got this look- like I've fucking done something, you know? He's the one over there with fifty-million people in one apartment. Always cooking this stuff that smells and comes through the air vents and under the door. Never a word about- sorry we sound like a herd of elephants over here and our food smell suffocates everybody to death. Five years, man. Five... years.

LAMONT

I'm sensing a little pent up hostility. Personally, I love me some Indian food. In fact I'm gonna name my second born Curry. Have you tried to, you know, Mister Rogers him?

NATE

Do what?

Lamont sings:

LAMONT

Please won't you be my neighbor?

Lamont cracks up and Nate tries not to but also laughs. A hot dog slips out of the tongs to the floor.

LAMONT/NATE

Oh, shit!

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - BACK - DAY

Lozen exits and scans the park for the Kids and Jerry. She spots Jerry running from one of the Kids.

JERRY

I'm not it!

Lozen looks over at June, who sprawls out and sleeps in a lawn chair.

LOZEN

Hey June?

No answer. No movement, except for houseflies that buzz around June's sweaty, make-up runny face.

Lozen nears June.

LOZEN (CONT'D)

June...

Lozen reaches a hand to June's shoulder, but before she can touch- June wakes with a start!

LOZEN (CONT'D)

Oh my God!

JUNE

What's wrong, dear?

Lozen calms herself.

LOZEN

I...are you OK?

JUNE

Oh, yes. Are you OK? Where's my tea...

June looks around for her tea.

LOZEN

I can take over, you don't have to be out here.

JUNE

This is where all the fun is at.
Everyone just having a good ole
time.

June finds her tea and takes a long drink.

Lozen looks out across the park and sees one of the Kids
press their head against a tree.

Kids and Jerry scatter.

LOZEN

I'll be back down in a minute and
then we'll bring the kids in, OK?

JUNE

Take your time, dear. We're doing
just fine.

Lozen walks away with concern.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - PARK - DAY

Jerry runs behind a dumpster. He looks down and finds his
foot over a dead rat.

JERRY

Ew.

Jerry surveys the area for a new spot and notices Aruna
sitting in an apartment window. She smokes and points at him,
"I see you!"

He runs off in search of a new spot.

Aruna waves out the cigarette smoke and closes the window.

Jerry comes to a stop in front of the access cover.

KIDS (O.S.)

Here I come! I'm gonna get all of
you!

Jerry lays flat in front of the access cover and hears a
noise from below the access cover.

HANDS dash out and grab him by the throat! He tries to
scream, but the hands tighten.

Sharp thumbnails press against Jerry's neck and break the
skin.

Jerry drifts out of consciousness. One of the Hands grips the lock and feeds in a fingernail. The lock pops open.

The Hands jerk Jerry's limp body through the access door opening, anxiously.

BLACK SCREEN

LOZEN

Jerry, where are you?

NATE

Jerry, buddy, the game is over.
Come on out! Mommy and daddy won't
be mad.

LOZEN

Jerry, please come out!

NATE

Jerry!

INT. FISCHER'S APARTMENT - JERRY'S ROOM - NIGHT

SUPERIMPOSE: Six months later.

Jerry's room is pristine and tidy. As if no one has lived there in quite some time. The only light comes from the hallway.

Nate, in his mechanic wear, sits on Jerry's bed and picks at a Koosh ball.

Lozen appears in the doorway.

LOZEN

Hey, Detective Barnes is here.

NATE

I didn't call.

LOZEN

He just stopped by.

NATE

Why?

Lozen hesitates.

LOZEN

He wants to see how we're doing.

NATE

He wants to stop by and ask how we're doing? It's been six months! Find my son's body so we can bury him.

LOZEN

Nate. Don't say that.

Nate yells at the doorway:

NATE

Tell Detective fucking Barnes to get the fuck out of my house. I didn't ask him to come here. I asked him to find my boy, which he said he would do but... I dunno-

Nate looks around the room.

NATE (CONT'D)

I don't see him. Do you see him? Maybe the detective should come in here and help me find my goddamn son!

Nate throws the Koosh ball, hard. He seethes.

Lozen sobs and steps toward him. His face morphs from anger to pain.

She falls into him and they sob together.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - SECOND FLOOR - DAY

Nate carries his mechanic's suit, locks his apartment's door, and heads to the stairs.

June struggles up the stairs and watches her feet with every step. One foot. Rest. One foot. Rest.

Nate pauses and thinks, as if to avoid interaction. He jogs down the stairs in a hurry past June.

JUNE

Hey Nate, how are you today?

Nate continues down the stairs and through the front door as if June didn't exist.

June sighs and continues up the stairs.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Nate jogs down the stairs and unwraps a new pack of cigarettes. His hands shake, hard, and he drops the lighter and cigarette.

He kneels to pick them up but doesn't reach for him. A tear drops from his nose and onto the floor.

Steve's feet block light from underneath the door. Nate notices and swipes up cigarette and lighter.

NATE

Mind your own business, Steve.

Steve's door cracks.

NATE (CONT'D)

I said fuck off.

Nate leaves out the door.

Steve watches after him through the crack of the door.

INT. AUTO REPAIR SHOP - OFFICE - DAY

Nate and Lamont sit at their desks and drown in paperwork.

NATE

We got to figure a way to loosen up
some cash and get the roof
repaired.

LAMONT

Don't need to worry about that if
we lose Tommy to the shop down the
street?

NATE

They're talking him up again?

KNOCK KNOCK.

NATE (CONT'D)

Come in.

The door opens and... quiet. Nate glances over and sees Ramesh. In surprise, they recognize each other.

Lamont looks between the two. He gets up to greet Ramesh.

LAMONT

You're Nate's neighbor. Whatcha need, homie? Are you trying to use that neighborhood discount coupon?

RAMESH

What is this coupon? I'm here for the machine.

Ramesh points to the logo on his shirt.

LAMONT

Oh, right right. Thank God. What, are there like two of ya'll in the whole state?

RAMESH

Yes.

LAMONT

Oh. For real? In that case you better do a check up on our other machine as well if that's all right?

RAMESH

Two-hundred dollar minimum fee on diagnostic. No coupon.

LAMONT

All right, all right. We all got businesses to run, I get it.

Lamont glances at Nate before he closes the door. Nate shakes his head in annoyance.

Lamont motions for him to calm down.

INT. AUTO REPAIR SHOP - OFFICE - DAY

Nate stacks papers and files them away. A boring job finally done.

Lamont enters and slides a service receipt on Nate's desk.

LAMONT

Gonna have to hold off on that roof a while longer.

NATE

What's this?

Lamont drops heavy into his chair.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Nate drags himself through the front door and to the mailboxes.

VOICES in an argument echo down from the second floor. The pace is fast.

RAMESH (O.S.)
No, you must stay here with us
longer.

Groceries FALL to the floor.

RAMESH (O.S.) (CONT'D)
(in Hindi)
Shit!

Nate recognizes the voice and pulls out the service receipt from his back pocket. He fumes and jogs up the stairs.

Ramesh puts groceries back into a bag from a spill. Vikram holds on to his own bags.

VIKRAM
(in Hindi)
Aruna is older now, you no longer
need us. Ramesh, it is time for me
to return home before I am too old
to do so.

RAMESH
Think on it. OK? One year. Aparna
must settle into college. This has
been a very busy year. Please
understand.

Ramesh catches sight of Nate as he steps onto the second floor. He busies himself with the groceries.

Vikram smiles and nods to Nate.

Nate nods back and looks at Ramesh.

NATE
I think there's a billing error.

Ramesh doesn't look up.

RAMESH
I don't make mistake.

NATE

OK, but I think there is. This is a ton of money.

RAMESH

It is a simple calculation. Flat hourly rate multiply by hours. Add in parts.

NATE

I know how to calculate. I own a business.

Ramesh looks up at Vikram.

Vikram shuffles inside.

Ramesh stands up with the groceries and looks at Nate.

RAMESH

Then you say I'm a liar?

NATE

No, you just made a mistake. This can't cost this much.

RAMESH

I don't make mistake.

NATE

Look, man, I tried to handle this with you but clearly you don't understand.

RAMESH

I understand, you think I'm liar or stupid. Call office, you're the one who will be the liar and stupid.

NATE

What the fuck is your problem?

Ramesh glowers at Nate. Nate does the same back.

Randa's Apartment's door opens to Priyanka with a stern face.

PRIYANKA

Ramesh, the food gets cold.

Ramesh walks into the apartment and holds the look with Nate.

Priyanka gives equal share of the stern look between Nate and Ramesh. She closes the door.

Nate turns and runs into a stern look from Lozen, who stands in the doorway of their apartment.

INT. FISCHER'S APARTMENT - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Nate and Lozen, bags under their eyes, eat TV dinners in silence at a round dinner table.

Lozen studies Nate. He looks like a man in a constant battle with misery.

INT. FISCHER'S APARTMENT - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Nate and Lozen lay in bed and face opposite directions. They both stare at their respective walls.

Lozen flips to face Nate. Her hand snakes through the covers, reaches into his crotch, and caresses.

Nate resists, for a moment, and then can't. They make love.

INT. FISCHER'S APARTMENT - MASTER BEDROOM - LATER

Nate and Lozen stare at the ceiling and recover from the sexual excitement.

LOZEN

If we get pregnant again, I want a girl. Lozen Fischer the Second.

NATE

Women can't have Seconds.

LOZEN

Then we'll change the rules. What would you name it if it was a girl?

Nate's face hardens. He gets up and leaves the room.

INT. FISCHER'S APARTMENT - DINING ROOM/FOYER - NIGHT

Nate ambles through the Dining Room to the kitchen.

He stops at the kitchen doorway. Something is off. His head swivels- a sliver of hallway light beams through an open door.

Nate scans the apartment. Nothing. No one.

He reaches into the kitchen and grabs a knife from a knife block set.

HEAVY BREATHING from the hallway. HEAVY FOOTSTEPS. Angry whispers erupt between heavy breaths:

JUNE (O.S.)
You know better. Get back
downstairs, right now! You'll be
sorry...

Nate creeps up to the front door and looks out the peep hole.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - PEEPHOLE POV/SECOND FLOOR - NIGHT

June stands at the top of the stairs in a nightgown and threatens something or someone down the stairs with a finger.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - SECOND FLOOR - NIGHT

Nate looks around the door.

NATE
June.

June's eyes grow big in a sweaty, unwell face.

She turns and tries to put on a friendly face with her back to the stairs.

NATE (CONT'D)
Everything OK?

JUNE
(slur)
Yes. Yes, of course.

The friendliness fades from June's face. Fear of an unknown feeling replaces it.

She falls backwards like a tree and crashes down the stairs.

Nate runs out of his apartment and skids to a stop at the top of the stairs.

NATE
Shit, shit, shit!

Ramesh rushes out of his apartment.

RAMESH
What is this? What is going on?

He peers over the top of the stairs and sees June. He glances at Nate and notices the knife.

NATE
Call an ambulance!

Nate glances at Ramesh and tracks his gaze to the knife still in his hand.

Ramesh backs away to his apartment and keeps an eye on Nate.

RAMESH
Priyanka, call for the ambulance...
and police.

Ramesh closes his door. A lock turns.

INT. FISCHER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Nate rushes Lozen into the apartment and slams the door.

NATE
Can you believe that mother fucker?
Who does he think he is?

Nate paces.

Lozen sits down and watches him, as if she waits for the weather to break.

NATE (CONT'D)
I have a knife so I murdered the
landlady? Are you fucking kidding
me? No he's the one that did the
knifing- right into my ass with
what he overcharged me.

LOZEN
I didn't know you two were doing
business. Is that what you two were
fighting about?

NATE
We're not. Not really. He fixes the
software and shit on machines. As
soon as he saw it was me...

Nate takes a breath and checks his watch.

NATE (CONT'D)
Fuck this racist motherfucker, I
gotta get to bed.

Nate storms off down the hall.

Lozen watches him, helpless.

LOZEN
What about June?

On "June", Nate slams the bedroom door.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Wilbur leans against the mailboxes, spits sunflower seeds into a cup, and watches a COP escort TWO CHILDREN through the front door.

A GOVERNMENT WOMAN carries folders and follows behind the Cop.

Wilbur checks out her curves, but- she stops and turns. Words hang in her mouth as Wilbur's eyes slither up her body.

She glares.

GOVERNMENT WOMAN
Are there any other children that
you're aware of?

WILBUR
Nope. You can have my wife if you
want, but she'll bleed you and the
government dry. How's a man
supposed to retire with a woman
like that?

GOVERNMENT WOMAN
I'm sorry I can't help you with
that, Mr. Wright. Goodbye.

WILBUR
Bye now.

The front door closes and Government Woman drops out of sight.

Wilbur pulls out a letter from his back pocket that reads: RAMOS INSURANCE CO., CONGRATULATIONS! He kisses the piece of mail and hurries downstairs down the hall.

The shadows from Steve's feet stretch under the door.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - BASEMENT DOOR - DAY

Cutout animals and kid drawings decorate the basement door.

Wilbur fishes keys out of his pocket and looks at the keyring: MAMA JUNE, and tries a key.

The door unlocks.

A look of creepy satisfaction crosses Wilbur's face.

He relocks the door and glances around the corner.

WILBUR
Be back for you later.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Lamont approaches the building with a covered dish.

For Sale signs plaster the adjoining buildings, as does spray paint tags. The first floor windows and doors all have broken glass.

INT. FISCHER'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Lozen flips burgers in a pan on the stove and drinks a beer.

The front door opens and Lozen pops her head in the kitchen.

LOZEN
I'm just gonna go change. I saw
Lamont's car pull up when I was
checking the mail.

NATE
Was he alone?

LOZEN
I think it's Lauren's week.

NATE
I meant with a date.

LOZEN
I didn't see one. I'll be right
back.

INT. FISCHER'S APARTMENT - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Lozen and Lamont stare at each other from across the dining room table as they die of boredom. Burgers, sides and Lamont's covered dish sit untouched.

NATE

And that's when he says, 'this guy has a knife.' I'm sorry, what? You think I killed her? She fell, clear as fucking day. I mean I'm the psycho? No, he's the psycho.

LOZEN

(to Lamont)

What number is this for you?

LAMONT

Five. You?

LOZEN

Eight.

Nate looks between the two and figures it out. He makes a dismissive face.

LOZEN (CONT'D)

Nate, I think it's time to move.
There's too much... here.

LAMONT

Might as well. It's like they made a final Escape from Wherever movie, except this time it's Escape from Atlanta. Downtown at least, shit. Anyways, those developers are definitely gonna snatch this place up with your landlady dead-

LOZEN

She's not dead.

NATE

She's brain dead. And I'm not moving because of him. Fuck him.

LAMONT

You say one more thing about that neighbor and I'm out.

LOZEN

(to Lamont)

I'll go with you.

(to all)

And June was a good person. It's just everything.

A quiet pause. Lamont stares at the food.

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

Wilbur, a two foot chain around his neck like a shawl, stands in the middle of a large basement apartment and surveys the room. It's a time capsule of old furniture and heaps of aged toys.

WILBUR

Show me dem goodies, Mama June.

INT. BASEMENT - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Wilbur checks between a mattress and box springs of a low to the ground bed. Nothing. He strips the pillow of its case.

Handfuls of cheap jewelry from a vanity drop into a pillow case.

Wilbur stands over a collection of wigs on a table. A pair of leg braces lean against the table.

He grabs at the wigs and stuffs them in the pillow case- but one falls to the ground. He leaves it.

INT. BASEMENT - MASTER BATHROOM - NIGHT

He checks the bathroom cabinets and snags a few pill bottles.

INT. BASEMENT - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Wilbur glances into a room crowded with bunk beds. He moves on.

He glances into a toy room. Floor to ceiling of children's books, toys, and things.

He checks a door. It doesn't budge.

WILBUR

What do we have here, hm?

He rams his shoulder against it a few times and it gives.

Wilbur flips the light on and- jumps back! His eyes dart around the room where shelves and shelves of hand-made multicultural monster masks stare back at him. Clearly, an obsession.

WILBUR (CONT'D)

You twisted bitch.

INT. BASEMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

The kitchen cabinet drawers are pulled out and rifled through.

Wilbur works through a drawer of various papers.

He slams the drawer shut and looks around. The in-wall ironing board cabinet catches his eye.

He gives one long look around, as if checking if he missed anything.

WILBUR

All right. Buck up, Wilbur.
Showtime.

Wilbur opens the cabinet.

A set of leather whips and a robust door key hang within the cabinet.

Wilbur runs his hand over a leather bull whip. He snatches the key and charges toward a large cabinet.

He stops at the cabinet and gives himself a pep talk:

WILBUR (CONT'D)

Don't be a pussy, Wilbur, you know
what needs to happen. You can be
free of that blood sucking, saddle
bag bitch and ride off into that
sunset. You just gotta do it.

Wilbur grabs the back of the cabinet and whips it open like a door to reveal a sliding metal door.

HOWLS, GROWLS and metal cages JOSTLE from behind the door.

His hand shakes as he fits the metal key into the slot and turns it.

His hand reaches for the hand groove.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Vikram, dressed for travel, stands with his back to the front door.

VIKRAM

(in Hindi)

I am sorry, son, it is time.

Ramesh stares at the floor as if an answer will appear any moment.

VIKRAM (CONT'D)
(in Hindi)
Your mother and I love you, but it is time. You may come visit us, but this will be my last trip here. Your mother needs me back home and our bodies cannot make the trip anymore.

VIKRAM (CONT'D)
Son?

RAMESH
(in Hindi)
At least stay the night. Let us do this properly tomorrow.

Vikram and Priyanka have a silent discussion between their eyes.

RAMESH (CONT'D)
You don't even have a flight yet. I will purchase and schedule this for you. Let me do this. Please.

Vikram gives in and nods.

Wilbur rounds the corner from the basement and sees Ramesh and family. He stops and leans into a shadow.

Ramesh grabs the luggage and leads the procession up the stairs.

RAMESH (CONT'D)
You will see, we will celebrate and see you off. A happy farewell.

Wilbur sneaks out and peeps up the stairs. Ramesh and family clear the stairs and disappear.

Wilbur glances at his apartment door and grabs his private parts in a rude gesture toward the door.

WILBUR
Eat it.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Wilbur sets down the pillow case and checks his surroundings. Confident he's alone, chains the door and locks it with a padlock.

He stops at a telephone box mounted on the apartment wall, pops it open, and slashes all the wires.

He pulls out a piece of luggage from nearby bushes, walks down the sidewalk and whistles a jolly tune like a man out on early parole.

INT. FISCHER'S APARTMENT - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Lamont moves a burger to a waiting burger bun.

LAMONT

I, uh, have to admit... I didn't know what to think when I first saw it, but now I'm a believer.

Lozen and Nate give Lamont puzzled looks.

LAMONT (CONT'D)

Pan-grilled burgers are the way to go. You did it, man, you convinced me.

They all share a chuckle.

LAMONT (CONT'D)

Wait, wait. Let's bless this food. This apartment building is cursed, and I don't wanna eat no cursed food, either.

NATE

I don't think...

Lamont puts his hands on the table.

Nate looks at Lozen, questioningly.

Lozen nods to Nate.

LOZEN

Go for it.

Everyone holds hands, bows their heads and closes their eyes.

LAMONT
Bless us, O God. Bless our food and
our drink.

INT. FISCHER'S APARTMENT - FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

The door handle turns and the door eases open.

INT. FISCHER'S APARTMENT - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Lamont continues the prayer blessing.

LAMONT
Since you redeemed us so dearly and
delivered us from evil--

A GOBLIN's small pale feet with claws for toenails glide
across the floor.

LAMONT (CONT'D)
--as you gave us a share in this
food so may you give us a share in
eternal life.

Goblin's pelvis and scuffed knees slide under the dining room
table and into a seat. Its feet swing.

LAMONT (CONT'D)
May you bless this family and those
we cannot find--

Nate's eyes pop open and burn through Lamont, but- his
attention draws to the seat beside him.

Goblin, a short hairless creature with black eyes, pointy
ears, and a hook nose stares at the food, hungrily. Surgical
mutilation is evident.

LAMONT (CONT'D)
--may they find safety and love.
Amen.

Lamont looks up with a smile. It fades as his eyes slide to
the Goblin.

LAMONT (CONT'D)
What the fuck is that?

Goblin looks around the table. Fear grows on its face.

Lozen screams. The Goblin screams and shows sharp pointed teeth that angle in all directions.

Nate reaches for a butter knife. The Goblin grabs his forearm with its clawed hands and sinks in its teeth.

Blood gurgles out of the arm and into the Goblin's mouth. Its black eyes widen with fear or ecstasy, hard to tell.

NATE

Ahhhh!

Nate pushes on the Goblin's head.

NATE (CONT'D)

Get it off!

Lamont grabs a chair.

Lozen grabs a bread knife off the table.

Nate yanks his arm free, and in the process pulls the Goblin off its chair to the ground.

Nate rushes to join Lozen and Lamont.

Goblin curls in a fetal position and stares at the three humans. It wipes the blood from around its mouth into its mouth.

LAMONT

What the fuck is that thing?

NATE

I don't know.

Lamont charges with the chair. The Goblin bares its teeth and jumps underneath the table. The chair smashes to pieces on the floor.

LOZEN

Wait!

Lamont scrambles away.

LAMONT

It fucking bit Nate.

LOZEN

I think it's scared.

LAMONT

I'm scared Nate has rabies!

The Goblin eyes the humans from the beneath the table and snarls.

LOZEN

Everyone stop and back away slowly.

Lozen kneels and puts down the bread knife.

LOZEN (CONT'D)

It's OK. See?

The Goblin watches Lozen's every movement.

Lamont bumps into a picture on the wall and it crashes to the floor.

The Goblin screams and charges toward Lozen, or the door behind her.

Nate pulls Lozen out of the way and they fall to the ground.

The Goblin half-runs and pounces out of the apartment.

Lamont slams and locks the door.

LAMONT

Call the police!

BEGIN DREAM SEQUENCE

EXT. VAN (PARKED) - NIGHT

A mini-van idles on a very dark side street in India. Not a light in sight.

INT. VAN (PARKED) - NIGHT

YOUNG RAMESH (late 20s), wrapped in a blanket, sits in the driver seat, shivers and watches exhaust clouds plume in the rearview mirror, nervously.

He looks to a car seat in the passenger seat, where BABY ARUNA sleeps in bundles of blankets.

He checks the direction of the air from an air vent on Baby Aruna and adjusts it.

Young Ramesh sits back and smiles at Baby Aruna.

YOUNG RAMESH

(in Hindi)

It will be OK, Aruna. Sleep.

Young Ramesh notices movement in the rearview. He turns and looks over his shoulder.

A SHADOWED MAN approaches from the down the street, who walks with authority and carries a flashlight.

Young Ramesh fumbles to put the van in gear. He finally does and drives down the road, takes a few turns and parks.

He sighs in relief.

RAP RAP RAP! A flashlight raps against the window. An INDIAN COP peers into the van.

INDIAN COP
(in Hindi)
Roll down the window.

Young Ramesh does.

YOUNG RAMESH
Sir, I know there is a curfew-

INDIAN COP
Then why are you on the street in
your vehicle?

YOUNG RAMESH
I'm trying to keep my daughter
warm. She's young and not well.

Indian Cop squints at Aruna.

INDIAN COP
You know when the blackouts occur
crime occurs. It is not safe.

YOUNG RAMESH
I know.

INDIAN COP
Go home.

YOUNG RAMESH
But, sir-

INDIAN COP
I said go home! If I catch you
again I will take action.

Young Ramesh nods.

The Indian Cop walks off.

Young Ramesh rolls up the window and lays his head on the steering wheel.

BZZRNT! The van radio springs to life. It RINGS like a telephone.

Young Ramesh glances at Baby Aruna, who stirs. He smashes buttons on the radio but it gets louder. And louder.

END DREAM SEQUENCE

INT. RANDA'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Ramesh wakes up in a recliner and a robe. RING! RING! He groans and rolls out of his chair.

RAMESH
Why does no one get this phone?

INT. RANDA'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Ramesh gets a look from Priyanka, who cooks over a stove.

He waves her off, "I don't want to fight", and picks up a phone receiver off the wall.

RAMESH
Ramesh Randa.

Ramesh picks up a pen tied to a clip board mounted on the wall and writes.

RAMESH (CONT'D)
Yes, I can do that...Tonight? This
is after hours. Different charge.

He glances over his shoulder and gets a side-eye from Priyanka.

RAMESH (CONT'D)
Address?

Ramesh waits.

RAMESH (CONT'D)
I said address. Hello?

Ramesh looks at the phone, tries the tapping the line.

He avoids eye contact with Priyanka on his way out of the kitchen.

RAMESH (CONT'D)
I'm going to dress. Please take
down the address when they call
back.

Ramesh halts in the kitchen door way as if struck by a
bullet.

RAMESH (CONT'D)
What is this? No!

INT. RANDA'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Aruna, hands on hips and in a provocative dress, glares at
Ramesh in defiance.

RAMESH
No! No!
(in Hindi)
This is shameful and invites
trouble, no!

ARUNA
What is the problem?

RAMESH
You look like a street person who
wants money for... for- no!

ARUNA
You cannot speak to me this way.

Priyanka looks around Ramesh.

PRIYANKA
Oh, this is a little
too...American.

ARUNA
We ARE American.

PRIYANKA
Yes, but you know what I mean.

RAMESH
This is not a conversation. It is
late and you dress like this? I
demand you return to your room.

Aruna storms out the door and slams it.

Ramesh plods toward the door.

PRIYANKA

Ramesh!

RAMESH

What?!

PRIYANKA

You will only make it worse and drive her away.

RAMESH

She will go out and drink, I have smelled it on her before! This is unacceptable! We are American but not that kind of American. MTV American!

PRIYANKA

We must approach this differently. And how do you know about MTV?

Ramesh's eyes bulge. He storms off toward the hallway.

RAMESH

Then when I come back you tell me how we are to handle this before she becomes a street woman!

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Aruna hurries down the steps and to the front door, but-
CHANG! She sees the doors are chained.

ARUNA

What...?

A RUSTLE is heard behind her. A hungry GROAN.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Aruna's face fills with fear as she looks off to the right in the glass.

A Tall Thin Figure hangs in the shadows of the hallway.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Aruna's head faces the reflection of the Tall Thin Figure in the window.

INT. FISCHER'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Lamont and Nate bend down on either side of the sofa and grip it. Nate's arm wound is wrapped in gauze.

Lozen tries the phone and hears nothing.

LOZEN
The phone is dead.

NATE
One, two, three!

Nate and Lamont pick up the sofa and move toward the front door.

LAMONT
What do you mean?

LOZEN
Wait, we can't just barricade
ourselves in- the phone doesn't
work.

Nate and Lamont look at each other. They set the sofa down.

LAMONT
Did you tap the thing?

Lozen gives her a look.

LAMONT (CONT'D)
Unplug it, plug it back in?

NATE
Lamont, that don't work.

LOZEN
What about the neighbors?

LAMONT
I'm not going out there. What
happens if that thing comes back?

NATE
Ramesh would leave our asses out in
the hall, that's what he would do.

LOZEN
We have to warn them and we need a
phone. I'll do it.

LAMONT
Ya'll don't have any guns, do you?

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - 2ND FLOOR - NIGHT

Fischer's Apartment's door opens.

Lamont scans the area. Thinks, and looks up.

NATE (O.S.)
What are you doing?

LAMONT
You ain't never seen that movie
where the thing is on the ceiling?

NATE
Just go.

Lamont, Nate, and Lozen sneak out of Fischer's Apartment to Randa's Apartment's door. They each carry a kitchen knife.

Lozen's fist pauses at the door. She looks at her knife.

LOZEN
Hide these. We don't want to scare
him.

Everyone hides their knives behind their backs. Lozen raises her fist to knock again.

The door swings open! Ramesh and his visitors look at each other in surprise.

LOZEN (CONT'D)
Mr. Randa, hi, I'm Lozen Fischer.

RAMESH
I am leaving for work. What do you
want?

LOZEN
There's been an... incident.

RAMESH
Not my problem. Excuse me.

Ramesh steps out and forces his visitor's step back. He turns and locks the door.

RAMESH (CONT'D)
Please do not bother my family.

Ramesh heads to the top of the stairs.

NATE

Look, man, there's something loose
in the building and the phones are
out.

Ramesh pauses at the top of the stairs and squints at Nate.

RAMESH

You are high on weed, yes? Drugs
and bad business, that makes sense!

Ramesh descends the stairs.

LOZEN

No, he's telling the truth, just
listen.

Ramesh halts in the middle of the stairs. His eyes widen as
if he witnesses a father's nightmare. His keys dangle from
his finger by the keychain.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - STAIRS - NIGHT

A Tall Thin Figure presses up against Aruna on the door and
sucks on her neck with WET SLOPPY sounds. She moans and her
eyes roll back in what appears to be ecstasy.

RAMESH

(in Hindi)

What is the meaning of this! Stop
this and get inside with your
mother, now, you whore!

Lozen, Lamont and Nate stand at the top of the stairs and
look on.

The wet, sloppy sounds cease.

RAMESH (CONT'D)

Did you not hear me? And you- you
get off of her or I will kill you!

The Tall Thin Figure's head swivels toward Ramesh.

Ramesh's keys slide off his finger and drop to the ground.

Dark, sunken eyes and a red mask of blood look back at
Ramesh. It smiles and two vampiric teeth glisten pink with
blood.

Aruna's neck pumps blood out of multiple bite marks. Her head
slumps. Blood soaks her dress and down her legs.

Ramesh trembles.

RAMESH (CONT'D)
Aruna...?

Lozen gasps.

NATE
Grab him!

Nate and Lamont grab at Ramesh and pull him back. Ramesh struggles against them as they half-drag him up the stairs.

RAMESH
No! My daughter!

The Tall Thin Figure leans off of Aruna and turns to face its meals on the stairs.

The glass SQUEAKS as Aruna slides down the door to the floor.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - 2ND FLOOR - NIGHT

Lamont sees the Tall Thin Figure advance to the stairs.

LAMONT
It's coming!

Lozen runs to Fischer's Apartment, opens the door and waves.

LOZEN
Get inside!

Nate and Lamont let go of Ramesh and run toward Lozen.

Ramesh fishes for his keys and realizes he dropped them. He bangs on Randa's Apartment's door.

RAMESH
Priyanka, open! Open this door!

INT. RANDA'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Priyanka washes dishes with headphones on and wiggles parts of a pop Indian dance.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - SECOND FLOOR - NIGHT

Lamont joins Lozen inside the apartment. Nate turns and sees Ramesh pound on his door.

RAMESH

Hello!

NATE

Ramesh, in here!

The Tall Thin Figure's head emerges over the top step as it stalks up the stairs.

Ramesh runs into Fischer's Apartment, grabs the door and turns to close it.

Vikram opens the door and peers across at Ramesh, questioning.

RAMESH

No, father, close the door! Close the door!

Vikram shakes his head and doesn't understand the English. He notices movement and sees the Tall Thin Figure step onto the landing.

BAM! BAM! The Randa and Fischer Apartment doors shut.

INT. RANDA'S APARTMENT - FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

Vikram's eye raises to the peep hole.

INT. RANDA'S APARTMENT - PEEPHOLE POV/SECOND FLOOR - NIGHT

A bloodshot eye looks back!

INT. RANDA'S APARTMENT - FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

Vikram jumps back.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Sandy backs out of Wilbur's Apartment's door and pulls a load of broken down cardboard boxes with her.

SANDY

What husband makes his wife do this-
a lazy ass, good for nothing,
that's who! And his name starts
with a-

She bumps into Aruna's body.

SANDY (CONT'D)
Oh, excuse me!

She turns and gasps.

SANDY (CONT'D)
Oh, sweetie are you ok?

A GROWL.

Sandy looks up to see a hairy WOLFMAN in the hallway shadows, no more than five feet tall.

Sandy maneuvers around the boxes and backs into her apartment.

SANDY (CONT'D)
Please don't hurt me. Don't hurt me, please.

The Wolfman runs at Sandy.

Sandy tries to close the door.

The Wolfman launches itself over the boxes and slams into the door before it closes.

Sandy drops to the ground with the Wolfman's weight on top of her and screams.

Blood showers and torn clothing bounces in the air like confetti.

Sandy's pink slippers stop moving.

The Wolfman rises on top of her and gags. It looks around, afraid, as if it doesn't know what's going on.

It gags again, violent, and doubles over.

The Wolfman pukes bloody chunks onto Sandy's mutilated upper body, from which it came.

INT. FISCHER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Nate and Lamont lower the sofa against the door and sit on it.

LAMONT
Mr. Randa, did your phone work?

RAMESH
No, it cut out. Your phone?

Lozen shakes her head.

NATE

These things are gonna find a way
in, it's just a matter of time.

LAMONT

Yeah, man, go ahead and give up.
Why don't you just walk out there
right now and get bitten up like
that girl?

Ramesh walks to a window, turns his back, and sobs. Lozen
puts a hand on his shoulder.

LOZEN

I'm sorry.

NATE

Fuck you, Lamont.

LOZEN

Stop it, both of you!

Lamont joins Ramesh by the window.

LAMONT

Hey, I didn't mean that.

RAMESH

You are fast?

LAMONT

What?

RAMESH

Running?

LAMONT

Wait. Are you asking me if I'm fast
because I'm Black?

RAMESH

You look like athlete.

LAMONT

I told ya'll, everybody racist
about something. Yeah... Yeah, I'm
fast. Michael Johnson fast.

Ramesh gives Lamont a confused look.

RAMESH

Who is Michael Johnson?

LAMONT
Is this guy for real?

NATE
(to Ramesh)
Do you have an idea?

Ramesh shakes his head.

Lamont opens a window.

LAMONT
Help! Folks are dead in here. Is
anyone out there?

Lamont listens. Nothing. His head drops, and realizes something.

LAMONT (CONT'D)
If we're locked in, then so are
these things.

RAMESH
More things?

LAMONT
I can Michael Johnson that shit
through the back and call for help.

Ramesh sees something out the window and points.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - PARK - NIGHT

The Wolfman sits in the middle of the park on its haunches and drools as it watches Ramesh and Lamont in the window.

The Wolfman howls.

INT. FISCHER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Lamont and Ramesh look at one another in fear. Ramesh shakes his head, "not a good idea."

INT. FISCHER'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - LATER

Nate rummages through the fridge. Lozen leans on the fridge door.

LOZEN
Nate. We need you.

NATE
I'm right here, what do you mean?

LOZEN
You haven't been here since Jerry.
I need you back, Nate, I need you
now.

Nate slams groceries against one another in a fit of rage.
Lozen steps back.

NATE
Why would you bring him up now?
These fucking things are trying to
kill us and all you want to talk
about is Jerry?

LOZEN
I'm talking about you, Nate.

Nate snatches four beers out of the fridge.

NATE
I'm fine.

Nate brushes past Lozen.

LOZEN
Nate, talk to me.

Nate slams the beers on the dining room table.

NATE
What about this guy?

Nate points at Ramesh.

NATE (CONT'D)
You never said a goddamn thing to
us after we lost Jerry. Didn't even
offer to help find him.

RAMESH
You hate us! I see the look on your
face. First day. First day you're
here I see you don't want us here.
You are racist!

NATE
The look on my face? It was because
your cooking stinks and it still
stinks! I saw the look on your
face, you racist piece of-

Lamont grabs a beer bottle and hurls it against a wall. The bottle smashes and the room falls silent.

LAMONT
Maybe that was a little dramatic.
My bad about your wall, but I got
an idea.

Lamont dangles his car keys.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - SECOND FLOOR - NIGHT

Ramesh knocks on his apartment door.

RAMESH
Open, hurry!

Lozen, Nate and Lamont surround him with knives ready. They watch the stairs.

INT. RANDA'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Lozen, Nate and Lamont sit on a couch across from Vikram one another. They stare at each other in awkward silence.

Nate looks down at his lap at a plate of gulab jamun, fried dough balls in sugary syrup.

Vikram motions for him to go ahead.

Nate gulps. A hesitant hand picks up and pushes a ball into his mouth.

Lamont watches Nate, carefully.

Nate chews. His face morphs and he moans in satisfaction.

NATE
Holy shit.

LAMONT
Told you, man.

Vikram smiles and nods at Nate.

A WAIL shrieks through the apartment.

Vikram's smile fades and he gets up to join Ramesh and Priyanka.

Ramesh holds Priyanka as he body gives and she sobs, uncontrollably. They sob together as Vikram holds them both.

Nate watches Ramesh and Priyanka. He struggles to keep his own feelings from exploding.

Lozen's hand slides over Nates.

INT. RANDA'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Lozen, Nate, and Lamont stand in silence in the kitchen and wait.

FOOTSTEPS. They look up and Ramesh enters and pulls out a chair, which EERRRNNNT's across the floor, amplified by the silence.

RAMESH
We need a plan.

NATE
There's the roof.

RAMESH
Mama June always locks it. Kids
smoked up there, always.

NATE
Maybe we can get the keys from
Wilbur?

LOZEN
And then hop over to another
building? The fire escapes!

NATE
Yeah!

LAMONT
Have you seen those ladders?
They're all rusted. I got a better
idea...

Lamont pulls out his keys and jingles them.

NATE
Right out the front door?

LAMONT
Damn right. I get in my car, I go
get help.

RAMESH
This could work.

NATE
We'll need to get Wilbur and his
wife, too.

LAMONT
And nobody has a damn gun?

Lamont looks around and gets his answer, "no."

NATE
I'm willing to bet Wilbur has an
arsenal.

Priyanka appears in the doorway.

PRIYANKA
I will stay behind with Vikram. We
will open the door when you come
back.

Ramesh nods and stands by his wife.

LOZEN
I'll stay with you. It'll be
crowded otherwise, right?

NATE
And we'll do this quick.

LAMONT
Super quick.

RAMESH
So, we have a plan.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - SECOND FLOOR - NIGHT

Lozen, inside the apartment, holds open the door. Ramesh, Nate, and Lamont stand outside the door and brandish kitchen knives.

RAMESH
(to Lozen)
Please take care of my family.

LOZEN
I will.

Nate and Lozen tap kiss.

LOZEN (CONT'D)
Be careful.

Nate exchange nods.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - STAIRS - NIGHT

Lamont stands on the top step, Nate and Ramesh behind him.

LAMONT
We ready?

NATE
When you say.

LAMONT
Go!

The three men run down the stairs.

Ramesh and Nate pull Aruna from the door and lay her in front of the mailboxes. Ramesh weeps but keeps watch. Nate resists.

NATE
I'm sorry, Ramesh, I really am.

Ramesh can only nod.

LAMONT
I'm going!

Lamont launches at the door, BAM, and bounces off the chained door.

LAMONT (CONT'D)
What the fuck? It's chained! The back door!

Lamont runs toward the back.

NATE
Lamont, wait!

BAM!

Lamont runs back.

LAMONT
We're locked in. These things locked us in.

KERCHUNK! A heavy door closes on the second floor.

LAMONT (CONT'D)
What was that?

PSSHTT!

The light from the second floor dims.

NATE
The roof access...

Nate runs to Steve's door and pounds on it.

NATE (CONT'D)
S- Stan? Steve! Steve, let us in!

Ramesh holds to Aruna and kisses her forehead.

Lamont steps around the cardboard debris and readies to knock on Wilbur's Apartment's door. His foot steps in something wet.

Blood pools from beneath Wilbur's Apartment's door. Nate backs away.

PSSHTT! The second floor falls dark, save for moonlight.

INT. RANDA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Lozen notices the light disappears from under the front door. She peers through the peep hole.

The Randa Family watch her, fear burgeons on their faces.

Lozen backs away and gives the family a look that escalates their fear.

LOZEN
It's a wendigo. They don't exist.
They're not supposed to exist.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - STAIRS - NIGHT

Something tall and dark moves toward the stairs.

LAMONT
I don't like this, man.

NATE
Me either.

LAMONT
Should have bought those samurai
swords at the flea market, like I
told you.

SSSCCHKKKTTT. Something scrapes across the ceiling.

WENDIGO, a skeletal, anatomical female with desiccated skin and exceptional height looms at the landing. Its antlers scrape the ceiling.

It carries something by the hair-

PENANGGALAN, head and upper torso of a woman with a clear plastic plate sewn into its chest. No arms. No legs. Organs pump and move beneath the plate.

Wendigo's long finger uncurls and points at Lamont.

LAMONT (CONT'D)
I'm tired of running. Come on. Come
get me you ugly bitch!

Lamont grips his knife and motions to Ramesh and Nate.

LAMONT (CONT'D)
There's three of us, we can take
it.

SMACK! The Penanggalan flies into Lamont with force. Lamont trips over the cardboard and falls against the wall, his knife flings loose in the air.

NATE
Lamont!

The Penanggalan snaps and bites flesh off of Lamont's face with broken, jagged teeth.

Lamont tries to pull it off but it latches down on his lip.

LAMONT
Ahhhh!

GROWLS emit from down the hall. Wolfman stalks toward Ramesh and Nate.

Ramesh joins Nate.

Lamont yanks the Penanggalan off, and with it his lip. He yells in agony.

LAMONT (CONT'D)
You motherfucker!

Lamont finds his knife and brings it down on the Penanggalan's chest but the plastic deflects the blade.

The Wendigo screams and lurches down the stairs toward Lamont.

NATE
Lamont watch out!

Nate looks around- they're surrounded.

WHOOSH! Steve's Apartment's door opens up and swallows Nate and Ramesh.

INT. STEVE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Ramesh and Nate land in the middle of a pristine, clinically clean living room. Plastic on floral patterned couches. Books in bookcases and neat stacks.

Ramesh and Nate look up in parallel.

Steve stands with his back against the door.

Other than being a larger than normal man, Steve looks like anyone's BBQ'ing mustached buddy next door with eyeglasses, or Ed Kemper, with circular scars on either side of his temple.

NATE
My friend is out there, he needs
our help!

RAMESH
My daughter is out there!

Steve puts his finger to his lips and shakes his head.

STEVE
Shhh.

Ramesh shifts to get up.

RAMESH
You, listen-

Steve takes a step forward and looms over them. Ramesh freezes.

Steve glances at the knife in Ramesh's hand. Ramesh moves his hand off the knife.

Steve points to the couch.

STEVE
Please.

Nate and Ramesh get up slowly. No sudden movements around Steve.

Nate slides his knife against his body, as if to hide it.

STEVE (CONT'D)

You don't need those in here, but
you can keep them, if you want.

Steve sits noisily in a plastic-covered recliner. The couch echoes the noise as Ramesh and Nate sit down.

Nate puts his knife on the table, Ramesh holds on to his in plain sight.

NATE

Hey. Good to finally meet you
Steve. I'm Nate-

STEVE

I know who you are. We've been
neighbors for years.

NATE

OK, you're right. My buddy, Lamont,
is outside. He might still be
alive.

Steve shakes his head.

STEVE

I am sorry, he isn't. By the lack
of faith in your eyes, you already
know that.

Nate, guilty, looks away.

RAMESH

Steve, hm?

Steve nods.

RAMESH (CONT'D)

My family is upstairs and in
danger. How can we escape this?
What happened here?

Steve gives a deep sigh.

STEVE

I don't know how you escape. I'm
not sure you can. It's unfortunate,
isn't it, how you asked your father
to stay another night? If only you
hadn't.

RAMESH

How do you know this...? We spoke Hindi.

Guilt passes over Ramesh's face as he realizes what Steve said is true.

Steve looks at him like "duh, I speak Hindi."

NATE

So you know what's going on?

Steve rubs each ankle and leans back in the recliner. His feet don't pop up on the leg rest, rather, round stubs in white socks where feet once were.

Nate and Ramesh try to hide the surprise on their faces.

Steve puts his arms behind his head.

BEGIN FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

YOUNG JUNE (8) hobbles down the stairs in thick leather orthopedic shoes for clubbed feet.

THUMP. THUMP. THUMP. She drags a heavy book bag, one stair at a time.

One hand never leaves the railing.

MONSTEROUS GROWLS fade up.

Fear captures Young June and she looks over her shoulder.

MEAN KIDS walk like Frankenstein's monster down the stairs behind Young June.

MEAN KIDS

We're coming to get you, June!

YOUNG JUNE

Stop it, you're ignorant!

Young June hurries down the stairs but trips on the last step and falls on her face. Blood spills out of her nose. She sees the blood drops on the floor and tears up.

The Mean Kids burst out in laughter and point at her.

MEAN KIDS

She tripped on her monster feet, ha
ha! Monster feet, monster feet,
monster feet!

Young June pulls herself up and scuttles down the hallway.

She wipes the blood from her nose and tries to pull on her bookbag but it threatens to throw her off balance.

She uses the corner of the hallway, next to the basement door, to steady herself. A new, yellow sign labeled CIVIL DEFENSE FALLOUT SHELTER hangs on the wall beside the door.

YOUNG JUNE

Uh!

Mean Kids push Young June. She falls but hangs onto the basement door handle.

MEAN KIDS

You're never gonna have friends.
She's pathetic.

YOUNG JUNE

I'll have friends. I'll have lots
of friends!

Young June's legs almost give but she holds onto the door handle.

MEAN KIDS

She's trying to go home! Yeah,
that's where all monsters belong!
Let's help her!

The Mean Kids pull Young June off the door handle, open the basement door, and push her in.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - BASEMENT - DAY

Young June tumbles down a short staircase and screams as the Mean Kids laughter fade out.

She lands hard on her hip and writhes in pain.

YOUNG JUNE

Help me, please, ya'll! I'm hurt!
I'm not a monster! Please!

Blood soaks through the clothing on her thigh around a unnatural bump. Her hand hovers over it, afraid to touch it.

Young June sobs and looks into the darkness that surrounds her.

YOUNG JUNE (CONT'D)
Is someone there? Help. I'm hurt.

Young June's vision blurs.

YOUNG JUNE (CONT'D)
Please...

Forms of DARK FIGURES, ghastly and truly monstrous appear in the dark.

Young June reaches out to the Dark Figures.

YOUNG JUNE (CONT'D)
Please...

END FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

INT. STEVE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Steve snaps his fingers and points at an old shoebox on the coffee table.

STEVE
Hand me that.

NATE
That's pretty shitty, what they did
to June. But, Lamont-

Nate leans forward to get up but Steve shakes his head and points to the sofa.

STEVE
I don't think he made it, Nate. I
really am sorry about all this.

Nate falls back into the sofa in anguish. Steve's right, he probably didn't make it.

Ramesh hands Steve the shoebox with both hands.

Steve leans up in his chair and takes the box in a single hand. He goes to open the box and pauses.

STEVE (CONT'D)
June was no monster. Not until they
made her one. It's lonely... being
the only monster.

Steve flips the top off the shoebox. Two hooves and braces sit in the box. He takes them out.

Nate and Ramesh's eyes follow the hooves.

Nate plucks his knife off the coffee table, real slow.

NATE

You're one of them.

Steve nods.

STEVE

Not exactly. This is by birthright, lucky me.

Steve rises on his hooves.

NATE

But you're not really a monster.
Are any of them-

STEVE

How would you know? You don't know me. I'm not sure any of you know each other. Piece of advice- you might want to get to know the neighbors before you sign another lease. All of them. If, you make it out of here, that is.

Steve approaches the door. Ramesh and Nate stand and circle away from him around the coffee table.

Steve snags a set of keys off a key hook rack and points to each of the three keys.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Big key- basement door. Smaller key- look behind the cabinet. Stay straight. Don't stop. If you're lucky and more haven't escaped... you'll make it. Tiny key- use on the padlock at the top of the ladder.

NATE

Fuck, there's more?

Steve tosses the keys to Ramesh.

RAMESH

Will you come with us and help us?

STEVE

Now that mom is dead, people will come and eventually know what happened here. I will not be the monster on TV.

Nate's brow furrows and he looks at a family picture on top of the TV: June and a YOUNG STEVE. Young Steve has feet in the picture.

Nate looks at Steve, mouth agape.

Steve smiles back and shrugs.

STEVE (CONT'D)

I regret never reconciling fully with mom. But, she wanted me to be something I wasn't. Still, it's funny how you love your family, no matter what.

He looks at Ramesh.

STEVE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry about what happened to your daughter. At least her death was quick...

(to Nate)

Instead of enduring suffering. Jerry is still a good kid, Nate.

NATE

Wait-

Steve whips open the door.

NATE (CONT'D)

Wait!

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Steve roars and charges like a linebacker toward Wilbur's Apartment.

Wendigo picks up Penanggalan, hears the roar and turns- Steve slams into it and pins it against Wilbur's Apartment's door.

Wendigo drops Penanggalan and Steve's hoof steps on it. The plastic splinters. Penanggalan screams in fright.

Nate and Ramesh look on from Steve's Apartment's open doorway.

THUD THUD! Wolfman pounces down the stairs and jumps off the middle step onto Steve's back and slides down to open up gashes down Steve's back.

NATE
Lamont?! Where are you?

RAMESH
Come!

Ramesh makes a b-line down the hallway. Nate follows.

NATE
Fuck.

Steve raises a fist to hit the Wendigo.

Wolfman bites into Steve's leg ligaments behind his knee.

Steve roars in pain.

The Wendigo sees its chance and claws down Steve's face. Deep gashes pour blood.

Steve headbutts the Wendigo in return.

Nate and Ramesh round the corner to the basement door.

BAM!

The Tall Thin Figure slams its hands on the glass of the back door. RRRNNNNNTTT. Its nails drag down the glass.

Ramesh turns to the Tall Thin Figure and points his knife. Rage seeps from his pores.

NATE (CONT'D)
Ramesh, the keys!

Nate tries the door- it opens!

NATE (CONT'D)
Ramesh!

Ramesh backs away towards Nate and holds the knife on the Tall Thin Figure.

RAMESH
I'll kill you. I will.

Nate, on the basement stairs, holds open the door.

NATE
Ramesh, come on!

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - BASEMENT STAIRS - NIGHT

Ramesh locks the door.

Ramesh and Nate sit side by side and catch their breath.

RAMESH

We have lived here so long and did
not know. Did not know anything.

Nate offers Ramesh his hand.

NATE

I'm Nate Fischer, I'm your
neighbor... and... you're welcome
over anytime.

Ramesh studies his hand, and shakes it.

RAMESH

Ramesh Randa.

NATE

Just bring some of that gulab jamun
with you.

They chuckle together.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - BASEMENT - NIGHT

Nate grabs onto the corner of the cabinet with one hand and
readies his knife in the other, as does Ramesh.

NATE

One... two...

Nate swings open the cabinet to reveal a sliding metal door.

Ramesh pulls the keys from his pocket.

NATE (CONT'D)

Wait.

Nate tugs on the door and it doesn't give.

NATE (CONT'D)

Worth a try.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - BASEMENT STAIRS - NIGHT

SCRATCHES against metal. The door lock jiggles.

KERCHUNK. ERRRNNTTT. The basement door unlocks and opens. Tall Thin Figure's hand hangs at door handle level.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - BASEMENT - NIGHT

Nate looks back at the stairs.

NATE
They're coming!

RAMESH
Keys!

Ramesh fumbles with the keys.

Wolfman explodes out of the stairs and towards its intended victims.

Ramesh and Lamont jump out of the way.

Wolfman slams into the metal door, its head ricochets off with a TING! Metal against metal. Its jaw hangs odd, as if broken. Metal pieces, fake fur and screws are visible.

Wolfman's head swings to Ramesh, who backs up into the living room and trips over toys.

NATE (O.S.)
Over here! Come get me!

Nate beats his fist against a dining room table.

Wolfman's head swings toward Nate it runs after him and chases him around the table. Nate uses chairs and the swing of his knife to keep it at bay.

Ramesh gets up and heads toward Nate to help, but hits the brakes. His head jerks to the stairs.

A Tall Thin Figure bares its fangs at Ramesh and lunges at him with its sharp fingernails.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Wilbur's Apartment's door opens and Lamont looks out with one eye, the other bulges from hemorrhage and his eye lid hangs on by a thread. He carries a large pipe wrench.

He steps out and surveys the carnage.

Steve lays face first on the steps, arms by his side, and motionless. His hair shines, slick with blood, his back covered in deep claw wounds.

The Wendigo lays on the ground, dead from a broken neck. A pendant with a humming bird imprint glints around its neck.

The Penanggalan hangs on to a shred of life. Blood seeps out its cracked, plastic chest plate. It mouths at the chain of a locket with a hummingbird imprint around its neck.

Lamont sneers at the Penanggalan and raises the wrench overhead.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - BASEMENT - NIGHT

Ramesh swipes and lops off a few fingers on Tall Thin Figure's hand.

Tall Thin Figure backslaps the knife out of Ramesh's hand and chokes him.

Nate passes the refrigerator and yanks the door open.

BAM! Wolfman and the refrigerator door hit head on.

NATE

Hah!

Nate turns and realizes the Wolfman is hurt. He throws everything into a kick that sends the Wolfman across the floor and into unconsciousness.

Nate stands over the Wolfman. It's clear the Wolfman is a person who has been surgically altered to look like a Wolfman.

Ramesh gurgles and tries to yell.

RAMESH

ARGHhh!

Nate looks up.

NATE

They're not real!

Nate grabs a chair and with a running start, smashes it into the Tall Thin Figure's back and it collapses.

Ramesh gasps for air and holds his knife at the Tall Thin Figure.

RAMESH

W-what?

NATE

Just like we thought. Man, they're not real.

RAMESH

Yes, but... they think they are. And so they are...real.

Nate helps Ramesh up.

NATE

All we have to do is get through here.

Ramesh stares with a fury at the Tall Thin Figure. His knife shakes within in his hand.

A verbal burst of loss and pain spews from Ramesh at the Tall Thin Figure.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

The large wrench breaks the door glass.

Lamont hits the metal bars. Again. Again. He kicks them. Again. The metal bars easily resist.

Lamont tires, drops to the ground and screams:

LAMONT

Fuck!

LOZEN (O.S.)

Lamont?

Lamont looks up to see Lozen and Priyanka at the top of the stairs with a knife.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - BASEMENT - NIGHT

The sliding door sits open. Ramesh and Nate look down a long, dank hallway of pillars and doors of a fallout shelter.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - BASEMENT - DAY

A YOUNG WARTHOG WOMAN, the face of a warthog and body of a young, human woman, drags a bag the size of a small child through the dark, empty basement.

THUDS from the Young Warthog Woman's hooves echo off the walls.

The bag whimpers and cries.

WARTHOG

You have been broken and discarded.
But not defeated. We shall put you
back together again. This is our
haven. A haven for monsters, like
you and I. No one else can know. Do
you understand?

Young Warthog Woman opens and walks through the sliding metal door with the bag.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - FALLOUT SHELTER - DAY

Young Warthog Woman drags the bag down the halls of a pristine version of the fallout shelter.

MUSIC QUE: Orchestral music fades up.

She passes:

- sleeping quarters with bunkbeds and a single piece of scenic artwork per room.
- a storeroom full of supplies.
- an incinerator where a YOUNG WILBUR pushes the foot of a teenager into the fire with an iron rod.
- another hallway that ends at a small blast door.
- an operating room where a CRIMINAL #1 lays on an operating table, bled to death. CRIMINAL #2 sits in a chair, groans and holds a gut gunshot wound.

Young Warthog Woman stops outside the operating room. An access ladder sits just outside the room and leads upward.

YOUNG WARTHOG WOMAN

Wilbur!

Young Wilbur looks around the corner.

YOUNG WARTHOG WOMAN (CONT'D)
 We've lost a patient. Ring his
 people and let them know the bill.
 And no more tabs! This isn't a
 charity. If they decline, tell them
 we'll drop the body in the street
 and they can deal with it.

Young Wilbur hurries to the operating room, grabs Criminal
 #1's legs and pulls him off the table like a human rickshaw.

Criminal #1's head slams into the floor. Young Wilbur pulls
 the body into the incinerator room and leaves a blood trail.

CRIMINAL #2
 Hey, be careful you fuck! I know
 who you are, you degenerate prick!

YOUNG WARTHOG WOMAN
 I didn't hear him complain, did
 you?

INT. FALLOUT SHELTER - HALLWAY/OPERATING ROOM - DAY

Young Warthog Woman looks at the blood trail in disgust and
 steps over it as she enters the room.

YOUNG WARTHOG WOMAN
 (to Wilbur)
 Make sure to clean this mess up.

Young Warthog Woman pulls the bag into the operating room and
 unties the top.

YOUNG WARTHOG WOMAN (CONT'D)
 You can come out now. What's your
 name?

The bag moves but doesn't open. From within a voice no more
 than five years and male stutters:

STEVE
 S-Steve...

Young Warthog Woman nods and strips to nude in a corner.

Criminal #1, despite a curvy and attractive body, looks away
 from Young Warthog Woman.

YOUNG WARTHOG WOMAN
 Poor Steve. I know what you endure.
 It is... unfair.

Criminal #2 looks between the bag and Young Warthog Woman, "this is getting weird."

CRIMINAL #2
(to himself)
Lucky me, stuck down here with a
gambling junky and a crazy nurse-
bitch.

Young Warthog Woman pulls on the scrubs of a nurse. A name tag dangles- she pulls it off and toss it in a surgical tray and puts on a surgical apron.

CRIMINAL #2 (CONT'D)
Nurse-bitch, whatever sick shit
you're about to do can wait. I'm
first, and whatever the fuck you
have in there can wait.

Young Warthog Woman removes a syringe from a surgical tray and tosses it to Criminal #2.

YOUNG WARTHOG WOMAN
Your patience is appreciated.

CRIMINAL #2
You want me to stick myself with
this thing? The boss is gonna
fucking hear about this- you and
that loser, Wil-ber, you're done.

Young Warthog Woman squats by the bag.

YOUNG WARTHOG WOMAN
It's safe to come out. There's
nothing and no one to be afraid of.

Steve's fingers stick through the top opening of the bag and work the opening apart. A young Steve's head pokes out and looks around in fear with tear stained cheeks. He has a cleft lip.

Criminal #2 uncaps the syringe and looks for an injection spot.

YOUNG WARTHOG WOMAN (CONT'D)
Let me ask you something, Steve.
Are you lonely, do you have
friends?

Young Steve looks away from the warthog face.

YOUNG WARTHOG WOMAN (CONT'D)
Are you lonely, Steve?

Young Steve nods.

YOUNG WARTHOG WOMAN (CONT'D)
No friends?

Young Steve shakes his head.

Criminal #2, distracted by the scene before him, pokes the needle straight through a flap of skin.

CRIMINAL #2
Mother fucker! Hey you asshole,
leave the pussy-lipped freak alone
and come do this or I'm gonna put
this through your fucking eyeball.

Young Warthog Woman's lips near Young Steve's ear and she whispers.

YOUNG WARTHOG WOMAN
If they tell you you're a monster,
then do what they least expect- be
one.

Young Warthog Woman snickers and stands, her back to Criminal #2.

CRIMINAL #2
Do you hear me?

Young Warthog Woman's hand fondles a scalpel on an operating tray.

CRIMINAL #2 (CONT'D)
I said-

Young Warthog Woman whirls around and slashes the scalpel at Criminal #2.

Criminal #2 blinks, unsure what happened. He chuckles.

A trickle of blood drips from the middle of Criminal #2's forehead and into his eye.

CRIMINAL #2 (CONT'D)
You don't scare me.

A large gash wound opens across Criminal #2's forehead, end to end, and paints a crimson veil down his face and neck. He screams.

Young Warthog Woman's scalpel slashes at him again like wielding a paintbrush. Again and again.

CRIMINAL #2 (CONT'D)
Please stop!

Steve watches and cries, silently. His hands tremble but manage to slide the bag up over his face.

Young Warthog Woman completes one dramatic slash.

Criminal #2's head hangs. Blood pours from multiple lacerations and a gigantic neck wound.

Young Warthog Woman turns to Young Steve and pulls down the bag covering his face.

YOUNG WARTHOG WOMAN
He expected a different result,
didn't he? He thought calling me
those names would hurt me, make me
cower. He got the result he asked
for and I don't think he liked it.

Young Warthog Woman chuckles.

YOUNG WARTHOG WOMAN (CONT'D)
Steve, I have to ask you a
question. I won't be angry if you
don't want to. Would you like to be
my friend? Would you like to have a
lot of friends, just like you?

Young Warthog Woman pulls off her mask to reveal a YOUNG JUNE. She smiles and offers her hands.

Young Steve's hands, hesitant, slides into Young June's hands.

YOUNG JUNE
Good. I want you to know you'll be
loved for who you are here. We may
have to make some changes...

Young Steve touches his lip.

YOUNG JUNE (CONT'D)
No, that's perfect. Never feel
ashamed of that. No, some other
things will need to change- but
that can come later. I promise.

Young June's hands squeezes Young Steve's, gently.

END MUSIC

END FLASHBACK

INT. FALLOUT SHELTER - NIGHT

Nate and Ramesh stand at the doorway of a sleeping quarters in a dank, not-so pristine version of the fallout shelter.

INT. FALLOUT SHELTER - SLEEPING QUARTERS - NIGHT

Nate and Ramesh look around the room, unsure they believe what they see. Their hands go to their noses.

A piece of landscape art, grime-covered and tilted, hangs on the wall.

Flies buzz around THREE SMALL CORPSES, surgically altered, emaciated and full of rot monster bodies in one of the four floor to ceiling fenced-in cages.

Nate gags and throws up.

Ramesh pats him on the back and stares at the corpses.

RAMESH

Those two are young. Very young.

Nate gathers himself and enters the room.

RAMESH (CONT'D)

Nate, no. We must go.

NATE

I have to know.

RAMESH

Know what?

Nate squats in front of the fence and studies the corpses. It's clear one of the corpses died recently, the other gnawed on for some time.

Nate gags, holds back vomit.

NATE

What Steve said. What if Jerry...
is alive.

Nate checks the other body and shakes his head. He b-lines out of the room.

INT. FALLOUT SHELTER - NIGHT

Nate bursts out of another living quarters and vomits in the hallway. Ramesh grabs hold of him.

RAMESH
Was it...?

NATE
No. None of them were Jerry...

RAMESH
What kind of people do this.

NATE
Monsters.

RAMESH
I understand you believe your son
is still alive. But if we don't
find help we may lose the rest of
our families.

Nate nods.

RAMESH (CONT'D)
We will get help, and find him.

NATE
I'm not sure I want to find him...
alive.

Ramesh grabs Nate and slams him against the wall.

RAMESH
Yes! You do!

Ramesh slams him again.

RAMESH (CONT'D)
You do! You do!

Nate rips Ramesh off of him and pushes him.

NATE
Get off me! Of course I want him to
be alive. I'm just, fuck I don't
know... scared. Scared of what he
might be.

Ramesh and Nate rest against a wall, side by side.

NATE (CONT'D)
It's wrong to think maybe Steve was
right.

RAMESH
He is not. We are fathers. We both
know this.

Nate glances at Ramesh, who nods insistence.

Nate looks away, unsure.

MUSIC QUE: Orchestral music fades up.

RAMESH (CONT'D)
Do you hear this?

NATE
Yeah, I do.

Nate and Ramesh walk down the hall and Ramesh spots the ladder.

RAMESH
There it is!

They pass by the sound of the music and look down the hall, curiously.

A blast door to a room sits open at the end of another hall.

NATE
I've seen too many movies, I'm not walking down there.

Ramesh nods in agreement. He notices a line of liquid that leads from the blast door and stops at a gas can and a briefcase a few feet in front of them.

CLICK. CLICK.

A gun barrel rests against the back of Nate and Ramesh's head.

Nate and Ramesh glance at one another and see the gun barrels against each other's head.

WILBUR
Drop the knives.

Nate and Ramesh comply.

NATE
Look, man, we-

Wilbur presses the gun barrel into Nate's head.

NATE (CONT'D)
All right!

WILBUR
Walk.

Wilbur walks them to the office door.

WILBUR (CONT'D)
You let these things out and
screwed up everything for me!

RAMESH
We did not. We just want to leave.

WILBUR
Have a seat.

INT. FALLOUT SHELTER - OFFICE - NIGHT

Nate and Ramesh take a seat. Their eyes scan the room.

Polaroids, old and new, cover the walls along with various hand drawings of surgical plans to create 'monsters.' CCTV monitors flicker on a table behind a cluttered desk.

Wilbur leans against the doorframe and trains his guns on Ramesh and Nate.

NATE
Whatever this is, Wilbur, it's
over, man. The cops... they're
coming.

Wilbur laughs.

WILBUR
I'm not an idiot, Fischer. But I'll
be damned if didn't see the big
one... I saw it escape, and knew,
these things had gotten out and
hadn't done what they're supposed
to do. Ruining everything. Fuck!

Ramesh, his face not visible to Wilbur, is a volcano ready to burst. Quiet, but rumbling.

NATE
Wilbur, look man, you can still go
on the run. Go to Mexico, whatever,
but killing more people is just
going to complicate that.

RAMESH
My daughter!

Ramesh turns to get up but Wilbur meets him with guns in his face.

WILBUR
Sit down you smelly immigrant
mother fucker! Sit down!

NATE
Ramesh, please, sit down, man.

Ramesh, barely in control, sits down.

RAMESH
People will hunt you. I will hunt
you.

WILBUR
Take the rope off my desk, Ramesh,
and tie your friend, Nate, to the
chair.

RAMESH
No.

Nate glances at Ramesh.

WILBUR
Do it, or you both die now.

Ramesh reaches for the rope on the desk.

Wilbur reaches to close the door with a fisted gun.

WHAM!

A large wrench comes down on Wilbur's forearm and cracks it
into a 90-degree angle. Jagged bone and blood emerge.

Wilbur screams, drops the guns and stumbles into the wall of
polaroids.

WILBUR (CONT'D)
Ahhh!

Lamont's eye glares at Wilber from the doorway.

LAMONT
Fuck you, dude.

NATE
Lamont! You're alive!

LAMONT
Damn right. Get that gun.

Nate grabs a gun.

Lamont points his wrench at Wilbur.

LAMONT (CONT'D)
It's over.

Goblin appears on Lamont's back, its claws sink into his shoulders and its teeth deep into his neck.

Wilbur howls with laughter.

Nate points the gun at the ground, unsure what to do.

Lamont grabs the Goblin's head to push it off, but Goblin rips off a mouthful of flesh and artery.

Lamont faceplants, and the Goblin with him.

Wilbur clambers toward the remaining gun on the ground, but-BAM! Ramesh hits him with a chair.

Wilbur crumples to the floor, out cold. Ramesh spits.

The Goblin perches on Lamont's back and growls at Lamont and Ramesh, the lower half of his face a blood mask.

Nate raises the gun at Goblin.

NATE
You killed Lamont...

RAMESH
No, Nate.

Goblin's eyes lock with Nate's.

Something in the Goblin's all black eyes seems familiar to Nate.

NATE
Jerry?

The Goblin's growls fade.

NATE (CONT'D)
Jerry.

The Goblin blinks as if it now fully recognizes the name.

NATE (CONT'D)
It's your dad. Your mom and I have been looking for you. We miss you, and love you so much. We just want you to come home.

The Goblin's face softens and turns sad. Tears fill its sad, guilt heavy eyes.

The Goblin stands.

Nate jumps, but resists lifting his gun.

The Goblin walks into a corner and puts its nose in it. It sobs.

NATE (CONT'D)

Ramesh. You need to go get help.

Ramesh grabs the remaining gun as if it were a bomb ready to explode.

RAMESH

What are you going to do?

NATE

What a father should- save his kid.

RAMESH

Nate...

NATE

Just go. Please.

Ramesh nods.

RAMESH

I will be back with help.

NATE

Hey Ramesh. You're a great neighbor.

RAMESH

Yes. You, too. We will do a... pot luck.

Nate's face cracks a grin.

NATE

Yeah. That sounds good.

Ramesh nods and leaves.

INT. FALLOUT SHELTER - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Ramesh races down the hallway and slows. He pauses in thought and looks back at the office.

Ramesh rushes to the access ladder and climbs.

INT. FALLOUT SHELTER - OFFICE - NIGHT

Nate squats.

NATE (CONT'D)
Son, it's OK. Come here.

Nate holds out his hand. He hides his other hand with the gun behind his back.

Goblin turns in the corner and looks at him with sorrowful eyes.

NATE (CONT'D)
Come on, daddy's not mad.

Goblin takes hesitant steps toward Nate like a child in big trouble.

Goblin places its claw in Nate's hand.

They walk out of the office together, claw in hand.

Nate glances over his shoulder at Lamont's body, pain wracks his face.

INT. FALLOUT SHELTER - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Nate and Goblin walk out of the office together and down the hall.

They turn down the hall toward the exit.

Nate slows and looks down at Goblin. His hand fidgets around the hidden gun.

NATE (CONT'D)
Daddy loves you, you know that?

Goblin looks up at him with big eyes.

Nate stares at his son. Emotions of pain and guilt play across his face.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - PARK - NIGHT

Ramesh climbs out of the access tunnel and stumbles across the park, gun ready in case of other monsters.

He runs past a ghost town of boarded up houses. Finally, lights catch his attention and he spots the convenience store.

He sprints.

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - NIGHT

Cashier mows down on a convenience store chili dog. BUBBLING noises and a small waft of vapor rise from behind the counter.

He switches from the chili dog to the bong beneath the counter.

Cashier corners the bong's bowl with a lighter and inhales.

BAM! BAM! BAM!

Ramesh whaps his hand on the window.

Cashier exhales and throws a coughing fit.

CASHIER

Dude!

Ramesh bursts into the store, out of breath.

RAMESH

Call the cops.

Cashier hides the bong.

CASHIER

For what, man?

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - FALLOUT SHELTER/ROOM - NIGHT

Nate leads Goblin into the living quarters and into the open cage.

Goblin sits down in the cage.

Nate closes the cage and locks it.

NATE

You're going to be ok. I love you,
son. I'm going to go check on your
mom. I'll be right back.

Goblin stares at Nate as if processing what he said.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - FALLOUT SHELTER - NIGHT

Nate steps out of the room and into the hallway. His drops with the weight of the evening.

CHANG CHANG CHANG.

Nate turns around to see Jerry bang on the cage, fear in his big black eyes that look beyond Nate.

Nate turns to the basement door and in it looms GRIFFIN, a large bi-pedal man with the surgically altered head and talons of an eagle and lower half of a lion.

Nate reaches for the gun and tries to aim, but the Griffin is upon him!

The Griffin grabs Nate's arms, splays them, and rears back to plunge it's beak into Nate's face.

Nate winces and knows- this is it for him.

SCHINKT! SCHINKT!

The Griffin's claws loosen on Nate's arms. It drops to its knees, and falls over. Two kitchen knives stick out of its back.

Lozen and Priyanka stand behind the Griffin, both in shock.

Nate looks up.

NATE

Hey.

LOZEN

Hey.

PRIYANKA

Ramesh...?

NATE

He made it out. He's going to get help. Lozen...

LOZEN

Yeah?

Nate's eyes tear up. Lozen's follow suit on sight.

NATE

I have something to show you.

Lozen searches his face.

LOZEN

OK.

INT. PSYCHIATRIC FACILITY - ROOM - DAY

Nate and a pregnant Lozen stand at an observation window.

A DOCTOR comes up beside them.

DOCTOR

He's doing well. We haven't seen any of his old behaviors, tendencies if you will, for some time now.

NATE

Do you think he'll ever be cured?

DOCTOR

His trauma was quite severe, as we've discussed. The decision to reverse the physical alterations made for exceptional progress. He's doing well in therapy and playing with some of the others. But, it goes without saying he will need life long therapy.

LOZEN

Has he said anything more about what happened to him?

DOCTOR

He has been opening up to Andy, although Andy doesn't really understand him.

LOZEN

Are you saying Jerry is regressing?

DOCTOR

Excuse me, I wasn't clear. Andy is one of our special patients. He has a neurodevelopmental disorder and suffers from an underdeveloped skull and brain, myopia, and severe intellectual disability. You see he can't really form or understand most words. Yes, we don't see it very often in developed countries.

Lozen sighs in relief.

Nate wraps an arm around Lozen's shoulders.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
Have the police found anything more?

NATE
They can still can't identify the man in the basement. They guess he worked for gangs, the mob, whatever, doing off the books medical stuff. I don't think we'll find out much more. They're just fucking sickos.

LOZEN
Nate...

Nate shrugs.

DOCTOR
To put it plainly, Mr. and Mrs. Fischer, we often find people act like a monster because they're treated like one. Like anyone else, they seek to find, or create, others just like ourselves as most people don't want to be alone.

INT. PSYCHIATRIC FACILITY - CHILDREN'S PLAYROOM - DAY

Goblin/Jerry, more human looking but with noticeable scars on his ears, sits at a table and draws. Paper, crayons, and a tape dispenser lay on the table.

A two-way mirror shows his reflection.

INT. PSYCHIATRIC FACILITY - ROOM - DAY

Lozen and Nate watch Jerry color.

LOZEN
Do you think it'll be safe to take him home soon?

DOCTOR
Oh, yes.

Lozen and Nate hug each other.

LOZEN
Oh, thank God.

Lozen leans back from Nate.

LOZEN (CONT'D)
You had faith.

Nate nods.

NATE
We both did. Everything's gonna be fine.

INT. PSYCHIATRIC FACILITY - CHILDREN'S PLAYROOM - DAY

Jerry's hands work scissors to cut out his drawing.

The door to the room opens and a NURSE, young with caring eyes, steps in.

NURSE
Jerry, time for group.

Jerry crumples the remaining paper and drops it in the trash on the way out with the Nurse.

INT. PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL - BEDROOM - DAY

Jerry seems to sleep in a bed. His eyes pop open and he reaches for something under his pillow.

Jerry's hand appears with cutout paper goblin ears.

He unwraps tape from around his fingers, tapes the paper ears to his own and sits on the edge of the bed.

He pulls hard on a tooth and emits a low growl. The fake tooth pops off to reveal his pointed goblin teeth.

The tooth drops to the floor.

Jerry approaches the door, pulls another tooth and opens the door.

A piece of tape lay over the door catch.

The door closes.