

Sophie's Story

written by

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>FADE IN:

OVER BLACK

A faint, low HUM begins. Almost  
electrical. Almost alive.

TITLE: "SOPHIE'S NOTEBOOK - OPENING CREDITS"

SEQUENCE - THE NOTEBOOK PAGES

A rapid series of hand-drawn notebook pages flip past --  
crayon, pencil, marker, highlighter. Torn edges, water  
stains, fingerprints. Each page jittering with the HUM  
underneath.

No narration. No dialogue. Just eerie music and pen  
scratches.

PAGE 1 - WRATH RULES

Messy kid handwriting fills the page:

WRATH RULES:

Only feed once a day. At night.

Don't look at them. They'll see you.

If they feed, they don't go away. They stay and kill the next  
night until I kill them.

They don't leave at sunrise.

The Tear won't close on its own.

The HUM grows louder.

PAGE 2 - MAP

A crayon map of Sophie's small town.

"MY HOUSE" in huge purple letters.

A red circle around THE RIDGE.

A jagged black X marking:

THE TEAR / GATE / HOLE / RIP IN THE  
WORLD??

In the corner:

"No glow = safe. Glow = run."

PAGE 3 - WRATH SKETCHES

Child-drawn shadow monsters. Thin. Floating. Wrong.

Labels:

Fast one Thin one The quiet one One with long arms (maybe blind?) One that knew I was there

Margin note:

"They float. Never walk. Never blink."

PAGE 4 - MAX

A heroic crayon drawing of MAX -- twice as big as real life. Glowing eyes. Lightning tail. Standing guard.

Labels:

MAX = GUARDIAN He sees before I do. They don't like him.

Beside it:

"He barked. 3 min later = Wrath came."

PAGE 5 - THE TEAR

A jagged rip across the page.

Labels:

TEAR GATE TO THEIR SIDE ALIVE???

Across the page in thick red crayon:

"IT'S GETTING BIGGER."  
Small Wrath doodles crawl out like  
smoke.

The HUM deepens.

PAGE 6 - FEAR NOTES

Panic scribbles:

Nobody believes me.

What if I miss one?

What if I stop seeing them?

What happens if I die?

At the bottom:

"I'm the only one who knows."

FINAL PAGE - SOPHIE ARMORED UP

A sketch of SOPHIE in cardboard armor, Max at her side. The pen drawn like a glowing sword. Wraths surround them.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL - NEONATAL WARD - NIGHT

Soft fluorescent lights. Quiet humming machinery. Rows of tiny swaddled babies. Monitors beep gently. Distant nurse footsteps squeak... then fade.

The camera TRACKS slowly down the hallway.

No footsteps. No breathing. But someone's there.

An OLD MAN (70s), in worn, tattered clothes, moves silently between the cribs. People pass him but do not notice. He isn't invisible -- just forgotten.

He stops at a crib.

CLOSE ON - A BABY'S FACE. Peaceful. Still.

OLD MAN (V.O.) No... not this one.

He moves to the next crib. Shakes his head. Then another.

A faint HUM begins -- low, rising from beneath the floor.

He reaches SOPHIE'S crib.

The HUM stops.

The baby stirs, eyes still closed. Her tiny hand opens and closes.

The Old Man leans in, reverent.

OLD MAN (whispers) Yes... this one. Strong soul. Quiet fire. You'll do. I'll give you what you need, when you need it. All you have to do... is fight.

He gently touches a finger to Sophie's forehead.

Her birth card reads:

SOPHIE GRACE - 7 lbs 4 oz - Born 3:14 AM

Her foot twitches. A faint pulse of golden light flickers inside the crib -- gone as quickly as it came.

The Old Man turns. Walks away. Disappears as he rounds the corner.

CUT TO BLACK.

TITLE CARD: "THE WAR ISN'T OVER."

The pages SNAP SHUT.

CUT TO BLACK.

A beat.

TITLE CARD: THE SELECTION - "THE HUM AND THE PEN"

INT. SOPHIE'S BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

Dark. Still. Quiet. The air holds a tension -- like the world is holding its breath.

Sophie lies curled under her blanket, head buried beneath a pillow. Not hiding from light. Not hiding from noise.

She's hiding from the HUM -- a low vibration, like a powerline underwater. Except it's happening inside her bones.

Her brow tightens. A wince. Pain flares behind her eyes -- dull but deep. The residue of something wrong. Something that shouldn't be here.

The HUM pulses again. Louder. She doesn't flinch. She already knows what it means.

A resigned breath.

SOPHIE (whispers) It came through.

She rolls onto her back, staring at the ceiling. No fear -- only fatigue. Like a kid who already knows the monster under the bed by name.

A flicker of realization. Her eyes snap open.

SOPHIE The pen.

She bolts upright.

Instant panic. Her hand dives under the blanket, patting frantically. Nothing.

A ripple of dread crosses her face.

SOPHIE Max? Max -- have you seen it? It was right here last night -- I swear--

She tosses the blanket aside. Flips the pillow. Nothing.

Down on her knees now. Digging through sheets. Lifting the mattress. Checking under it.

Nothing.

She scrambles to the floor -- a one-girl search party. Hands sweeping under the bed: dust, socks... no pen.

The HUM lingers. Pressing. Watching.

MOM (O.S.) Sophie! Bus'll be here in ten minutes!

Normal life intrudes like a slap. Sophie ignores it -- lost in the storm.

SOPHIE Come on, come on...

Behind her, Max stirs. He lifts his head at the foot of the bed. A sniff. Another. His ears snap upward.

He hops down. Trots forward -- alert. Focused. No wagging. No playfulness.

He barks once -- sharp, direct.

Sophie freezes. Looks at him.

Max moves to the far corner, nose low. He stops at the rug's edge. Sniffs hard. Shoves his snout underneath.

A small glint of metal.

Sophie's eyes widen. She scrambles over. Yanks the rug back.

There it is. The pen.

Relief slams into her. She snatches it up, clutching it to her chest.

SOPHIE What would I do without you?

Max stares at her -- not smug, not playful. Still listening to something she can't hear.

He barks again. Same tone. Expectant.

Are we going out there now?

A beat.

Sophie understands. Part of her agrees. But not today.

SOPHIE (softly) Not yet. I have to go to school.

She kneels, fingers combing through his fur -- grounding herself.

SOPHIE I don't want this. But there's no one else.

She rises. The decision heavy, but worn like armor.

She pockets the pen. Grabs her bag. Slings it over her shoulder.

One last look at Max -- standing sentinel.

She steps out... heading to school like it's just another Tuesday.

EXT. SOPHIE'S FRONT YARD - MOMENTS LATER

MATCH CUT -- the front door swings open.

BOOM -- DAYLIGHT. Bright. Loud. Immediate.

Sophie steps out, backpack pulled tight. The pen tucked into the strap like a holstered weapon -- something she might need in a heartbeat.

Her jaw is set. Eyes scanning. No softness left in her morning.

Behind her -- quick paws.

Max bursts out. Fast. Focused. No leash. No hesitation. Not a pet on a walk -- a soldier on deployment.

MOM (O.S.) Max! No! Get back inside!

Max doesn't flinch. The command barely reaches him. Tail stiff. Ears high.

He thinks they're heading into danger. And he's ready.

Sophie moves down the driveway -- then stops.

Max is still glued to her side. Eyes cutting across the street, scanning hard. Muscles coiled.

Not play. Not excitement. Purpose.

Sophie kneels in front of him -- calm, low, steady.

SOPHIE Go home, Max. I mean it.

Max whines -- soft, confused. Tail droops... then one slow wag. Still watching her. Still waiting for the mission.

SOPHIE Be ready. We might need to move after school.

Max shifts -- posture tightening. Tail lifts. Head tilts. He's listening like a trained scout.

SOPHIE And be a good boy.

Max gives one bark -- sharp, crisp. Not refusal. Acknowledgment.

He understands. This isn't the fight. Not yet.

A firmer wag. Like: Roger that. I'll wait.

Sophie rises.

The rumble of the school bus grows. It rounds the corner -- brakes hissing.

The doors fold open with a metallic gasp.

Sophie gives Max a final nod -- a silent exchange only they understand -- then boards the bus.

The doors close behind her.

Max doesn't move. He sits at the edge of the driveway, tail curled around his paws, eyes locked on the bus as it pulls away.

Waiting.

INT. CLASSROOM - LATE MORNING

Fluorescent lights buzz. Kids laugh, poke, whisper. The hum of childhood politics in full swing.

Sophie sits at her desk, shoulders slightly hunched -- watching the room like a soldier casing a battlefield.



Across the room, EVAN CARTER (10) -- pale, quiet, almost translucent -- curls protectively around a spiral notebook. Pencil scratching fast. Deep in the zone.

Sophie clocks him. Takes a breath. Then another.

She stands. Walks slowly toward him -- not shy, but cautious. Approaching him like a skittish animal.

SOPHIE Hey, Evan.

No response. He keeps drawing, hunching tighter.

SOPHIE (gentle, curious) Whatcha working on?

EVAN Just... stuff.

He pauses. Looks up -- just a flick of his eyes.

EVAN (flat, automatic) Hi, Sophie. How's it going?

SOPHIE Okay, I guess.

She watches his hands. Watches the notebook.

SOPHIE (softly) I like your drawings.

Evan looks up again. Longer this time.

EVAN Thanks.

A beat.

A fragile moment -- like something could grow here -- but Evan drops his gaze and dives back into his sketch.

Sophie hovers. Like she wants to say more. Needs to.

But she doesn't.

She just nods, turns, and walks back to her desk. Quiet. Small. Not defeated -- just misunderstood.

Off her --

The classroom noise swells again, the world happily moving on without her.

INT. LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Quiet. Calm. A soft breeze filters through the half-open kitchen window.

Max lies by the front door. Still. Ears up.

Then--

He jerks upright. Ears twist sharply. A deep inhale -- sniff, sniff.

A faint HUM. (We barely hear it -- low, unsettling.)

Max growls. Then barks -- once. Twice.

Then he loses it.

MOM (O.S.) Max! Hey! Calm down!

She enters with a laundry basket -- frustrated, confused.

Max paces like a madman, tail rigid, barking like the world's ending. He throws his body against the door.

MOM What is with you?

She sets the laundry down and marches to the door.

MOM Fine. Go sniff the neighbor's lawn or whatever.

She opens it.

WHOOSH --

Max ROCKETS out of the house,  
tearing down the driveway at full  
speed -- then leaps the fence in  
one clean, panic-fueled motion.

Gone.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Max HITS THE PAVEMENT at full sprint -- collar jingling, paws flying.

MOM (O.S.) MAX?! Max -- hey!!

She bursts onto the porch just in time to see him already halfway down the block.

He disappears around the corner.

MOM Oh no no no -- dammit!

She freezes -- hands on her head -- trying to process the insanity of what just happened.

Then, under her breath:

MOM (soft, panicked) She's gonna kill me if anything happens to that dog.

She spins and bolts back into the house.

INT. KITCHEN - SECONDS LATER

Keys jingle.

MOM (grabbing her purse)

Stupid dog... why today?

EXT. DRIVEWAY - MOMENTS LATER

She jumps into the car.

Engine ROARS.

Tires SQUEAL as she pulls out fast.

CUT TO:

EXT. SMALL TOWN ROADS - CONTINUOUS

Max sprints along sidewalks, weaving through back alleys and parking lots

like he knows exactly where he's going.

Eyes sharp. Snout low.

He's not lost. He's locked in.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. CLASSROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

The final bell BLARES.

Chairs scrape. Backpacks zip.

Kids spill out like water.

Sophie is already halfway to the door.

TEACHER

Sophie! You forgot your homework!

But she doesn't stop.

The paper flaps uselessly in the teacher's hand.

TEACHER (to herself)

What gets into that girl...

EXT. SCHOOL YARD - AFTER SCHOOL

The final bell echoes in the distance.

MATCH CUT from the hallway to the schoolyard doors—

SLAM! They burst open.

Sophie explodes outside, racing across the field.

She cuts through the dry grass, backpack bouncing, eyes locked on:

The old brick wall at the edge of the woods.

The hum is louder now. Constant.

A pressure behind her ears. Inside her chest.

She skids to a stop, drops to her knees behind the wall, and yanks open her bag.

Inside — armor.

Duct-taped shoulder pads.

Pizza-box chest plate.

Shin flaps cut with kid scissors, labeled with fading Sharpie.

SOPHIE (muttering, focused)

Left... right... chest... tie here...

She slips each piece into place like a soldier prepping for war.

The cardboard creaks and shifts — not built for protection in this world.

But in *their* world?

It's enough.

Her fingers tremble slightly.

She exhales, clenches them into fists.

She's ready.

A bark – sharp, urgent.

She turns.

Max bursts from the woods, panting hard.

His fur is matted from the run. Tail low. Determined.

Sophie's eyes widen with relief.

She drops to one knee and hugs him briefly.

SOPHIE

There you are. Took you long  
enough.

Max whines, licking her hand once before turning toward the woods.

He growls.

The hum – everywhere now.

The air changes.

The wind dies. The trees go still.

Everything holds its breath.

Sophie rises.

One hand grips her pen.

The other hovers over Max's head.

She stares into the dark treeline.

SOPHIE (softly)

Let's do this.

EXT. WOODS NEAR THE SCHOOL – LATE AFTERNOON

The final bell rings.

A moment later–

Sophie bursts across the open field toward the brick wall.

Her backpack thumps against her.

She's already unzipping it mid-run.

She drops behind the wall, yanks out the cardboard armor, straps it on.

SOPHIE (under her breath)

Left... right... chest... tie here...

Shoulder pads. Chest plate. Shins.

It creaks and shifts – ridiculous by adult standards.

But Sophie doesn't care.

She grips her pen like a weapon and scans the treeline.

The hum is deafening.

A bark.

She turns–

Max crashes through the trees, panting, wild-eyed, fur damp from the run.

He bounds toward her, barking twice – sharp and loud.

Sophie kneels, presses her forehead to his for one second – then stands.

The air drops ten degrees.

Leaves rustle without wind.

The sky dims, like the sun has flinched.

FROM THE WRATH'S POV:

Sophie stands in full gleaming armor, radiant gold etched with glowing seams.

Her pen now a coiled whip of light, sparking with energy.

Max is a massive wolf-like guardian – twice his real size, eyes blazing blue.

A Wrath dives – a swirling shadow of cloth and bone, screaming silently.

Sophie strikes first – the whip slices the air–

CRACK!

The Wrath twists, dodges.

Max leaps from the wall, snapping at it mid-air.

Sophie spins, ducks, cracks the whip again–

Miss.

Miss.

HIT.

The Wrath recoils, shrieking, but  
fast – too fast.

It dives again – connects.

A shadowy limb slams into Sophie's chest. She's thrown  
backward off the wall.

Hits the ground hard – breath knocked out. Armor warped.  
Elbow scraped.

Max ROARS – not barking, roaring – and launches.

He hits the Wrath mid-air. His jaws clamp down.

The creature lets out a silent scream as its smoky form  
collapses into ash.

Silence.

REALITY RETURNS

The hum vanishes.

Wind picks up.

Birds chirp like nothing happened.

Sophie lies on the ground, blinking up at the sky.

Cardboard armor ripped and sagging.

Max stands over her, still growling low until he's sure it's  
over.

SCREECH.

A car skids to a stop nearby.

Her mom leaps out, rushing toward her.

MOM  
 Sophie! Oh my God – are you okay?  
 What happened?!

Sophie sits up fast, clutching her pen.

SOPHIE  
 I just fell.

MOM  
 You're bleeding – what were you  
 doing? Why are you—?

Sophie looks away.

Max shifts closer, watching the woods.

Her mom kneels, nearly in tears.

MOM (softer)

Please, Sophie... just tell me what's going on. Why do you  
 keep doing this?

Sophie says nothing.

She stands slowly, brushing off dirt.

Max stays beside her.

INT. CAR – MOMENTS LATER

Sophie climbs in, quiet.

Pen still in her hand.

Her mom watches her, unsure what to say.

She puts the car in gear.

Outside, a single swirl of ash floats in the air – then  
 vanishes.

They're safe.

For now.

INT. SOPHIE'S HOUSE – LIVING ROOM – EARLY EVENING

The rain is gone. Soft pinkish calm fills the sky.

Inside --



Sophie sits on the couch, wrapped in a blanket, a mug of soup in her hands. Max curled at her feet, tail twitching in sleep.

Her mom finishes cleaning a scrape on her knee.

MOM Why do you play like that?

Sophie doesn't answer. Watches steam curl from her mug.

A beat.

She shrugs -- too casual to be true.

SOPHIE I was just having fun. I slipped. That's all.

Her mom studies her -- doubt, concern, unspoken questions.

But she lets it go.

MOM (softly) You could've really hurt yourself.

SOPHIE (quietly) I'm okay.

She sips her soup. Leans into the couch cushion, looking smaller now.

Her mom gently tucks a strand of hair behind Sophie's ear.

A tiny gesture. But Sophie closes her eyes and leans into it.

A piece of toast falls from the cushion. Max wakes.

SOPHIE (whispering) Good boy.

Max eats it in one bite, then rests his head again.

Her mom watches her another moment -- wanting to speak, ask, understand -- but instead...

She stands and heads to the kitchen.

Sophie stays curled on the couch.

She knows the lie was small.

She also knows it bought her this moment:

Warmth. Safety. A mother's hand. A soft blanket.

And for tonight...

That's enough.

EXT. SCHOOL YARD - RECESS

Sophie sits on the edge of the blacktop, hugging her backpack like it's the only thing in the world she trusts.

Her eyes drift past the playground -- toward the field... the fence... the tree line beyond.

She scans. Eyes flicking back and forth.

Not for Wraths.

Just... habit now.

A few yards away, EVAN crouches in the dirt with a stick, pretending to dig -- but he's watching Kendra.

Enter: KENDRA (10) and CHASE (10). Matching grins. Arms crossed. Trouble incoming.

KENDRA We saw you out in the field yesterday.

CHASE Yeah. You were like... jumping around. Swinging at nothing.

KENDRA (mocking curiosity) Were you... wearing something?

Sophie doesn't answer. She hugs her backpack tighter. Looks away.

CHASE What's in the bag, huh?

SOPHIE Nothing. Go away.

Kendra smirks, steps closer.

KENDRA Aww.

She grabs for the bag.

Sophie stands -- quick, defensive.

SOPHIE Don't touch it.

CHASE What are you gonna do?

Before she can react, Kendra yanks the bag from her hands.

Sophie lunges -- Chase shoves her hard.

Sophie hits the pavement. A dull thud.

Evan flinches. His fingers tighten around his stick. But he doesn't move.

Kendra unzips the bag.

Her smile grows.

KENDRA Oh. My. Gosh.

She pulls out bent slabs of cardboard -- duct-taped armor:

Shoulder pads. Bracers. Chest plate.

Plus papers. Homework.

CHASE Is this a costume? You were really out there... in this?

KENDRA It's like a garbage knight.

They laugh as they tear it apart -- cardboard ripping, duct tape snapping.

SOPHIE (quietly) Please. Stop.

KENDRA Grow up, Sophie. This isn't preschool.

She drops a piece of armor onto Sophie's chest. The rest flutter down after it --

Like broken feathers. Or dead leaves in fall.

CHASE Next time you go play warrior, maybe leave the diapers at home.

They walk off, still laughing.

Sophie remains on the ground. Scraped. Still.

Her face wet -- but her eyes burn.

Slowly, she gathers the pieces. No drama. No tears.

Just... quiet.

Evan watches. Frozen. Not cruel -- just afraid he'll be next.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - AFTER SCHOOL

Sophie moves through the buzzing hallway. Backpack low. Shoulders even lower.

Kids weave around her -- laughing, shouting, slamming lockers.

A paper airplane skids to a stop at her feet.

She doesn't flinch. Doesn't look up.

She's here... but not here. Watching the world through a window.

INT. GUIDANCE OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Fluorescent lights. Plastic ferns. A poster of a kitten that reads: "Hang in there!"

The door opens. MRS. MAYS (50s) steps out with a clipboard -- warm, but practiced.

MRS. MAYS Sophie? Come on in, sweetie.

Sophie steps inside without a word. The door closes behind her.

INT. GUIDANCE OFFICE - LATER

They sit across from each other.

Mrs. Mays perches on the edge of her chair, pen ready. Sophie sits back, hands folded in her lap.

MRS. MAYS Your teacher said you've been having a hard time lately. That you've been distracted. Is that true?

Sophie doesn't answer.

MRS. MAYS (gently) You can tell me anything. That's what I'm here for.

Sophie looks at her. Then:

SOPHIE There's a portal near my house.

A beat.

SOPHIE It's like... a tear between this world and another one. That's how they get in.

MRS. MAYS (uncertain) "They"?

SOPHIE The Wraths.

Silence.

SOPHIE I can hear them. When the portal opens. Nobody else can -- not even my mom. But Max can see them.

MRS. MAYS Max?

SOPHIE My dog.

Mrs. Mays nods slowly, jotting something down.

MRS. MAYS And what happens when they come through?

SOPHIE They feed.

MRS. MAYS Feed on what?

SOPHIE People.

That hangs in the air.

MRS. MAYS You've seen them do this?

SOPHIE Yes.

Her voice is steady. Matter-of-fact. Not trying to convince anyone.

SOPHIE One Wrath feeds once per night. If I don't stop it before sunrise... it stays. It hides. And the next night, it feeds again.

A beat.

SOPHIE One kill per Wrath. Per night. If I miss one... that's one death. If I miss two -- that's two.

MRS. MAYS And you try to stop them?

SOPHIE I do stop them. Most of the time.

MRS. MAYS How?

Sophie gives a small shrug.

SOPHIE I have a pen. But it only works on them. It's not magic to anyone else.

Mrs. Mays scribbles again -- the pen scratching louder now.

MRS. MAYS Sophie... if what you're saying is true -- wouldn't someone have noticed?

SOPHIE They make it look natural. Accidents. Heart attacks. No one connects the dots.

Silence.

MRS. MAYS Do you ever win?

Sophie pauses.

SOPHIE Sometimes.

She looks down.

SOPHIE But winning just means nobody died.

A beat.

SOPHIE They don't know I saved them. They just keep walking around like nothing ever happened.

She looks up -- calm, clear.

SOPHIE So yeah. If you're still breathing... that's me winning. You're welcome.

Mrs. Mays is stunned silent. Only the tick of the office clock fills the space.

INT. SOPHIE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DUSK

Muted cartoons flicker on the TV. Warm evening light slips through the windows.

In the kitchen -- the clatter of dishes. Mom on speakerphone, half-listening, half multitasking.

MOM (O.S.) Yeah, she's in the backyard with the dog. Finally burning off some energy.

EXT. BACKYARD - MOMENTS LATER

Sophie runs across the grass in her socks. Max bounds after her, tail wagging like they're playing for real. She laughs -- once -- like she might be. They chase each other around the yard -- Past a plastic swing, A patch of clover, A toy left in the grass. Then-- Sophie slows. She laughs -- once -- like she might be.

Then--

Sophie slows.

She looks toward the back fence. The trees beyond it.

Max follows her gaze.

She walks over, kneels by a loose fence slat.

SOPHIE (quietly) Just a peek.

She wiggles the board -- it creaks softly. Max waits beside her, instantly tense.

SOPHIE If we're fast, she won't even know.

She slips through. Max follows.

The slat swings shut behind them.

The yard goes still.

EXT. RIDGE BEHIND SOPHIE'S HOUSE - DUSK

Sophie crouches in tall grass, Max beside her.

Below the ridge -- nestled in the trees -- a faint pulse of light.

The Tear.

Low. Wrong.

And... maybe bigger than before.

Sophie squints.

SOPHIE (to Max) Is it bigger?

Max whines softly.

She pulls a can of bright orange spray paint from her backpack.

RATTLE-RATTLE-RATTLE.  
The sound slices the quiet.

She moves down the slope. Max shadows her.

The HUM deepens as they approach -- vibrating the dirt.

Sophie steps just close enough and sprays a curved orange line around the Tear -- a marker.

SOPHIE There. We'll see tomorrow.

She studies the Tear. Movement inside -- Wraths drifting, watching.

Maybe.

MOM (O.S.) Sophie! Come inside! Dinner's ready!

Sophie flinches.

One last look at the Tear.

Then she turns back up the hill.

Max lingers, staring into the glow...

...then follows.

INT. SOPHIE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The door clicks shut behind Sophie.

She walks in -- dirt on her knees, scraped hands. Drops her backpack. Pulls out torn cardboard -- bent and dirty from earlier.

No tears. Just tape. Cereal boxes. Pizza flaps. Duct tape.

Quiet purpose.

Max settles beside her, watching.

In the kitchen -- dishes clink. A phone hums on speaker.

MOM (O.S.) You're not going back out tonight. I mean it. And just so you know -- I've got Sarah coming by in a few. She'll be here while I run out.

SOPHIE I don't need a babysitter.

MOM Not up for debate.

DOORBELL RINGS.

Max barks once. Sophie doesn't look up.

MOM (calling out) Hey! Thanks for coming on such short notice!

SARAH (15) enters -- hoodie, earbuds, bag of chips. Awkward, checked out, not unkind.

SARAH All good. Honestly? Better than watching my brother glue his eyelids shut for TikTok.

Mom gestures toward Sophie.

MOM That's Sophie. She's... into crafting right now.

Sophie looks up. Nods. Keeps taping.

SARAH (to Mom) What's the plan?



MOM (grabbing keys) Nothing big. Just hang out. No leaving the house. Sophie knows the rules -- right?

SOPHIE (quietly) Yes, Mom.

MOM Okay. Be back in a couple hours. Thanks again.

The door shuts. Silence settles in.

Sarah plops onto the couch, watching.

SARAH So... what are you making?

SOPHIE Armor.

SARAH Nice. For like, a school project?

SOPHIE (matter-of-fact) No. For later. In case I have to fight something.

SARAH ...Cool.

She says it like a joke -- but Sophie's tone snuffs the laugh out before it starts.

Sophie fits a shoulder plate. Nod.

Then--

SARAH FREEZES.

Her eyes go blank. Her voice drops  
-- low, ancient:

SARAH (in a strange language) Tarelli'van shai. Nurn desh keh... Watch the gate, little one. It will be hungry soon.

Sophie freezes mid-tape. Eyes widen -- she understands.

SOPHIE (quiet) I will.

Sarah BLINKS -- jolts.

SARAH Wait... did I just say something?

SOPHIE You said to watch the gate.

SARAH No I didn't--

A beat.

SARAH (half-laugh) ...Did I?

Sophie nods once.

Max barks sharply from the other room.

The HUM begins -- low, faint... rising.

Sophie turns toward the back window.

SOPHIE (to herself) It's almost time.

SARAH Time for what?

Sophie doesn't answer. She tightens duct tape around her wrist.

Max returns -- alert.

And somewhere beyond the ridge...

...the dark begins to move.

INT. SOPHIE'S BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

The room is dim. Quiet.

Sarah stands in the doorway as Sophie climbs into bed -- armor set aside, Max curled at the footboard.

SARAH Need anything before I crash on the couch?

Sophie hesitates.

SOPHIE ...My pen.

SARAH Your... what?

SOPHIE I left it downstairs. On the table.

SARAH You need it for school?

SOPHIE I need it to sleep.

Sarah blinks, then gives a half-smile.

SARAH Alright. One sleep pen, coming up.

She disappears. A moment later returns with a cheap gel pen.

SARAH Here you go, warrior poet.

Sophie takes it like it's made of silver.

SARAH (playful) You gonna write dreams down or stab monsters with it?

SOPHIE (quiet) Both.

Sarah hesitates -- not sure if it's a joke.

SARAH Well... goodnight then.

She flips the light switch. The door clicks almost shut.

In the dark --

Max breathes steady. Sophie clutches the pen to her chest.  
Eyes open -- just a second longer.

Then she rolls over.

INT. LIVING ROOM - A LITTLE LATER

The front door opens quietly.

Mom steps in, juggling her bag and keys.

SARAH meets her in the entryway -- whispering.

SARAH She's asleep. Out cold.

MOM (softly) Thanks again. Everything okay?

SARAH Yeah. She was... cool. Quiet kid.

She grabs her chips and earbuds.

SARAH Let me know if you ever need someone again.

MOM I will. Drive safe.

The door clicks shut behind her.

INT. SOPHIE'S BEDROOM - SAME TIME

Sophie sleeps on her side. Max sleeps at her feet, breathing steady.

Her hand still grips the pen. Not glowing. Not magical. Just there. Held tight.

INT. SCHOOL CAFETERIA - DAY

Lunch hour -- loud, chaotic. Trays clatter. Snacks crinkle.  
Kids laugh, shout, trade food.

At a table near the edge sits Sophie. Alone. Lunch untouched.

She slouches low, arms on the table. Eyes dull. No Max. Just noise -- and the faint HUM only she hears.

She picks at her food without seeing it --

Until she does.

Across the room, on a reading mat: EMMA, sitting crisscross. In her lap: a scruffy teddy bear. Matted fur. One ear half-off. A seam ripped open --

And from inside?

A soft golden glow. Dim. Subtle. Alive. Pulsing.

Only Sophie sees it.

She freezes. Eyes locked.

SOPHIE (V.O.) That's not normal...

She stands. Drawn like a magnet.

The cafeteria noise dulls -- like she's slipping underwater. Her breath quickens. Feet move on their own.

SOPHIE (V.O.) I didn't know what it was. Just that it wasn't nothing. It felt like... something meant for me.

She crosses the room. Each step louder in her head than the cafeteria storm.

She stops in front of Emma.

EMMA (confused) What?

SOPHIE I need that.

Before Emma can respond --

Sophie grabs the bear.

EMMA Hey! That's MINE!!

Sophie flips it, sees the glow again -- still there, deep inside the seam.

She RIPS.

RIIIIP.  
Glowing fluff spills out.

Her eyes go wild.

She grabs another seam -- RIPS again.

EMMA (screaming) STOP! STOP IT!! You're hurting him!!

The cafeteria erupts. Kids back away. Chairs scrape.

TEACHER (O.S.) Sophie!?

Sophie drops to her knees, arms deep in fluff -- frantic, digging, shaking.

SOPHIE It's glowing! I see it! It's-- it's something! I don't know what, but-- I NEED it!!

TEACHER (grabbing her arm) That's ENOUGH. What are you doing?!

Sophie jerks away.

SOPHIE You don't understand! It's not just fluff -- LOOK AT IT--!

She holds out a glowing tuft.

To everyone else --

It's just stuffing.

Emma sobs. The entire cafeteria freezes.

TEACHER That's it. Principal's office. Now.

Sophie rises slowly -- clutching the golden tuft. Breathing like she ran a mile.

SOPHIE I didn't want to hurt her... I just-- I saw it. I still do.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

The teacher marches Sophie down the corridor.

Her face is hot. Her hand is clenched around the glowing tuft of fluff.

She sneaks a look. Still glowing.

She slips it deep into her pocket. A secret.

SOPHIE (V.O.) I don't know what it is. But it's part of something. And now... I think I'm part of it too.

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - DAY

Sophie sits small in a plastic chair. Hands folded tight in her lap. Feet not quite touching the floor.

No Max. No noise. Just her. And the silence.

PRINCIPAL HARRIS sits across the desk -- calm, professional, troubled.

PRINCIPAL HARRIS You walked across the room and tore open another student's stuffed animal. In front of the entire class.

A beat.

PRINCIPAL HARRIS That's not okay, Sophie.

She stares at her shoes. Says nothing.

PRINCIPAL HARRIS I don't care what you thought you saw -- it wasn't yours. Emma's upset. The other kids are shaken. And frankly... I'm concerned.

Sophie shifts slightly. No eye contact.

PRINCIPAL HARRIS I'm not saying you meant to hurt anyone. But that doesn't change what happened.

A beat.

PRINCIPAL HARRIS Do you understand why this is serious?

A tiny nod.

She doesn't explain. Doesn't defend herself. Just waits.

Principal Harris sighs, long and tired.

PRINCIPAL HARRIS Alright.

He picks up the phone. Dials.

PRINCIPAL HARRIS (into phone) Mrs. Mays? Could you come down? Yes. She's here now.

He hangs up.

PRINCIPAL HARRIS (softer) I think you need to talk to someone who can help.

Sophie waits. Silent.

INT. MRS. MAYS' OFFICE - DAY

Soft light. Bookshelves. A fuzzy rug. Lavender diffuser.  
Every detail whispering: safe.

But Sophie doesn't feel it.

She's curled in the far corner of the couch -- arms tight  
around her knees, shoulders hunched, face turned away.

The door clicks closed as MRS. MAYS enters.

She walks slowly. Calm. Not stern. Not rushing.

She sits across from Sophie, clipboard in her lap.

MRS. MAYS I know we just talked yesterday... and we're  
scheduled again tomorrow... (she offers a gentle smile)  
...but after what happened today with Emma, I thought we  
should talk now.

Sophie doesn't move.

MRS. MAYS She's very upset. You tore her bear open in front  
of everyone.

A beat.

MRS. MAYS Can you help me understand what happened?

Silence.

Sophie tightens her hold on her knees.

Then, softly --

SOPHIE It glowed.

MRS. MAYS The teddy bear?

A small nod.

SOPHIE Not all of it. Just one part. Inside.

Mrs. Mays writes slowly.

MRS. MAYS What does that mean -- "it glowed"?

SOPHIE Sometimes things glow. Not like a lightbulb. Not out  
loud. Just... from the inside. Quiet.

A beat.

SOPHIE Only I can see it.

Mrs. Mays watches her closely.

MOM (softening slightly) I don't know what's going on inside your head anymore.

A beat.

MOM But I need you to stop scaring people. I need you to be a kid again.

Long beat.

Sophie blinks.

SOPHIE (whispers) I can't.

MOM (frustrated) Why not?

SOPHIE (soft, flat) I'm not trying to scare anyone.

A beat.

SOPHIE I'm trying to save them.

MOM Save them from what?

A beat -- then:

MOM (trying again) You know this isn't a game. I don't mind that you have an active imagination -- you dream big, baby girl -- but you can't act like this anymore. Do you understand me?

SOPHIE (still staring out the window) Yes, Mommy.

A beat.

SOPHIE I understand.

EXT. RIDGE BEHIND SOPHIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The sky is ink-dark. Stars barely push through heavy clouds.

Sophie climbs the familiar hill -- flashlight in one hand, a well-loved stuffed bear in the other, orange spray paint clipped to her belt. Max follows close. Ears back. Silent. He already knows.

They crest the ridge. Sophie stops.

Below them -- THE TEAR, glowing and humming. Deep. Wrong.



Wraths swirl beneath the surface like smoke trapped under deep water.

Sophie moves to the jagged edge. Points her flashlight down.

The orange paint line she sprayed last night is gone.

Not faded. Not washed away. Swallowed.

The earth has split wider where it once circled the crack.

The glow pulses faster. The hum presses against her chest like a second heartbeat.

SOPHIE (softly) It is growing.

Max lets out a low, uneasy growl.

Sophie crouches. Unzips her coat.

She looks at the stuffed bear in her arms -- her own bear. Well-worn. One ear frayed. Stitches down the side. She's had it forever.

She hesitates... then gently tears open the back seam.

Stuffing spills into her palm. It glows faintly. Just like Emma's did.

Sophie blinks back tears, grips the glowing handful -- and tosses it into the Tear.

A beat of silence.

Then--

The Tear shudders. A ripple shoots down the glowing seam. Its cracked edges pull inward. Only slightly -- but unmistakably.

The hum falters. The Wraths drift backward, retreating deeper.

Max shifts -- alert.

Sophie doesn't smile. Doesn't flinch. She just watches.

SOPHIE Okay. That worked.

She lowers herself to the ground -- cross-legged.

SOPHIE What else are you scared of?

The Tear hums again. Quieter... but not gone.

Sophie leans in. Looks deeper --

And sees more:

Below the Wraths lies a vast shadowed ocean of movement. A current carrying creatures like driftwood. And deeper still -  
- massive forms, larger than houses, weightless, drifting.  
Eyes glowing faintly in the dark.

Sleeping. For now.

Sophie grips her ears as the hum spikes, like static crackling inside her skull.

Max growls low. Tail stiff.

Sophie jerks back -- breathing hard.

She grabs more stuffing from the bear -- throws it in.

Another recoil. The Tear shrinks a few more inches.

Then-- nothing.

The glow stabilizes. The crack stops shrinking.

Still huge. Still open.

Sophie kneels, holding the half-empty bear in her lap.

SOPHIE Okay... That was one bear.

She stares into the wound in the earth.

SOPHIE I'm gonna need... hundreds.

She wipes her nose with her sleeve. Eyes narrowing, focus sharpening.

SOPHIE Where in the world am I gonna find that many?

Max whines. She pats his side.

She lifts the sagging bear into her arms -- gentle, grateful.

SOPHIE (softly) You were a good soldier.

They sit together in silence. Watching the void. Waiting for morning.

INT. THE TEAR - SOMEWHERE BETWEEN - NIGHT

Blackness. Not empty -- pressurized. Alive with movement.

A WRATH floats deep within the current. Drawn upward. Pulled by instinct toward something near the surface.

In the distance -- The Tear glows faintly. A jagged split in reality.

Too small. Not ready.

It does not matter.

The Wrath surges toward it -- fast, hungry, wrong.

EXT. RIDGE BEHIND SOPHIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The ground vibrates. The glow at the base of the Tear flickers, pulses.

Then -- the shadow arrives.

A shape pushes against the crack from below. At first, it cannot fit. The seam

tightens, rejecting it.

But the Wrath pushes harder.

Its form stretches, distorts -- a long, sinewy smear of shadow forcing itself

through a space too narrow to contain it.

The Tear quivers. Its edges ripple like skin under strain. Bones crack. Joints

dislocate. Not human -- but wrong all the same.

It pulls itself forward, inch by inch.

Behind it -- the Tear widens. Just a little. But enough.

The Wrath spills into the night -- a tangle of too-thin limbs and smoke.

Still.

Then --

A twitch.

A tremble.

It reforms -- and vanishes into the trees.

INT. SOPHIE'S BEDROOM - DUSK

Sophie sits at her desk, pencil in hand. Her worksheet lies untouched.

Outside, the gray-blue light of almost-night settles into the room.

She hears it – that distant, low HUM.

From downstairs – a soft, anxious whine.

Max.

Sophie rises quickly. Crosses to her backpack. Grabs it.

SOPHIE (whispers)

One of them's already through...

She heads toward the door –

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Mom stands at the end of the hall. Arms crossed. Exhausted. On edge.

MOM  
Where are you going?

SOPHIE  
I just... I need to check something.

MOM  
No. You have homework. And it's getting

dark. Go back to your room. Now.

SOPHIE (urgent)

Please. Just ten minutes–

MOM (sharper)

No. I said enough of the sneaking out.

You stay inside.

A beat.

Sophie lowers her head. Turns back into her room.

EXT. SMALL TOWN STREET - DUSK TO NIGHT

Sophie runs full speed through the quiet neighborhood. Max at her side -- barking wildly, like he already knows.

They round a corner -- past dim porchlights, drawn curtains, empty sidewalks.

The HUM grows louder. Pulsing. Wrong.

Sophie scans the block -- looking, reaching, praying she's early enough.

Then--

HEADLIGHTS.

A car skids to a stop behind her.  
Bright. Blinding.

MOM (O.S.) SOPHIE!?

SOPHIE (terrified) NO!

She tries to sprint -- but her mom grabs her arm and yanks her back.

Sophie thrashes, screaming--

SOPHIE LET ME GO! I CAN HELP! MOM, PLEASE -- LET ME GO!

MOM What are you talking about?! Stop it!

Sophie fights harder. Kicking. Clawing. Panicked.

SOPHIE I HAVE TO GO! I CAN STILL STOP IT!

MOM Sophie! There's nothing out there!

SOPHIE I DON'T KNOW WHO -- BUT IT'S OUT THERE!

Max barks -- loud, sharp. Then whines, staring down the block.

He knows.

Mom drags Sophie back toward the car.

SOPHIE NO! MOM -- PLEASE -- I CAN HELP! JUST LET ME GO!

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Sophie is shoved into the back seat. She pounds on the window -- sobbing, furious, terrified.

SOPHIE I was supposed to help... I was supposed to stop it...

Outside -- a porch light flickers. Then dies.

The HUM goes silent. Clean. Final.

Max stops barking. Just sits. Head low.

Sophie slumps in the seat. Breathing hard. Tears still coming -- but slower now.

Defeated.

SOPHIE (softly) It's too late. There's nothing I can do now.

A beat.

SOPHIE We'll get it tomorrow.

Max whines -- soft, wounded -- but he understands.

Sophie curls up in the seat. Eyes hollow. Quiet.

Her mom watches her in the rearview mirror -- lost, scared, shaken.

The car drives off into the dark.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

The faint plink of a spoon in coffee. A distant lawnmower drones behind closed windows.

Sophie sits at the kitchen table, one leg tucked under her, hunched over a bowl of soggy cereal. She prods it with her spoon, never lifting it to her mouth.

Max sprawls beneath her chair -- chin on paws, eyes half-lidded but alert. His tail gives the occasional lazy thump.

Mom, hair still damp from the shower, sits sideways at the table with a mug in one hand and the local paper in the other.

Yesterday's fight hangs in the air -- not sharp anymore, but heavy.

MOM (reading) Oh wow... someone on Oakridge passed away last night. (reads) "Local veteran Albert Wilson, 72, died of an apparent heart attack in his home..."

She slows on the name. Glances toward Sophie.

MOM (murmurs) That's weird. Mr. Wilson.

Sophie freezes mid-stir. The tiny ripple in her cereal milk goes still. She doesn't look up.

SOPHIE (V.O.) I could've stopped it. If you'd let me go... I could've saved him.

Under the table, Max shifts -- uncomfortable, ears flattening like he knows the truth of it.

MOM (casual) You're awfully quiet this morning. Big plans?

Sophie hesitates. Still staring at the bowl. Then finally looks up -- blinking too fast.

SOPHIE Can I go to Harper's house today?

Mom pauses mid-sip, mug hovering near her lips.

MOM Harper? You haven't mentioned her in months.

SOPHIE I just thought... maybe it'd be fun. To play.

A beat.

MOM (softening) Yeah. That sounds... nice. I'll call her mom.

SOPHIE (V.O.) Harper's house backs up to the woods. The hum was coming from there last night.

Max tilts his head -- tiny, knowing -- then settles again.

Mom flips another page.

MOM Hmm... says his granddaughter -- Emma, from your class -- wants to start a teddy bear drive. To give to kids who don't have any.

Sophie's eyes shift. Her stomach twists -- but not the same way as before. Her fingers tap the table's edge -- fast, restless.

A small pause.

A reminder.

SOPHIE (quiet, to the dolls) I'll come back. I promise.

She tucks the blanket snug, props a Barbie in a guard stance at the edge of the "beds."

Then she slips out of the fort, already swinging her backpack over one shoulder.

From her hoodie pocket -- the PEN glows faintly. Just enough for Max to see it.

Max turns toward the fence without a sound.

Sophie follows.

The HUM grows louder with each step.

The kid recedes. The hunter approaches.

EXT. HARPER'S BACKYARD - EDGE OF FENCE - MOMENTS LATER

Sophie slips through the side gate -- quick, low, backpack straps already tight.

Max shadows her steps, tail low, ears pivoting like satellite dishes.

They move along the overgrown side yard -- knee-high grass snagging at her socks. A trash bin half-tipped. A rake teeth-up, waiting for the unwary.

Sophie crouches by the fence, stilling herself.

The HUM is louder now -- not a wail, not an echo. Steady. Focused. A beacon.

She leans toward a missing slat.

Through the gap --

Empty lots gone to seed. Cracked sidewalks sprouting weeds. Narrow paths threading between forgotten buildings.

SOPHIE (V.O.) It's close. It's hunting.

Her fingers flex against the fence.

She nods.

They move.

EXT. SUBURBAN CUT-THROUGH PATHS - CONTINUOUS

Sophie darts through a hedge gap -- branches scraping her sleeves. Max ducks under a leaning chain-link panel, claws skittering on concrete.

They skirt behind a shuttered gas station -- paint peeling, price board forever stuck at \$1.49.



Past a crooked swing set swaying in the breeze -- creeeeeeak.

Across broken pavement and tall grass, soda cans crunch softly under Sophie's sneakers.

Max freezes mid-step. Head lifts. Nose works the air.

His eyes flick to Sophie -- a question.

She nods. Go.

The HUM pulses -- urgent, insistent.

Sophie's pace quickens.

She knows exactly where it's pulling her.

EXT. ALLEY BESIDE OLD CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

A narrow cut between two tired brick walls. Always dark. Always damp.

Trash bags sag beside a dented dumpster.

Sophie crouches behind it, hands braced on the cold metal.

She leans out, slow and careful -- and sees it.

EXT. FIELD BEHIND THE CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

Open space. Concrete pads fractured by weeds. Tall grass rippling like it's holding its breath.

And there -- near a rusting dumpster --

THE WRATH.

It doesn't stand. It hovers.

Smoke and bone twisting around itself, never settling into a shape the eye can trust.

Sophie narrows her eyes. Unzips her pack.

Out comes the duct-taped pizza-box chest plate. Shoulder flaps. Worn. Bent. Trusted.

She fits each piece with quiet precision.

The PEN slides into her palm -- glowing faintly. Ready.

Sophie climbs onto a low cement pad. Max steps beside her, growl deep and rolling.

SOPHIE (quiet, to the Wrath) I missed you last night...  
(beat) But it's time for you to go.

EXT. FIELD BEHIND THE CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

The Wrath dives -- a smear of shadow and jagged bone.

Sophie jumps back, PEN snapping out--

CRACK!  
A lash of light slices the air.  
Miss.

Max launches with a furious bark -- the Wrath swats him aside like a leaf. He rolls, scrambles up again, hackles bristling.

Sophie lunges--

CRACK! Hit.

The Wrath flickers -- glitching like bad video -- then snaps solid, angrier.

It surges, claws like hooked glass.

Sophie takes the hit on her shoulder -- spun to the ground.

Elbow skids across gravel -- skin tears. Pizza-box armor caves inward with a sad cardboard crunch.

SOPHIE (breathing hard) I'm not scared of you... (beat)  
...okay, maybe a little!

She forces herself up, PEN whipping again.

The Wrath unleashes a hollow, splitting screech -- and lunges.

CRACK! A miss by inches.

It slams into her midsection -- air ripped from her lungs -- and she crashes into the grass.

Sky. Then nothing but green.

EXT. FIELD - MOMENTS LATER

Sophie lies on her side -- elbow bleeding, knees scraped raw. Her PEN is three feet away, its glow fading.

Max plants himself between her and the open air, barking like he's holding off an intruder.

To anyone else: Just a girl winded from a fall, and a dog barking at nothing.

EXT. HARPER'S BACKYARD - LATER

The side gate creaks.

Sophie slips back in -- limping, dirt smeared from cheek to hoodie hem. Max trots behind her, silent now, matching her pace.

From across the yard--

SOPHIE It worked...

She rips more stuffing. Tosses it in.

The Tear shrinks again -- only for seconds -- then stabilizes.

Still huge. Still open.

Sophie falls back, panting. Mr. Snuffles limp in her lap.

SOPHIE Okay... That was one bear.

She stares at the wound in the earth.

SOPHIE I'm gonna need... hundreds.

She wipes her nose. Her gaze sharpens.

SOPHIE Where in the world am I gonna find that many?

Max whines, pressing his head against her arm. She strokes him.

SOPHIE (soft) You were a good soldier.

They sit together in the dark, watching the Tear ripple, waiting for morning.

EXT. WOODS NEAR THE RIDGE - NIGHT

The trees stand still -- no wind. But the air is thick with electrical buzz.

The HUM drowns everything.

Sophie crouches in tall grass -- knees damp, breath shallow. PEN in hand. Her backpack heavy with duct-taped armor and a stolen beer bottle.

Max stands beside her -- muscles taut.

Across the clearing -- a WRATH moves between trees. Smoke-bodied. Flickering. Wrong in every motion -- glitching through reality.

SOPHIE (V.O.) They only eat once a day. And this one's still hunting.

Sophie steadies her breath.

SOPHIE (to Max) Let's drop it fast.

The Wrath pivots -- then dives.

Sophie snaps the pen-whip--

CRACK!

A miss.

Max lunges with a deep, ripping bark -- but the Wrath flings him aside like he weighs nothing.

Sophie spins--

CRACK! (CONT'D)

This time: contact.

The Wrath shudders, form tearing apart for a heartbeat--

Then it slams into her chest.

She hits the ground hard -- armor crumpling, dirt flooding her mouth. The PEN spins out of reach.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE THE FIELD - SAME TIME

SARAH (15) steps out of the convenience store -- earbuds dangling, hoodie zipped to her chin, chips in hand.

Max's barking cuts the night.

Not playful. Sharp. Urgent.

She glances over -- and freezes.

A little girl in a torn cardboard chestplate hits the ground in the grass.

Sophie.

Sarah's heart slams once -- panic, instinct, something old rising in her chest.

Her legs move before she decides.

She sprints.

Her hand slips into her hoodie pocket -- pulls out an old lipstick tube.

She doesn't even look at it. It's like drawing a weapon she's carried her whole life.

EXT. FIELD - MOMENTS LATER

Sophie groans, trying to push herself upright. Max circles her, snarling, teeth bared.

Sarah drops into the grass -- fast -- boots sliding. She hits one knee beside Sophie, arm hooking under her shoulder, pulling her up like she's done this a hundred times.

SARAH C'mon, c'mon, get up.

She snatches the PEN from the grass and jams it into Sophie's palm.

SARAH This yours?

SOPHIE (panting) Yeah... thanks.

Sophie glances down -- at Sarah's OTHER hand.

SOPHIE What's that?

Sarah looks at the lipstick for the first time, confused -- like it teleported into her grip.

SARAH Huh. This? It's just my lipstick. (beat) I don't even wear it. I don't know why I carry it. But if I don't have it with me... I feel off. Like I'm forgetting something important.

A long, loaded beat.

Sarah meets Sophie's eyes -- something deep and ancient flashing behind her gaze.

SARAH Keep fighting.

The words drop out like they came from her bones, not her mind.

Sarah blinks -- startled by herself.

SOPHIE Just some. I don't drink it -- I throw it. When it hits a Wrath, it makes them visible for a second.

Mrs. May quietly picks up her pen, jotting something down -- but her eyes keep flicking up to Sophie's face.

SOPHIE And the teddy bear stuffing -- it helps close the Tear. It slows it down. I don't know why. I just know it works.

She fidgets with her sleeves, lost in thought.

SOPHIE I think it has to glow first. Like... it only shows me what I need when I'm ready to see it.

Mrs. May studies her -- pen paused mid-air.

MRS. MAY You're not just imagining this, are you?

SOPHIE No. And I don't think I'm the first.

Mrs. May looks up.

SOPHIE There was this girl. Sarah. She babysat me a few days ago. I saw her again and... she didn't remember anything.

Sophie leans in, voice tightening.

SOPHIE But she had this lipstick she always carries around. She said it makes her feel safe, even though she doesn't know why.

A breath.

SOPHIE I think it used to be her weapon. But she forgot. Like when you grow up... you lose it.

Mrs. May's voice goes quiet.

MRS. MAY Lose what?

SOPHIE The sight. The hearing. The glow. The Wraths. (beat) When you get older... it stops working.

Mrs. May raises a careful eyebrow.

MRS. MAY That's a pretty big idea.

Sophie nods once. Small. Scared.

SOPHIE I know. But it's the only thing that makes sense. That's why I'm scared.

Mrs. May exhales slowly.

MRS. MAY Because you think... you're running out of time?

Sophie finally lifts her eyes -- steady, haunted -- and nods.

INT. SOPHIE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Tape rips from a roll.

Sophie smooths a hand-drawn sign onto the front door:

BEAR DROP-OFF HERE  
Crayon letters outlined in marker.

She kneels beside a large donation bag of teddy bears. The faint scent of laundry soap and attic dust drifts up as she lifts each one.

She counts them under her breath, slow and steady. Her fingers linger on every bear like she's measuring something deeper than weight.

Max sits beside the pile, proud and tall -- a guard dog watching over treasure. Every now and then he steals a bear and parades it across the room like he caught it himself.

Sophie pins a tiny paper heart on each bear:

In Loving Memory of Mr. Wilson.

She picks up a caramel-brown bear, worn enough to feel alive in her hands.

SOPHIE (whispers) You're going to help save the world.

MOM (O.S.) These look great. I'll print a bunch of copies at work tomorrow.

Sophie doesn't look up, still focused.

SOPHIE I want to put one on every mailbox in the neighborhood.

Max trots by with a flyer clamped between his teeth -- volunteering.

MOM (laughing) Maybe not that one, bud.

EXT. SCHOOL PLAYGROUND - DAY

Recess chaos swirls -- tag games, screeching swings, tetherball smacks.

Emma sits alone on a bench. Knees drawn in. Arms wrapped around a small teddy bear.

She doesn't rock, doesn't cry -- just holds it like something fragile is leaking out.

Across the yard, Sophie watches. A folded flyer in her fist.

She approaches carefully -- like approaching a sleeping animal.

SOPHIE (nervous) Hey... Emma?

Emma's eyes lift. Guarded.

SOPHIE I just... I'm really sorry. About what I did. And about your grandpa. Mr. Wilson was... really nice.

Emma says nothing.

Sophie offers the flyer.

SOPHIE I'm doing a bear drive. For you. For him. To help other kids. (beat) I messed up before... but I want to do something good now.

Emma takes the flyer. Her thumb traces the edges.

EMMA (soft) Thanks.

Sophie nods, turns.

EMMA (quiet, after a beat) He would've liked that.

Sophie stops, smiles -- tiny, real -- then walks on, head lifted a little higher.

INT. MRS MAYS OFFICE - DAY

The door creaks open--

MOM Yeah. I just... I want to know what's going on with my kid. (soft, almost breaking) I just want her to be okay.

Mrs. May nods gently.

MRS. MAY We'll keep talking. And maybe the three of us can meet soon. Together.

She closes the notepad softly, like she doesn't really want the session to end.

FADE OUT.



INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - NIGHT

The bell dings overhead.

Sophie slips in -- hood up, posture small but determined.

Fluorescent lights buzz in tired yellow.

Behind the counter, the same CLERK from before locks onto her instantly.

CLERK You.

Sophie freezes mid-step.

CLERK I'm watching you. You steal again, I call the cops.

Sophie forces a shy kid-smile.

SOPHIE I'm just looking. Promise.

She drifts down the aisles casually -- eyes flicking toward the back fridge.

Inside, beer glows faintly behind the glass. Or maybe it's just the hum swelling in her chest.

Her backpack zipper opens halfway with a tiny sound.

EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE - SAME

MAX sits outside, tail twitching, watching Sophie through the glass like he's waiting for a signal.

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - CONTINUOUS

Sophie inches toward the fridge.

Her hand rises toward the handle-- then stops.

The clerk hasn't moved. Hasn't blinked.

Too risky.

A beat.

THEN--

The glass door SLAMS open.

MAX rockets inside.

CLERK HEY! What the--?!

Max darts straight down the snack aisle and SLAMS into a chip rack.

WHOOSH -- the whole shelf tips and collapses, bags exploding everywhere.

CLERK Get that mutt OUTTA here!

He charges after Max.

Max jukes left -- then right -- staying barely out of reach, tail wagging in chaos.

Sophie moves.

Fridge door open. Six-pack shoved into her backpack. Zipped fast.

Max sprints toward the front.

EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE - SECONDS LATER

Sophie bursts through the door, backpack clanking.

CLERK (O.S.) You gotta be KIDDING me!!

Max leaps out behind her. They vanish into the night.

EXT. ALLEY - MOMENTS LATER

Sophie and Max duck behind a dumpster, panting.

She rips open her pack -- beer bottles gleaming.

SOPHIE Okay... that was awesome.

Max's tongue lolls. Tail thumps.

SOPHIE We're a good team.

Her face hardens. Determined.

She holds up one bottle -- the glass sweating gold.

SOPHIE (V.O.) Because next time... I'm not running.

She tucks it away. Max gives a quiet approving chuff.

They slip deeper into the alley darkness.

FADE OUT.

INT. SOPHIE'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The NOTEBOOK sits open in MOM's lap.

Every page is crowded -- cramped handwriting, frantic sketches, timelines, diagrams, rules. Rain-warped corners. Torn edges. A life lived under the cover of night.

Mom flips another page. Reads. Flips again.

Her breathing stays tight, as if each page makes the room smaller.

MAX appears in the doorway, framed in shadow. Watching. Silent.

Mom doesn't look up.

MOM (muttering) "Wrath #4 -- slower. Might be blind." "Max barked at 3:12. It came at 3:15." (beat) What does that even mean?

She turns another page.

MOM (reading) "Mr. Wilson didn't make it. I should've lied better."

Her throat tightens. The air seems heavier.

MOM ...Jesus.

She presses the notebook closed halfway, fingers trembling.

Finally -- she looks up.

MOM (flat) Is she okay?

Max tilts his head, unreadable.

MOM I mean -- is she seeing things? Hearing voices? Is this... (soft, terrified) a breakdown?

Max barks. One sharp, decisive sound.

Mom stares at him like she might actually be losing her mind.

MOM That a no?

Max barks again. Same tone. Same certainty.

Mom snorts through her fear.

MOM You're real confident for someone who licks his own butt.

She stands, moves to Sophie's backpack on the floor.  
Hesitates. Then unzips it.

Inside: a six-pack of beer, torn teddy bear stuffing, colored string, the PEN.

Mom lifts the pen. It catches the lamplight and seems to... buzz. Like a mosquito only she can't swat.

Max growls low -- a deep, primal warning.

Mom drops her hand away from the pen.

MOM (to Max) What is this?

Max moves closer, glances at the pen -- then the notebook.

Mom sits again, notebook across her thigh.

MOM (shaken) She's writing rules. Keeping times. Tracking things. (beat) Like she's... watching something.

Her voice breaks into a whisper she doesn't want to hear.

MOM I don't know if she's pretending... or if she's somewhere too far for me to reach.

She rubs her eyes with the heel of her hand.

MOM You've been with her every time she goes running out at night. You've seen her chasing shadows. And now you're-- (gestures vaguely) growling at me?

Max sits. Strong. Steady. A soldier at attention.

Mom's voice softens. Thin. Scared.

MOM You believe her... don't you?

Max barks once. No hesitation.

Mom lets out a helpless, trembling laugh.

MOM That doesn't help me, Max. (beat) I need to talk to her.

Max stands, tail low, and barks again. Then he turns toward the hall.

Mom sighs deeply, pulls the notebook against her like armor.

MOM (soft, rattled) Just don't growl at me when this goes sideways.

Max blinks, then leads her out.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Mom sits on the couch. The NOTEBOOK lies open next to a sweating six-pack of beer. Her fingers drum anxiously against the cardboard cover.

The front door jiggles -- and opens.

SOPHIE steps inside, soaked from the rain. Her hood drips. Her hair sticks to her cheek. The PEN clipped to her side gleams under the lamp.

She freezes. Her eyes lock onto the notebook. Then the beer. Then her mother's face.

Mom's voice is steady -- but cracked with something she can't hide anymore.

MOM (quiet) We need to talk.

INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Rain needles the windows. Thunder rolls -- close enough to rattle the picture frames.

Lights are low. Shadows own the corners.

MOM sits stiffly on the couch. The NOTEBOOK lies open in her lap. A six-pack of BEER sweats onto the coffee table beside her.

She hasn't turned a page in a long time.

The front door opens.

SOPHIE steps in again, dripping rain, hoodie clinging, dirt on her shoes. The PEN glows faintly at her hip -- like a pulse.

MAX enters behind her, shaking off water.

Sophie freezes when she sees the notebook -- then the beer -- then her mother's face.

It's enough.

MOM (quiet, shaken) We need to talk.

SOPHIE I can't. Not right now.

MOM (sharper) Sophie Grace -- you tell me what in the hell is going on. (holds up the notebook) I read this.

SOPHIE You weren't supposed to.

MOM Then why write it all down?

SOPHIE I didn't think you'd find it.

Mom flips pages -- jagged drawings, timestamps, "WRATH #6," and "DEATH?" scrawled in margins.

MOM You have beer in your backpack. Stuffed animal guts. Rules about monsters. Time stamps of people dying. (beat) You need to tell me what this is.

SOPHIE (breath tight) I don't have time. There's more than three of them now.

Mom's voice goes small.

MOM Them who?

SOPHIE The Wraths.

Mom blinks -- stunned.

MOM You're... serious.

SOPHIE (nods) They're coming through a Tear. A gate. A crack in the world. And if I don't seal it, they'll keep feeding.

MOM (flat) You expect me to believe this?

SOPHIE No. (beat) But you should.

Mom hesitates -- torn.

MOM Why now? Why are you only telling me this now?

Sophie meets her eyes -- steady, exhausted beyond her years.

SOPHIE Because people are going to die if I don't stop them.

Thunder shakes the windows.

MAX steps forward, gives a soft but urgent woof.

Sophie breathes deep.

SOPHIE I don't have time to convince you. I just need you to let me go. Or help me.

Mom's voice goes whisper-soft.

MOM Help you do what?

SOPHIE Stop what's coming. (beat) All you have to do is believe me.

MAX barks once -- sharp, like punctuation.

Mom swallows hard.

MOM I don't know what I believe. (beat) But I believe you believe it.

Sophie nods -- a tiny, trembling exhale.

SOPHIE That's enough for now. You can help me.

MAX barks again -- louder, urgent.

Mom exhales -- a decision landing in her bones.

MOM What do you need?

SOPHIE Your keys. My backpack -- the one with the beer.

Mom rises.

MOM (dry) You and I are having the longest talk of your life tomorrow.

SOPHIE (half-smile, brave) Okay. Just help me save tonight.

They move together. Max is already at the door -- poised like a soldier.

They step into the storm.

INT. MOVING CAR - NIGHT - RAIN

Wipers drag slow arcs. Lightning flickers. The world outside is a smear of shadows.

Mom grips the wheel like it might fly away. Sophie sits rigid, the PEN glowing faintly against her side. Max stands in the backseat, staring out the window, growling low.

SOPHIE (focused) When we get there, I need you to rip open the bears. I'll tell you where to put the stuffing.

MOM And you...?

SOPHIE I'm going to send them back.

Mom whispers under the storm:

MOM Jesus Christ...

Sophie doesn't turn -- just stares ahead at something only she can see.

Max growls -- deep -- as the ridge comes into view.

EXT. BACKYARD RIDGE - NIGHT - POURING RAIN

The car fishtails to a stop in mud.

THUNDER cracks overhead. RAIN hammers down sideways. Wind whips through the trees like something screaming.

Sophie is out first -- cardboard armor bending, soaked instantly. She yanks open the trunk -- teddy bears spill out in bulging bags.

SOPHIE (shouting) This will work, Mom! Trust me!

Mom looks at her daughter -- armor, pen, bottle, soaked hair. A warrior. A child.

MOM (soft, breaking) This is insane... (beat) But I love you, baby girl.

SOPHIE (raw) I'm not letting them touch you.

BARK! BARK! BARK!  
Max thrashes in the backseat.

SOPHIE Let's get 'em, boy!

Mom opens the door -- Max rockets into the storm. Mom grabs a bag of bears -- no hesitation left.

They sprint into the dark together.

EXT. FIELD NEAR THE TEAR - MOMENTS LATER

The TEAR pulses beneath twisted tree roots -- a wound in the earth.

Mom drops to her knees, ripping open bears, flinging stuffing where Sophie shouts.

EXT. FIELD - SOPHIE IN ACTION

Sophie sprints through rain. CRACK -- the pen-whip lights the dark.

A WRATH dives -- she dodges.



SOPHIE Now, Max!

Max leaps at empty air -- attacking what Mom cannot see.

MOM (stunned) That dog is floating...

A Wrath sweeps toward Mom--

SOPHIE (screaming) Mom -- DUCK!!

She HURLS a beer bottle--

CRACK!

From Sophie's POV: A Wrath ignites  
in golden fire.

From Mom's POV: A beer bottle just exploded in mid-air.

A monstrous silhouette appears for an instant -- then  
vanishes.

Mom trembles.

MOM What the hell... that thing was right-- it was--

SOPHIE Get back to work!

Mom nods, terrified but moving.

EXT. FIELD - THE PATCHING

Sophie drops to her knees beside Mom.

SOPHIE More here! It's almost closed!

She slams stuffing into the glowing crack only she can see.

To Sophie -- golden fire stitches the wound. To Mom -- she is  
stuffing mud with bear guts.

Mom rips open another bear, crawling through the mud.

The tear SHRINKS. Wraths flicker and vanish.

EXT. FIELD - FINAL PUSH

The storm rages. Three WRATHS dive at once.

CRACK. CRACK. CRACK.

Sophie drops one, spins from  
another. Max tackles a second mid-  
air.

Mom tears open the last bear, shoves stuffing into the tear's center.

FLASH.

A shockwave BLOWS OUTWARD -- rain  
thrown aside. Wind sucked inward.

The Tear collapses -- pulling the Wraths with it.

Then... Stillness.

EXT. FIELD - VICTORY

Silence. Nothing but rain-soft earth.

One last WRATH flickers at the treeline.

Sophie steps toward it.

SOPHIE (cold) Looks like you've got no way home. (beat) But  
you sure as hell can't stay here.

She snaps the whip--

CRACK.

The Wrath tears apart, dissolving  
into drifting ash.

Light breaks through the clouds.

Sophie stands there, soaked and shaking.

SOPHIE (quiet) Told you I'd stop them.

Max presses against her leg. Mom stands nearby -- stunned,  
covered in bear fluff.

A wide tableau: Mother. Daughter. Dog. A destroyed field  
filled with teddy bear guts.

EXT. FIELD - CONTINUOUS

Sophie collapses to her knees.

Mom drops beside her, arms around her instantly.

MOM (sobbing) Oh my God... Sophie... what is happening?

SOPHIE (exhausted) It's over.

MOM I didn't see it at first... just you... playing.

SOPHIE You believed me. That's what mattered.

Mom holds her tighter. Max curls against them both.

A final wide shot -- a wrecked battlefield, a sealed tear,  
and a family made whole again.

Safe. For now.

FADE OUT.

THE END