

THE PEOPLE OUTSIDE

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"We can easily forgive a child who is afraid of the dark; the real tragedy of life is when men are afraid of the light." - Plato

FADE IN:

INT. FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

The door is barricaded shut with wooden planks. Each plank is nailed with bent ends into the drywall.

A dull ORANGE LIGHT flickers.

There is a CREAK outside the house... Then another CREAK, this one more intense, like a pressure is being put on walls that are only built to sustain so much.

We slowly ZOOM IN on the barricaded door. The creaking stops. The house holds.

For now.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (LATER)

BLAIR, mid 30's, is seated on the couch with ZOEY, 7, in his lap. He adjusts a single ear bud in his left ear.

Zoey's right ear holds the other ear bud, the chord connecting father and daughter together.

Faint sounds of a children's AUDIO BOOK leak out from the headphones.

A FIRE flickers an orange light throughout the room. No other lights are on.

The windows are covered with thick blood-red drapes, two on each side which are pulled tightly shut and tied together by rope.

Blair tilts his head slightly to watch Zoey as she furiously scribbles a DRAWING of what looks like a park with various stick figures in and around it.

BLAIR

What are you drawing?

Zoey switches to a blue crayon, giving Blair a clear view.

BLAIR (CONT'D)

A playground? You always draw that.

ZOEY

I know.

Blair lightly brushes a strand of hair out of Zoey's face, tucking it behind her ear.

BLAIR

You don't like this book?

ZOEY

I've heard it before.

BLAIR

You used to fall asleep to this one. Couldn't get enough of it.

Zoey shrugs.

ZOEY

I'm grown up now.

BLAIR

Oh, I see.

SONYA, early 30's, quietly enters the living room from the darkened kitchen. She folds her arms across her chest and leans against a wall, watching her two favorite people in the world.

Blair pretends not to notice her presence. He motions to the many stick figures in Zoey's drawing.

BLAIR (CONT'D)

Which one of these is Mom?

Zoey stops for a moment, studies the picture, and points to a stick figure way off to the side, almost at the edge of the paper.

ZOEY

This one.

Blair leans in close, his eyes squinting.

BLAIR

Why does she look so old?

Zoey studies the stick figure with confusion. She turns to face Blair.

ZOEY

She's not old, she's just Mom.
That's how she looks.

Blair grins.

BLAIR
Ah, makes sense.

Zoey grabs the purple crayon and draws a small FLOWER on the ground.

Blair glances over at Sonya, quietly chuckling.

Sonya nods to herself like, *I'll get you later*. She quickly flashes Blair the middle finger before leaving.

BLAIR (CONT'D)
Love you!

SONYA (O.S.)
Yeah, yeah, yeah...

The sound of Sonya's FOOTSTEPS heading up the stairs.

ZOEY
(eyes on drawing)
Now you've done it.

Blair smiles. He grabs a red crayon from the pack and hands it to Zoey.

BLAIR
Here, use some red.

Zoey takes the crayon.

A CREAKING sound comes from outside the house.

Blair's usually relaxed face is instantly wiped away and replaced with something resembling worry and acute awareness.

He slowly looks toward the front door and removes the earbud from his left ear. He reaches around and places it gently into Zoey's left ear. She doesn't seem to mind.

Blair slowly reaches for the drawer in the side table. He opens it and removes a Glock 19 HANDGUN. He places it down on the table but keeps a hand on it, listening.

Seconds pass.

All is quiet. After a few moments Blair takes his hand off the gun and turns his attention back to Zoey.

Zoey removes an ear bud and looks up at Blair.

ZOEY

Daddy, birds live in trees, right?

Blair stares at Zoey for a few moments, almost as if he's coming out of some deep trance and needs a few seconds to regain his bearings.

BLAIR

Well, they nest there, yeah.

ZOEY

And they fly in the sky?

BLAIR

Mmm Hmm.

Zoey nods to herself, her eyes wide, picturing it.

ZOEY

I'd like to see that.

Blair kisses Zoey on the cheek.

BLAIR

No looking outside, you know the rules. Now come on, back to your drawing.

Zoey looks down at her picture then back up to Blair.

ZOEY

Because that's where the plague is, right?

BLAIR

That's right. That's why we stay inside.

Zoey nods and offers the dangling earbud.

Blair takes it and puts it back in his ear. The ambient sounds of BIRDS CHIRPING fills his left eardrum as the narrator continues with the story.

Blair glances towards the front door quickly, his eyes scan to the left and right to the two large windows covered by blood-red drapes on either side of the door.

Eventually, the worry subsides enough to look away. Blair turns his attention back to Zoey's drawing.

Zoey has scribbled various CIRCLES into the sky with a black crayon. Each circle has a pattern inside it comprised of JAGGED LINES and DOTS.

But Blair is looking at something else in the drawing. Something off to the side at the very edge of the paper.

The stick figure that is supposed to be Sonya has been scrawled over in a sea of RED CRAYON; The red pooling below at the feet in a dark red blotch that would be best described as a puddle of blood.

Blair stares at the stick figure, unable to find the words to even ask...

ZOEY

Daddy?

BLAIR

Yeah?

ZOEY

Why does mom go upstairs?

BLAIR

I guess sometimes she likes to be alone.

ZOEY

But I don't know what she's doing when she's alone.

BLAIR

Why do you need to know?

Zoey shrugs.

ZOEY

I just do.

BLAIR

Why don't you go see then?

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

The blood-red drapes are tied together with ropes over the bedroom windows. Various lit candles light up the room.

Sonya stands in front of the drapes. She lightly runs her fingers down the fabric until it reaches the rope that holds them together. After a moment, she drops her hand to her side.

Sonya heads towards the bed and gets on it. She grabs a remote control beside a TWO-WAY BABY MONITOR from the bedside table and points it at the flat screen ahead.

The flat screen TV turns on. An EMERGENCY BROADCAST SYSTEM is all that appears.

Sonya looks over and notices Zoey staring at her in the doorway. She smiles and pats the bed beside her.

Zoey runs into the room and jumps on the bed. She cuddles up to Sonya.

ZOEY

Why do you always watch this?

SONYA

Nothing else is on.

ZOEY

What about your movies?

SONYA

Nothing different ever happens in those.

ZOEY

Nothing different happens on this either.

SONYA

True, but there's a chance.

Sonya runs a hand through Zoey's hair.

SONYA (CONT'D)

Did you know you were almost born during an earthquake?

ZOEY

Like when the world shakes?

SONYA

Yep.

ZOEY

Why does the world do that?

SONYA

Why does it shake?

ZOEY

Yeah.

Sonya thinks about this.

SONYA

I'm not entirely sure. You'll have to ask your father that one.

Zoey stares at the Emergency Broadcast image on the screen; The large circle, the various lines inside it.

ZOEY

It kind of looks like my pattern.

SONYA

It does, doesn't it?

Zoey continues to stare at the screen, zoning out...

FLASH CUT:

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Sonya, 7 years younger and visibly PREGNANT, is standing in front of a TV holding the remote control. She flips through the channels, static on every one.

She makes a surprised sound and touches her protruding stomach with her free hand. (Zoey is kicking.)

A NEWS REPORT suddenly appears on screen between bursts of static. A frightened NEWS ANCHOR stares back at us as the studio he's in shakes around him.

NEWS ANCHOR

We're not entirely sure what's going on. Preliminary reports seem to indicate the upswell of earthquakes that have been occurring have now doubled.

The News Anchor looks down, presses two fingers on his earpiece, and listens. He looks up.

NEWS ANCHOR (CONT'D)

I'm now being told that it's something else... it's...

He looks off camera.

NEWS ANCHOR (CONT'D)

Can we get a confirmation on that?

Blair, 7 years younger and wearing a Denver Bronco's jersey, grabs the remote away from Sonya. He tosses it aside and takes her hand in his.

BLAIR

We need to get into the basement.

SONYA

Blair, the baby's kicking.

BLAIR

That's wonderful but we really should get downstairs.

SONYA

But there haven't been any earthquakes here.

BLAIR

Exactly. We're due.

Blair leads Sonya away.

BACK TO:

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sonya hits a button on the remote. The Emergency Broadcast signal is replaced with a light-hearted movie, somewhere in the middle of its runtime.

Sonya lies back against her pillow and watches as she cuddles Zoey. She tries to lose herself in the film; But after a few moments, she gives up and turns the TV off.

ZOEY

Hey!

SONYA

Sorry. Just not in the mood tonight.

Sonya looks over towards Blair's side of the bed; To his night stand filled with various PAPERS, REPORTS, and cut-out NEWSPAPER ARTICLES.

She leans over Zoey and grabs some papers from under a pair of SCISSORS. She begins to leaf through them.

A paper describing the Schwarzschild Radius- a mass's point of no return into transforming into a singularity known as a black hole.

The Coriolis force- A DIAGRAM of the earth separated at the equator into two hemispheres, north and south, various arrows depicting the earth's rotation.

Sonya quickly puts these papers aside. She focuses in on another paper with various sections HIGHLIGHTED.

ZOEY

What are those?

SONYA

Something your father is working on... I think.

ZOEY

Read them to me.

Sonya glances at Zoey and sees her interest. She looks back to the papers.

SONYA

Okay, um...

(reading)

When under observation, electrons are being "forced" to behave like particles and not like waves. Thus the mere act of observation affects the experimental findings...

She goes through some more papers.

SONYA (CONT'D)

(reading)

For the question to make sense, you have to start with two species that are genetically similar enough that they can potentially hybridize...

Sonya scans the highlighted article.

SONYA (CONT'D)

(reading)

And to hybridize, they must be living in the same environment.... Any inequality is likely to result in extinction of one parent species through ecological competition, rather than merging...

Zoey stares at Sonya, lost.

ZOEY

I don't get it.

SONYA

Yeah, me neither.

Sonya flips through some more papers. She comes to a stop on a PICTURE of the HILLSBOROUGH STADIUM DISASTER; A frightening image of people mashed together after an overcrowded soccer match led to the collapse of an entire section of seating.

Below, in Blair's handwriting, it reads; "*96 people crushed.*"

Zoey points to the picture of the people mashed together.

ZOEY

Is that the plague?

Sonya has seen enough. She bundles up the papers and opens the drawer on her bedside table.

Inside the drawer is a CELL PHONE. She stares at it for a long while, in a trance, before placing the papers inside and shutting the drawer again.

Sonya turns back to Zoey.

SONYA

That's enough of that.

ZOEY

I liked them. It was like a bedtime story.

SONYA

Were you getting tired?

ZOEY

A little.

SONYA

Well do you want to have a "little" nap?

Zoey sits up quickly.

ZOEY

No, I'm not that tired. I'm gonna go see dad now.

Sonya smirks at this.

SONYA

Okay.

ZOEY

Don't do anything while I'm gone.

Sonya holds her hands up defensively and smiles.

SONYA

I won't.

Zoey glances at the scissors on Blair's night stand before leaving.

Sonya's smile fades the second she's alone.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Zoey is sprawled out on the couch, asleep on her stomach.

Blair is seated on the couch, his eyes beginning to close. His head starts to fall to his chest... he GASPS and catches himself. He looks over at Zoey and rubs her back gently.

Blair stands up quietly. He goes to the fireplace and puts the fire out.

He returns to Zoey and scoops her up in his arms.

BLAIR

Come on, sleepyhead. Time for bed.

Zoey moans at being moved but appears to fall right back asleep in her father's arms.

Blair carries her out of the living room.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Blair carries Zoey passed the spare room, the door is closed.

Zoey opens her eyes and stares at the closed door as they pass... Then pretends to go back to sleep.

INT. ZOEY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Blair gently places Zoey down in her bed. He tucks her in and gives her a kiss.

He looks at the window straight ahead that has been covered with blood-red drapes then slowly leaves the bedroom, closing the door halfway behind him.

We ZOOM IN slowly on a "sleeping" Zoey. Then... she wakes up, completely alert.

Zoey quietly gets out of bed and grabs the two-way baby monitor from her side table. She rushes back to bed with it and gets under the covers.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Blair is changing clothes, getting ready for bed.

Sonya lies in bed on her side, watching him.

SONYA
How is she?

BLAIR
Sound asleep.

SONYA
Must be nice.

Blair shrugs.

BLAIR
She's still a baby, she should sleep like one.

SONYA
I wish she would fall asleep that easily with me.

BLAIR
Yeah well, we have a special connection...

SONYA
What, ear buds?

Blair smiles.

BLAIR
Makes for a nice distraction.

Sonya turns to face the two-way baby monitor on her bedside table.

SONYA
Maybe if I hear her wake up I'll go give her a good night kiss.

BLAIR
Yeah, because that makes a ton of sense.

SONYA
You know what I mean.

BLAIR
That girl weighs a ton now.

SONYA
Maybe you're just getting weaker.

BLAIR
Few more months I may not be able
to carry her at all. And I doubt
it.

Blair flexes an arm. Sonya tosses a rolled up sock at him.

Blair gets into his side of the bed. He leans over and kisses
Sonya's cheek.

Sonya turns to face him.

SONYA
What was that for?

BLAIR
What do you mean?

SONYA
I thought I looked "old"?

And there it is.

BLAIR
Come on. You know I have a thing
for older women...

Sonya punches him in the arm.

SONYA
Stop.

BLAIR
Sorry.

SONYA
I see new wrinkles on my face
everyday in that god damn mirror. I
hate it.

BLAIR
Stop looking in the mirror then.

Sonya balls her fist.

SONYA
Want another one?

Blair holds up his hands in surrender. He looks ahead at the flat screen TV.

BLAIR
You gonna turn the movie on or what?

SONYA
Not tonight. We should save the power anyway.

BLAIR
Oh come on, there's plenty of juice. As long as the sun rises everyday and the solar panels keep in place, we're fine.

SONYA
Is that even a guarantee anymore?

Blair considers this.

BLAIR
Fair point.

SONYA
Still, no sense in being wasteful.

Blair looks over at his scattered papers on his night stand, and the pair of scissors off to the side.

BLAIR
Where's the rest of my stuff?

SONYA
Jesus. You don't miss a thing, do you?

Sonya opens the drawer on her bedside table and takes out the papers. She hands them to Blair.

SONYA (CONT'D)
I was just checking out some of the um, articles.

Blair organizes the papers neatly.

BLAIR
Glad you're taking an interest finally.

SONYA

If morbid curiosity is considered
"interest", then yes, maybe I have.

Blair places the papers back on his night stand.

BLAIR

Want to discuss anything you read?

SONYA

No, all that stuff is...

Sonya waves her hand, looking for the right word.

SONYA (CONT'D)

I don't know. I'd rather stay
focused on what's in the house, put
it that way. Even with all that's
going on... It's just where I need
to be. Mentally and physically.

BLAIR

Zoey is the same way. Head in the
clouds. It's a good thing.

SONYA

Really? I had no idea. Tell me more
about how my daughter is...

BLAIR

I'm just saying. If you want some
advice, try to stay up in the
clouds with her as long as
possible. It's safe up there.

INT. ZOEY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Zoey has the two-way baby monitor pressed to her ear,
listening to the conversation under the blanket.

SONYA (V.O.)

Eventually she's going to have to
come back down to earth though.
Eventually she's going to
understand what's really going on.

BLAIR (V.O.)

She will understand what we teach
her to understand. There's no sense
frightening her if we don't need
to.

SONYA (V.O.)
She's not dumb, Blair. And she's
getting older.

BLAIR (V.O.)
Well let's pray that trend
continues.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Blair leans back against his pillow and gets comfortable. He
stares at the lit candles.

BLAIR
Want me to put the candles out?

SONYA
Not yet.

Blair and Sonya stare at each other for a moment. Blair lifts
his arm up, sensing Sonya wants to cuddle up. Sonya moves
toward him and rests her head on his chest.

Blair lets his arm fall down around his wife. He gently rubs
her arm. They lie like this for several moments, in silence,
thinking.

BLAIR
I did inventory in the basement
today.

SONYA
When?

BLAIR
While you were bathing Zo'.

Sonya scoffs at this.

SONYA
Yeah, if you call mixing bottled
water and dish washing liquid
bathing... But that's good. How we
looking?

BLAIR
We'll survive.

SONYA
Always comforting to hear.

BLAIR

And I don't always need the sarcasm
from you.

SONYA

What?

Blair gives Sonya a quick glance.

BLAIR

We're doing better than most. Hell,
maybe everybody. So, I mean...
let's be thankful for what we have.

SONYA

I am thankful.

Sonya rubs Blair's stomach gently.

SONYA (CONT'D)

I'm thankful that my husband is a
hoarder and his annoying habit of
preparing for the end of days
actually turned out prophetic.

BLAIR

More sarcasm?

SONYA

If you can't tell then no. And I'm
not saying I'm not grateful to be
alive, because I am. It's just...
you know, what kind of life is it
really?

BLAIR

It's life. And that's enough for
me. Should be for you too. And in
the end, I'd rather be in here
struggling than out there being...
god knows what.

Sonya's eyes fall on the blood-red drapes covering the
window.

SONYA

I've often wondered how easy it
would be to just untie the ropes
and let the drapes fall open. Just
let the world in, you know?

BLAIR

Hmm.

SONYA

Those things outside would simply make their way in the house and everything would be over. No more anguish about what could happen. What is happening is a lot easier to bear.

BLAIR

Have you thought about doing that a lot?

SONYA

Not a lot. Every now and again maybe. Only one thing stops me.

BLAIR

Zoey.

Sonya nods.

SONYA

Zoey.

INT. ZOHEY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Zoey comes out from under the blanket. She turns the volume down a bit on the baby monitor and looks up at the blood-red drapes covering her window.

SONYA (V.O.)

Did she ever tell you why she call those things, 'the plague'?

BLAIR (V.O.)

No. I never really asked.

SONYA (V.O.)

Maybe you should. How does she even know that word?

BLAIR (V.O.)

I don't know, but that's a good question.

Zoey reaches under her mattress and brings a FLASHLIGHT out from under it. She clicks it on, the beam of light illuminating where the wall meets the ceiling, casting her SHADOW large across it.

She holds out her hand behind the beam, spreading it large and moving fingers to produce a spider-like shadow on the wall.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Blair and Sonya lie cuddled up together, both staring at the blood-red drapes and listening.

SONYA

(quietly)

Do you think they could get up here to the second level?

BLAIR

For the last time, no, I don't.

SONYA

But you don't know for sure.

BLAIR

No one knows for sure. But you work the evidence and look for patterns and hope for the best. And the evidence says, if they don't see you, they don't wake up.

SONYA

I just want them gone. I just keep thinking, why us? Why our house?

BLAIR

I'm working on figuring that out. But whatever the reason, we know they can't just enter.

SONYA

We think, we don't know. But I'm pretty sure at this point it's not the location they're interested in. That's what freaks me out the most. They want what's inside. They want us.

Blair kisses Sonya's forehead.

BLAIR

Okay, now you're over thinking. Let's change the subject. We will work ourselves up into a frenzy talking about this. Like always.

SONYA

I know. You're right.

BLAIR

Let's just try to get some sleep, okay?

Sonya sighs.

SONYA
Yeah, great segue.

Blair gets out of bed and puts out the candles around the room. He reaches the last lit candle...

SONYA (CONT'D)
Don't put that one out.

BLAIR
Still need a night light, huh?

SONYA
Blair...

Blair keeps the one candle lit and comes back to bed.

BLAIR
Let's try to get at least a couple hours tonight.

SONYA
I'll be happy with one. It's like trying to sleep in the ocean with great white sharks circling you.

Blair and Sonya get comfortable under the covers. They lie in the darkness, dead silent for a long while.

SONYA (CONT'D)
I never got to say good night to Zoey.

BLAIR
Say it now. Right here.

SONYA
What?

BLAIR
Put it out into the universe. The ether. She'll hear it.

SONYA
Were you drinking the mouthwash again?

BLAIR
Fine, don't. Go wake her up and tell her.

Sonya thinks it over.

INT. ZOEY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Zoey is now making a bird-shape shadow with both her hands, flapping them like wings. She smiles.

SONYA (V.O.)
Good night, Zoey.

ZOEY
(whispers)
Good night, Mom.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

The single lit candle flickers slightly.

SONYA
Think the universe will relay the message?

BLAIR
I do.

SONYA
Well then let me try another one...
(clears throat)
I want everything back to the way it was seven years ago.

Sonya waits in silence for a few moments.

SONYA (CONT'D)
Guess it missed that one.

BLAIR
Careful what you wish for.

SONYA
Why?

BLAIR
Zoey would have to be reborn. You want to go through that again?

Sonya considers this.

SONYA
Fair point.

BLAIR
Delete that one from your inbox universe.

SONYA

I guess it granted you your wish
though.

BLAIR

What do you mean?

SONYA

You always thought you were the
center of the universe. Turns out,
you were right. You almost
literally are.

BLAIR

Or maybe it's because we're just so
attractive.

Sonya considers this.

SONYA

That could be it.

They kiss, which turns passionate rather quickly, because why
not?

Blair rolls on top of Sonya. She grunts.

SONYA (CONT'D)

Speaking of someone weighing a ton.
Jesus.

BLAIR

Thanks.

SONYA

Just making an observation.

BLAIR

Can you blame me though? The weight
of the world is on my shoulders...

Sonya stifles a laugh at the bad joke.

SONYA

Is this what we've come to? End of
the world dirty talk?

BLAIR

What's left?

SONYA

I can't believe I'm saying this
but... I'm getting on top tonight,
big guy.

Sonya pats Blair on the back. Blair shifts his weight.

Sonya rolls over on top of Blair.

BLAIR
No complaints here.

Sonya presses her hands down on Blair's chest as she props herself up.

SONYA
I didn't think so.

INT. ZOEY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Zoey turns off the baby monitor. She grabs the flashlight and makes her way to the blood-red drapes.

She runs her fingers up the fabric until her hand comes to a stop on the rope. She tugs at it. Nothing. The rope is tied way too securely.

Zoey shines the beam of light around the room, searching for something. The beam stops on an unplugged LAPTOP for a moment.

Beside the laptop, under a small UV LIGHT, is a single VIOLET FLOWER in a vase.

The beam moves around the room and comes to a stop on the half open bedroom door leading into the hallway...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Blair and Sonya are asleep in bed. The house is quiet. The single candle remains lit.

Seconds pass.

A CREAK from downstairs.

Blair gasps and instantly sits up in bed, listening.

Sonya stirs awake.

SONYA
What is it?

BLAIR
I heard something.

SONYA
Where?

BLAIR
Downstairs.

They both sit in silence, perfectly still.
Something dawns on Blair.

BLAIR (CONT'D)
Fuck. I forgot to put the gun away.

SONYA
Blair...

BLAIR
I know.

Blair shoots out of bed.

SONYA
I'll check on Zoey.

Blair leaves the bedroom quickly.

Sonya throws the covers off herself and heads into the hallway.

Both are in too much of a rush to notice that the scissors are gone...

INT. ZOEY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Sonya opens the half-closed door and looks around the room.

SONYA
Zoey?

She reaches for the light switch and turns on the lights.

Zoey is nowhere to be found.

SONYA (CONT'D)
Shit.

Sonya bolts out of the room.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Blair enters the living room, his eyes locked on the Glock 19 handgun still sitting on the side table. He moves toward it and looks up... he freezes.

FOOTSTEPS are heard coming down the stairs. Then Sonya rounds the corner.

SONYA

Blair, Zoey's not in her room.

Blair doesn't break his gaze from what he's looking at.

BLAIR

What are you doing, Zo'?

Zoey stands by one of the blood-red drapes holding the scissors from Blair's night stand. She has cut the rope that holds the curtains together.

Now the curtains are being held together by nothing more than a thin string of frayed rope.

Sonya's attention turns to Zoey.

SONYA

Zoey!

ZOEY

I wanna see the birds...

Blair approaches Zoey slowly, cautiously.

BLAIR

Put the scissors down, okay?

Zoey looks at Sonya with pleading eyes.

ZOEY

Can I, mom?

Sonya's frightened eyes betray her attempt at a calm demeanor.

SONYA

No Zoey, listen to your father.

ZOEY

But I want to see!

Blair inches closer.

BLAIR
Listen, baby. The bird's are
asleep. It's night time.

A LOUD CREAK outside, something is pushing into the walls.

Zoey laughs and brings the scissors up to the thin frayed rope.

BLAIR (CONT'D)
No!

Zoey cuts the rope. The curtains fall away...

Sonya SCREAMS.

Blair rushes toward Zoey.

Outside the window, various FACES, slightly PURPLE and bloated, move forward and press themselves into the glass. Their eyes are CLOSED.

Sections of their skin are STUCK TOGETHER, like a mass of Siamese twins.

Zoey looks at the faces in horror and screams.

The many eyes suddenly burst OPEN, all with bloodshot pupils. They now see inside the house.

Blair grabs Zoey and throws her out of the way.

One of the HEADS rears back and head butts the window, breaking it. SMASH!

Zoey lands near Sonya, crying.

Various PURPLE HANDS reach through the open window and grab a hold of Blair.

Sonya scoops up Zoey in her arms as she watches the horrible scene unfolding in front of her.

SONYA
No!

Blair struggles against the many ARMS trying to pull him outside.

BLAIR
Run!

Sonya hesitates.

BLAIR (CONT'D)

Now!

Zoey screams and cries in Sonya's arms.

Sonya turns and runs out of the living room towards the stairs.

Blair struggles and finally breaks free, his shirt ripping into shreds as the HANDS grab hold of it.

He stumbles toward the Glock 19 handgun on the side table.

Various BODIES fall through the open window and inside the house. Their purple, bloated skin attaching one to the next, pulling more in by sheer force.

Blair grabs the handgun and turns quickly. He FIRES.

INT. CLOSET - NIGHT

GUNSHOTS.

Sonya puts a terrified Zoey down at the back of the closet. She quickly turns and shuts the doors then rushes back to Zoey, hugging her tight.

ZOEY

(crying)

They are taking daddy, I know it!

Sonya gently turns Zoey's face into her chest, holding her there.

ZOEY (CONT'D)

It's my fault! It's my fault!

GUNSHOTS.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Blair FIRES bullet after bullet, emptying the clip into the purple mass of humanity now on his living room floor.

But more keep coming through, dragging the dead weight of the fallen still attached to them.

A SCARRED ONE, the scar running the length of its forehead, slowly stands up awkwardly; It's bloodshot eyes locked on Blair. It lunges forward.

Blair aims and squeezes the trigger... CLICK. Empty. He drops the gun and turns to run.

The SCARRED ONE grabs hold of Blair's ankle with a withered, purple hand, tripping him. The OTHERS, sensing Blair is caught, begin dragging a struggling Blair toward the window.

The OTHERS stand and grab hold of various parts of Blair's body, helping to lift him out of the window.

Blair screams and fights with all he has. It's a losing battle.

The mass of HUMANITY swallows Blair whole and pulls him out of the house; The remaining BODIES falling awkwardly out the window as they are dragged away with him.

INT. CLOSET - NIGHT

Sonya and Zoey are huddled together in the back of the closet. Zoey's face is buried in her mother's shirt, balling.

ZOEY

They're taking him away!

Sonya rocks Zoey back and forth, stroking her hair, calming her.

SONYA

Shh... Shh...

Tears falls from Sonya's eyes as she listens to the various CREAKS downstairs.

Zoey whimpers.

ZOEY

He's gone...

Sonya hugs her tight.

Eventually, all is silent.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

INSERT - 3 MONTHS LATER

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

A quiet living room. The door is barricaded. The windows have been boarded up with wooden planks. No more blood-red drapes.

Extra planks cover where the broken window was. A HAMMER and some spare nails lie on a nearby table.

INT. ZOEY'S ROOM - DAY

Sonya sits at a desk along the wall with Zoey, tying knots and creating a long, thick ROPE.

Zoey "helps" by coloring the rope with various colored crayons.

Both look thinner with dark circles under their eyes.

In the center of the room is a chair with a CIRCLE drawn around it; the circle is etched into the floor with permanent marker.

Zoey stares at the rope.

ZOEY
Are we almost done?

SONYA
No.

ZOEY
Oh.

Sonya glances at Zoey.

SONYA
This is important. It's in case you need to escape. It's your way out of the house from up here.

Zoey flashes a confused look.

ZOEY
Why would I have to escape? I can just sit in my infection circle.

SONYA
Protection circle. And it's just in case.

ZOEY
Oh, I see.

SONYA
Keep coloring, please.

Sonya completes a knot in the rope and pulls it tight.

INT. BASEMENT - DAY

The basement is underground, no natural light filters in. The small windows near ground level are covered with black electrical tape.

A small light bulb hanging from a string CLICKS ON as Sonya stands underneath it in the center of the basement.

Zoey is perched halfway up the stairs, she holds her shirt over her nose like something smells.

The basement looks like a bomb shelter.

There are shelves with various canned goods, batteries, medical supplies, and various hygienic items.

A mountain of bottled water is stacked in the back corner. Each case of bottled water has been opened and picked apart.

Food and water supplies are dwindling.

There is a mound of full garbage bags in one corner with various pine tree air fresheners on strings hung above.

There are some spare solar panels and wood planks in another corner. A fake Christmas tree wrapped in oversized CHRISTMAS LIGHTS leans against a wall. There is an ANGEL on top of the tree.

Sonya looks back at Zoey on the steps.

SONYA
Come on, it's not that bad.

Zoey shakes her head.

ZOEY
Stinks down here.

Sonya sniffs the air.

SONYA
It doesn't, Zoey. I don't smell anything.

Zoey pinches her nose shut through her shirt.

ZOEY

I don't like the basement.

Sonya gives up and heads toward the shelf with the canned goods. She grabs a couple cans of stew.

Zoey stares at the garbage bags in the corner.

Sonya grabs one water bottle and heads back towards the string. She reaches up and clicks the light bulb off.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

The various windows are boarded up. Candles are lit around the kitchen.

Sonya opens the cans of stew and dumps the contents into two bowls.

Zoey is seated at the kitchen table, drawing a picture with crayons. The water bottle, now open, is in front of her.

Sonya brings the bowls with spoons in them over and places one in front of Zoey. She takes a seat beside her at the table.

Zoey dips her finger into the stew. She looks at Sonya with disapproval.

SONYA

It's not a microwave day.

Zoey makes a yuck face and wipes her finger off on her shirt. She goes back to her drawing.

Sonya eats a spoonful of her cold stew.

SONYA (CONT'D)

Why aren't you eating?

Zoey doesn't look up from her drawing.

ZOEY

Food stinks like the basement.

SONYA

(stern)

Hey, I don't want to hear that. Eat something please.

Zoey ignores her.

SONYA (CONT'D)

Zoey...

Zoey looks up at Sonya, she rolls her eyes and grabs her spoon. She nibbles at the stew slowly.

Sonya examines Zoey's drawing; A mass of STICK FIGURES all jammed together. There are little lowercase "m's" above in the sky. Birds.

Zoey drops her spoon and goes back to her drawing, adding more stick figures.

Sonya watches her for a moment. She sighs.

SONYA (CONT'D)

Do you still think dad is coming home?

ZOEY

Not anymore.

SONYA

Why? Where is he?

ZOEY

He's with the plague.

SONYA

The what?

ZOEY

The people outside.

SONYA

That's right.

Sonya gently rubs Zoey's back.

SONYA (CONT'D)

Don't say the plague. You know I don't like that.

ZOEY

Sorry.

Zoey continues to draw.

Sonya eats some stew and takes a small sip of water. She looks back to the drawing.

The drawing shows an arrow in the sky pointing down towards a stick figure with a sad face in the middle. The word "daddy" is scrawled above, in a 7 year old's writing.

Sonya sighs and runs a hand through Zoey's hair, separating it with her fingers.

SONYA

Do you want me to braid your hair today?

ZOEY

No thanks.

(beat; continues drawing)

I like to pretend daddy's coming home sometimes.

Sonya stares at Zoey for a moment, a little taken aback.

ZOEY (CONT'D)

It's fun to pretend.

SONYA

I know it can be. But there's no room for hope anymore. We need to let him go.

ZOEY

Nope. We don't.

SONYA

Zoey, we can't- -

ZOEY

Watch.

Zoey flips the paper over to the other side. She places her hand down on the paper, her fingers stretched apart. She begins to trace roughly around her hand with crayon.

Sonya watches curiously.

Zoey removes her hand, leaving a crude outline of it. She holds the paper up to Sonya.

ZOEY (CONT'D)

Nothing is forever, mom. Remember?
Like dad said?

Sonya's eyes tear up as she looks at the small hand drawn on the piece of paper. She wipes away a tear that streaks down her cheek.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Sonya and Zoey hold hands outside the closed door to the spare room.

SONYA

You get a half hour in here, that's it.

ZOEY

Okay.

Sonya slowly reaches out and opens the door.

INT. SPARE ROOM - DAY

The windows are covered with blood-red drapes.

In the middle of the room is a makeshift PLAYGROUND, made out of various household items. There are various ropes that make a climbing wall. Many wooden planks support the structure, with a ladder and pull up rings and monkey bars, etc.

Toys are scattered everywhere.

There is a chalkboard with different color chalks. A drawing of many stick figures stuck together in a ball fills the board.

Zoey runs into the playground and begins to climb and play. Sonya leans on the door frame and watches with a small smile.

Zoey notices that she is being watched.

ZOEY

I'm okay, Mom.

SONYA

A half hour, Zoey. I'm timing you.

ZOEY

Okay.

Sonya takes one last cautious look and disappears into the hallway.

INT. SPARE ROOM - DAY (LATER)

Zoey plays with two dolls on the ground. She mimics a conversation between the two.

ZOEY

Oh no, you can't trust strangers
Mrs. Walker.

(beat; high pitched)

Why?

(beat)

(MORE)

ZOEY (CONT'D)

Because strangers are bad and they
will take you away to the dark
place.

(beat; high pitched)

I don't want to go to the dark
place. It sounds scary.

(beat; whispers)

It is.

A wall CREAKS.

Zoey stops and looks around, dropping the two dolls.

She looks up at the chalk board and heads toward it. Grabbing
a chalk, Zoey draws a small stick figure with X's for eyes.
Beside it, she draws a larger stick figure.

Zoey drops the chalk and slowly turns around, studying the
room. She looks down and begins itching her inner thigh area.
Not satisfied, she puts her hand in her pants and continues
to itch the bare skin.

Zoey pulls her hand out and looks at it. There is DRIED BLOOD
under her fingernails.

INT. SPARE ROOM - DAY (LATER)

SONYA (O.S.)

Okay, time's up...

Sonya enters the room and looks around.

SONYA (CONT'D)

Zoey?

After a moment of panic, she spots Zoey curled in a ball in
the corner of the room.

SONYA (CONT'D)

Zoey!

Sonya rushes toward her daughter and kneels down.

SONYA (CONT'D)

Are you okay?

Zoey shakes her head.

SONYA (CONT'D)

Did you have a panic attack?

Zoey nods.

SONYA (CONT'D)

Okay.

Sonya takes Zoey's hand and stands her up so that she is eye level.

SONYA (CONT'D)

Deep breath, with me. In... and out.

Zoey follows instructions.

SONYA (CONT'D)

Control your breathing. Inhale... exhale.

(beat)

Feel a little better?

Zoey shakes her head no.

SONYA (CONT'D)

Do you need your protection circle?

Zoey nods.

SONYA (CONT'D)

Okay, let's go.

Sonya leads Zoey out of the room by the hand, not noticing the blood under her fingernails. She shuts the door behind her.

INT. ZOEY'S ROOM - DAY

Zoey is seated on the chair in the protection circle. Her eyes are closed.

Sonya sprinkles some salt around the outline of the circle, to go along with the frankincense, rosemary, and juniper.

SONYA

Great goddess of the day and night,
protect her with all your might.

(beat)

When deep within there's no pain or
fear, no evil spirits may enter
here.

Sonya finishes sprinkling the salt. She grabs a marker and adds some dots and jagged lines within the circle, matching what Zoey drew earlier.

SONYA (CONT'D)
Zoey... controlled breaths. Breathe
in, breathe out.

Zoey follows. Inhale. Exhale.

SONYA (CONT'D)
When you feel safe, open your eyes.

Zoey slowly opens her eyes.

SONYA (CONT'D)
Do you feel better?

ZOEY
Yeah.

Sonya motions to the dots and jagged lines she just drew.

SONYA
Is this your pattern?

Zoey looks it over and nods.

SONYA (CONT'D)
Good. When you're ready, you can
leave the circle.

Zoey stands and steps right to the edge of the circle,
keeping her feet just inside it. She stares at her feet.

ZOEY
Mom?

SONYA
Yeah?

ZOEY
Why don't we just put a protection
circle around the house?

Sonya grins at this.

SONYA
I don't think we have enough salt
for that, Zoey.

ZOEY
Oh.

SONYA
Good idea though.

ZOEY

If we did, would it work?

Sonya considers this for a moment.

SONYA

Do you believe it would?

Zoey nods.

SONYA (CONT'D)

Then it would.

Zoey steps out of the protection circle. She looks over at the violet flower beneath the UV light.

Sonya offers her hand. Zoey takes it. They head out toward the hallway.

SONYA (CONT'D)

You know, one of these days you're going to have to tell me what that pattern is all about...

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Candles are lit around the room.

Sonya is stretching on the floor and doing various yoga poses. Zoey copies her every move.

After a few stretches, a nearby wall CREAKS.

Sonya and Zoey go still and stare at the wall. They wait a couple seconds. Sonya continues stretching.

Zoey continues to stare at the wall.

SONYA

Zoey, keep doing your stretches please.

ZOEY

The walls make different sounds every time.

Sonya keeps an eye on Zoey as she changes poses.

SONYA

It's sturdy, don't worry.

ZOEY

Like they are alive.

SONYA

Well... houses are a lot like us.
They need to stretch too.

ZOEY

Stretching makes it stronger,
right?

SONYA

That's right.

ZOEY

And the plagues are helping it
stretch? I mean, the people?

Sonya is silent for a moment.

SONYA

In a way.

ZOEY

Did they make the earth stretch
too? For the earthquakes?

SONYA

I'm not sure.

ZOEY

Why are they purple? Are they
holding their breath?

SONYA

I don't know, Zoey.

Zoey begins stretching again, still lost in thought.

ZOEY

Mom?

SONYA

Zoey, if you have a question, just
ask it please.

ZOEY

Never mind.

SONYA

No, finish your thought.

Now Zoey is silent for a moment.

ZOEY

Do we have plagues inside us?

Sonya stops stretching.

SONYA
No baby, we don't.

ZOEY
How do you know?

SONYA
Because I keep us healthy.

ZOEY
Why?

SONYA
Why do I keep us healthy?

Zoey nods.

SONYA (CONT'D)
Because it's important, that's why.

ZOEY
Okay.

Sonya watches Zoey as they continue to stretch on the living room floor.

SONYA
Hey Zo', why did the tomato blush?

ZOEY
I don't know.

SONYA
Because it saw the salad dressing...

Zoey smiles politely.

SONYA (CONT'D)
Aw, you used to love my stupid jokes.

ZOEY
I'm grown up now.
(beat)
I'm all done. Can I go upstairs?

Sonya sighs.

SONYA
Yeah, go ahead.

Zoey stands and heads for the stairs.

A look of sadness overtakes Sonya's face as she stops stretching.

INT. ZOEY'S ROOM - DAY

Zoey sits on her bed. She has one earbud in her right ear, listening to an audio book. The left ear bud dangles by her side.

The LOUD BEEP of a program opening on the laptop fills the room.

Zoey looks over at the laptop's black screen. There is no cord plugged in anywhere. The laptop has a thin layer of dust on it.

Zoey removes her right ear bud and heads toward the laptop. She moves her finger on the touch pad, the SCREEN lights up. There is a large green phone icon and a message, 'Incoming Call'.

Zoey notices a WHITE POWDER by the flower vase. She presses it into her finger curiously and rubs it away.

Turning her attention back to the laptop, Zoey moves the mouse and clicks on the green phone icon.

A FACE pops up on screen. ABIGAIL, mid 30's, has a welcoming smile on her face. Rays of SUNLIGHT poke through a window behind her.

ABIGAIL

Hello, Zoey.

Zoey lets out a small gasp.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)

It's okay. Don't be afraid. I just want to talk a little bit, is that okay?

ZOEY

You can see me?

ABIGAIL

I can.

Zoey waves her hand at Abigail.

Abigail waves back.

Zoey giggles.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)
Zoey, can you tell me if your
parents are there with you right
now?

ZOEY
I'm not supposed to talk to
strangers.

ABIGAIL
Oh, but we aren't strangers. We
know each other.

ZOEY
Who are you?

ABIGAIL
My name is Abigail.

ZOEY
I don't know who you are.

ABIGAIL
Not yet. But you will.

ZOEY
Are you... are you an alien?

Abigail smiles.

ABIGAIL
No, I'm just like you.

ZOEY
But mom says there's no one like us
left.

ABIGAIL
Well... it seems your mom is wrong,
isn't she?

Zoey just stares, dumbfounded.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)
Do you know why I'm here today,
Zoey?

Zoey shakes her head no.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)
Well, you are about to face
something very difficult.
(MORE)

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)

And I'm here to prepare you for what's about to happen.

ZOEY

What's gonna happen?

ABIGAIL

The rest of your life, that's what's going to happen. Your life will be broken up into two parts... Before today, and after today. This is what we call "the crossroads". Do you remember discussing the crossroads, Zoey?

Zoey shakes her head no. She looks at the sunlight behind Abigail.

ZOEY

Where do you live?

ABIGAIL

I'm afraid I'm far away from where you are.

ZOEY

You're afraid?

ABIGAIL

Oh no no, that's just a saying.

ZOEY

Are you in the sky?

Abigail shrugs.

ABIGAIL

I might be. Do you think I am?

ZOEY

Can you go outside where you are?

ABIGAIL

I can.

Zoey's eyes widen.

ZOEY

Oh.

ABIGAIL

Let me ask you the same question, Zoey. Can you leave your house?

ZOEY

No. The plague will get me. Like it got daddy.

ABIGAIL

So your dad is not with you?

Zoey clams up.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)

It's just you and your Mom?

ZOEY

Um...

Zoey looks toward the hallway, unsure.

ABIGAIL

Zoey, never mind that. You don't have to answer that. Look back at me.

Zoey looks back at the screen.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)

You're a very beautiful little girl. How old are you?

ZOEY

Seven.

ABIGAIL

Good. That's the right age.

ZOEY

I think I hear my mom coming.

Abigail leans forward in her seat, getting closer to the screen.

ABIGAIL

Wait. Whatever you do, don't tell your mom about me, okay?

ZOEY

Why?

ABIGAIL

I can give you the answers you're looking for, that's why. Like the plague. Do you know why you call it the plague, Zoey?

ZOEY
No.

ABIGAIL
I do.

Zoey absorbs this.

ZOEY
I have to go now.

ABIGAIL
Before you go, I need you to remember something, okay? It's very important. Whatever you do, don't let your mom- -

SONYA (O.S.)
Zoey, who are you talking to?

The laptop screen instantly goes BLACK.

Sonya enters Zoey's bedroom, looking around. She follows Zoey's gaze toward the laptop.

SONYA (CONT'D)
Did you turn this on?

Sonya checks for cords. She presses the power button multiple times on the laptop. Nothing.

SONYA (CONT'D)
It's dead. Who were you talking to?

ZOEY
Um...

Zoey points a finger at her own REFLECTION in the black laptop screen.

ZOEY (CONT'D)
Myself.

SONYA
Yourself?

Zoey nods.

SONYA (CONT'D)
You were talking to yourself?

ZOEY
To my infection.

SONYA
Your reflection?

Zoey nods.

ZOEY
My reflection.

SONYA
Was your reflection talking back?
(beat)
You know what? Don't answer that.

Sonya closes the laptop. She grabs Zoey's hand.

SONYA (CONT'D)
Come on, I'm giving you a bath.

Sonya leads Zoey out of the bedroom.

Zoey glances back at the laptop as she is pulled around the corner.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

All is quiet. A couple candles are lit around the room.
There is no movement anywhere.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sonya and Zoey are asleep in the bed.
Zoey is in Blair's spot. We ZOOM IN slowly on Zoey's face.
She twitches.

INT. ZOEY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Zoey stands by the blood-red drapes. She reaches two hands up and makes a parting motion. The drapes instantly fall away.

Blair is sitting on the roof looking at the impossibly HUGE STARS in the black sky. He seems at peace.

Zoey steps up close to the window. She lightly knocks on the glass.

Blair turns around and smiles warmly. He moves close to the window.

BLAIR
Is that...? No. That can't be. Is
that... my Zoey?

ZOEY
It's me, daddy!

BLAIR
It can't be. My Zoey is just a
little girl and you are so big.

Zoey hops around excitedly.

ZOEY
It's me, Zoey. Look!

Blair leans in close and smiles.

BLAIR
Ah, you're right. It is you.

ZOEY
I told you!

Zoey attempts to open the window.

BLAIR
No, no. You can't do that.

Zoey pulls her hand back.

ZOEY
Why?

BLAIR
Because that's not how this works.
You have to stay inside, you know
that.

A sadness washes over Zoey's face like a wave.

ZOEY
Oh.

BLAIR
You know I love you, right? I miss
you everyday.

ZOEY
I know.

Blair places his palm flat against the glass.

BLAIR
Hold your hand up to the glass for
me, okay? Inside mine.

Zoey presses her palm against the glass; Her tiny hand
engulfed by Blair's.

BLAIR (CONT'D)
Can you feel my hand, Zo'?

ZOEY
Yeah, it's warm.

Blair nods.

BLAIR
Press it tight, okay?

ZOEY
Are you coming home soon?

BLAIR
Soon baby, soon. Okay, now remove
your hand.

Blair and Zoey both remove their hands from the glass. The
IMPRINT of their hands still remain.

BLAIR (CONT'D)
Now watch our handprints.

Zoey watches in amazement as the two intertwined handprints
begin to fade away.

BLAIR (CONT'D)
Nothing is forever, Zoey. Remember
that, okay?

Zoey looks up at Blair with tears in her eyes. She nods.

Blair smiles.

BLAIR (CONT'D)
That's my girl.

Then, the blood-red drapes suddenly close.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Zoey jolts awake, breathing heavily. She has tears in her
eyes. She wipes them away.

Sonya opens her eyes. She places her hand gently on Zoey's heaving chest.

SONYA
Are you okay?

ZOEY
I had that dream again.

SONYA
The one with dad?

Zoey nods and breaks down crying.

Sonya opens her arms.

SONYA (CONT'D)
Come here.

Zoey collapses into Sonya's arms.

Sonya holds her tight and rubs her head. After a few moments, Zoey begins to settle.

All is quiet again...

Until the THREE LOUD KNOCKS on the door downstairs.

Sonya goes rigid.

ZOEY
Mom?

Sonya jumps out of bed.

SONYA
Zoey, closet. Now.

Zoey rushes to the closet and opens it, she goes inside. Sonya is right behind her.

SONYA (CONT'D)
Stay here, be quiet.

Zoey curls into a ball at the back of the closet.

ZOEY
I'm scared, mom.

SONYA
I know. Just whatever happens...
stay here. I'll be back soon.

More LOUD KNOCKING downstairs.

Sonya makes eye contact with Zoey and closes the closet door. She rushes to the bedside table and opens the drawer, removing the Glock 19 handgun.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

More KNOCKING on the front door, louder this time.

Sonya carefully makes her way toward the door, gun in hand. She reaches the front door and puts an ear up to one of the wooden planks.

She listens.

SONYA

Who's there?

MASON (O.S.)

It's um, it's Mason. Can I come in?
It's scary out here.

Sonya loses her breath for a moment, hearing a young boy's voice is the last thing she expected.

SONYA

How old are you?

MASON (O.S.)

Nine.

Sonya takes this in.

SONYA

Are you alone?

MASON (O.S.)

Yes.

SONYA

Are you sure? There's nobody around you? None of those... things?

MASON (O.S.)

No.

SONYA

How did you get here, Mason? How did you get passed them?

MASON (O.S.)

They weren't here. They came after me in the woods and I shot like my dad said and I ran.

SONYA
Where is your dad?

A pause.

MASON (O.S.)
He's gone.

Sonya closes her eyes and shakes her head. She sighs.

SONYA
You understand why I can't let you
in, right Mason?

MASON (O.S.)
Why?

SONYA
Because I can't open this door.
It's unsafe.

MASON (O.S.)
But the plague isn't here...

SONYA
What did you say?

MASON (O.S.)
They aren't here.

SONYA
You called them the plague.

MASON (O.S.)
Yeah.

SONYA
Why? Where did you hear that?

MASON (O.S.)
That's what they're called.

SONYA
By who?

MASON (O.S.)
People.

SONYA
What people?

MASON (O.S.)
Survivors.

ZOEY (O.S.)

Mom?

Sonya spins around.

Zoey is peeking out from behind the wall in the hallway.

SONYA

Zoey! I said stay upstairs.

ZOEY

Who are you talking to?

MASON (O.S.)

Can I please come in? I'm scared
and I'm really thirsty and hungry.
I don't know where to go.

Sonya keeps her attention on Zoey.

SONYA

Get back upstairs and get in the
closet.

ZOEY

Is that a boy outside?

SONYA

Zoey...

Zoey comes out from behind the wall and steps into the living
room.

ZOEY

Does he need help?

MASON (O.S.)

Should I just wait here?

Sonya turns back towards the front door.

SONYA

No, Mason. Please don't. You need
to go.

MASON (O.S.)

Where do I go?

Zoey steps closer.

ZOEY

Let him in. He needs help.

Sonya ignores this.

SONYA

I don't know but you can't stay
outside my house, okay?

MASON (O.S.)

I don't know what else to do.
Please. The plague might come back
soon and they can hear me out here.

Sonya lowers her head, thinking.

Zoey steps up beside her and takes her hand.

ZOEY

Mom... Please. If we can help, we
should.

Sonya looks down at Zoey, reading her eyes. She sighs.

SONYA

Mason... I'm... I'm going to take
down these boards and let you in
but I need you to be on the lookout
for the pl... the things, okay? If
you see them approaching you need
to tell me.

MASON (O.S.)

Okay.

Sonya let's go of Zoey's hand.

SONYA

Zoey, get back.

Zoey moves to the couch and sits.

Sonya places the handgun down on the side table and picks up
the hammer. She begins using the hammer's claw to rip out
some nails from the wooden planks...

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (LATER)

The last wooden plank comes off.

Sonya wipes the sweat from her brow. She takes a deep breath,
leans forward and looks through the newly exposed PEEPHOLE.

A SMALL FIGURE stands in the DARKNESS. Almost a shadow. Too
dark to see anything clearly.

Sonya tries the light switch for the porch. CLICK. Nothing.

SONYA
(under her breath)
Of course.
(beat)
How do we look, Mason?

MASON
Still nothing around.

Sonya glances back at Zoey.

SONYA
You okay?

Zoey nods from the couch.

Sonya places the hammer down on the side table and picks up the handgun. She puts it in her waistband. She gets close to the front door and puts her hand on the dead bolt.

SONYA (CONT'D)
I'm going to open the door now,
okay? As soon as I do you better be
ready to come in or the door will
close for good. Do you understand?

MASON (O.S.)
Yeah.

SONYA
Okay.

Sonya takes a deep breath and listens for several moments.

Then she opens the door.

MASON, 9, stands on the porch directly in front of Sonya. He wears SUNGLASSES. The moon and the stars are impossibly huge in the night sky behind him.

Sonya reaches her hand out towards Mason.

SONYA (CONT'D)
Take my hand. Hurry.

Mason reaches out but grabs nothing but air.

Sonya suddenly realizes... he's blind.

SONYA (CONT'D)
Are you...?

ARTHUR, 60's, steps out in front of Mason holding a SHOTGUN.

Sonya gasps and tries to slam the door but Arthur barges in the house shotgun first.

Sonya stumbles backward. She reaches for the handgun in her waistband.

Arthur points the shotgun at Sonya's chest.

ARTHUR
Don't move another muscle.

Sonya freezes. She looks over her shoulder at Zoey who is frozen as well, terrified.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
Hands in the air.

SONYA
Who are you?

Arthur steps closer, aiming down the barrel.

ARTHUR
Now.

Sonya slowly raises her hands in surrender. She looks at Zoey.

SONYA
It's okay, Zoey.

Zoey jumps off the couch and grabs on to Sonya's leg. She has urine stains running down her pant leg.

Arthur keep the shotgun aimed at Sonya.

ARTHUR
Mason... two steps ahead is the door. No obstructions. Close it behind you.

Mason enters the house carefully, he feels around for the door and closes it.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
Above the handle should be the dead bolt. Lock it please.

Mason feels his way up to the dead bolt and locks it. He turns around.

SONYA
What do you want?

Arthur stares down the shotgun barrel.

ARTHUR
For you to trust us.

A confused look takes over Sonya's expression.

Arthur steps forward, lowers the shotgun, flips it around, and offers it to Sonya.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
Go ahead. Take it.

Sonya hesitates.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
It's okay, this is not a trick. And
I'm sorry about doing this but we
needed shelter and it's the only
thing we could do.

Sonya quickly snatches the shotgun out of Arthur's hands and points it at him. She presses the release lever by the trigger guard and ejects a shell. It's loaded.

Arthur raises his hands in surrender.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
You know your guns.

Sonya doesn't acknowledge this.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
Shoot me if you want but spare the
boy. We are no threat to you or
your daughter there.

Zoey buries her face in Sonya's shirt.

SONYA
How about I just keep this shotgun
and kick you right back out of the
house?

ARTHUR
You could do that, sure. But I hope
you won't. We are just trying to
survive, like everybody else.

Sonya glances at Mason.

SONYA
Is the boy blind?

ARTHUR

Yes.

SONYA

How have you survived?

ARTHUR

With a whole lotta luck. It's spread pretty thin these days but we were fortunate it found us.

SONYA

Where did you come from?

ARTHUR

The woods. We had a cabin out there.

SONYA

Had?

ARTHUR

Those uh, things tore it down and got inside. I shot a few but more kept coming.

Sonya thinks for a moment.

SONYA

Why should I trust you after what you just pulled?

Arthur shrugs, his hands still in the air.

ARTHUR

No reason to. I was just hoping handing over my shotgun would be seen as a peace offering of sorts.

SONYA

Some offering.

ARTHUR

Well, I had you hemmed up pretty good you must admit. I could've killed you and took the house with a simple squeeze of the trigger.

(beat)

But I didn't.

SONYA

I might. Give me a reason not to.

Arthur nods to himself slowly.

ARTHUR
I can tell you what happened to
your husband...

Sonya's eyes widen.

Zoey slowly turns her head and looks at Arthur... then
quickly looks away again.

SONYA
How?

ARTHUR
I saw it. Saw them pull him out.

SONYA
And you didn't help?

ARTHUR
What could I do?

Sonya's eyes begin to tear up.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
But I saw what they did... and I'm
starting to learn what these...
things are. I think. Observe
anything long enough and you start
to see some patterns.

Sonya glances down at Zoey.

SONYA
What kind of patterns?

ARTHUR
Can I put my arms down, ma'am?

Sonya nods.

Arthur lowers his arms.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
I think we have a lot that needs to
be discussed, if we hope to
survive. I just don't think now's
the time to do it.

Arthur glances down at Zoey. Sonya gets the hint.

SONYA
What's your name?

ARTHUR

Arthur.

SONYA

Okay, Arthur...

Sonya waves the shotgun barrel at the corner of the room.

SONYA (CONT'D)

I need you to take Mason and get into the corner for now. I need to think this out.

Arthur nods. He moves to Mason's side and takes his hand. They move to the corner.

Sonya keeps the shotgun trained on Arthur the entire time.

ARTHUR

Ma'am, I appreciate you giving us a second thought, but if that thought is going to be awhile we should probably get those boards back up.

SONYA

You trying to make my decision for me?

ARTHUR

Not at all. If you decide you want us out, I'm certainly not in a position to argue. I can take the boards down just as easy as I can put them up. But if you've made it in this house this far, maybe those boards are helping.

Sonya glances at the wooden planks on the ground.

SONYA

Fine. You do it. Hammer and nails are there. Try anything and you'll wish you hadn't.

Arthur nods and whispers something to Mason. Mason nods.

Arthur gets to work. He begins nailing the wooden planks over the front door. BANG. BANG. BANG.

Zoey looks up at Sonya aiming a shotgun ahead.

ZOEY

Mommy... I'm scared.

Sonya looks down at Zoey.

SONYA
You haven't said that in a long
time.

ZOEY
That I'm scared?

SONYA
No...
(beat)
Mommy.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (LATER)

Sonya and Arthur are seated on chairs by the fireplace; the light of the flames flickering off their faces. The front door has been boarded back up.

Arthur finishes a bottle of water and places the bottle down gently on the floor.

Sonya has the handgun in her hand, resting in her lap. The shotgun is on the floor beside her, pointed at Arthur.

Zoey and Mason are asleep on the couch, empty bottles of water and cans of stew beside them. Mason still wears his sunglasses.

Arthur stares at the children.

ARTHUR
Those two got comfortable quick.

SONYA
Yeah... I'm surprised.

ARTHUR
Mason never really takes to anyone.

SONYA
Has he been blind since birth?

Arthur nods slowly. A second or two passes.

ARTHUR
Yeah.

SONYA
Does he always wear those
sunglasses?

ARTHUR

Even when he sleeps, as you can see. I usually take them off him but I suppose we can leave him be for tonight.

SONYA

Must have been difficult for him. Growing up with all this... in the darkness.

ARTHUR

Some might say it's a blessing in disguise.

SONYA

I guess it could be.

ARTHUR

I've often wondered what he sees in his head, you know? What does he picture when I describe things to him? What does he see in his dreams?

Sonya considers this, she glances at the children.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

I don't know... Maybe that's something only he can know. It's his world.

(beat)

Thank you for the water, by the way. Very kind of- -

SONYA

You said you saw my husband get pulled out of the house.

Arthur pauses for a moment at the sudden change of direction.

Zoey quickly opens her eyes and looks at Arthur, then pretends to go back to sleep.

ARTHUR

Yes, I did.

SONYA

How did you know that he was my husband?

ARTHUR

Wasn't he? I guess it's just something one assumes.

SONYA

Tell me what you saw. Describe it to me. Every detail.

Arthur exhales a deep breath.

ARTHUR

So I was out in the woods when I heard the gunshots. Came running. Mostly because gunshots meant other people. Didn't really think about it, just reacted.

SONYA

Why were you out in the woods?

ARTHUR

Hunting.

SONYA

For what?

ARTHUR

Deer.

SONYA

There's still some of those around?

ARTHUR

There's still some people around too. Works the same way, I suppose. We're all animals.

Sonya gives Arthur a look.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

Even saw a dog wandering around with its leash still attached. Damndest thing.

SONYA

Okay, continue. You heard gunshots...

ARTHUR

So I reached the clearing, noticed those things in front of your house... They were everywhere. Sort of all built up in a mass of humanity, stumbling over each other. They were attached to each other, like their skin had been fused to the one next to them.

(MORE)

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

Like those, what are they called, Siamese twins. The skin looked blue or... purple even. I had heard about them before obviously, but never saw them with my own eyes. It was... quite the sight.

(beat)

Anyway. I saw them start coming out of the broken window, wasn't anything pretty, looked like something oozing out of a wound, but that's when I saw your...

SONYA

Husband.

ARTHUR

Your husband get pulled out along with them. He was screaming. I started to move forward, shotgun in hand, thinking I should do something. I didn't know what, but I knew I had to move. Then I saw some of those heads turn toward me. Their dead, blood-shot eyes locked on me... It stopped me in my tracks. I have no shame in admitting I was terrified.

SONYA

So what did you do?

ARTHUR

I turned and I ran back into the woods. It was self preservation, sure. But I also knew if I got killed then Mason would be alone in the cabin. I couldn't let that happen.

SONYA

You said you saw- -

ARTHUR

I did. I turned back around, glanced back through the trees... And that's when I saw what happened.

(beat)

They... they absorbed him. For lack of a better word.

SONYA

They what?

ARTHUR

That's the best way I can describe it. Your husband, he... was absorbed into them. He became one. Just another appendage on this thing. Another person added to it.

Sonya shakes her head.

SONYA

No...

ARTHUR

I'm sorry, but that's what I saw. And that was enough. I turned and hightailed it back to the cabin.

SONYA

Are you sure you saw what you saw?

ARTHUR

Yes.

SONYA

You said it yourself, you were looking through the trees. Maybe you- -

ARTHUR

No, ma'am. That's what I saw, no if's and's or but's. That's what happened.

Sonya takes this in. Tears fill her eyes but she fights them back. She swallows dryly and grabs her water bottle and takes a nervous sip.

SONYA

What do you think they are?

ARTHUR

I don't have the foggiest. But others do. I was able to get a few radio signals from my cabin. There's theories floating around. But whatever this thing is, I think it's just absorbing people into it, making itself bigger and bigger. And it's not the only one. From what I've gathered, this is happening all over the world. Or what's left of it.

SONYA

What do you mean, what's left of
it?

ARTHUR

You didn't know?

Sonya stares back blankly.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

The world, it's... it's shrinking.

Sonya stares at Arthur in disbelief.

SONYA

Shrinking?

Arthur nods. Sonya takes this in for a moment.

SONYA (CONT'D)

Fuck... Blair, he... My husband, he
had these articles he was
collecting that stated something to
that effect as well.

ARTHUR

Because it's true. Most of the
world is underwater. Only reason we
are here is because of where we
live. Denver is waterfront property
right now.

Sonya exhales a breath.

SONYA

Why wouldn't he tell me that?

Arthur shrugs.

ARTHUR

He was probably protecting you. Or
maybe you just didn't want to know
the truth.

Sonya closes her eyes for a moment. She shakes her head. She
opens her eyes.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

Have you not seen the sky? The moon
and the stars have quadrupled in
size. They light up the darkness.
It's the only beautiful thing about
all this.

SONYA
You think it's beautiful?

Arthur seems lost in his thoughts for a moment. He nods.

ARTHUR
In the man made lodge the moon rays
replace god...

Zoey opens her eyes at this. She looks frightened. She quickly closes her eyes again, squeezing them tight.

SONYA
What?

Arthur snaps out of it.

ARTHUR
Nothing.

Sonya leans forward in her seat. Determined.

SONYA
Dos anyone know what caused this?

ARTHUR
As I said, there's some wild theories. Everything from aliens shrinking the planet for observation to god forcing us all together to become one being. I even heard one theory proclaiming that the planet is simply reacting to over population by thinning the herd. But no one knows for sure. It's all just... people panicking and grasping at straws. But it's always been that way, hasn't it?

Sonya stares into the crackling fire beside her, lost in thought.

SONYA
This doesn't make any sense. No, something's wrong here.

ARTHUR
I think maybe it's time you start questioning the nature of your reality, ma'am.

SONYA
Arthur...

Sonya slowly looks back at Arthur.

ARTHUR

Hmm?

SONYA

Stop calling me ma'am.

Arthur nods.

Sonya and Arthur both turn and look at Zoey and Mason. They watch in silence for awhile.

ARTHUR

Think they heard what we were saying?

SONYA

If not, they will. I think the universe tells them one way or another.

Arthur considers this.

ARTHUR

You a religious woman?

SONYA

I probably should be, huh?

Sonya and Arthur exchange polite smiles.

Sonya leans back in her chair, keeping an eye on Arthur, and gets comfortable.

The flames flicker.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Tiny bits of DAYLIGHT poke through the various boards on the windows.

Sonya stirs awake, slumped in her chair. The chair where Arthur sat is now empty. She looks down beside her... the shotgun is gone.

Sonya bolts upright and looks toward the couch.

Arthur is kneeling down by Zoey and Mason. He runs a hand through Mason's hair.

ARTHUR

Don't worry, just moved the shotgun
so it wouldn't go off.

He points to the corner. The shotgun is perched up against
the wall.

Sonya nods, unsure. She quickly feels to see if the handgun
is still in her waistband. It is.

SONYA

How long was I out?

ARTHUR

All night.

SONYA

Did you sleep?

ARTHUR

Here and there.

SONYA

How are the kids?

ARTHUR

They slept peacefully, as kids do.

SONYA

Hmm.

Zoey opens her eyes. She looks at Arthur and screams.

Arthur holds his hands up in surrender.

Zoey jumps off the couch and runs to Sonya, hugging her.

SONYA (CONT'D)

It's okay, they were here last
night, remember? They aren't a
threat.

ZOEY

He caused the plague. He's one of
them.

SONYA

No, Zoey, he's one of us.

ZOEY

He's a stranger.

SONYA

Shhh.

Mason is now awake. He reaches up toward his sunglasses.

Arthur grabs Mason's hand, seemingly stopping him from removing them.

MASON

Dad?

Arthur takes Mason's hand.

ARTHUR

Come on. Let's give them some room.

(to Sonya)

Kitchen?

Sonya nods.

SONYA

I'll bring you guys some more food
and water.

ARTHUR

Much appreciated.

Arthur leads Mason by the hand to the kitchen.

Sonya comforts Zoey.

ZOEY

Can that man leave now?

SONYA

Not right now.

ZOEY

Why? I don't want him here.

SONYA

He may be able to help us.

ZOEY

How?

SONYA

I haven't figured that out yet.

Sonya stands and takes Zoey's hand.

SONYA (CONT'D)

Come on, let's go to the basement
and get them something to eat and
drink.

Zoey pulls her shirt up over her mouth and nose.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Sonya, Zoey, Arthur and Mason all sit around the kitchen table. There is two bottles of water on the table, one for Sonya and Zoey, one for Arthur and Mason.

Some cold stew has been opened for everyone. Arthur and Mason eat quickly, shoving the stew in their mouths with spoons.

ARTHUR

My apologies. Who would've thought that cold stew in a can would taste so good?

Sonya smiles respectfully.

Zoey stares at Mason, who has stew all over his mouth. She giggles. Mason makes a playful face.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

You're very lucky to still have reserves.

SONYA

My husband he... He was kind of a hoarder in that way. Always preparing for the 'what if's' in life.

Arthur nods and shovels some more stew in.

ARTHUR

Smart man.

Mason threatens to catapult some stew from his spoon towards Zoey.

Zoey quickly puts some water in her hand and throws it at Mason. They laugh.

Sonya and Arthur watch with smiles on their faces.

Mason pours some water into his hand and throws it way off target. It hits the floor. The kids laugh harder.

MASON

Not a fair fight! I can't see.

Zoey laughs.

SONYA

Zoey, do you want to take Mason to the playground?

Zoey nods excitedly.

Arthur flashes Sonya a confused look.

SONYA (CONT'D)
We built her one upstairs.

ARTHUR
Oh.

SONYA
Is that okay?

ARTHUR
Sure.

SONYA
Do you maybe... need to lead- -

ARTHUR
Oh, no. Mason can navigate just
fine just as long as someone guides
him by hand.

SONYA
(to Zoey)
Do you think we can guide Mason
upstairs?

Zoey nods.

ZOEY
Not that man though, mom. I don't
want him up there.

SONYA
Zoey, don't be rude.

ARTHUR
It's okay. Take them up. I'll wait
here.

Sonya nods and takes Mason by the hand, leading him out of
the kitchen. Zoey grabs on to Mason's other hand.

Mason giggles.

INT. SPARE ROOM - DAY

Sonya, holding the two-way baby monitor, watches as Zoey
explains the intricacies of the playground to Mason.

The other baby monitor sits on a shelf in the room.

After a few moments, she leaves the kids to play.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Sonya enters the kitchen.

Arthur is still seated.

ARTHUR
How'd it go?

SONYA
Great. They'll have the time of
their lives up there.

Sonya takes a seat across from Arthur. She places the two-way baby monitor down on the table in front of them.

ARTHUR
What's that for?

SONYA
Zoey wanted to hear what I was
doing. It's a comfort thing, you
know... with new people around. I
don't think she pays much attention
but I guess she finds it soothing
if she can hear me in the
background when she's alone.

ARTHUR
I had one of those video ones for
Mason when he was a baby. Could
watch him in his crib for hours.

SONYA
They are special, aren't they?

Arthur nods.

ARTHUR
Yes they are.

INT. SPARE ROOM - DAY

Mason swings back and forth on some monkey bars, having the time of his life.

Zoey quickly checks on the baby monitor, turning up the volume a bit.

SONYA (V.O.)
So, has it always been just you and
Mason?

Zoey rushes back to play.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Arthur shifts uncomfortably in his seat. He finishes what's left of the water in the bottle in front of him.

ARTHUR
No, not always. My wife, um, best
way to put it is she up and left
one day. Out of the blue.

SONYA
That's horrible.

ARTHUR
Mason was just over a year old. I
know she had severe postpartum
depression and maybe she... she
never got over that her baby was
blind. I don't know. But one day
she was just... gone. No word of
warning or anything. Then
everything happened soon after
so... just became about survival.

Sonya shakes her head.

SONYA
What do you tell Mason?

ARTHUR
I don't.

SONYA
Oh.

ARTHUR
He doesn't really ask.

Sonya nods.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
How are your food and water
supplies holding up?

SONYA
Their manageable. For now.

ARTHUR

Well I understand we are two more mouths to feed. So I was thinking maybe I should go out and do some hunting. Maybe catch a deer for some meat or grab some water from the creek we could boil up.

SONYA

Do you think that's a wise idea?

Arthur shrugs.

ARTHUR

Just wanted to contribute ma- -

Sonya gives him a look.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

Apologies. I never got your name.

SONYA

It's Sonya.

ARTHUR

Sonya. That's a pretty name. I just thought I'd contribute in some way.

SONYA

We have enough for now. If it ain't broke, we don't need to be fixing it.

ARTHUR

Fair enough.

(beat)

I noticed you had solar panels all over the roof. Do they work?

Sonya stands up and heads toward the light switch. She turns the light on and off.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

Impressive.

SONYA

We use the power sparingly.

ARTHUR

Of course.

Arthur coughs several times into his hand and clears his throat.

Sonya looks at the empty water bottle in front of Arthur.

SONYA
Would you like some more water?

ARTHUR
If you can spare it.

Sonya leaves the kitchen.

Arthur stares at the baby monitor in front of him.

INT. BASEMENT - DAY

The overhead light clicks on.

Sonya goes to the mountain of picked apart bottles of water and grabs one. She starts to leave but notices a square of DAYLIGHT peeking through a small window above.

The black electrical tape covering the small window has peeled at the corner.

Sonya places the water bottle down and finds a stool to stand on. She grabs some more black electrical tape from off of the shelf.

Sonya steps onto the stool and reaches up to the peeled corner. She stops.

The window is fogged over and moist. There are CIRCLES drawn into the window consisting of patterns of JAGGED LINES and DOTS. Zoey's patterns.

Sonya slowly peels away the rest of the electrical tape, making sure the coast is clear outside as she does.

The window shows a mass of STICK FIGURES all jammed together. There are little lowercase "m's" above in the sky. Birds.

An arrow is pointed down towards a stick figure with a sad face. Above it, in a 7 year old's writing, the word "daddy" is scrawled into the glass.

Sonya gasps and quickly covers up the window. She tapes over it with more black electrical tape as fast as she can.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Sonya steps into the kitchen with the bottle of water and stops dead in her tracks.

Arthur is gone.

Then, from upstairs, Zoey SCREAMS.

Sonya drops the water bottle on the floor and rushes out.

INT. SPARE ROOM - DAY

Sonya barges in through the door.

Arthur is kneeling down on one knee in front of Mason. He turns to face Sonya.

ARTHUR
I was just checking on them.

SONYA
Where's Zoey?

ARTHUR
She ran away.

Sonya quickly leaves the spare room.

INT. ZOEY'S ROOM - DAY

Sonya finds Zoey sitting on the chair in the protection circle, trembling. She rushes toward the chair but stops herself before entering the circle. She kneels down.

SONYA
Are you okay? What happened?

ZOEY
He scared me.

SONYA
Mason did?

Zoey shakes her head.

ZOEY
The man.

SONYA
How? How did he scare you?

ZOEY
He said I should go with him and that he would keep me safe. But he's lying. He's going to hurt me.

Sonya stands up.

SONYA

Wait here.

Sonya leaves Zoey's room and shuts the door behind her.

Zoey looks down at her feet dangling near the floor. She brings her legs up onto the chair and curls into a ball.

After a few moments, Zoey glances at the violet flower in the vase. The UV light flickers.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Sonya removes the handgun from her waistband as she closes in on the spare room ahead.

INT. SPARE ROOM - DAY

Sonya looks in. The room is empty.

She heads for the stairs.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Sonya enters the living room, the Glock 19 handgun pointed straight ahead.

SONYA

Hey! What were you telling my daughter?

Arthur and Mason are near the front door. Arthur holds the shotgun. He has an ear pressed against the wall.

He slowly turns to face Sonya, his expression barely registering the gun pointed at him.

ARTHUR

They're coming.

Sonya stops, listens. Silence.

SONYA

How do you know?

MASON

I can hear them.

Then, a LOW RUMBLE. Like a tremor.

A WHIMPER from the bottom of the stairs.

Sonya looks over her shoulder.

Zoey cowers near the final step, hiding herself behind the railing.

SONYA

Zoey get back in your room!

ZOEY

I don't want to be alone. I want to be with you.

ARTHUR

Actually the basement might be best if it's underground...

Sonya holds the handgun on Arthur.

SONYA

Why were you saying those things to my daughter?

ARTHUR

What things?

SONYA

That she should go with you and she would be safe.

ARTHUR

I never said anything like that.

Sonya FIRES into the drywall near Arthur; The wall exploding into chunks.

Mason covers his ears. Zoey screams.

Arthur barely moves, the shotgun hanging lazily at his side.

SONYA

You're lying to me!

ARTHUR

I'm not. But do you really want to keep making holes in your walls right now?

The RUMBLE is close. It now sounds like footsteps, hundreds of them; Trudging along like soldiers toward their destination.

The house.

SONYA

You stay the fuck away from her.

Arthur looks down at the shotgun in his hand. He let's it drop to the floor.

ARTHUR

Guns are useless, you know.

Arthur goes to the side table and grabs the hammer. He begins to rip out the nails from the wooden boards that cover the opposite window Blair was pulled from.

SONYA

What are you doing?

Arthur keeps at it.

SONYA (CONT'D)

Stop!

Sonya steps forward, the handgun pointed at the back of Arthur's head.

ARTHUR

I need to see where they are.

Arthur removes a wooden board. SUNLIGHT explodes inside.

SONYA

If they see us they can get inside!

Arthur spins around, his eyes wild.

ARTHUR

They can enter whenever the fuck they want! Your wooden boards are a false sense of security. They are a god damn blanket, that's all they are.

Arthur removes some more nails.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

You don't think we had our cabin barricaded up like god damn Fort Knox?

He rips another wooden board off the window.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

They still got in!

Zoey steps into the living room, covering her ears.

ZOEY
Mommy make him stop!

Mason takes his hands off his ears and lowers his head sadly, like this was inevitable.

Arthur rips off another board, then another...

Sonya shakes her head, gun trained on Arthur.

SONYA
I'm warning you... I will kill you.

Arthur rips the last wooden board off, exposing the window. He stares outside.

ARTHUR
Well? What are you waiting for?

Arthur slowly looks over his shoulder at Sonya. He waits, shakes his head.

Zoey quietly moves beside Sonya.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
You can't pull that trigger.

SONYA
Oh no?

Sonya steps closer, her finger curved tightly around the trigger.

ARTHUR
You can't, because you never did.

A SHADOW suddenly engulfs Arthur. He looks out the window, his eyes widen.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
Basement! Now!

Arthur turns around and grabs Mason; they head for the basement.

SONYA
You stupid fuck! What did you expect would happen!?

ZOEY
Mom!

Sonya glances down at a terrified Zoey by her side. She looks toward the window as the incoming SHADOW blocks out the sun.

Sonya takes Zoey by the hand and rushes toward the basement.

INT. BASEMENT - DAY

DARKNESS. FEET SHUFFLING AROUND.

CLICK. The light bulb dangling above turns on.

Sonya and Zoey are underneath one side of the light bulb. Arthur and Mason are on the other side.

Arthur stares at Zoey. He slowly looks up at Sonya.

ARTHUR

I took your daughter, you know...

Sonya glares at Arthur. A creepy grin forms across Arthur's face.

Sonya raises the handgun. Arthur reaches up and pulls the string to the light bulb.

DARKNESS. Zoey SCREAMS. SOUNDS OF A STRUGGLE. SCRAMBLING FEET.

SONYA (O.S.)

(panicked)

Zoey, run!

Arthur GRUNTS. Sonya lets out a PRIMAL SHRIEK.

TINY FOOTSTEPS BOUND UP THE STAIRS.

A LOUD THUD... then silence.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Zoey scrambles into the living room, frantic. She stops dead in her tracks and stares ahead.

Slowly, she approaches the exposed window, now blanketed in SHADOW.

Zoey keeps moving, until she stands directly in front of the window, staring up in awe.

A mass of bloated purple HUMANITY fills the window pane. A single HAND presses itself flat against the glass.

Zoey stares at the hand curiously. She slowly reaches up and places her hand on the glass, her small hand fitting inside the hand on the other side.

She gasps.

FLASH CUT:

INT. ZOEY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Blair and Zoey both remove their hands from the glass. The IMPRINT of their hands still remain.

BLAIR

Now watch our handprints.

Zoey watches in amazement as the two intertwined handprints begin to fade away.

BLAIR (CONT'D)

Nothing is forever, Zoey. Remember that, okay?

BACK TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Zoey stares up at her hand inside the large purple hand outside the window. Her eyes go wide.

ZOEY

Daddy?

RAPID FOOTSTEPS approach.

Arthur runs into the living room and stops. He is breathing heavily, his shirt is ripped.

Zoey turns around and SCREAMS.

Arthur smiles.

ARTHUR

Don't be scared, my little girl. I won't hurt you.

Arthur closes in. Zoey covers her eyes with her hands, trembling.

Arthur stands over Zoey. He puts a hand on Zoey's arm and caresses it lightly, rubbing it up and down.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

Why don't you unbuckle my belt for me this time...

SMASH! The window explodes. The purple HAND, now an ARM reaches in and grabs Arthur by the shirt.

Zoey runs away towards the stairs.

Arthur grips the purple ARM, trying to free himself from the grasp.

The ARM yanks Arthur violently into the broken glass, cutting his face badly.

Arthur holds his face and SCREAMS. The HAND releases for a moment only to grab Arthur by the throat.

Arthur's eyes widen, blood pouring from the cuts on his face. He begins to GURGLE from the sheer strength of the grip around his throat.

The HAND pulls Arthur out of the window kicking and screaming.

INT. ZOEY'S ROOM - DAY

Zoey is curled up in a ball on the chair inside the protection circle.

INT. BASEMENT - DAY

DARKNESS.

Then, the light clicks on.

Sonya is unconscious near the garbage bags in the corner.

Mason stands under the hanging light bulb. He removes his sunglasses and looks around... taking things in. He looks at Sonya curiously.

Turning around, he spots the Christmas tree with the oversized lights and angel on top.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

The SHADOW recedes away from the house.

DAYLIGHT filters back in through the broken, bloody window.

INT. ZOEY'S ROOM - DAY

Zoey sits normally on the chair in the protection circle. She stares ahead.

FOOTSTEPS approach from the hallway, slow and steady.

Mason appears in the doorway. He smiles warmly and enters the room.

Zoey looks him up and down.

ZOEY

Where are your glasses?

Mason stops just outside the protection circle. He looks down at his shoes and proceeds to step inside the circle.

Zoey recoils back.

Mason kneels down in front of her.

MASON

You're okay now, Zoey.

Zoey stares at Mason; Mason stares right back.

ZOEY

You can see?

Mason nods.

MASON

Yeah, I can. But you knew that.

ZOEY

Where is my mom?

MASON

She is where you left her.

ZOEY

Where is- -

MASON

My dad is gone. You're safe.

Zoey nods, unsure.

MASON (CONT'D)

But I need to leave now, okay?

ZOEY

Why?

MASON

Because I don't belong here. This
is your home, not mine.

ZOEY

But you can't go outside, the
plague will get you.

Mason smiles sadly.

MASON

No, they won't. I promise.

Zoey stares at Mason, studying him.

ZOEY

Are you an angel?

MASON

No, far from it. I did something
very wrong... I helped. But not in
a good way. You will understand
when you're older. But you're free
now, Zoey. You're home.

(beat)

I should go.

Mason stands up and looks around the room. He nods to
himself.

Zoey looks up at Mason.

ZOEY

Will you come back?

Mason shakes his head and leaves the room. He stops in the
doorway, thinking for a moment.

MASON

After I leave, you will never want
to see me again.

Zoey is silent.

Mason rounds the corner and disappears.

INT. BASEMENT - DAY

Sonya slowly regains consciousness and sits up near the
garbage bags. She rubs her head. Her breathing is hoarse and
labored.

Sonya stares ahead, directly at us. Her eyes seem different, filled with paranoia and desperation.

She twitches.

SLOW DISSOLVE
TO:

INT. BASEMENT - DAY

The bottled water and canned goods have been depleted. Some still remains, but is scattered about randomly.

INT. ZOEY'S ROOM - DAY

Zoey waters the violet flower carefully. She places the water bottle down beside the vase.

Her eyes stop on more WHITE POWDER near the laptop. She presses her finger into it and puts a little on her tongue. She makes a yuck face and quickly gets the taste out of her mouth with some water.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Sonya is lying on the couch, hand on her forehead, her eyes closed.

The window is boarded up behind her.

A CREAK. Sonya's eyes shoot open. She quickly gets to her feet and listens...

FOOTSTEPS behind her.

Sonya removes the handgun from her waist band and spins around, pointing it at... no one.

All is quiet in the empty living room.

Sonya takes a deep breath and lowers the gun. She rubs her eyes tiredly and places the gun down on the side table.

She heads for the basement, leaving the gun behind.

INT. ZOEY'S ROOM - DAY

CLOSE UP on the laptop screen. The green phone icon pulses, awaiting an answer.

Zoey's face is reflected in the screen. She clicks the mouse on the green phone icon.

Abigail appears. She smiles when she sees Zoey. Welcoming.

ABIGAIL
Hello again, Zoey.

ZOEY
Hi.

ABIGAIL
Do you remember my name?

Zoey nods.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)
What is it?

ZOEY
Abigail.

ABIGAIL
That's right. Very good. Now, we got cut off last time but you didn't tell your mother about me, did you?

Zoey shakes her head.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)
Are you sure?

Zoey nods.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)
Good. I'm glad. You can't ever mention me to your mom, okay?

ZOEY
Why?

ABIGAIL
I'm interested in what's been happening in your house since we last talked. Anything new?

ZOEY
There was a man here.

ABIGAIL
Ah. Anyone else?

ZOEY

A boy. He couldn't see. But then he could.

ABIGAIL

I see. How did they get in the house?

ZOEY

Mom let them in.

Abigail looks down and appears to make a note.

ABIGAIL

What did they do?

ZOEY

The man wanted to take me away.

ABIGAIL

Why didn't he?

ZOEY

I think daddy stopped him.

ABIGAIL

Where is your dad now?

Zoey glances at the violet flower.

ZOEY

He's outside.

ABIGAIL

Outside?

ZOEY

Yeah.

ABIGAIL

Did anything seem familiar, Zoey? Like, did something happen that you think happened before?

ZOEY

I don't know.

ABIGAIL

Did you recognize the man or the boy from before?

ZOEY

No.

ABIGAIL
When the man said he wanted to take
you away, where were you?

ZOEY
In the spare room.

ABIGAIL
What's in the spare room?

Zoey just stares, unable to find the words.

Abigail makes another note. She looks up, a serious
expression on her face.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)
Did he touch you, Zoey?

Zoey stares at Abigail, lost.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)
The man, did he- -

ZOEY
In my arm.

ABIGAIL
Your arm?

Zoey nods.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)
Anywhere else?

ZOEY
No, I don't think so.

ABIGAIL
Okay. Were you frightened of him?

ZOEY
Yeah.

ABIGAIL
Did you go to the protection circle
after?

ZOEY
Yeah, right away.

ABIGAIL
That's good. You're safe there.

ZOEY

How do you know for sure?

ABIGAIL

Because the only one that can hurt you inside that circle... is you.

Zoey steps closer to the screen.

ZOEY

Can you... Can you make the bad people go away?

ABIGAIL

I'm not sure about that yet, Zoey. But I'm trying. I think the important thing here is to realize that what's outside the house is not a threat to you. They can't hurt you.

ZOEY

Oh.

ABIGAIL

What you need to worry about is what's inside the house.

Zoey's eyes widen.

ZOEY

What's inside the house?

ABIGAIL

You already know. She's been there with you all along, hasn't she?

ZOEY

Mom?

Abigail nods.

ABIGAIL

Mom.

(beat)

Do you know where your mom is right now, at this moment?

Zoey shakes her head slowly.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)

I do.

ZOEY

Where?

ABIGAIL

She's in the basement.

ZOEY

Oh.

ABIGAIL

You need to listen to me now, okay?
Because you're in a lot of trouble,
Zoey. If we don't sort things out I
can't guarantee- -

ZOEY

I think she's coming upstairs.

Abigail gets right up close to the screen.

ABIGAIL

Okay, you be careful. Your mother,
she... She's not what she seems.
But remember, if you need help or
just want to talk, I'm right here.
Just a click away.

Zoey nods. There's a pause, then- -

ZOEY

Abigail?

ABIGAIL

Yes, Zoey?

ZOEY

How did you know about my
protection circle?

The screen goes BLACK.

Sonya stands in the doorway, looking tired and withdrawn. She
sips from a water bottle.

SONYA

Let me guess... talking to yourself
again, huh?

Zoey lowers her head.

Sonya enters the room and goes to the bed. She sits on the
edge of it.

SONYA (CONT'D)

Come here.

Zoey goes to the bed and takes a seat beside Sonya. Sonya takes a sip of water.

SONYA (CONT'D)

Did you know you were supposed to be a twin, Zoey?

ZOEY

Like someone just like me?

Sonya nods.

SONYA

You should have had a sister. She would be the same age as you, and look exactly like you. But you absorbed her in my womb. Like the things outside did to your father.

Zoey goes still, unable to fully process everything she's being told.

SONYA (CONT'D)

That's what happens sometimes. One twin absorbs the other. It's called vanishing twin syndrome. So when you stare at yourself in that laptop screen, you could actually be staring at your twin in real life if only... you hadn't, you know.

Sonya finishes the water in the bottle. She tosses it on the floor.

SONYA (CONT'D)

I wonder what your sister would have been like sometimes. I often daydream of what it would've been like if she had absorbed you instead. I would've liked to have known her. My daughter. Who did you take from me, Zoey?

ZOEY

Mom...

Sonya stands up off the bed.

SONYA

Is she part of you? Are the best parts of you just her... trying to escape?

Sonya holds out a hand.

SONYA (CONT'D)

Take my hand.

Zoey reluctantly takes it.

Sonya leads her out of the room.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

Sonya opens the blood-red drapes. Zoey stands beside her.

The drapes fall away, revealing various purple ARMS and LEGS pressed against the glass.

Zoey quickly looks away.

SONYA

No. Look.

Zoey looks out through the window.

SONYA (CONT'D)

They are now up over the second floor. Probably over the roof too. Consuming us and the house, slowly. This is what getting eaten alive must feel like. And it's your fault, Zoey.

Sonya looks down at Zoey.

SONYA (CONT'D)

Soon they will absorb us into them like you did your sister.

Sonya grabs Zoey's arm and leads her out of the room.

The drapes stay open. The window exposed.

INT. SPARE ROOM - DAY

The blood-red drapes are open. A mass of purple HUMANITY fills this window as well.

The window is fogged over and moist. Various CIRCLES, filled with JAGGED LINES and DOTS are crudely drawn into the glass.

Sonya and Zoey stand still in front of the window, staring.

SONYA

They know your patterns...

Several moments pass as Sonya stares hypnotized ahead.

SONYA (CONT'D)

They are watching...

Zoey slowly looks up at Sonya.

ZOEY

Mom... are you okay?

Sonya closes her eyes for a long while.

SONYA

No, I don't think I am. I need to go lie down.

Sonya walks out of the room, leaving Zoey behind.

Zoey looks up out the window for a moment then turns away.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

Zoey peeks in through the semi-open door. Sonya is asleep on her side, facing away.

INT. ZOEY'S ROOM - DAY

Zoey stares at the violet flower.

She touches the flower gently then places her hand under the UV light, feeling the warmth of it. She clicks the UV light off.

Zoey stares at the violet flower as it instantly starts to wilt. She looks toward the black laptop screen and stares at her reflection.

Slowly, she lifts a hand and waves at herself.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ZOEY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Zoey is asleep in her bed. She tosses and turns, sweating and mumbling under her breath.

A loud BANG wakes her up.

Zoey sits up, instantly alert. She looks out into the dark hallway. BANG!

Zoey fumbles for the flashlight on her bedside table and turns it on. The beam illuminates the hallway... then Sonya quickly scampers passed, disappearing down the hallway as quick as she appeared.

Zoey gasps.

ZOEY

Mom?

All is quiet.

Zoey's breathing quickens. She slowly gets out of bed, the beam staying trained on the hallway ahead.

Another loud BANG down the hallway.

ZOEY (CONT'D)

Mom!

FEET SCAMPERING close by, almost as if they are speed walking. Then the scampering stops and is replaced by an eerily slow CREAKING noise... The stairs, as someone descends down them one at a time.

Zoey slowly makes her way toward the hallway.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Zoey heads toward the railing, the beam lighting up the wall near the stairs.

The creaking sounds abruptly stop.

Zoey slowly peaks between the railing and looks below.

Sonya is standing at the bottom of the stairs, her eyes closed, both arms hanging lazily at her side. She doesn't move.

Zoey puts the flashlight beam on Sonya. Sonya scampers away from the light; More creaking sounds follow as she descends to the basement.

Zoey moves toward the stairs and makes her way down, the beam of the flashlight leading the way through the dark. She reaches the bottom of the stairs and slowly turns the corner, heading towards the door to the basement.

She brings her shirt up over her nose.

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

Sonya is heard breathing in the dark.

A beam of light appears near the top of the stairs.

ZOEY
Mom? I'm scared.

The beam of light makes its way down, it stops halfway. The beam points straight ahead and illuminates Sonya standing by the many garbage bags piled in the corner.

Sonya's eyes are closed, her head bowed. Her chest heaves up and down with each hoarse breath.

Behind, Zoey stands at the mid-point of the stairs with the flashlight, afraid to move.

ZOEY (CONT'D)
Mom, wake up...

Sonya doesn't acknowledge this. She just twitches.

ZOEY (CONT'D)
MOM!!

Sonya's eyes burst open. She screams. Zoey recoils on the stairs, terrified.

Sonya spins around and spots Zoey on the stairs.

SONYA
Zoey? My God I thought I lost you again.

Sonya looks around the basement.

SONYA (CONT'D)
Where am I?

ZOEY
You're scaring me.

SONYA

I'm sorry baby, I... Just give me a second here.

Sonya quickly rushes toward the overhead light bulb and pulls the string. The basement lights up.

Sonya bows her head and steadies her breathing in the light.

SONYA (CONT'D)

I'm so sorry. I didn't mean to frighten you. I just don't remember coming down here.

ZOEY

You woke me up. You were making loud noises then you walked down here.

Sonya places a palm on her forehead, feeling her temperature.

SONYA

I'm burning up. I must have been sleepwalking. Jesus. I'm sorry, Zoey. My head isn't right.

Sonya makes her way to the stairs and meets Zoey halfway.

SONYA (CONT'D)

Are you okay?

Zoey nods but starts crying. Sonya kneels down and hugs her.

SONYA (CONT'D)

Let's get back upstairs. You can sleep with me tonight, okay?

Zoey nods.

Sonya takes the flashlight in one hand and Zoey's hand in the other. They head up the stairs.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Zoey is asleep in the bed.

Sonya is wide awake. She checks on Zoey and quietly leans over and opens her bedside table drawer. Inside the drawer is the cell phone.

Sonya grabs the cell phone and hits the power button. The screen lights up. The charge icon reads, '0%'.

The screen suddenly shows an IMAGE; it's a picture of Arthur's BLOODY CORPSE. Whoever took the picture was standing directly over the body.

Sonya puts the cell phone back in the drawer and closes it. She gets out of bed and moves toward the blood-red drapes, which have been tied closed again.

Sonya places a hand on a DENT in the drywall beside the window. She slowly closes her hand into a fist and fits it perfectly inside the dent. She sighs.

Sonya looks toward Zoey sleeping in the bed before leaving the room.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ZOEY'S ROOM - DAY

Zoey puts the flashlight back on her bedside table. She heads toward the violet flower, which is now dead and completely wilted. She studies it for a moment.

Zoey clicks on the UV light above the violet flower... nothing. She clicks it on and off multiple times, same result.

Puzzled, Zoey cocks her head to the side. She looks toward the laptop and reaches a finger toward the keys...

SONYA (O.S.)

Zoey!

Zoey retracts her finger.

ZOEY

Yeah?

SONYA (O.S.)

Come get some breakfast please.

ZOEY

Okay.

Zoey clicks the UV light on and off once more then leaves the room.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Sonya and Zoey eat some stew and drink bottled water.

A wall in the living room CREAKS. This causes a mere pause between the two but then they go right back to eating.

All is quiet except the clinking of cutlery against the bowls.

ZOEY
My flower is dead.

A long silence.

SONYA
What flower?

Zoey glances at Sonya then returns to the stew.

Sonya shakes her head.

SONYA (CONT'D)
The imagination on you.

The two continue to eat in silence.

SONYA (CONT'D)
Do you want to talk about last night?

ZOEY
No.

SONYA
You know if we're going to make it through this we need to start facing things, together. No more head in the clouds stuff, Zoey. You're not a child anymore.

ZOEY
But I am.

SONYA
No, you're not. Believe me.

Zoey sighs.

ZOEY
Can I be excused?

SONYA
What, you'd rather talk to a laptop screen than talk to your mother?

Zoey stands up.

ZOEY

I just wanna go.

Sonya grabs Zoey's arm.

SONYA

I'm just trying to protect you from those monsters out there. You do see that, don't you? They are all out to get you. They all just want you.

ZOEY

You're hurting me.

Sonya slowly lets go of Zoey's arm. Her fingers have left marks in Zoey's skin.

Sonya looks down at the marks on Zoey's arm and shrugs.

SONYA

Nothing is forever, right?

Zoey looks away, standing still. Sonya waves her away.

SONYA (CONT'D)

Go. Just go.

Zoey leaves the kitchen.

SONYA (CONT'D)

(calling after)

I may not always be around, you know...

Silence.

Sonya turns back to her stew and pushes it around with her spoon. Frustrated, she pushes the bowl away.

A wall CREAKS in the living room.

Sonya buries her face in her hands, at her wits end.

A SPRAYING SOUND, like a mist from a nozzle, comes from just down the hallway.

Frustrated, Sonya gets up to investigate.

INT. BASEMENT - DAY

Zoey has her shirt up over her nose as she sprays a can of air freshener from the halfway point of the basement stairs.

Sonya rushes up behind her and grabs the can.

SONYA
Stop. Just stop.

ZOEY
It stinks!

Sonya tosses the can of air freshener away and grabs holds of Zoey's wrist.

SONYA
I'm sick of this shit.

She drags Zoey down the steps and into the middle of the basement floor. She pulls the string above, turning on the light.

SONYA (CONT'D)
Stand there. Don't move.

Sonya let's go of her grip and crosses her arms.

SONYA (CONT'D)
What smells?

Zoey lowers her head.

SONYA (CONT'D)
What smells!?

Zoey doesn't respond.

SONYA (CONT'D)
Nothing! Exactly. I don't want to hear another word about it, understand me?

Zoey nods.

SONYA (CONT'D)
Go to your room.

Zoey heads up the stairs.

Sonya looks toward the corner filled with garbage bags underneath hanging car fresheners. She shutters slightly.

INT. ZOEY'S ROOM - DAY

Zoey stands in front of the laptop and the withered violet flower. She clicks the UV light on and off. Nothing.

Looking toward her reflection in the black laptop screen, Zoey reaches a finger out and presses the ESCAPE KEY. The screen lights up instantly.

There is a green phone icon front and center. Zoey slowly moves the cursor onto the icon and clicks it. The icon activates.

After a few moments, a smiling Abigail appears on screen.

ABIGAIL

Zoey... so good to hear from you.

Abigail's smile fades as she sees Zoey's face.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)

What's wrong?

ZOEY

My mom... I think she's sick. She's scaring me.

ABIGAIL

I see. Well I warned you about that, didn't I?

ZOEY

I don't know what to do.

ABIGAIL

Yes you do. That's why you called me. And I'm glad you did. It means you're ready to talk, and more importantly, ready to listen and face what actually happened. Isn't that right?

Zoey shrugs.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)

Have you been taking your medication regularly?

ZOEY

My... ?

Abigail gives her a look.

ABIGAIL

Take your pill please. And I hope you're drinking lots of water, it's important to stay hydrated.

Zoey looks toward the half-empty water bottle. There is a single WHITE PILL beside it where the white powder has been. She picks it up and studies it.

ZOEY
What is this?

Abigail makes a quick note.

ABIGAIL
You take them everyday, Zoey. Now
come on, down the hatch please.

Zoey slowly puts the pill on her tongue. She grabs the water bottle, opens it, and takes a drink, swallowing the pill down with it.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)
Good.

Zoey makes a yuck face.

ZOEY
Yuck.

ABIGAIL
Where's your mother right now,
Zoey?

ZOEY
Downstairs.

ABIGAIL
She's never there when you need
her, is she?

Zoey stares at the screen, lost.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)
Can you do me a favor?

Zoey nods.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)
Look at your flower.

Zoey looks over at the violet flower... which is now fully bloomed and back to life.

ZOEY
It's alive!

ABIGAIL
Yes it is.

ZOEY
You can see it?

ABIGAIL
I know all about the violet flower,
Zoey. And what it means to you.
Keep your eyes on the flower
please.

Zoey continues to stare at the flower.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)
Really look at it, Zoey. Where does
it take you?

Zoey stares at the flower, transfixed. She reaches out toward
the UV light above.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)
That's it.

Zoey clicks the UV light on.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)
Let there be light.

FLASH CUT:

INT. MALL - DAY

Zoey, a couple years older, her HAIR BRAIDED, is holding
Sonya's hand, basked in a PURPLE GLOW. She is looking toward
the store's neon purple sign. Hypnotized.

Sonya is browsing some clothing when her cell phone RINGS.
Sonya checks the phone and gasps. She let's go of Zoey's hand
and brings the phone to her ear.

SONYA
Hello?

OPERATOR (V.O.)
You have a collect call from
Englewood Federal Correctional
Institution from...

BLAIR (V.O.)
(pre-recorded)
Blair.

OPERATOR (V.O.)
Would you like to accept the
charges?

SONYA

Yes.

Sonya hasn't noticed that Zoey has wandered off.

Zoey stares up at the store's neon purple sign that reads, 'Ultra Violet Clothing Store'. There is a GLOWING FLOWER within the logo.

Various PEOPLE bustle passed in front and behind Zoey. The mall is crowded. Zoey slowly backs away as more people funnel through.

Suddenly, Zoey is lost within a CROWD OF PEOPLE walking in both directions. She looks up and around, frozen in terror. The PURPLE LIGHT still emits from the nearby store.

Zoey looks up at all the people passing her by. The various people illuminated in the purple light all seem to blend together to form one.

Zoey closes her eyes, terrified.

Various PEOPLE above begin to look down at her.

WOMAN #1

Are you okay, honey?

WOMAN #2

Are you lost? Where's your mother?

Zoey holds her breath, willing it all to go away.

MAN #1

Wait, isn't that the girl from the paper?

MAN #2

Jesus. Did anyone notify mall security?

Zoey opens her eyes, tears fall out. Various HANDS reach down toward Zoey. She recoils away.

WOMAN #1

Sweetheart, it's okay. You need to breathe.

MAN #1

She's turning purple.

SONYA (O.S.)

Zoey!

Zoey lets out a huge gasp, finally breathing.

Sonya bursts through the crowd of people holding her cell phone. She picks Zoey up.

SONYA (CONT'D)

Christ, I look away for one second
and you disappear into thin air!
Why do you do that? You know what
could happen. You're okay though,
right? You're okay.

The various people shake their heads and mumble under their breath before moving on.

Zoey breaks down in tears.

ZOEY

You left me.

Sonya brushes Zoey's hair out of her face.

SONYA

No, no, no, no, no... I'm right
here. You wandered away.

ZOEY

You lost me again.

SONYA

You're supposed to stay right by my
side at all times, Zoey. You know
the rules.

Sonya wipes away Zoey's tears.

SONYA (CONT'D)

Hey, guess who's on the phone?

Zoey locks eyes with Sonya.

ZOEY

Dad?

Sonya smiles and nods.

SONYA

Want to talk to him?

Zoey nods excitedly.

SONYA (CONT'D)

Okay, but we gotta be quick.

Sonya takes the button off of mute and hits the speakerphone button.

SONYA (CONT'D)
Hey, we're back.

BLAIR (V.O.)
Is everything okay?

SONYA
Yeah, it's just crazy here. I had to get away. Someone wants to talk to you.
(to Zoey)
Do you wanna say hi?

BLAIR (V.O.)
Is that my Zoey?

Zoey turns away and clings onto Sonya tight. She peeks over Sonya's shoulder at the CROWD of people rushing passed like water around a rock in a river.

Zoey closes her eyes, not daring to open them again.

SONYA
I uh, think she's a little shy right now.

BLAIR (V.O.)
Aw, that's okay. She'll come around. Nothing is forever, right Zoey?

BACK TO:

INT. ZOEY'S ROOM - DAY

Zoey stumbles back away from the flower, recovering.

Abigail watches her intently.

ZOEY
What was that place? Where was I?

ABIGAIL
Stay focused, Zoey. We are right where we need to be.

ZOEY
What was that place, Abigail?

Abigail looks down and seems to be making a note.

ABIGAIL

We need to shrink those memories down. Isolate the trauma and focus on it. Nothing else matters.

ZOEY

What? Abigail? What did you say?

Abigail looks up and smiles warmly.

ABIGAIL

I just find it amazing what a child's mind interprets, and how it manifests later in life. But let's go further back, Zoey. Sometimes you have to go back to move forward. I want to talk about the incident. Can you come a little closer please?

Zoey reluctantly steps up closer to the laptop screen.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)

Good, thank you. This next part will be scary though so I want you to focus on me and nothing else, okay?

Zoey nods.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)

Okay. Now listen to me closely, Zoey. I want you to let the people outside in.

Zoey shakes her head, not believing what she heard.

ZOEY

What?

ABIGAIL

Open the door. Let the plague in, Zoey.

ZOEY

No. I can't. I- -

ABIGAIL

Let... the plague... in.

ZOEY

I don't want to.

ABIGAIL

It has to come inside, Zoey. The plague is all around your house right now, consuming you. There's nowhere left to go but in.

Zoey wipes away a tear that fell onto her cheek.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)

No more crying. Time to be a big girl and face your fears.

ZOEY

I can't.

ABIGAIL

Then I will open the door myself!

ZOEY

No! Don't bring the plague around!

Abigail smiles at this.

Zoey's features instantly slacken and relax. Her eyes widen as if she is in a hypnotized state.

ZOEY (CONT'D)

Don't bring the plague around...
plague 'round... playground...

Zoey gasps, her eyes unblinking.

ZOEY (CONT'D)

Playground...

ABIGAIL

That is what we call a "trigger word", Zoey. It's time to see things from a different perspective. The truth is always viewed in the harshest light of all, but you must follow it. You must see where it leads. Where does it lead?

ZOEY

Playground...

FLASH CUT:

EXT. PLAYGROUND - DAY

Zoey is laughing and playing on the playground with other KIDS.

EXT. PARK BENCH - DAY

Sonya watches from a park bench, away from the other PARENTS. She checks her cell phone and starts texting and scrolling through a news feed.

EXT. PLAYGROUND - DAY

Zoey hangs off some monkey bars as something catches her attention off to the side.

Mason is walking nearby with a walking stick poking out in front of him, feeling the ground ahead. He has sunglasses on. He drops the stick and freezes in place, lost.

MASON

Dad?

No answer.

MASON (CONT'D)

Dad?

Various kids point and laugh.

Zoey drops from the monkey bars and goes to help. She picks up Mason's walking stick and hands it to him.

EXT. PARK BENCH - DAY

Sonya watches and smiles proudly. Zoey and Mason continue to talk. She checks her cell phone again, scrolling through social media posts.

Mason says something and points behind him.

Zoey looks toward a parked car on the road shaded by trees. She takes Mason by the arm and leads him away toward the car.

Sonya continues to scroll her phone. She checks her text messages and sends a response back. Finally she looks up, Zoey is gone.

Sonya scans the playground but can't find Zoey amongst the many laughing and screaming kids. She stands up, craning her neck to look.

EXT. ROADSIDE - DAY

Zoey approaches the car holding Mason by the arm.

Arthur steps out of the driver's seat and makes his way around the car, staring at Zoey the entire time.

MASON

You can let go now.

Zoey let's go of Mason's arm.

ARTHUR

Thank you for helping him like that... ummm...?

ZOEY

Zoey.

ARTHUR

Zoey. Pretty name. Thank you.

Arthur takes hold of Mason and hands Zoey the walking stick.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

Hold that for me, okay?

ZOEY

Okay.

Arthur helps Mason into the backseat of the car. He turns back to Zoey.

ARTHUR

Where are your parents, Zoey?

Zoey turns around and points.

ZOEY

My mom is right there. My dad is at work.

ARTHUR

I see.

Arthur holds his hand out.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

I'll take that back now.

Zoey places the walking stick in Arthur's palm.

Arthur closes his hand and yanks back; Zoey yelps as she is pulled forward.

Arthur scoops Zoey up quickly and puts her in the backseat with Mason. He slams the door and looks around the area.

INT. ARTHUR'S CAR - DAY

Zoey looks at Mason, in shock at what just happened. Mason's head is lowered.

Zoey tries to open the door but can't.

MASON

No use. Locks are childproof.

Zoey presses a hand against the window and stares out toward the playground.

ZOEY

Mom!

Arthur gets in the driver's seat and starts the engine. He looks at Zoey in the rearview mirror.

ARTHUR

Away from the window!

Zoey jumps, frightened. She sits back in her seat and starts to cry.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

You look straight ahead now, Zoey. Keep your eyes inside the car, you hear me? No looking outside. Not even once. If I catch you looking again you'll be in a lot of trouble. I know you won't disappoint me now, will you?

Zoey shakes her head.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

Good girl.

Arthur kicks it into drive and pulls away from the curb.

Zoey's head is lowered as she continues to cry. Above her, on the window, her handprint has begun to fade from the glass.

EXT. PLAYGROUND - DAY

Sonya frantically searches the playground area.

SONYA

Zoey!

Some parents begin to scoop up their children and move them away. Others assist Sonya in the search for Zoey.

SONYA (CONT'D)

Zoey!!

BACK TO:

INT. ZOEY'S ROOM - DAY

ABIGAIL

You mom looked for you desperately,
she really did. But it was too
late, wasn't it?

Zoey remains in a hypnotized state. Tears fall from her eyes.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)

I know this is hard to live through
again, but your fear of the
outdoors and people stemmed from
that playground. You never viewed
people the same way again. They
were now the enemy. Every stranger,
who was once a welcoming face, now
was viewed as a possible threat.
They are all dangerous to you,
therefore, apart from family, they
all might as well be one single
being. It's an alarming form of
solipsism.

Abigail watches Zoey for a moment.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)

But I don't want to overwhelm you,
just make you aware. You've made it
clear that your mother wasn't there
for you when you needed her most.
So I'll ask again, where is your
mother now?

Zoey doesn't respond.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)

Zoey... Where is your mother right
now? Be specific.

ZOEY

In the basement.

ABIGAIL
 And what else happened in the
 basement, Zoey?

FLASH CUT:

INT. ARTHUR'S BASEMENT - NIGHT

Zoey is seated on a pile of dirty blankets and towels on the floor. She is chained around the waist to the radiator.

She curls herself up into a ball as a looming SHADOW takes over her space.

Arthur stands over her. He looks down at a can of stew that is open but hasn't been touched.

ARTHUR
 Something wrong with the stew?

Zoey shakes her head.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
 I asked you a question.

ZOEY
 No.

ARTHUR
 Then why didn't you eat it?

ZOEY
 I'm not hungry.

ARTHUR
 Oh yeah you are.

Arthur begins to unbuckle his belt.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
 Yeah you are...

INT. BASEMENT - THE NEXT NIGHT

Mason brings Zoey a plate of food and a bottle of water. He has no sunglasses on.

Zoey looks up at him, her eyes pleading.

ZOEY
 Can you help me?

Mason kneels down and places the plate and bottle down near Zoey.

MASON
I can't. He'll hurt me.

ZOEY
When can I go home?

MASON
You can't. No one ever goes home
after being down here.

Zoey reaches out and gently touches Mason's arm.

ZOEY
You can come with me. My dad will
beat him up if he hurts us again.

Mason hesitates for a moment. He stands up quickly and leaves.

Zoey is left alone. She looks up through a small window as various COLORED LIGHTS turn on outside.

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT (LATER)

Zoey is lying on the dirty blankets and towels, despondent and distant. She is staring at something on the floor in front of her.

Illuminated by the outside lights is a CIRCLE of DRIED BLOOD. Inside the circle is various JAGGED LINES and DOTS of blood. A splatter pattern.

Zoey's pattern.

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT (LATER)

Mason is heard screaming in pain as Arthur beats him upstairs.

Zoey lies on her side, numb to it all.

INT. BASEMENT - THE NEXT NIGHT

Arthur paces back and forth in front of Zoey, swigging a beer and holding his shotgun. He mumbles under his breath, obviously pissed about something. He finishes the beer and tosses it away.

Arthur approaches Zoey and stands over her, shotgun hanging lazily at his side.

Zoey keeps her eyes on the various colors of lights coming from the window above.

Arthur follows her gaze.

ARTHUR

They light up the darkness, don't they? They are beautiful. Almost as beautiful as you.

ZOEY

Are they heaven?

ARTHUR

Heaven? There's no heaven.

Arthur looks up toward the lights, he seems lost in his thoughts for a moment.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

In the man made lodge the moon rays replace god...

Zoey's eyes drop to the floor.

Arthur faces Zoey and slowly puts his shotgun down.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

I don't know what in the hell I'd do if I didn't have you, Zoey. Don't know what I'd do...

He unbuckles his belt.

INT. BASEMENT - THE NEXT NIGHT

There is now dried blood over the many dirty blankets and towels that Zoey is lying on. Blood has crusted onto her INNER THIGHS.

Zoey is emotionless. A shadow. She lies still. Her blinking is the only telltale sign that she's still alive...

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT (LATER)

Mason sneaks down toward Zoey. He stands over her for a moment... then reaches into his pocket and holds up a key.

Mason kneels down by Zoey and unlocks her chains. He quickly removes the chain from around her waist.

MASON

Come on, we got to be quick. I don't know how long he'll be out for.

Mason helps Zoey to her feet, supporting her weight as Zoey nearly collapses.

Zoey looks up through the window at the various colored lights above.

ZOEY

What are those lights?

MASON

Christmas lights. He never takes them down.

Zoey looks at Mason.

ZOEY

Are you an angel?

MASON

No. But that's where we live.

ZOEY

In heaven?

MASON

No, on Angel. Let's hurry up, or we will both be in lots of trouble.

Mason leads Zoey towards the stairs.

MASON (CONT'D)

Just remember to send your dad back to beat up my dad...

BACK TO:

INT. ZOEY'S ROOM - DAY

Zoey slowly looks at the dried blood under her fingernails.

Abigail snaps her fingers on the screen.

ABIGAIL

Zoey, stay focused please.

Zoey looks at Abigail.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)

Listen closely, okay? You are suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, and this is not just common amongst abuse victims, it's almost an epidemic. Your mind fractured because of what happened. You blamed your mother for losing you. She is the anger and depression that resulted from your captivity. The lack of trust of other people. You wanted your father to save you. You believed he could and he would. He is the protector. The one who would figure out what happened and would find you and make things right. These are your truths, Zoey.

(beat)

Let's keep connecting the dots...

FLASH CUT:

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Zoey stumbles down the street. She looks back at the house with Christmas lights on it.

Mason, now wearing sunglasses, watches from the front porch then goes back inside.

Zoey runs away as fast as she can.

EXT. ANOTHER STREET - NIGHT

Zoey stumbles down the side of the road along the curb.

A SCARRED MAN with a SCAR on his forehead is walking his dog. He sees Zoey and approaches quickly.

Zoey looks up at the Man and screams. She tries to run away in the opposite direction.

SCARRED MAN

Hey, wait. Are you okay?

Zoey collapses to the ground and pulls herself along on her stomach onto a lawn.

The Scarred Man takes a long look at Zoey and pulls out his cell phone. The Dog sits and stares at Zoey, whining.

SCARRED MAN (CONT'D)

Is your name Zoey?

Zoey whimpers and buries her face into the grass.

ZOEY

Go away... go away...

The Scarred Man dials a number and brings his cell phone to his ear.

OPERATOR (V.O.)

911, what is your emergency?

SCARRED MAN

Um, I was just out walking my dog and I came across that missing girl everyone's been looking for. Zoey Walker, I believe her name is?

OPERATOR (V.O.)

Okay... Sir, are you saying you found a missing child?

SCARRED MAN

Yeah, she's right in front of me, covered in blood.

BACK TO:

INT. ZOEY'S ROOM - DAY

Zoey stares at the laptop screen.

Abigail leans in closer to the camera on her end.

ABIGAIL

Now let's talk about the recurring dream you have about your father... the one where he's on the roof. You know which one I'm talking about. He is always outside, isn't he? Behind a pane of glass? Do you know why?

Zoey shakes her head no.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)

It's because your father is in prison, Zoey.

(MORE)

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)

You've visited your father there many times, haven't you? Before your condition prevented you from doing so. You feel he was taken from you. Maybe you even feel like it's your fault. It's not. None of this is your fault. The depression that you feel on a daily basis is a common consequence of molestation. Along with mood swings. Low self-esteem. And yes, even guilt.

FLASH CUT:

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Zoey is wrapped in blankets in the bed, earbuds in her ears. She has a HOSPITAL BRACELET on one wrist.

Blair and Sonya lie on either side of her, both on their sides, facing their daughter.

SONYA

Do you want some more water?

Zoey shakes her head no.

Blair reaches out and tucks a strand of hair behind Zoey's ear.

BLAIR

The man that did this to you,
Zo'...

SONYA

Blair...

BLAIR

What else can you remember about
him?

SONYA

Stop. It's not the time. The police
are handling it.

Blair scoffs at this. He turns onto his back.

BLAIR

They are doing nothing because they
have nothing.

SONYA
 (quietly)
 They swabbed her for DNA.

BLAIR
 Jesus.

Blair clenches his jaw and closes his eyes for a moment, suppressing the anger. He takes a breath, calming himself.

BLAIR (CONT'D)
 All we know is that it was an older man and he had a son that helped. We know you saw her with a blind boy before you lost her. So we start there.

SONYA
 Before I lost her?

BLAIR
 Before she was taken.

SONYA
 That's not what you said.

Blair lets out a frustrated sigh.

BLAIR
 We need to focus and work together if we're going to solve this thing, Sonya.

SONYA
 We? Blair we're not detectives. We can't just- -

BLAIR
 We can't do nothing!

Blair stares at Sonya with an icy glare.

BLAIR (CONT'D)
I can't do nothing. Do you understand?

He gets up out of bed and leaves the room.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Blair is seated on the couch with Zoey on his lap. The TV is on and showing a newscast, but at a low volume.

Zoey has one earbud in, working on a drawing using various colored crayons.

Sonya is curled up on the other side of the couch, half-asleep.

Blair looks down at the drawing Zoey is working on. The DRAWING is of a house with Christmas lights all around it.

BLAIR
That looks nice.

ZOEY
Thanks.

BLAIR
That our house?

ZOEY
No. That's where I was taken.

Blair turns his attention to Zoey.

Sonya perks up.

BLAIR
That's the house?

ZOEY
Yeah.

BLAIR
It had Christmas lights on it?

ZOEY
Yeah, they turned on every night.

Blair and Sonya exchange a glance.

BLAIR
Christmas lights in the summer? You sure, Zo'?

ZOEY
Yep.

BLAIR
What else can you remember about the house?

ZOEY
I don't know.

Sonya leans forward and places a hand on Zoey's forearm.

SONYA
Think hard, Zoey.

ZOEY
Um... It was in heaven.

BLAIR
What do you mean?

ZOEY
The boy who saved me wasn't blind,
he was an angel. He said that's
where he lived.

BLAIR
In heaven?

ZOEY
No. On Angel.

Blair quickly hands Zoey off to Sonya and gets up.

Sonya eyes Blair quickly then cuddles up to Zoey, pointing
out things she likes in the drawing.

INT. SPARE ROOM - NIGHT

Blair sits at a desk in front of a laptop. He goes to Google
Earth and types in Angel Street, Denver, Co.

Angel Avenue pops up. He takes a deep breath and clicks on
the link...

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT (LATER)

Sonya is sitting cross-legged on the bed, waiting, thinking.

Blair enters the room holding the two-way baby monitor. He
places it down on his bedside table.

SONYA
She asleep?

Blair begins pacing the room.

BLAIR
I think so. Maybe. Who knows. Would
you sleep if you were her?

SONYA
We need to tell the police.

BLAIR

Why? So they can go arrest him?
Three hots and a cot? Fuck that.
I'm dealing with this.

SONYA

You're not thinking clearly Blair,
you're- -

BLAIR

I'm thinking like a father, Sonya.
What else can I do?

INT. ZOEY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Zoey listens to the baby monitor. She stares at her hospital bracelet.

SONYA (V.O.)

You don't even know if it's the
right place or who even lives
there. Zoey could be confused.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

BLAIR

I toured the entire street online.
I saw a caution sign warning of a
blind child in the neighborhood.
And there was only one house with
Christmas lights on the entire
block. Just one.

SONYA

It still could be a coincidence.

BLAIR

No... no, this was it. I know it.

SONYA

You're acting like an insane person
right now.

BLAIR

I'll just go knock on the door and
feel it out. I'll know if it's him
when I look in his eyes.

SONYA

How?

BLAIR

I just will. I know it. The universe will tell me that I'm on the right path.

SONYA

There is no universe to tell you what to do, Blair! No God. There's just you. Us.

BLAIR

Well then there's no right or wrong then, is there? Just choice. And I've made mine.

BACK TO:

INT. ZOEY'S ROOM - DAY

Abigail shuffles some papers in front of her.

ABIGAIL

This next part, Zoey... I know it has been a subject of some interpretation by you over the years. You know the end result, but not how it occurred. Right now, I'm going fill in the blanks with what I know from various police reports that I've read, okay? I feel by connecting these dots for you we may finally be able to break through the formidable walls that you have built around yourself...

(beat)

Are you ready?

Zoey nods.

FLASH CUT:

INT. BLAIR'S CAR - NIGHT

Blair slowly drives passed the CAUTION SIGN warning of a blind child in the neighborhood. He stares at it as he passes by.

He slowly stalks the street, eventually pulling up along the curb outside a house with Christmas lights on it. He throws the vehicle in park and kills the engine.

Blair closes his eyes and takes a deep breath. After a moment of self reflection, he nods to himself and gets out of the car.

EXT. FRONT PORCH - NIGHT

Blair raises a fist and knocks on the door. There's some COMMOTION inside followed by silence.

The door is heard unlocking. It opens.

Mason, wearing sunglasses, looks straight ahead as he peeks out from behind the door.

MASON
Yes, who's there?

Blair's breath catches in his throat for a moment. He clears it.

BLAIR
Is your parents home?

Mason is silent for several moments.

MASON
It's just my dad. Who's asking please?

BLAIR
May I see him?

MASON
He's um, asleep at the moment.

BLAIR
Can you wake him up?

Mason thinks it over.

MASON
I think you should come back another time.

Mason starts to shut the door but Blair stops it with his foot.

Mason gasps slightly.

MASON (CONT'D)
Who are you?

BLAIR
I think my little girl might have
been here...

Mason goes still.

BLAIR (CONT'D)
Do you know who I'm talking about
son?

Mason doesn't move a muscle. He is silent for a long while.
Then...

MASON
(whispers)
Are you here to beat him up?

BLAIR
What?

MASON
That's what Zoey said. She said
you'd beat him up.

Blair takes this in, absorbing everything. He slowly kneels
down and removes Mason's sunglasses.

Mason's eyes look at the ground. He has two BLACK EYES. Blair
takes hold of Mason's limp arms and turns them over, exposing
the forearms. Both have various BRUISES and LASH MARKS.

MASON (CONT'D)
Are you going to hurt me?

BLAIR
Jesus, kid. No.

Blair gently puts Mason's sunglasses back on him.

BLAIR (CONT'D)
You're not going to want to see
this.

ARTHUR (O.S.)
Who's at the door, Mason?

Blair stands up quickly and reaches into his waistband. He
pulls out the Glock 19 handgun and lets it hang lazily at his
side.

FOOTSTEPS approach.

Arthur appears in the doorway, looking like he is in the
middle of a night of heavy drinking.

Mason hurries away into the house.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
Who are you? What do you want?

Blair just stares at Arthur, studying him.

Arthur slowly looks down at the gun hanging lazily in Blair's hand. He looks back up into Blair's eyes. Something passes between the two men... an understanding.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
Sir, please... I have a child.

Blair's hand wraps tightly around the Glock 19 at his side. He shrugs.

BLAIR
So do I.

He quickly raises the gun and SHOOTS Arthur in the neck.

Arthur drops to the floor, his eyes bulging, instantly choking and gagging on his own blood. He presses a hand tightly over the wound; His other hand outstretched toward Blair, trying to keep him at arms length.

Blair takes a step inside the home and stands over Arthur, watching him suffer.

After enough time has passed, Blair flips the gun around and begins to pummel Arthur; Each clubbing blow more vicious than the next.

Finally, he stops. He is breathing heavily. He looks down at the corpse below him and tosses the bloody gun on the floor. He takes out his cell phone and snaps a PICTURE of the bloody mess beneath him.

Blair turns around, takes a few steps out of the house, and takes a seat on the porch. He reaches into his pocket for a cigarette and lights one up.

Mason appears in the doorway. He is staring down at the bloody mess that was once his father.

Blair looks over his shoulder at Mason.

BLAIR (CONT'D)
You're free now, kid. Run.

Mason slowly looks at Blair and takes off his sunglasses.

BLAIR (CONT'D)
 Go on. Run. Find your favorite
 neighbor. Call the police.

Mason runs out of the house and passed Blair. He disappears
 into the night.

EXT. FRONT PORCH - NIGHT (LATER)

Blair lights another cigarette and picks up his cell phone.
 He dials a number and brings the phone to his ear.

SONYA (V.O.)
 Hey. Where are you?

Blair exhales some smoke.

BLAIR
 I need you to protect Zoey from now
 on, okay? Protect her with
 everything you have.

SONYA (V.O.)
 Blair... What did you do?

BLAIR
 Hold on. I'm sending you something.

Blair cycles through his cell phone and attaches the picture
 he took to a text message. He sends it to Sonya.

BLAIR (CONT'D)
 I love you. Tell Zoey daddy loves
 her very much and that she is safe
 now.

POLICE SIRENS are heard approaching toward the neighborhood.

SONYA (V.O.)
 Tell her yourself, she can hear
 you. I'm on speakerphone. What
 happened, Blair?

ZOEY (V.O.)
 Daddy, are you coming home?

BLAIR
 Maybe not for awhile, baby. I love
 you, okay? I did this for you.
 Remember that. And remember...
 Nothing is forever.

Blair stubs out his cigarette and stands up.

The POLICE SIRENS are closer now.

SONYA (V.O.)
Is that the cops?
(beat)
Blair!

BLAIR
Check your texts. Maybe when Zoey
is older she will want to see what
I sent you.

ZOEY (V.O.)
(crying)
They are taking daddy, I know it!

BLAIR
I love you guys.

ZOEY (V.O.)
(crying)
It's my fault! It's my fault!

Blair hangs up the phone and pockets it. He places his hands
behind his head as the POLICE SIRENS close in.

BACK TO:

INT. ZOEY'S ROOM - DAY

Abigail stares at Zoey through the screen, her demeanor calm
and reassuring.

ABIGAIL
I hope this information will be of
some help to you, Zoey. I am
feeling positive myself, but you
need to stay vigilant. Some truths
we bury deep down until they take
other forms. Sometimes they are
even turned into something
beautiful as a defense mechanism.
Like your flower.

ZOEY
Or... Or the Christmas tree?

FLASH CUT:

INT. BASEMENT - DAY

A fake Christmas tree wrapped in oversized CHRISTMAS LIGHTS leans against a wall. There is an ANGEL on top of the tree.

BACK TO:

INT. ZOEY'S ROOM - DAY

Abigail makes a quick note.

ABIGAIL

I'm sure you have stockpiled a lot of beautiful things in the house with you, Zoey. Truth is, you've been dealing with this trauma for the better part of 16 years. You're 23 years old and have been diagnosed with severe agoraphobia. It's a symptom of the trauma you endured when you were 7. And that's who I'm still talking to right now, aren't I? The 7 year old child?

Zoey stares at Abigail, tears in her eyes, her jaw trembling.

Abigail shakes her head slowly.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)

You needn't feel alone. There are plenty of other people like you out there. I myself have had my bout with agoraphobia, so I know what I'm talking about. I'm not just a doctor, Zoey... I'm a survivor. And so are you.

Zoey looks around the room, getting her bearings.

ZOEY

You're a doctor?

ABIGAIL

Of course I am. But you knew that. What you're going through right now is what's called regressive hypnotherapy. It takes you back to the moment a trauma occurred and forces you to re-live it. Some even have the ability to re-live the event through different perspectives, an ability you possess, Zoey...

(MORE)

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)

And an important one for healing. But also one that can cause some issues. I have put you in a dissociative state to compartmentalize the trauma, now I intend to isolate it. Only then can we run you through what is called "the loop", making you re-live the event over and over until it no longer has an effect on you.

ZOEY

I'm scared, Abigail. I don't know what you mean.

ABIGAIL

I know. But it's sinking in elsewhere, believe me. You will understand soon enough. Now we both know where your father is, Zoey. The question is, and has always been, where is your mother? You need to answer that question before we progress any further, or I can't help you. You must confront her in order to forgive her. Do you understand?

ZOEY

Because she lost me, right?

ABIGAIL

That's right. That's how you've always seen it. So now your eyes are open once again. But we've been here before. There's still something you're not facing in that house.

ZOEY

What?

ABIGAIL

First things first. Where's your mom?

ZOEY

Downstairs.

ABIGAIL

Time to go see her. You're not finished yet.

ZOEY
How do you know?

ABIGAIL
Because you're still 7 years old.

The laptop screen goes black.

Zoey stares at her reflection in the screen, dumbfounded.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Zoey slowly makes her way to the railing and listens.

Downstairs, a SCRAPING SOUND repeats over and over.

ZOEY
Mom?

The SCRAPING SOUNDS continue.

Zoey heads for the stairs.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Zoey follows the SCRAPING SOUNDS toward the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Zoey enters the kitchen.

Sonya is seated at the table holding a KNIFE. She carves a final line into the kitchen table.

SONYA
You're the reason your father is gone. You know that, right?

Sonya looks up at Zoey.

SONYA (CONT'D)
It was because of you.

Zoey takes a deep, nervous breath.

ZOEY
No.

SONYA
No?

ZOEY

It was because of you, mom. You weren't watching me. You lost me.

Sonya's eyes go dark. She stares a hole through Zoey. She slowly places the knife down on the table.

SONYA

Who have you been talking to up there? I hear you, you know.

Zoey doesn't respond.

Sonya pushes out a chair away from the table.

SONYA (CONT'D)

Come over here. Sit with me.

Zoey reluctantly takes a seat. She looks down at the tabletop; Carved into it is a CIRCLE with various JAGGED LINES and DOTS.

SONYA (CONT'D)

Look familiar?

Zoey nods.

SONYA (CONT'D)

What does it mean?

ZOEY

It was in the basement.

SONYA

I know it was, but what does it mean?

Zoey doesn't respond. Sonya sighs.

SONYA (CONT'D)

Trying to reach you is pointless sometimes, you know that? But still I try, don't I?

After a moment, Sonya reaches over and takes Zoey's hand in hers.

SONYA (CONT'D)

Zoey, listen... You know I love you right?

Zoey nods.

SONYA (CONT'D)

Good. But love comes with responsibilities. It means I have to take care of you and protect you but you make that difficult if you don't communicate with me. Or if you, you know... wander off. Understand?

Zoey just stares at the carving in the tabletop.

Sonya let's go of Zoey's hand, frustrated.

SONYA (CONT'D)

I pray you never have to find out what it takes to be a mother. There's no manual telling you what to do. It's just a constant responsibility and worry and it never stops. You have no idea what that did to me. What you did to me.

Sonya turns her arm over, revealing multiple SCARS on her wrists and forearms.

SONYA (CONT'D)

I've punished myself every day for what happened because I love you more than I love myself. Do you know what that's like? To know someone has that power over you? It's the most beautiful and ugliest thing in the world, both at the same time. As soon as I felt you kick inside me I just wanted it to stop. Just wanted you out. And if I'm being honest... I still do.

Sonya tightens her grip on Zoey's hand. Zoey tries to pull away but can't.

ZOEY

Mom! Let go!

SONYA

I'm trying to.

Sonya pulls Zoey to her feet and yanks her out of the kitchen.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Sonya pulls Zoey along toward the boarded up front door.

SONYA

You have to leave this house, Zoey.
There's no other way around it. You
have to go outside.

Sonya releases her grip. She continues toward the front door and grabs the hammer. She fits the hammer's claw onto a nail and begins pulling at it.

ZOEY

Mom, stop. You'll wake the plague
up.

SONYA

You just can't stay here forever.
It's not healthy.

Sonya yanks a nail out and tosses it aside.

Zoey spots the Glock 19 handgun left on the side table.

SONYA (CONT'D)

Sometimes as a parent you have to
make the hard decisions. For the
betterment of the child.

Sonya rips out another nail from the board.

Zoey grabs the gun and points it at Sonya's back.

ZOEY

Stop! They'll get in!

Sonya slowly turns around and spots the gun in Zoey's free hand, pointed right at her.

Zoey takes hold of the gun with both hands, the gun shaking in her trembling grip.

ZOEY (CONT'D)

Please... just stop.

SONYA

And just what are you planning to
do with that?

Zoey starts crying.

ZOEY

I'm scared.

Sonya shakes her head.

SONYA

You need to grow up. It's time you finally did. Now put the gun down before someone gets hurt.

Zoey keeps the gun aimed on Sonya. She wipes away a tear with her shoulder.

SONYA (CONT'D)

I said grow up. You're not a kid anymore, Zoey. You will leave this house. I'll drag you outside if I have to.

Zoey steps forward, gun trained in the middle of Sonya's chest.

Sonya nods to herself.

SONYA (CONT'D)

Okay...

She looks at the hammer in her hand then back to Zoey.

SONYA (CONT'D)

So this is how it has to be, huh?

ZOEY

Don't make me go out there.

SONYA

You're sick, Zoey. Something is very, very wrong with you. I know this because I'm sick too. I'm just trying to help.

ZOEY

I'll die if I go out there. You're trying to kill me.

Sonya shakes her head slowly.

SONYA

No, baby... I'm trying to give you a life. But I suppose, sometimes people need an ultimatum to kick their asses into gear. The whole "nothing is forever" thing your father preaches... It's complete and utter bullshit, Zoey. It's magical thinking in a brutally unmagical world. So please, if you take nothing else from this, just know... I'm doing this for you.

Sonya suddenly lunges toward Zoey with the hammer.

CLOSE UP on Zoey's face as she closes her eyes... and FIRES.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

CLOSE UP of an OLDER ZOEY, 23 years old. She opens her eyes. Her eyes have changed; She now emits a look of paranoia and desperation.

An older Sonya, late 40's, is lying dead in a POOL OF BLOOD at her feet.

Older Zoey looks down as the blood creeps closer and closer...

FLASH CUT:

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The stick figure that is supposed to be Sonya has been scrawled over in a sea of RED CRAYON; The red pooling below at the feet in a dark red blotch that would be best described as a puddle of blood.

Blair stares at the stick figure, unable to find the words to even ask...

BACK TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Older Zoey stares at her mother's body on the floor. She looks at the gun in her hands and tosses it away.

Terrified, she slowly looks around the house at the boarded up windows and the boarded up front door.

She turns back around. Sonya's body is gone. All that remains is an OLD BLOODSTAIN on the floor.

Older Zoey closes her eyes and takes a deep breath. Inhale. Exhale.

A wall CREAKS nearby. She slowly turns around to face the sound.

CLOSE UP on the front door. A loud THUD. The boards begin to give way on the door. Another THUD. Then another.

Zoey is suddenly 7 YEARS OLD again. She frantically scrambles up the stairs just as the nailed boards fly off of the front door and crash to the floor.

Then the front door bursts open...

INT. ZOEY'S ROOM - DAY

Zoey runs into the room and slams the door behind her. She presses the escape key on the laptop. The screen stays black. She frantically hits multiple different keys... nothing.

A mass of FOOTSTEPS and GROANS come from downstairs. The plague.

Zoey rushes to get inside her protection circle and curls up into a ball on the chair. She closes her eyes and rocks back and forth.

ZOEY

Great goddess of the day and night,
protect me with all your might.
When deep within there's no pain or
fear, no evil spirits may enter
here...

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Standing in the doorway is CODY, early 20's, and BRANDY, early 20's.

The sky is blue behind them.

Cody takes Brandy's hand.

CODY

Come on.

Brandy resists going inside. Cody gives her a look.

CODY (CONT'D)

What are you if you don't take
chances?

BRANDY

An upstanding citizen?

CODY

Wrong. You're nobody.

Brandy thinks it over then allows Cody to lead her inside the house by the hand.

Cody shuts the front door behind them. He kicks a loose board out of the way.

Brandy looks around the house at the various boarded up windows.

CODY (CONT'D)
Told you it was worth it.

BRANDY
This place is disgusting, Cody.

CODY
Yeah but you can't deny... it's a little exciting.

Cody takes hold of Brandy and starts kissing her neck.

Brandy looks toward the corner of the living room, her eyes locking on the dried blood.

BRANDY
Is that blood?

Cody glances over at it.

CODY
Um, maybe some rats got in a fight, I don't know.

BRANDY
Then where are the carcasses?

Cody turns Brandy's head so that she is looking right at him.

CODY
Come on, stay with me here. You know you like this. We could get caught...

Cody keeps kissing on Brandy, who eventually gives in and kisses him back.

They move toward the couch. Brandy pushes Cody down onto it and climbs on top of him. They make out passionately.

Then, a CREAK from upstairs.

Brandy immediately pulls away.

BRANDY
What was that?

Cody doesn't move a muscle, listening.

BRANDY (CONT'D)
You heard that, right?

Cody nods slowly.

CODY
Yeah.

Brandy looks around the house again. She clearly has a bad feeling.

BRANDY
I think someone may be living here.

CODY
No... No way. This place is
condemned. Has been for years.

They remain still on the couch, listening.

BRANDY
(whispers)
Could be squatters.

CODY
No. Every way in was boarded up. I
checked all around the outside of
the house. We're just being paro'.
Now, come on...

Cody grabs Brandy's ass.

Brandy shakes her head and removes his hands. She gets off of him.

BRANDY
I don't like this. We should go.

CODY
Are you serious? You know how long
I've wanted to do this for.

Brandy sighs.

BRANDY
You're killing me here, dude.

CODY
Would you feel better if I looked
around a bit first?

BRANDY
A little.

CODY

Alright. Kind of kills some of the fun but whatever.

Cody stands up with a grunt. He heads toward the kitchen.

Brandy follows.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Cody and Brandy look around the kitchen. They head toward the kitchen table and look down at the pattern carved into the tabletop.

CODY

Whoa. This is like some witchcraft shit.

BRANDY

Yeah, this place is getting creepier by the second.

They look over toward the sink. There are empty cans of stew and empty water bottles scattered about in the sink and on the counter top.

Flies buzz around the stew cans.

CODY

You may be right about those squatters...

BRANDY

So can we go now?

CODY

Look at the flies, Brandy. That food has been there for awhile. Whoever did that is probably long gone by now.

BRANDY

I'm not sure I trust that logic.

CODY

Well let's put it to rest then.

Cody places his hands around his mouth, preparing to amplify his voice.

BRANDY

No, don't!

CODY
Hello! Is anybody in here!?

Brandy freezes. Cody drops his arms to his side, listening.
Silence.

INT. ZOEY'S ROOM - DAY

Zoey is curled up on her chair in the protection circle.
A loud GUTTURAL GROAN comes from downstairs.
She brings her hands to her ears, trying to block the sound.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Cody flashes Brandy a sly grin.

CODY
See? Nothing to worry about.

BRANDY
I can't believe you just did that.

CODY
Well, it worked didn't it? Feel better?

BRANDY
Not really. Just because there is no answer doesn't mean somebody isn't here.

Cody rolls his eyes.

CODY
Just come on then, you big wimp, let's keep looking around.

INT. BASEMENT - DAY

Cody and Brandy stand at the top of the stairs. Various air freshener spray bottles line the stairs all the way down.

Brandy makes a yuck face.

BRANDY
What's that smell?

Cody sniffs the air and makes the same face.

CODY
More rotting food?

BRANDY
No, it's... it's worse than that.

Cody takes out his cell phone and turns on the flashlight. He starts down the stairs.

BRANDY (CONT'D)
You're going down there?

CODY
I am.

BRANDY
I'm not going down there.

Cody shrugs.

CODY
Stay up there alone then.

Brandy looks behind her and quickly follows Cody down the stairs.

BRANDY
I hate you, I hate you, I hate
you...

Cody brings his shirt up over his nose as he reaches the floor.

Brandy pinches her nostrils shut.

Cody shines the flashlight from his cell phone around the basement. The beam stops on a string leading up to a light bulb.

Cody heads toward it and reaches up. He pulls the string.

Light floods the basement.

For the first time a TRAIL OF DRIED BLOOD leading down the stairs and across the floor can be seen. It leads into a corner underneath various overhead pine tree air fresheners hanging from the ceiling.

Cody and Brandy both lock eyes on what's below at the same time; Sonya's decomposing CORPSE. A single GUNSHOT WOUND is evident in her chest region.

Brandy screams.

CODY
Holy fuck!

A loud THUD from comes from upstairs.

Cody and Brandy run back up the stairs.

INT. ZOEY'S ROOM - DAY

A HIGH-PITCHED WAIL emits from downstairs.

The chair Zoey's sitting on topples over. She hits the ground with a THUD. She quickly crawls toward her bed and reaches underneath it.

THUNDEROUS FOOTSTEPS downstairs.

Zoey pulls out a long, thick rope. The rope is colored with various colors of crayons.

FLASH CUT:

INT. ZOEY'S ROOM - DAY

Zoey stares at the rope.

ZOEY
Are we almost done?

SONYA
No.

ZOEY
Oh.

Sonya glances at Zoey.

SONYA
This is important. It's in case you need to escape. It's your way out of the house from up here.

BACK TO:

INT. ZOEY'S ROOM - DAY

Zoey looks from the rope in her hands to the toppled over chair in the protection circle.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Cody and Brandy run toward the door.

An EXASPERATED GRUNT comes from upstairs.

Cody stops and looks up towards the second floor.

CODY

Wait.

Brandy stops at the front door, her hand on the handle.

BRANDY

What?

CODY

Hello!?! Anybody up there!?!?

Silence.

BRANDY

Cody, we need to go. Now.

CODY

Someone might need help.

BRANDY

There's a freaking body in the basement, man! What's wrong with you?

Cody keeps his attention on the second floor.

BRANDY (CONT'D)

Fuck this.

Brandy yanks the front door open and runs out of the house.

Cody watches Brandy go. He pulls up his keypad on his cell phone and dials 911, but doesn't press the call button. He hesitates... then heads up the stairs.

INT. ZOEY'S ROOM - DAY

Zoey sits on the chair in the protection circle. She has the rope bundled up on her lap.

The many FOOTSTEPS of the plague are heard dragging their way up the stairs.

Zoey's breathing is rapid. She closes her eyes and tilts her head towards the ceiling. She mouths some words to herself.

The plague's many FOOTSTEPS get closer.

After a few moments she opens her eyes... and spots her escape route on the ceiling...

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Cody gets to the top of the stairs and listens, cell phone in hand. His finger is poised over the call button.

A faint RUSTLING sound comes from the closed door just down the hall.

CODY

Hello?

(beat)

Is anybody hurt? I'm with the...

I'm a cop. I'm just here to help.

A dull THUD comes from the room with the closed door. Followed by a CREAKING noise... like a pressure is being put on something that is only built to sustain so much.

Cody carefully makes his way toward the closed door.

CODY (CONT'D)

Make your presence known now, or else you will be shot. Final warning!

Cody positions himself in front of the closed door. He slowly reaches his free hand out toward the handle...

INT. ZOEY'S ROOM - DAY

CLOSE UP on the door as it opens.

Cody looks up toward the ceiling. He gasps and recoils. He hits the call button and backs out into the hallway.

We PULL BACK to reveal Older Zoey hanging from the rope. The rope has been tied into a noose around her neck and looped up over a hook on the ceiling.

Older Zoey's neck is wrenched to the side at an awkward angle. Her body swings slowly back and forth over the toppled chair below. The ceiling CREAKS under the weight. She hangs directly above the middle point of the protection circle.

Many PRESCRIPTION PILL BOTTLES are littered around the room, most are empty. Empty water bottles are everywhere.

Taped to the walls with black electrical tape are various newspaper articles and paperwork. The Hillsborough Stadium disaster photograph; the Schwarzschild Radius diagram; The Coriolis force diagram; along with various reports on over-population and conspiracies.

In the middle of it all is the PICTURE of Arthur's bloody corpse, blown up and prominent amongst this collage of human anarchy.

The blood-red drapes are tied together over the nearby window. Beyond the drapes and the glass, somewhere far away outside, a child laughs... and a bird chirps.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DOOR - DAY

The door is closed. The window on the door is frosted glass with an etching in it.

The etching reads, *'Dr. Abigail Porter. Ph.D.'*

INT. ABIGAIL'S OFFICE - DAY

Abigail sits across from a male PATIENT, 25. She has a note pad in her lap with a pen poised over the paper as she listens.

The male Patient sits with perfect military-like posture in his seat. His hands are clasped together firmly.

PATIENT

It's just so real to me. And it's always the same thing, like I'm stuck in some sort of loop, and I can't get away from it.

Abigail nods and makes a quick note.

ABIGAIL

Go on. So what happens?

PATIENT

So I look up and see the smoke from the planes, and people are running away, screaming. Buildings are on fire... Like I actually see this. This isn't some dream to me. This is real. I experience it. I can see the fire, I can smell the smoke, I can hear the screams.

(MORE)

PATIENT (CONT'D)

It's like September 11th in New York City on repeat. But I've never been to New York, ever. I know that. But I also know what I feel. People just think I'm crazy. Some PTSD shit from my tours of duty. No one believes me that it is actually happening... at least in my head. My brain just... makes it real. And no one believes me.

ABIGAIL

I believe you.

PATIENT

You're paid to.

ABIGAIL

I'm paid to listen. And I've seen other people with your symptoms so I know how real it can all seem. But the most important thing to remember is that you're not alone.

PATIENT

Then why do I feel alone?

ABIGAIL

Because you're reaching out. And everyone has to reach before they can grasp another's hand. It's a process.

PATIENT

So I just, what... wait it out? What do I do if I have another episode?

ABIGAIL

Embrace it. It may be what you need. You have to understand that tragedies bring people together. After 9/11 people of all races and creeds banded together as one to face a faceless evil. They realized, albeit only amidst desperation and chaos, that they are stronger as one. Strength in numbers is real. Perhaps we are all meant to be one. Maybe human beings broke apart slowly like the continents, never to be whole again.

(MORE)

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)

Or maybe life is the journey we need to take in order to connect, and ultimately rediscover our purpose. Separate from each other we are scattered and scared and confused and without direction, but as one, maybe that's when it all makes sense. Maybe that's when the dot's connect.

PATIENT

So you think everything I'm experiencing just means I'm trying to connect with other people?

ABIGAIL

Actually, I think it means you're trying to fix a relationship in your life that can never be fixed.

The Patient stares at Abigail, not moving a muscle.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)

I'm just trying to figure out if it's with your mom... or your dad.

The Patient looks away.

Abigail leans forward in her seat.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)

Listen, we all have "PTSD", in some form or another. We all have our stresses. Our disorders. We all have our issues. We build up walls around ourselves to protect ourselves from these issues but sometimes, and usually at the worst time possible, those issues still find a way in. It's an unrelenting monster that, once invited inside, never let's up. And everyone's monster is different. We all give our problems a different face or name but in the end, we have to deal with it the same way. By recognizing it, admitting it, and facing it head on. That's what you're doing right now, Mason. It's a courageous act, not an act of cowardice. You're doing the right thing by talking about it.

OLDER MASON bows his head. He nods to himself. He looks back up with hope in his eyes... and smiles.

INT. ABIGAIL'S OFFICE - DAY (LATER)

Abigail is seated at her desk in front of a laptop. She brings the cursor up to an appointment labelled, 'Mason Connors', and checks it off.

The cursor moves to the next appointment labelled, 'Zoey Walker - Webcam Session'. She clicks on a green phone icon and waits for it to connect.

She leans back in her chair and flips through her note pad. One note reads, 'playground = plague around'. Then below that, 'plague around = people outside'.

Below that, Abigail puts pen to paper and begins to write, 'people outside = PTSD'. Followed by 'peoPle ouTSiDe', capitalizing and underlining the P, T, S, and D.

She smiles to herself at the ridiculousness of such a connection.

Still, she makes a note of it.

Abigail looks up to the laptop screen; Her call to Zoey is still waiting to connect. After a few moments, Abigail clicks a red phone icon and ends the call.

Just then, a wall CREAKS nearby.

Abigail looks over her shoulder. There's a slight RUMBLE outside, like a tremor. She gets up and heads toward the window.

EXT. OUTSIDE - DAY

From outside we see Abigail appear in the window and look around.

After a moment or two, she looks straight ahead at us and closes the blood-red drapes...

We are left on the outside looking in.

CUT TO BLACK.