

WHAT PASSES THROUGH

FADE IN:

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DUSK

Both the Sun and the Moon cast lingering afternoon light onto a suburban street where two rows of mirror image houses face each other.

One of the houses is noticeably, though not dramatically, less well-maintained than its neighbours.

The lawn is overgrown. A small girl's bike lies on its side, almost covered by the weedy grass.

INT. SUBURBAN HOUSE, HALLWAY - DUSK

MAJA, a dark-haired, forty year old tramps up the stairs. In her summer dress and sandals she has the dishevelled look of the lunatic, or the busy mother.

She enters a room at the top of the stairs.

INT. ABIGAIL'S BEDROOM - DUSK

The model of a young girl's bedroom; Character wallpaper, cartoon character bed sheets, mobiles on the ceiling.

Maja dreamily moves the mobiles with her hand, then treads to the window.

EXT. BACK GARDEN - DUSK

ABIGAIL, her beautiful, seven year old daughter plays in the back garden. Her dark hair cascades down her back as she rampages round the garden.

She's moving from one hiding spot to another, as though playing a game of hide and seek but whoever she is playing with cannot be seen.

She looks happy.

INT. ABIGAIL'S BEDROOM - DUSK

Maja smiles at the sight. But her face darkens as...

EXT. BACK GARDEN - DUSK

...a figure appears behind her daughter, at the end of the garden, hiding in the shadows of the trees.

A sickly looking, spindly grey-skinned girl with dark-rimmed eyes, sallow cheeks, and balding, lank hair, about the same age as Abigail. THE ACHERI.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - DUSK

Maja runs down the stairs...

INT. KITCHEN - DUSK

...And hurriedly peels open the back door.

MAJA

Abigail? Abigail? Come in.

The child stops playing, but makes no move to come inside.

MAJA

Who are you playing with? Come inside.

Maja glances at the grey-skinned entity. It's moving slowly and silently through the shrubbery.

MAJA

Time to come in now, Darling.

ABIGAIL

Awww, Mum.

MAJA

Don't "Awww, Mum", me. Come inside.

The young girl reluctantly obeys.

Maja gratefully receives her and ushers her inside.

Maja stares out at the other child as she shuts the door. It steps away from her gaze and disappears into the shadows.

MAJA

Are you alright?

Abigail nods.

MAJA

I'm overprotective, I know. I  
Always have been. When you were  
younger, I used to take you to the  
Hospital all the time. It seems  
like a dream now. I can't remember  
what I thought was wrong, but I  
wanted you checked for everything.  
You wouldn't believe how many tests  
you had.

She kisses her daughter.

MAJA

You were so perfect, I suppose I  
had a fear that something MUST be  
wrong. Stupid I know. I just  
couldn't bear the thought of losing  
her. It's because I love you, do  
you understand?

ABIGAIL

I love you too.

MAJA

I know you do. Go and get ready for  
bed.

The little girl runs off upstairs.

MAJA

Remember to clean your teeth!

Maja watches her daughter go, then bolts the door. There are several locks. She locks each and checks it for good measure. They're firmly shut.

INT. HALLWAY - DUSK

Maja walks to the front door. She goes through a similar routine with the numerous locks there.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DUSK

The Living room is in a similar state to the rest of the house, neglected and dusty.

Maja heads for the windows. They're already locked but she checks them.

MAJA (V.O.)

I blame it on my Mother. She filled  
my head with nonsense.

Maja peers through the curtains at the front garden. Her gaze roaming over the bushes and around the trees.

MAJA (V.O.)

There's one story that always stuck  
with me. She told me there were  
these things. The Acheri. They  
befriend children, join in their  
games. Then steal the children  
away. Or worse.

The small, sickly looking child crouches next to a bush.

MAJA (V.O.)

Sometimes, I swear I can see one.

Maja sweeps the curtain shut and turns away from the sight.

MAJA (V.O.)

But there's no such thing. I've  
always had an over active  
imagination, ask my husband.

He was the same before he....did what he did. He imagined things, things that weren't true. He thought our daughter...But he's gone now, of course. Not much imagination left in that brain. Oh, what a horrible thought, So strange what passes through your mind. Sometimes I forget...

INT. HALLWAY - DUSK

Abigail bounds down the stairs, dressed in cute pyjamas.

ABIGAIL

Can we play hide and seek before bed?

MAJA

I don't like that game.

ABIGAIL

It'll be fun. Please, Mum. It's my favourite.

Maja looks lost as she stares at her child's face.

MAJA

I don't like you to be out of my sight. I always think. Oh, it doesn't matter. Just a quick game, but stay in the house.

ABIGAIL

OK.

MAJA

Promise me you'll stay in the house?

ABIGAIL

I will. You count, I'll hide.

Maja turns round and hides her face against the bannisters of the stairs. She starts to count.

MAJA

One hundred, ninety-nine...

Abigail runs off.

Maja turns round to peek.

ABIGAIL

Hey, no peeking!

Maja turns round again, chastened. She resumes counting.

MAJA

Sixty eight, sixty seven, sixty six, sixty five...

A door creaks. Maja turns, slowly.

The Acheri is there, that balding, sickly child. It stares at her with its black eyes.

MAJA

You can't be in here. You can't.  
Get out.

It disappears around the corner.

Maja gives chase.

MAJA

Get out!

INT. LIVING ROOM - DUSK

She enters the living room. It seems empty at first, but there's a body shaped lump behind a curtain.

Maja approaches.

She pulls it back. Nothing.

MAJA

Abigail, Abigail, Honey, I'm  
coming. Where are you? Oh God,  
where are you?

She crouches, looks under the coffee table.

MAJA

Abigail, where are you?

INT. KITCHEN - DUSK

She hurries through, and looks in the cupboards big enough to  
hide a child. She's not there.

Maja's steps are more hurried as she runs into the Hallway.

INT. HALLWAY - DUSK

She's quick enough to see the skinny, mottled legs of the  
Acheri disappearing up the stairs.

She races after it.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - DUSK

The Hallway, lit eerily in the moonlight, seems to stretch on  
beyond what is possible. It's empty.

MAJA

Abi? Abi, Darling? Where are you?  
I'm scared Abi. Can we stop the  
game? Tell your Mother where you  
are.

Silence.

MAJA

Abi? Abigail?

She storms into the master bedroom.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - DUSK

The bed is unmade. The cupboards open.

She looks at the bed. A mottled hand, darts back under the bed.

MAJA

Abigail please show yourself,  
Abigail we're not playing anymore.

She gets down on hands and knees. She lifts the sheet hanging down over the bed, and peers underneath. There's nothing under the bed.

The pad of feet.

Maja's head whips round to see the dirty, decaying feet of the Acheri running out of the room.

She jumps up and chases it again.

MAJA

You! Get away from here! Get away,  
whatever you are. Abi! Abigail,  
please. PLEASE, come out. Abi!

Maja races into the next room along.

INT. GUEST BEDROOM - DUSK

She flings open the Cupboard. It's empty.

She rushes into the next room.

INT. ABIGAIL'S BEDROOM - DUSK

She flings open cupboards, tears the sheets from the bed.

MAJA

Abigail! Abigail!

She's not here.

Maja is panic-stricken. She flings open the long curtain hiding the window and looks out.

EXT. BACK GARDEN - DUSK

Her daughter is racing toward the shadowy trees at the bottom of the garden, her hand held tightly by the mottled-grey Acheri.

MAJA  
No, Abi, No.

INT. HALLWAY - DUSK

She races down the stairs, almost tripping as she goes.

INT. KITCHEN - DUSK

Maja unlocks the back door and runs out.

MAJA  
Abi. Abi, come back!

We watch from the door as she scrambles into the trees at the back of the garden. The pair are nowhere to be found.

Maja is hysterical. Tears are rolling down her cheeks. She spins around, looking in every direction for her missing child.

MAJA  
Abi!Abi!

She disappears round the side of the house.

We turn back and move through the hallway to the front window, all the time hearing Maja's frantic shouts from outside.

INT. HALLWAY - DUSK

Through the hallway window, we watch as Maja frantically runs into the front garden.

MAJA

Abigail! Abigail, where are you?  
Oh, Abi, please where are you?

She checks everywhere, but with no success.

MAJA

Abigail! Abigail!

An elderly woman appears from next door. EDITH. She shuffles over in her slippers. She puts her arm around Maja and leads her back towards the house.

MAJA

I can't find Abigail.

EDITH

I know, love. Come on, let's get you in the house.

MAJA

She's out here, somewhere. I saw her. Abigail!

Edith, sympathetically, but firmly, guides Maja back inside.

We tilt down to the table in front of the window. A letter sits next to the phone, accumulating dust.

It looks official. We can only pick out a few words. CHRISTIE'S HOSPITAL. A name: ABIGAIL MARTIAL.

Some more: An AGGRESSIVE FORM OF LEUKAEMIA.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DUSK

Edith settles Maja onto the couch.

MAJA

She was just here.

Edith sits next to her. She smooths Maja's hair with her hand.

EDITH

Maja, Abigail's gone, dear. She's gone. You remember. It was Leukaemia. Two years ago.

MAJA

She was just here. I saw her.

EDITH

I know, love. I'll make some tea. You just stay here.

MAJA

She was just here.

Edith kisses Maja on the forehead and leaves Maja on the couch, sobbing.

FADE TO BLACK.