

SPOOK HOUSE

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FADE IN:

EXT. PRIVATE ROAD - NIGHT

A full moon shines down on a RAM 1500 Pickup Truck, as it cruises through heavily forested terrain, along a dirt road.

SUPER - The Big Thicket - Outside Bruna, TX

INT. PICKUP - CONTINUOUS

UNCLE RED, 45, unkempt hair and beard, can of Shiner Bock in hand, drives, an unlit Marlboro Red dangling from his mouth.

In the passenger seat, Toby, 13, small for his age, keeps a watchful eye on Red.

TOBY

Ma says you ain't spouse'd to drink
and drive, you know.

Red shoots him a "look", then smiles, as he pulls the cig from his mouth, and takes a big swig.

RED

That so, Toby? She tell you that,
huh? Didn't she tell you that you
ain't spouse'd to go to the Spook
House tonight, too?

Toby watches, as a smile grows on his lips.

TOBY

Uncle Red!

RED

Well, Boy, we goin' to the Spook
House, as planned in advance, and
I'm gonna be drinkin' while I drive
us there. That cool with you?

EXT. DEAD END OF PRIVATE ROAD - LATER

The Pickup comes do an abrupt stop, as dust flies.

The woods are dark and deep, with a thin overgrown walking trail off of the driver's side of the Pickup.

A wind picks up and rustles the tree branches overhead.

INT. PICKUP - CONTINUOUS

Red shuts off the engine, finishes his beer, tosses it into the rear bed through the open rear window.

He turns to Toby.

RED
You ready? It's your time.

Toby looks tentative, but shakes his head affirmatively.

TOBY
Ready, Uncle Red, but I am kind of
scared.

Red pulls out an ornate silver cross from the center console,
hands it over to Toby.

RED
Chain broke, so put it in your pocket.
(beat)
Can't have too much help from above.

Toby takes the cross, looks it over up close.

TOBY
Is this real silver?

Red opens the door, steps out.

RED
Don't matter if it's real silver.
It's a real cross. Put it in your
pocket. It'll keep you safe.

Toby puts the cross in his right jacket pocket, opens the
door, jumps out. As he does, the cross falls to the ground.

EXT. DEAD END OF PRIVATE ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Red pulls the remains of the Shiner Bock 6-Pack from the
rear bed, cracks one open.

Toby walks over from the rear, as Red grabs flashlights from
a duffel, then lights a smoke.

TOBY
How far away is it?

Red takes a swig.

RED
Just a ways.

He hands Toby a flashlight.

RED (CONT'D)
Take this and you keep it on...at
all times. Fully charged.

EXT. TRAIL - MOMENTS LATER

Red leads Toby along the overgrown trail, their flashlight beams guiding them forward.

Above, the trees are thick, with moonlight flickering through.

Uncle Red? TOBY
I'm scared. Is that ok?

Red stops suddenly, turns, the beam right under his face.

B00! RED

Toby laughs, unfazed.

From above, a Great Horned Owl lets out a HOOT!

Toby stops in his tracks, looks up, very scared now.

Red pauses, aims his beam up into the upper branches, revealing the huge OWL in a circle of light.

RED (CONT'D)
Ha! HOOT! HOOT!
(beat)
That's just old Mr. Jangles. He was
here way back when I did what you
about to do. He's the Protector.

He brings the beam down to ground level, looks directly into Toby's eyes.

RED (CONT'D)
You gonna be scared, but it's what
our clan always done, and it's ok to
be scared. It's your time, Toby.

EXT. OVERGROWN CLEARING - MOMENTS LATER

Two flashlight beams enter, as Toby and Red break through the trees.

Toby's eyes go wide as he gazes at the charred remains of a massive Victorian Estate in the center of the clearing.

RED
There she be. The Spook House.

TOBY
How do we get in? Front's all burned.

Red walks forward, motions for Toby to follow. He aims his beam over to the side of the house.

RED
"We" don't go in. "You" go in over
there, on the side. C'mon.

They walk toward the house, as the owl flies above them. It
roosts on the top of the roofline, seemingly watching.

RED (CONT'D)
Your Great Great Gramps started this
back in the late 1800's and ever
since, every thirteen year old boy
in the lineage has to do what we
talked about.

Toby's gaze remains on the great house, as they approach.

TOBY
But, I've never even seen a real
skeleton before. What if -

Red stops, quickly turns, finger extended at Toby.

RED
There ain't no what ifs, Boy. You
go where I told you. You do what I
told you. You get that rib bone.
You read that prayer out loud I gave
you. You apologize for the sins of
your Fathers, and you come back out.

Toby taps his left pocket.

TOBY
I have the prayer.

RED
Cross?

Toby taps his right pocket.

TOBY
In here.

They continue walking.

TOBY (CONT'D)
But, I don't even know what I'm
spose'd to be apologizing for.

RED
When you turn sixteen, I'll tell you
everything, but for now, just know
this - that skeleton you gonna come
face to face with, when he was alive,
(MORE)

RED (CONT'D)
he was a bad man...an evil man.
Just do as you've been told.

EXT. SPOOK HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Red leads Toby around the house to the side, where several sheets of plywood have been nailed to the exterior wall.

He reaches down, pulls up a hammer and a small hacksaw beneath some dead leaves, as Toby watches.

He hands the saw to Toby.

RED
You use this if you can't break the
bone off clean.

With the hammer, Red plies nails out of the plywood, pulls the boards down, revealing a hole in the wall, big enough to crawl through.

Toby watches, unsure.

TOBY
I...I go in through that hole?

RED
Yep. Then you go down the center
hallway, up the stairs to the third
floor, and back to the only room
with a door still attached. It's
the turret 'round back of the house.
Watch the flooring for holes. I'll
be waiting out front...but I can't
enter, so you on your own.

INT. SPOOK HOUSE - LIBRARY - MOMENTS LATER

Toby enters through the hole, flashlight in front of him, scanning the burned out interior. Dust dances in the flashlight's beam.

The room is big, with a fifteen foot ceiling with a large hole above the wall in front of him, open to the second floor.

A charred desk sits under a faded and fire-rippled life-sized painting of a man dressed in eighteenth clothing near the rear wall. Built-in shelves hold the remnants of old burned books. Everything is in shambles.

Toby hesitates, as he shines his light around the room.

RED (V.O.)
Get going, Toby. You can do it.

An open dark hallway leads away into the interior of the house. Toby tentatively follows his beam of light out of the room, into the-

CENTRAL HALLWAY

To Toby's right, the passage is blocked off by the caved-in ceiling. In front of him, a huge blackened hole in the wall reveals what used to be the kitchen.

He turns to his left, toward the rear of the house, where the hallway continues on into blackness. Behind him, a fat RAT scampers out of the hole in the kitchen wall.

Toby's head jerks around at the sound, as the rat continues into the library.

He takes a deep breath, continues forward.

MALE VOICE (V.O.)
(whispers)
Welcome...

Toby stops in his tracks, shines the light around him, up and down, panicked.

TOBY
Uncle Red? You don't need to try
and scare me. I'm already scared.

Silence, except for the creaking from the wind.

Toby shakes his head, readies himself, and moves forward.

Ahead of him and to his right, a grand stairway leads to the upper floors.

As he shines his light, the dust particles seem to flow up the stairs at a rapid pace.

STAIRCASE

Toby takes a step up, and the wood beneath his foot cracks and gives way. He pushes off the wall next to him and jumps up a stair, then carefully continues up.

SECOND FLOOR LANDING

The damage is worse up here. There's no furniture, just charred walls and burned out sections of ceiling.

Another staircase leads up to his left. Dust particles rapidly shift through the air towards the stairs, and up.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
(whispers)
Upstairs...

Toby's breathing becomes more rapid. He reaches into his right pocket and his hand comes out the bottom through a hole in the pocket.

He shuts his eyes, breathes in heavy, panicked breaths.

TOBY
Oh no. The cross.

EXT. SPOOK HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Red finishes his Shiner, pulls another can from the 6-pack. He lights up a smoke, looks to the roofline where the owl was perched, but he's no longer there.

INT. SPOOK HOUSE - THIRD FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Another dark hallway leads to the only door still in place. Like everything else, it's charred, but it's shut.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
(whispers)
Come in...

Toby slowly walks towards the closed door.

REAR TURRET BEDROOM

The door creaks open, Toby enters, visibly shaking.

Although smoke damaged, the room isn't charred. Furniture still sits in place, and against the back wall, a SKELETON lies shackled on a wooden bed, numerous rib bones missing, and a massive hole in the top of its skull.

Toby shakily walks towards the bed.

Breathing heavily, he reaches a hand down, grabs a rib bone-

The skeleton raises its arm, brakes the shackle, wraps its bony fingers around Toby's wrist.

Toby SHRIEKS in horror. The flashlight beam cuts out, as voices whisper in the blackness.

EXT. SPOOK HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Red stomps out a cig, grabs his final beer from a pocket.

TOBY (O.S.)

Uncle Red?

Red approaches the hole in the wall, as Toby's flashlight beam shines out, then cuts out.

RED

Toby? You get it?

Toby exits the hole, hacksaw in hand.

TOBY

Why didn't you tell me this is my Great Great Gramp's house?

Red looks puzzled, as Toby approaches.

TOBY (CONT'D)

Why didn't you tell me your Gramps
killed his Pa right here?

RED

Toby, where's the cross?

Toby reaches into his right pocket, puts his hand through the hole, shakes it around.

RED (CONT'D)

No . . .

Toby sprints forward, lunges at Red with the hacksaw.

Red raises his hand holding the beer in defense.

The blade slices into the unopened can, as beer gushes everywhere.

Red backpedals, goes down, as Toby leaps at him, blade raised.

From behind, the owl races in, talons open, grabs Toby by his shoulders, takes him up and back towards the house.

Red watches wide eyed, as they disappear into the night.

As Red stands, a muffled explosion sounds from within the house. A fireball escapes into the night from the back of the house.

RED (CONT'D)

I'm so sorry, Toby. God bless.

FADE OUT