

DIBBUK BOX

by
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Mandate Pictures/Ghost House Pictures

DARKNESS

A lush void... endless, oblivion.

Then words, mournful and afraid seep from the blackness; the voice of a young girl we'll soon know by the name of APRIL.

APRIL (V.O.)
If only my brother knew...

The darkness forms into something else, something tangible...

INT. COTTAGE/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

INSERT TITLE: "BELSZEW, POLAND, 1942"

The COTTAGE WALLS close in on us. Shadows stretch across rotten wooden floorboards. Insects scurry through sparsely filled cabinets.

APRIL (V.O.)
... where it came from.

A YOUNG COUPLE is frantically stuffing their meager belongings into three tattered suitcases. The look on their faces tells us that SOMETHING TERRIBLE is coming... or, even more likely, is already in the house.

An infant WAILS shrilly in the background, but its cries are ignored.

We move past the frantic couple, and into a DARK BEDROOM just beyond them.

INT. DARK BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

The bedroom is almost pitch black... and yet we can make out a bed in the corner, where the silhouette of a SLEEPING FIGURE lies underneath a threadbare cotton blanket.

The figure WHEEZES as it sleeps, its body rising and falling with each gasp. All we can discern of it in the darkness are glimpses of yellowed and withered flesh; corrupted limbs.

APRIL (O.S.)
If only he knew what it really
was...

The figure AWAKENS, shifting beneath the blankets, revealing a sagging female face... folds that hang loose like kneaded clay. BLIND EYES wracked by GLAUCOMA peer out from the dark, a discolored tongue writhes over dry lips.

We drift over the old woman, and towards an object on the bedside table:

THE DIBBUK BOX.

It's merely a wooden box, simple and elegant; there's a small and narrow drawer at the bottom, and two doors with brass handles. Despite its normal appearance... it does hold a certain quiet malevolence.

Crawling in the shadow of the box are a thin procession of ants, their glistening black bodies cross the wooden table, and make their way towards the crack between its doors.

APRIL (O.S.) (CONT'D)
... he never would have bought it.

We're then SWEPT INTO back into the darkness... and out of existence entirely.

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

SUPERIMPOSE TITLE: "COLUMBIA, MISSOURI, SEPTEMBER 18, 2003"

An alarm clock SCREAMS out... bringing us into the present, and into the life of APRIL MCREADY, the same young woman we just heard speaking.

For now, she's just a shape beneath the covers... a shape that doesn't really want to move.

For all the posters and typical teenage girl paraphernalia plastered on the walls, the place has a temporary quality to it, as if its resident doesn't really consider it a "home".

The sound of an ARGUMENT spills from somewhere else in the small apartment. The voice's are middle-aged and bear the familiar antagonism of a married couple; the topic at hand is obviously financial.

April's hand WHIPS OUT, knocking the alarm clock off the bedside table and to the floor. Her blanket falls away revealing an intensely pretty girl with raven-black hair. Her features are delicate, but there's an edge to her, a hardness to her eyes.

April stares at a FAMILY PHOTOGRAPH by her bed: it shows a much younger April catching her posing family by surprise with a high-powered super-soaker.

April turns away from the photo, affected for some reason.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

April steps into the kitchen wearing a black hooded sweatshirt and a backpack covered in hand-sewn metal/punk band patches. The married couple bickering in the tiny space don't look anything like April's parents in the picture.

She's adopted.

April ignores the argument at hand, digs through the cupboard. Doesn't look like there's much to eat.

INT. APARTMENT/LIVING ROOM - MORNING

TOBE, a wan looking twelve year old boy sits on a tattered old flower print couch and quietly watches a cartoon. He's dressed in slightly too-large hand me downs; a pair of reading glasses rest on his thin nose. His parent's argument can be heard faintly in the background.

April sits down beside him.

APRIL
Just quit it Tobe.

TOBE
Quit what?

APRIL
Smiling all the time... it's annoying.

TOBE
(in on joke)
Okay.

April playfully knuckles his shoulder.

APRIL
You're the grimmest looking twelve-year old I know dude...

TOBE
I just don't want to go to school today... it's like two degrees outside.

April stands up.

APRIL
Be right back.

Tobe nods glumly. April rushes out of the room... when she returns she's holding a really stylish and cozy looking snowboarding jacket.

APRIL (CONT'D)
Here, try this on.

Tobe takes the jacket, amazed. He stands up, trying it on for size.

TOBE
This is for me? I've always wanted
one of these...
(whispered)
Did you steal it or something?

APRIL
No, of course not, it was on sale.

She adjusts his collar.

APRIL (CONT'D)
Just try not to break too many
girl's hearts today.
(appraising)
Look at this charmer...

Tobe zips it up, grinning in spite of himself.

INT. CLASSIC BLACK FORD MUSTANG - MORNING

Blistering metal cranks from the speakers, accompanied by the palm-against-dash drumming of ROB (17), a muscular bad boy with tattoo's crowning his neck, and a ragged bomber jacket.

April's staring out the window at the passing apartment complexes, each of them uniformly grey and drab.

ROB
I knew kissing that promoter's ass
would pay off eventually... even if
we did have to be the resident band
for his lame-ass club every Monday.

APRIL
You're excited huh?

Rob grins at her:

ROB
We could sell like a million t-
shirts on this tour. Mastodon pulls
a huge crowd.

The car comes to a stop at the curb in front of a modest HIGH SCHOOL campus.

April passes Rob a handful of bills; he in turn reaches into his jacket, and gives April several plastic bags, each of them rolled tight, packed with green marijuana buds.

APRIL
(sniffing bags)
You're going to need some thicker bags; every time I'm in English class my teacher scrunches up his nose and gives everybody this really confused nostalgic look.

April slides them into her jacket pocket.

ROB
Be careful out there... Trevor Watkins got busted for selling last week.

April darts forward, kissing her boyfriend.

APRIL
No worries... if I get caught I'll just say you put me up to it.

ROB
I don't like the sound of that...

APRIL
(affecting innocence)
"I'm just a sweet little girl officer... it was all my boyfriend's idea."

ROB
Get out of here.

Smirking, April backs out of the car.

APRIL
Later!

April gives her boyfriend a little wave before losing herself in the herds of high school kids rushing to their respective classes.

INT. COLLEGE CLASSROOM - EVENING

A stark black and white image is projected onto a pull-down white screen: a stricken CHILD lies in bed... while an oddly shaped SILHOUETTE looms over him.

We hear a voice from a young man we will soon know as PETER MCREADY:

PETER (O.S.)
Some believe that the Dybbuk is a
being or entity that has escaped
from Gehenna, a Hebrew term very
loosely translated from "hell"...

There's a tight CLICKING sound, and the image changes; we're now treated to a horrific illustration of a haggard man sitting in a rickety wooden chair in a dark empty room.

His face twists in anguish as an UNSEEN FIGURE wraps a WRINKLED ARM around his chest from behind the chair; its elongated fingers grace the man's face.

PETER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Many Jewish scholars disagree...
claiming that the Dybbuk is less of
a damned soul, and more of a tragic
figure. A lost, wandering spirit...
(a beat)
Ultimately though, most of them
seem to agree that even if their
possession of a human host isn't a
consciously malicious act...

Peter moves halfway into the beam of the projection, highlighting one side of his face, and letting the rest of his features fall off into darkness.

PETER (CONT'D)
... the consequences for those
unfortunate enough to be possessed
are no less dire.

He's good looking, albeit with the typical college kid physique: too much coffee and top ramen.

The projection shuts off, and the over-head florescent lights flicker to life, illuminating the large COLLEGE CLASS ROOM.

Thunderous applause ERUPTS...

Peter smiles modestly at his reception, then steps aside as his beaming instructor, DR. SCHLESSINGER (60s) takes his place.

DR. SCHLESSINGER
Thank you for that presentation Mr.
Mcready.

(checking watch)
Well that's it for today, I hope
the rest of you are all well on
your way to choosing your thesis
subjects.

The students rise from their seats in succession, and head
towards the exits.

Dr. Schlessinger regards Peter as he gathers his things.

DR. SCHLESSINGER (CONT'D)
So... do think you'll get your
hands on it?

PETER
I'll find out tonight.

Dr. Schlessinger smiles playfully:

DR. SCHLESSINGER
You're not worried... at all? Even
a little?
(a beat)
What if there's something to the
story?

Peter's eyes darken slightly... they seem to harbor the kind
of wisdom only gained through suffering.

PETER
You know as well as I do that it's
just a box. It's going to sit on my
desk and hold down paper while I
finish my thesis.

He grins again, snapping out of the momentary funk.

PETER (CONT'D)
I'll be careful though...

INT. HOUSE/PETER'S ROOM - NIGHT

Peter sits at a desk and types away. Indie rock with female
vocals gathers around him, soothing and smooth.

The music matches the room: a cozy and smart abode. Towering bookshelves brace the walls, all filled with rows and rows of tomes covering the various facets of Cultural Anthropology, with an emphasis on Folklore and Mythology. Next to Peter's computer rests an old fashioned type-writer.

Peter sits at his desk and stares at an EBAY entry for "THE DIBBUK BOX", an allegedly haunted wine cabinet.

Its the same object we saw earlier. Oddly enough, seeing it on a computer screen robs it of some of its mystery.

Peter's screen-name MCREADYONE is listed as the current highest bidder. There are only FIVE MINUTES left in the auction.

Edgy with anticipation, Peter drags his cursor over the picture of the Dibbuk Box, and the image's doors SWING OPEN with a hollow wooden CLICK.

Beneath the item are a series of USER COMMENTS. They range from misspelled and incoherent, to lucid and genuinely creeped out:

CARINE1253: "So, what a woodeen box?"

DARKCLOWN: "Is there a ghost inside?"

MARTINCROWES: "I wouldn't buy it... the last owner sounds out of his mind.

MRBARETT: "There are some things that you just shouldn't mess with... why invite trouble?"

JUNGLPRINCESS: "I think it's neat... I want it. It would be cool to really be haunted"

MARCSHELHORSE: "Don't buy this."

Peter shakes his head, not taking any of it seriously; this is obviously just a lark.

He keeps his finger poised by the RAISE BID button, ready to vanquish any challenger.

INT. REFINISHING STORE/BASEMENT - NIGHT

Sanding and polishing equipment hang from hooks over a workbench in the dim basement. Silhouetted limbs of discarded chairs and tables jut out from the darkness like the splayed out bodies of over-turned insects.

Tacked onto a wall in a disturbing montage are a series of crude drawings. They depict some vaguely familiar imagery; a sleeping figure lying in bed... withered flesh, an obscured face.

It's directly from what we saw in the cottage in Poland.

A computer monitor gleams brightly in the gloom, casting pale light on KIRK (33), an emaciated man, with a vaguely rotting look to his skin. He's hunched over the keyboard and just staring oddly at the screen. On the monitor is the same EBAY page that Peter was looking at.

The DIBBUK BOX rests beside him, its face turned away from us.

Kirk coughs raggedly, then starts picking away at the skin on his fore-arm; its covered in deep gauges that have recently grown infected.

From somewhere behind him there's a faint shuffling sound, as if a broken limb was being DRAGGED across the concrete floor.

Kirk twists around and peers into the darkness.

Silence now. Whatever was moving towards him has gone still.

KIRK

Hello?

The unseen THING in the basement begins to WHISPER in a soft strangled voice.

Kirk shivers in the darkness, rising from his chair defensively. The whisper then stops abruptly, leaving him alone in the silent basement.

KIRK (CONT'D)

(feeble)

Please... just please stop.

INT. HOUSE/PETER'S ROOM - NIGHT

Peter stares at the screen... his eyes are glazing over from the effort.

1 minute until end of auction.

Suddenly, another highest-bidder screen-name replaces his.

Peter FREAKS, starts rapidly raising his bet.

PETER

C'mon...

The seconds are counting down, it's dangerously close... and Peter's bid comes in at the last moment, making him the highest bidder!

Peter grins victoriously:

PETER (CONT'D)

Nice.

EXT. CITY STREETS - MORNING

SUPERIMPOSE TITLE: "SEPTEMBER 19, 2003"

Early morning grey skies seep a light rain that gives the asphalt a gleaming, reflective quality.

Kirk, wearing a tattered old hooded black jacket, lurches across the sidewalk. Hugged tightly to his chest is a package bound in construction paper, practically mummified with duct tape. It's the exact same size as the Dibbuk Box.

He pushes past a TEENAGER, who curses at him under his breath, then he steps off the sidewalk and onto the black asphalt.

Cars RUSH PAST, kicking up splashes of water from the many puddles, but Kirk doesn't pay attention to any of them. He's completely focused on the modest POST OFFICE on the other side of the street.

A MUSTANG roars past him, HONKING LOUDLY, just a foot away from creaming him. Kirk pauses in the street for a moment, then continues his odd staggering walk to the other side.

INT. POST OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The CLERK, an elderly man with glasses, quietly watches Kirk as he struggles to find the correct change to pay for shipping.

Kirk then clutches his chest and begins to cough.

His sleeve falls back to his elbow, revealing the mottled skin on his arm. The Clerk notices the ravaged flesh, and unnerved, averts his eyes.

EXT. POST OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

A relieved looking Kirk steps out of the post office. The building's glass windows reflect the busy street -- but Kirk's body obscures his own reflection.

Suddenly, a soft WHISPERING drifts through the air, the same exact sound we heard back in the basement.

The sounds of traffic and the rest of the world die completely, leaving nothing but Kirk's heartbeat and the odd feminine whispering.

Kirk slowly turns around to face the glass windows, the source of the noise.

He gasps at what he sees, stumbling backwards: instead of Kirk, reflected in the glass is a HAGGARD HUNCHED OVER FIGURE.

Its back faces towards us -- the prominent ridges of the spine strain through the thin fabric of its rags. What we see of its skin is withered and racked by age.

Kirk continues stumbling backwards, shaking his head, actually sobbing.

There's a loud CRACKING sound as the figure twists towards us, threatening to expose its face.

Kirk closes his eyes, shielding himself.

When he pulls his hand away, the figure is gone, leaving only his own reflection.

Kirk shakes his head, relieved.

IN A DARK BLUR OF MOVEMENT, KIRK DISAPPEARS AS A LARGE SUV SLAMS INTO HIM!

The SUV drags Kirk's broken and twisted body beneath it as it goes skidding into the other lane and in the way of oncoming traffic.

A Honda Civic SMASHES into its side, PINNING it against two parked cars!

Bystanders scream, panicked!

A dark red pool spreads out from beneath the SUV... then a bloody arm reaches out and CLAWS at the black asphalt, splitting the nails off its fingers.

The clutching hand goes limp.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL PARKING LOT - AFTERNOON

A meaty hand reaches out and grabs a plastic bag filled taut with sticky green marijuana from a second hand, this one slender and feminine.

The feminine hand belongs to April, who's looking over her shoulder, on edge. The man taking the weed is JOEY, a heavily freckled and paunchy stoner. He sniffs the bag.

APRIL

C'mon Joey... hurry up.

Her every breath is visible in the brisk fall air.

Joey shakes the bag slightly, then reseals it.

JOEY

Smells pretty dank.

April nods, as if to say, "of course dummy".

Joey digs into his pockets.

JOEY (CONT'D)

Alright, twenty-five right?

APRIL

Just like the last fifteen times...

Joey makes an odd face, and steps away from her -- looking away to some unseen point as if waiting for something to happen.

APRIL (CONT'D)

What's wrong?

In the reflection of a car beside Joey, two CAMPUS POLICE OFFICER'S maneuver towards April from behind.

April spots them, then rushes forward, KNEEING JOEY in the groin, and pushes past him, entering the labyrinth of parked cars encircling the high school.

JOEY

(pained)

Hey!

April yells back at him:

APRIL

Narc!

The two police officers rapidly brush past Joey on either side as he moans and cradles his groin.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

OFFICER JENNINGS, tall, with an authoritative air, moves between the cars, scanning the place for April. OFFICER STEWART, female, and squat, with harsh features, trails behind.

OFFICER STEWART
Where'd she go? Girl shot out like
a rocket, then vanished.

Officer Jennings leans down, crouching low, and peers beneath a parked VAN.

He frowns, then rises up again -- revealing a frightened April hiding beneath the VW BUG right behind him.

The police officer's feet walk right past her and out of view.

OFFICER JENNINGS (O.S.)
We've already notified her foster
parents. They know the drill.

OFFICER STEWART (O.S.)
Not the first time eh?

OFFICER JENNINGS (O.S.)
Nope. We'll just stop by there in
an hour -- see if she's...

His words trail off as the two police officers walk further and further away.

April frowns, waiting a moment, then crawls on the asphalt in the opposite direction, ducking behind another car, then rising up into view as she bumps up against an SUV.

BOOP! BOOP!

The vehicle's alarm cries out, causing a startled April to high-tail it away from the protesting vehicle, and ultimately out of the parking lot.

INT. BUS - AFTERNOON

April's huddled in the back of the bus, panicked, adrenaline up. She pulls out her cell, dials a number.

APRIL

Hey, Rob? I need to stay at your place tonight.

(a beat)

I just got chased by the campus cops okay, I can't go back home, they called my foster parents!

INT. BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

Rob's sitting cross-legged in bed, smoking a joint while watching an old black and white horror film. His wallpaper is a disorienting patch-work of scraps of concert flyers.

ROB

April you know I'd do anything for you... but if you come to my house, you will be leading the cops to a MUCH LARGER amount of weed.

(a beat)

Here, just find a place to crash out for a couple days. Then you could come on tour with us when we take off.

(another beat)

It's gonna be fine; in a month from now this will all have probably blown over.

INT. BUS - AFTERNOON

April sighs, considering.

ROB (ON PHONE)

Do you have a place that you can go for just three days?

APRIL

(hesitant)

Yeah... I think so.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Peter's house is a messy, but charming college kid dump. The walls are sloppily painted with deep blues and reds and covered in framed pop art. A classic track from THE SPECIALS plays in the background.

Sitting at a dining table and digging into a meal of THAI FOOD is Peter and his two roommates: BECKY (22), a together looking woman, with pale skin, and a Betty Page style haircut, and CHRISTOPHER (21), a handsome guy with scruffy hair and a devilish look in his eyes that betrays how many drinks he's had during the course of the meal.

CHRISTOPHER
You spent three hundred and fifty
bucks?

PETER
It's research.

Christopher waves the thought away:

CHRISTOPHER
Highway robbery.

Two black and white cats creep out from the hallway and take their places by Becky's chair. They curl around the wood, purring hungrily.

BECKY
Christopher, you probably spend
twice that much a month on
alcohol...

Becky reaches down and kneads the scruff of the closer cat's neck.

BECKY (CONT'D)
You're in no place to judge.

The other cat curls against Becky's other leg, and makes a jealous mrroowwing sound.

BECKY (CONT'D)
I know, I know. I love you too
Vincent.
(she smiles at Peter)
Besides, I think it's a neat idea
for a thesis; purchase a real live
"haunted" item, and just... see
what happens. Document it.

PETER
Thank you Becky -- but nothing IS
going to happen... which is sort of
the point of my thesis.

CHRISTOPHER
College just baffles me
sometimes...

KNOCK KNOCK

BECKY

Sort of late, isn't it?

Peter stands up, leaving the table, and heads towards the front door. He opens it up, revealing a very tired looking April standing on the doorstep.

PETER

April...

Peter's instantly on guard, his sister's unexpected arrival never bodes well. April's looking cagey as well, awkward, and at a loss for words.

APRIL

Hey.

PETER

Is something wrong, are you okay?

APRIL

Yeah, I'm alright.

PETER

Here, c'mon inside, Becky cooked some dinner.

April steps into the house. Upon seeing her Christopher smiles, raising a toast to her in salute. Becky however looks more skeptical.

CHRISTOPHER

What's up slick?

(a beat)

Haven't seen you around for a while... a year or something?

APRIL

I know... how've you been?

CHRISTOPHER

In debt, failing my classes, and in a series of devastating short lived relationships.

(a beat)

Can't complain.

April grins:

APRIL

Sounds like fun.

EXT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

April and Peter sit beside each-other on the couch and play an old Nintendo one-on-one fighting game. Peter's character goes sailing to the other side of the screen after a particularly devastating attack.

PETER
(still playing)
So, what did you do? Blow up a car?
Murder somebody? Tell me.

APRIL
No.

PETER
You're not in trouble? Cause, if I recall correctly, that's usually when you drop by.

APRIL
I sort of wanted to take a break from Karen and Greg; they're at each-other's throats recently.

PETER
How long of a break?

APRIL
Actually, I was thinking about getting legally emancipated.

Peter turns away from the screen, surprised.

April's character punches his character's face in... and the figure drops to the floor in a puddle of digital blood. Peter turns back to the screen, frowning, sets down his controller.

PETER
Karen and Greg are trying really hard April. It's probably just stressful for them right now. She lost her job... he's holding down two.

She instantly relents, shaking her head.

APRIL
I was just kidding.

PETER
I'd hope so. And you on your own? No offense, but that would be disastrous.

The remark stings her, but she hides it well.

APRIL

Peter, you got a good thing going here. There's room... food. I don't have to hear people argue all the time.

(a beat)

Is it totally insane that I'd just want to hang out with my brother in a nice place for just a couple days?

Peter's skeptical, but despite his concerns, he'd never turn his sister away.

PETER

No, not insane. You're always welcome to crash out.

(a beat)

Just try not to destroy anything while you're here, okay?

It's obvious that there's a tension between them, something unresolved. In many ways the low-key banter is a mutual shield.

APRIL

I'll try.

(a beat)

Want to play again?

PETER

(sleepy)

Have to pass. On average I'm getting about four hours of sleep a day... but I at least try to maintain that base.

He looks like he'd like to give her a hug... but doesn't know how... so instead he pats her shoulder.

PETER (CONT'D)

Good-night.

APRIL

Night.

Peter walks out of the living room. April reaches out and switches the video-game screen to the regular television. She turns up the volume, allowing the program to wash over her, then closes her eyes.

EXT. RURAL COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT

A lonely country road, flanked on both sides by an impenetrably dark forest. Something pale and large moves past the trees and into view:

It's a white DELIVERY TRUCK.

The vehicle rocks and shudders as it navigates the bumpy terrain.

INT. DELIVERY TRUCK - NIGHT

The cab of the truck vibrates from the effort. A HANK WILLIAMS song spills from the modest speakers.

The DRIVER nods his head to the tune, rubbing his eyes, struggling to stay awake on the long trek.

Dark silhouettes of packages and mail reflect from the rear mirror. Their shadows sway back and forth with each jarring movement.

There's a sudden BURST OF STATIC on the radio, startling the driver. The song returns, but the signal comes in weaker this time.

The driver tries to salvage it, tweaking the dial.

The signal decays further, as the ballad drowns in an ominous white noise.

There's the faintest trace of a FEMALE WHISPERING dripping unnaturally from the speakers.

When the Driver attempts to adjust the dial, one of the SHADOWS expands and SHIFTS in the gloom behind him.

The Driver looks up at the rear mirror.

The whispering ceases and the ballad resumes without further interruption.

Things are still once more.

INT. HOUSE/KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

SUPERIMPOSE TITLE: "SEPTEMBER 20, 2003"

April forages through the kitchen cupboards for food. Becky's spices and herbs take up most of the space.

There's nothing easily edible except for one cereal box with a post-it that reads: "Becky's cereal. Don't touch it, Christopher!"

The two cats, Vincent and Crispin, step into the kitchen and sit on their haunches, quietly watching April.

April pulls the cereal box out of the cabinet and sets it on the counter. She opens the fridge: one shelf is filled with every variety of fresh vegetable and juices. Each item has a sticker with "BECKY'S" written on it.

APRIL
Wow... really?

On the second shelf is a crusty old ketchup bottle with a post-it note on the side that reads: "Christopher". An empty pepto-bismol container lies on its side next to it.

April smirks, then grabs Becky's milk and pours herself a bowl of cereal. A brisk KNOCK at the front door causes her to put it back down onto the counter.

INT. PETER'S HOUSE/PETER'S BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

Peter's at his desk working, when the phone RINGS. He picks it up.

PETER (O.S.)
Hello? Yes, this is Peter Mcready.

INT. HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

April makes it to the doorway, and puts her eye against the peephole.

PETER (O.S.)
April's brother, yeah. I know,
you're April's case-worker right?
We met once.
(a beat)
She was almost arrested at school?
For what?

APRIL'S POV: Resting on the doorstep is a lone package. A white delivery truck is slowly making its way down the street. It grows smaller and smaller, until it disappears.

PETER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
No. I haven't seen her. She hasn't
called.

April opens the door and steps outside.

PETER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
I'll give you a ring if she does.

EXT. HOUSE/STOOP - CONTINUOUS

April leans down and picks up the package. She stares at it curiously for a moment, then steps back inside the house.

INT. HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Peter's sitting on the couch, wearing a look of disappointment like a familiar sweater.

APRIL
(cautious)
Good morning.

PETER
I knew there was something you weren't telling me... just a matter of time before it got dumped in my lap.

April cops to it immediately; no use continuing the charade.

APRIL
How did you find out?

PETER
I got a call from your case-worker. She said that you were selling drugs at school. Is that true?

APRIL
Do you even have to ask me?

PETER
I swear to god it's like a game show with you...

APRIL
Hey...

Peter mimics the dramatic tone of a game show host:

PETER
"How badly can April screw up?"

APRIL

Hey... I'm sorry for disrupting
your college kid dream life here...
if you want me to leave, I will.

And there it is, the guilt card has been dropped right in
Peter's lap; it's impossible to ignore. Peter stops making
fun of her and just stewes for a moment, considering.

PETER

You know that nobody just handed me
this opportunity April. I worked
hard for my scholarship. You could
have the same thing... you're
smart... it's not impossible.

Peter stops. No good use lecturing her, she never listens
anyway.

PETER (CONT'D)

What are you going to do?

APRIL

Rob's going on tour for a month in
a couple days... I'll go with them.

PETER

You want to stay here until then
right?

APRIL

Just a couple days and I'll be
gone.

PETER

(resigned)

Yeah, you can stay.

APRIL

(emphatic)

Thank you.

PETER

But, while you're here you're gonna
do some chores for me, and try not
to contribute to whatever bullshit
I already have to deal with on a
daily basis.

Peter looks down at the package she's been holding in her
hands.

PETER (CONT'D)

What's this?

INT. HOUSE/PETER'S BEDROOM - EVENING

A curious Christopher and Becky watch as Peter draws a box-cutter blade across the excessively duct-taped package, slicing through the tape and the card-board. He rips open the top of the package and extracts the wooden cabinet within.

CHRISTOPHER
(pseudo-dramatic)
Glad I made it back home in time to
witness the unwrapping of the
cabinet...

THE DIBBUK BOX is identical to the picture from the internet swap meet entry: seemingly innocuous, merely a wooden wine cabinet.

BECKY
Ooh, can I hold it?

PETER
(handing it to Becky)
Sure.

Becky stares at it for a moment.

BECKY
It's old... it smells old at least.

Christopher holds out his hands. Becky passes it to him.

He shakes it slightly, eliciting a RATTLING sound from within.

PETER
Don't do that.

CHRISTOPHER
(sheepish)
Sorry.

On Peter's look, Becky leads Christopher out of the room.

BECKY
We'll leave you to it.

Peter waits for them to shut the door behind them, then taking a deep breath, he focuses his attention back on the box.

He opens the two doors and the bottom drawer SLIDES out along with them, making a loud clicking sound.

The cabinet is filled with a variety of strange items: Two U.S. Wheat Pennies from the twenties; two small locks of hair (bound with string); a granite statue engraved and gilded with Hebrew letters; a golden cup; a dried rosebud; and a black cast iron candlestick holder with octopus legs.

Peter reaches into the cabinet and pulls out one of the locks of hair.

PETER

Weird.

He places it back inside the box, rubbing his fingers together distastefully.

After giving the other items a good once-over, Peter shuts the door, and feeds a fresh piece of paper into his type-writer.

For a moment the room is silent, save for the sound of his typing.

With a soft click, the Dibbuk Box doors spring open.

Peter freezes at the type-writer. He slowly turns around to face the item, its contents once more exposed.

PETER (CONT'D)

Okay.

Peter stands up from the chair, then looks down at the item warily.

He then picks it up, and stares deeply into it. He closes the doors shut, then lifting it up high, peers into its base, searching for any trace of an internal mechanism, or possible timer.

He places the Dibbuk Box back on the counter, and shaking his head, sits back down at the type-writer.

Peter COUGHS once, then continues typing.

We move away from Peter, and towards the wooden Dibbuk Box doors. We edge inside the narrow space between them, and then enter the darkness within. Everything falls to black.

DARKNESS

There's a soft feminine WHISPERING within the void.

INT. HOUSE/KITCHEN - MID-DAY

SUPERIMPOSE TITLE: "SEPTEMBER 21, 2003"

On her knees, April scrubs away any dirt from the kitchen's tile floor. She sprays the corner with some clear disinfectant, then resumes scrubbing with a sponge.

Finished, she stands up to admire her handiwork: where it was once messy, the kitchen is now completely spotless, every tile gleams, the counter tops look clean enough to eat off of, the fridge could be brand new.

Suddenly, April grimaces, almost RETCHES.

APRIL

What --

She holds her nose, and backs out of the kitchen -- BUMPING into Becky.

BECKY

Hey, I was going to ask you something. Have you been eating my...

Her face twists up as she smells the stench as well:

BECKY (CONT'D)

Good god, what is that?

APRIL

I don't know, I've been cleaning for an hour...

(a beat)

It smells like cat piss.

Becky frowns, knowing where this is leading.

BECKY

Vaguely.

APRIL

What are you feeding your cats?

This doesn't smell normal.

(a beat)

It smells like rotting flesh...

BECKY

Vincent and Crispin are perfectly trained to use the litter box outside. They've lived with me in over three different households and I've never once had a problem.

APRIL
Then what the hell is it?

Becky shrugs.

BECKY
Beats me. There's some heavy duty
cleaning supplies in the basement --
I'm sure just a bit of that will do
the trick.

Catty:

APRIL
Thanks.

INT. HOUSE/BASEMENT STAIRS - CONTINUOUS

April descends the concrete steps leading into the dark basement. Hanging just above her suspended from a rafter is a hanging light-bulb. April pulls the cord, illuminating the stairs and basement space below with a shallow pool of light.

INT. HOUSE/BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

Almost every corner of the basement is cluttered with some of the roommate's unpacked cardboard boxes and supplies.

April inspects a tall bookshelf filled with buckets of paint, tools, raid, and some cleaning materials. She grabs a large bottle of AJAX off the shelf.

THERE'S A LOUD POP AS THE LIGHTBULB BEHIND HER DIES -- and the entire basement goes black!

April's silhouette curses in the darkness, stumbling backwards.

APRIL
(yelling)
Damn. Hey! Somebody open the door,
I can't see down here!

There is no response from upstairs.

April thrusts her arms out in front of her, then slowly backs up against the cabinet to brace herself.

Her hand searches the space, then wraps around a familiar shaped object: a flashlight!

April switches it on and the narrow beam of light cuts right through the gloom. She takes another step -- and there's a soft CRACKING sound beneath her foot.

APRIL (CONT'D)

What?

She directs the beam in front of her, and the light spills across the floor.

Hundreds of small dark things teem out of the cracks between the rotten floorboards and shuffle towards her.

April moves to the side, avoiding the strange dark things and letting the beam guide her way. The flashlight reveals that the THINGS are a swarm of especially large cockroaches.

APRIL (CONT'D)

Gross.

She swings the light around... and spots movement against the wall. Moving towards it, she discovers ANTS GATHERING UP FROM THE FLOOR, CLIMBING ACROSS THE WALL, and collecting on the ceiling.

April grabs a bottle of raid from the shelf and SPRAYS at the dark mass of ants -- and then the cockroaches on the ground.

APRIL (CONT'D)

Sorry guys...

Suddenly she grabs her shoulder and winces --

APRIL (CONT'D)

Oww, shit!

There's a buzzing sound in the darkness -- as April backs away from it, she finds the beam of light falling across a small hornet's nest balanced in the corner of the room.

More hornets can be heard moving through the darkness towards her. April turns tail and runs.

INT. HOUSE/BASEMENT STEPS - CONTINUOUS

She charges up the basement steps, reaches the door, flings it open, then SLAMS it shut behind her.

INT. HOUSE/BECKY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Becky sits at her desk, and studies for a medical exam. She's wearing a long and faded Skinny Puppy t-shirt which barely conceals her pale and slender legs.

The only light in the room is the soft red glow of an antique lamp resting on the edge of the desk.

A large text-book is spread out in front of her. She takes notes in a book positioned in her lap.

Exhausted, she rubs her eyes.

BRRRIINNNG!

Her phone rings, and she picks it up.

BECKY

Hey. Still studying. Haven't nailed it yet. No, You can't come over Andrew. Be realistic...

Becky sighs, leaning back. You can tell by her slight lack of enthusiasm that the interest level in this couple might not be one-hundred percent equal.

BECKY (CONT'D)

You knew what you were signing up for when you started dating a girl in Premed.

(a beat)

I promise I'll make it up to you.

(another beat)

How? Well, I got a new pair of fishnets, some handcuffs, and a vintage bottle of wine. Hello?

The telephone has gone dead.

Becky tries the receiver several times -- no dial tone.

BECKY (CONT'D)

C'mon.

She puts the receiver to her ear... and a soft WHISPERING wafts from it.

Creeped out, Becky slowly pulls the phone away from her ear.

She sets it down on the desk, and stares at it. Then she leans down beneath the desk, and UNPLUGS the phone.

Suddenly her LAMP DIES, casting the entire room in darkness.

She sits up too fast, and bumps her head on the bottom of the desk.

BECKY (CONT'D)
(pained)
Ahhh...

Becky sits down on the carpet, then crawls out from beneath the desk, holding her head.

The same WHISPERING SOUND heard from the phone now SEEPS out from somewhere else in the room:

WHISPER (O.S.)
(faint)
... is that you?

Becky freezes in place.

The room is silent once more.

She quickly stands up and opens the door of the room, allowing some of the hallway light to creep inside and illuminate half of the space. The other half remains in darkness.

She steps out of the room and into the hallway.

INT. HOUSE/UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Becky stares into her room from the hallway. She gets down on her knees, and tries to see if she can spot anybody crouching beneath her bed.

It's hard to tell, but there doesn't seem to be anybody down there.

BECKY
Hello?

She then runs back into the room, and throws open the closet doors.

Nobody inside -- just racks of dark clothing.

BECKY (CONT'D)
Losing my mind.
(shaking her head)
Too much coffee.

She leans against the wall.

BECKY (CONT'D)
Need to keep studying... need a new
light-bulb.

INT. HOUSE/STAIRS - CONTINUOUS

Becky creeps down the stairs of the dark house. Every one of her steps protests with a sharp groan.

INT. HOUSE/DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Becky stands at the edge of the downstairs hallway. The over-head fluorescent light is on, emitting a low buzzing sound. Across from her is the kitchen, where the light is on as well.

She enters the hallway, and makes her way towards the kitchen. As soon as she reaches the hallway half-point, the fluorescent lighting above her SPASMS violently, creating an odd strobing effect.

Behind Becky, A HUNCHED OVER FIGURE steps out of the darkness and into the hallway. It can only be seen occasionally, and faintly discerned, caught in the spastic illumination.

Becky is unaware as she continues towards the kitchen.

The HUNCHED OVER FIGURE continues to make its way towards her, it's merely a dim silhouette, its features hidden.

It reaches out for her with a GRASPING HAND -- and then the over-head light dies completely, casting both Becky and the figure into darkness.

INT. HOUSE/KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

We wait in the kitchen, where everything is silent.

Becky's fate is unknown.

An unscathed Becky steps out of the darkness of the hallway, and into the kitchen.

Apparently nothing happened.

Becky reaches the counter beneath the shelves, attempts to pull herself up and onto it.

She grabs onto the side of the fridge and pulls herself up the rest of the way. Then she opens one of the cabinets, revealing an unopened case of light-bulbs.

Becky smiles, and grabs for one -- AND THE KITCHEN LIGHTS GO OUT.

Now balanced precariously on the edge of the counter in the darkness, Becky tries to carefully ease herself to the floor.

She makes it down, then takes a deep breathe, and opens the refrigerator door.

Bright and pale light floods the kitchen, ILLUMINATING A FIGURE STANDING BEHIND HER!

Becky turns around -- AND SCREAMS!

The figure pushes the fridge door open the rest of the way, and the bright light reveals... that it's only Peter.

BECKY

Oh god Peter, you scared the hell
out of me.

Peter looks away. His face is much paler then the last time we saw him, and his cheekbones are now slightly sunken in.

PETER

I'm sorry.

BECKY

My light upstairs went out, and I
heard this sound -- and then all
the lights down here were going
crazy.

PETER

We'll have an electrician check it
out tomorrow.

Peter gives a short cough, and holds his chest.

BECKY

You okay?

Peter nods.

PETER

Think I'm coming down with a
cold...

Becky lightly touches his cheek...

BECKY

Don't work so hard.

Peter slightly eases away from her touch, but doesn't make it too obvious.

PETER
Easier said than done.

He reaches into the fridge, and grabs a bottle of cold medicine.

BECKY
You know that stuff just knocks out your immune system. What you really need is vitamins, sun, and good food.

PETER
This will have to do for tonight Becky.

He trudges out of the kitchen.

Becky watches him go with a yearning look; it's obvious that they may have been closer than just friends in the past.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

SUPERIMPOSE TITLE: "SEPTEMBER 22, 2003"

Becky waits in the kitchen in front of the basement door. She checks her watch impatiently. The door opens and RONNY an excessively grizzled electrician steps out.

BECKY
So... what's wrong?

RONNY
Nothing ma'm.

BECKY
What do you mean? Everything was going ape-shit last night.
(a beat)
There has to be something.

RONNY
The circuit breaker's fine. Every light in the house works. You can see for yourself.

BECKY
Well, NOW they do.

RONNY

Give me a call if you have any more problems, but I believe that everything's in perfect working order here.

Becky eyes him suspiciously.

INT. HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

April is fast asleep on the couch, curled up tightly beneath the blankets. The only source of light in the dark room comes from a fringy cable access program playing on the television. It seems to feature some weird sort of middle-aged Latin dance competition, but its impossible to discern.

April tosses and turns, wrapping the blankets even tighter around herself -- then with a soft moan she opens her eyes and sits up straight.

Something RUSTLES in the darkness.

Groggy, but aware of the disturbance, April looks around the room for the source of the sound.

A shadowy figure wearing dark rags is curled up at the foot of the stairs -- hunched in an odd fetal position, with its hands gripping the second step.

This is the DYBBUK.

April shivers, hugging the blanket closer to herself. She tries to get a better glimpse of the figure in the darkness.

APRIL

Hello?

The Dybbuk quickly straightens up, and gripping the edge of the bannister, pulls itself to its feet. It stands there, swaying slightly back and forth, then sidles up against the wall.

APRIL (CONT'D)

Hey.

April takes a step off the couch.

APRIL (CONT'D)

Hey!

(building courage)

Whoever you are, there's five of us in this house!

She reaches into her pocket.

APRIL (CONT'D)
You should go ahead and leave now
because I'm about to call the
police!

The Dybbuk is still motionless, pressed against the wall.

It raggedly LURCHES forward, pulling itself up the stairs in a disturbing crawl... and vanishes from view.

April cautiously approaches the foot of the stairs.

APRIL (CONT'D)
Peter! Peter, wake up!

She grips the bannister, and stares up at the head of the stairs. There's no sight of the Dybbuk, merely darkness.

APRIL (CONT'D)
Somebody's in the house!

INT. HOUSE/PETER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Peter is fast asleep on his bed. The Dibbuk Box rests right beside his face, with both doors craning wide open.

APRIL (O.S.)
PETER!

Peter's eyes spring open, and he pulls himself off the bed. He cradles his forehead, then stumbles towards the door.

INT. HOUSE/UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Peter staggers out into the darkness of the hallway, bracing himself against the wall.

PETER
(yelling)
April, what is it?

There's a SCRATCHING sound behind him.

The hunched over Dybbuk is pressed tightly against Becky's door, and raking at the wood with its jagged nails.

Peter stays pressed up against the wall, not wanting to be seen.

The Dybbuk then reaches for Becky's doorknob.

PETER (CONT'D)
Becky... Becky! Wake up!

INT. HOUSE/BECKY'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Becky sits upright in bed, instantly awake. Her eyes fix on the door.

RAKE... RAKE...

The scratching sound is insistent... filled with terrible need.

BECKY
(groggy)
What is it?

CREEEAAAKKK...

Becky's door slowly swings open, and she rears back in her bed, terrified.

FRAMED IN HER DOORWAY IS THE DYBBUK, it's merely a silhouette in the darkness, but its very presence is filled with malice.

BECKY (CONT'D)
Peter help!

INT. HOUSE/CHRISTOPHER'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Christopher's crouching by his door, gripping a baseball bat wrapped in black duct tape. He takes a deep breath, kicks the door open, and rushes out into the hallway.

INT. HOUSE/UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Christopher runs towards Becky's room, where Peter is now standing by the door. He looks inside.

Becky is huddled at the foot of her bed, shivering.

CHRISTOPHER
Somebody broke in? What's going on?

BECKY
Somebody was standing by my door...
maybe he saw Peter coming and went
away. I don't know.

CHRISTOPHER
Downstairs?

Christopher pulls out his cellphone and brings it to his ear.

The phone HISSES WITH STATIC... Christopher quickly pulls the phone away, unnerved.

There's a CRASHING SOUND from downstairs.

PETER
(yelling)
April!

Peter rushes to the end of the hallway and to the stairs, with Christopher and Becky behind him.

INT. HOUSE/STAIRS - CONTINUOUS

The three of them head down the stairs, with Peter at the lead.

INT. HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

They make it to the living room, where Peter raises a cautioning hand.

The television is overturned, shattered in pieces on the carpet. The Dybbuk is pressed against the wall, with its back faced towards them. Its bony shoulders rise and fall with each gasping breath.

The three don't step any further into the living room. Christopher leans closer, attempting a better look at the intruder. He fixes on the long grey hair; it trails out behind her like rotting tendrils.

CHRISTOPHER
It's an old woman.
(a beat)
Just a skinny old woman...

BECKY
(whispered)
Maybe she's homeless. What should we do?

PETER
(whispered)
I don't know.
(a beat)
Where's my sister?

INT. HOUSE/KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

April is crouched low behind the kitchen counter with her legs hugged close to her.

She looks up, and into the hallway that leads into the living room.

INT. HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The Dybbuk is still prone, motionless against the wall.

BECKY
(whispered)
She's not moving...
(a beat)
Wait... is she even breathing?

AND THE DYBBUK WHIRLS AROUND AND SCREAMS: it's a bloodcurdling sound, filled with anguish and terror.

We barely see its face in the darkness, just a hint of ancient yellowed skin: features buried in a sea of wrinkles and folds. One thing is clear though, it definitely isn't human.

It lashes out at the air with skeletal hands hosting jagged nails.

Terrified, Becky and Christopher both run up the stairs, leaving a paralyzed Peter behind. He can't tear his eyes away from the Dybbuk. Breaking down, he falls down to one knee, and covers his face.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

April hears the terrible cacophony from the living room, and stands up to get a better look.

THE DYBBUK MOVES INTO THE KITCHEN.

April screams, terrified, then flings open the basement door and enters.

INT. HOUSE/BASEMENT STEPS - CONTINUOUS

April races down the basement steps, almost tripping in the darkness.

There's the sound of something rasping, and scratching the walls as it comes up behind her.

INT. HOUSE/BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

April runs through the basement, and reaches a corner of the room where she slumps down. She turns just in time to see the DYBBUK COME SURGING TOWARDS HER THROUGH THE DARKNESS...

She barely has time to scream.

DARKNESS

END DREAM SEQUENCE

INT. HOUSE/COUCH - MORNING

April juts forward, bolting upright on the couch. Her face glistens with sweat, her eyes are strained.

INT. HOUSE/BECKY'S ROOM - MORNING

Becky lies in a fetal position. She presses both of her cats towards herself in a desperate embrace. A single tear descends her cheek.

INT. HOUSE/CHRISTOPHER'S ROOM - MORNING

Christopher sits on the edge of his bed -- his breaths are rapid, his brow is drenched.

CHRISTOPHER

God...

INT. HOUSE/PETER'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Peter lies back on his bed, perfectly still. He quietly stares at the ceiling. Then he sits up, looking behind him.

Thick clumps of dark hair cling to his sweat dampened pillow.

INT. HOUSE/DINING ROOM - MORNING

There's an uneasy silence at the dining room table. Everyone quietly eats breakfast, except for Peter who is conspicuously absent.

Christopher stares at his bowl of cereal listlessly. Nobody seems to want to speak. All of them are lost in thought.

April breaks the silence:

APRIL

I had the worst dream last night...

Christopher and Becky look at her.

CHRISTOPHER

Yeah? Not sure if it will top mine... but go ahead.

APRIL

You guys were all in it... and Peter.

Becky frowns, unconsciously leaning forward.

CHRISTOPHER

Okay.

APRIL

Some old woman broke into the house... at least, from far away she looked like an old woman. Her face was *different* though.

Christopher's mouth literally drops.

CHRISTOPHER

Are you serious?

APRIL

What?

CHRISTOPHER

I mean... you really dreamed that?

APRIL

Yeah.

CHRISTOPHER

So did I.

Now the attention is focused on Christopher.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)

In your dream... we all went downstairs... cornered her in the living room, right?

April nods, surprised. Becky's lost in thought.

BECKY

I dreamed the same thing.

Holy shit.

Christopher's shaking his head:

CHRISTOPHER

(awed)

I didn't think that was even
possible. Pretty amazing don't you
think?

April doesn't seem too sure.

INT. HOUSE/PETER'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Peter has an intimidating looking stack of homework and unfinished class assignments piled up on his desk. What was once a neat and cozy work space is gaining an increasingly cluttered and chaotic quality. His trash can overflows, next to several other bags, filled taut with garbage. A bottle of WHISKEY is set dangerously close to the computer keyboard.

Peter sits at his desk and stares at a blank piece of paper that's been fed into his type-writer.

The Dibbuk Box lies behind him, the doors closed.

There's a KNOCK on his door.

PETER

Come in.

April steps inside and sits on the bed. She instantly picks up the Dibbuk Box and hoists it into her lap.

APRIL

So is this is that thing you got in
the mail... that package?

Peter nods.

PETER

I have to start writing my thesis
on it -- but I'm having trouble
getting going.

His tone is uncharacteristically LACONIC.

She looks over his shoulder at the printed out ebay article resting on his desk:

APRIL

The Dibbuk Box, huh?

(a beat)

Spooky.

Peter turns to her, annoyed:

PETER
Here, just... just set it down
April.

APRIL
Okay, okay...
(a beat)
So, I'm taking off. Christopher's
going to give me a lift to Rob's
show.

Peter is looking away, out the window -- where the sun hangs
suspended behind a cluster of houses.

APRIL (CONT'D)
No speech, no lecture? Nothing?
(a beat)
You're not going to tell me how
irresponsible I am for just hitting
the road?

PETER
(distracted)
No... not really.

April grins, pleased. Then she stares at him seriously for a
moment, actually taking note of the state of his room, the
bottle, and his slight physical deterioration.

Peter turns around to face her, taking her off guard.

PETER (CONT'D)
What is it?

April shakes her head, standing up.

APRIL
Looks like you threw a party in
here... are you okay? I mean...

PETER
I'm fine.

APRIL
You do look sort of sick. Maybe you
shouldn't be drinking.
(forcing a smile)
I don't know... maybe that box of
yours is actually working.

Peter ignores her:

PETER
(resigned)
I'm just tired. I have tons of work
to do. You go have fun on tour.

APRIL
Okay... right. I will. Thanks for
having me Peter.

April exits.

Peter begins to type -- then stops, and cradles his temples.

INT. PETER'S ROOM/BATHROOM - LATER

Peter faces himself in the mirror. He quickly downs several pain pills with a murky glass of water. He runs his hand through his hair, and several GRAYING strands come off with it, hanging limply from his fingers.

INT. PETER'S ROOM - LATER

Peter types furiously... filling page after page with text.

There's laughter from the room adjacent to his: Christopher's room. It sounds like Christopher and April are in the throes of an extremely animated discussion...

The sound of their voices creeps down the wall, until they seem to be speaking directly beneath Peter.

Peter stops typing and stares at the floor.

The conversation stops. The room goes silent.

April's voice then drips from the ceiling:

APRIL (O.S.)
Is that you?

He looks back at the desk. The Dibbuk Box has moved from one side of the typewriter to the other.

The doors are now open.

Peter reaches out and shuts the doors, then picks it up, and places it back on the other side of the type-writer.

He resumes his typing... then stops. The current page in the type-writer is completely blank.

PETER

What?

He digs through the pile he's created, flipping past each page, every single one of them a pale canvas free of any words.

Peter throws the pages in the air -- and they go fluttering down around him like scattered leaves.

There's one page that stays in his lap, with a single word typed on it: SARAH. The word lies there eerily in the center of the page.

We hear a low wheezing sound from somewhere in the room.

Behind Peter, there's now a SHAPE beneath his covers; something is lying in his bed.

Peter turns around... and the shape twists, allowing the covers to fall away, revealing an OLD WOMEN, her back faced towards him.

The Old Women stirs, then shifts position, turning towards him...

Peter turns away just before she turns around completely; based on the wrinkled and corrupted appearance of her back there's no telling how unpleasant her face must look.

When he looks again, the figure is gone. His sheets lie flat on his bed once more.

The walls resume their whispering, now speaking solely in Peter's voice... then, their quality changes, becoming that of the low female whispering of the HUNCHED OVER FIGURE... of the Dybbuk.

PETER (CONT'D)

Oh god...

The whispering fills the entire room, strangling it.

Peter covers his ears tightly.

Blood gushes from his nose, and splatters onto the white page in his lap.

Peter holds his nose, closes his eyes, and doubles over in front of his desk...

EXT. HOUSE/BACKYARD - NIGHT

When he opens his eyes, he's sitting cross-legged in the backyard, completely drenched, smack dab in the center of a brutal downpour.

The sky is now an abyss of blackness and shifting grey storm clouds.

Apparently, he's been sitting there for hours.

PETER
(whispered)
What? How did I...

He squints up at the dark sky for a moment, letting the rain whip across his face, and drip down his hair.

Peter tries to stand, and collapses, falling back to the grass. Another go at it, and he's on his feet. Unsteadily, he staggers back towards the house.

INT. HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

April has her bag packed and is dressed up to the nines: tight rock band t-shirt, red and black plaid skirt, and doc-martins.

She's digging through her backpack for a suitable jacket when Christopher pokes his head through the front door. He checks her out, but tries not to make it obvious. Problem is, Christopher is ALWAYS obvious.

CHRISTOPHER
Ready to go?

APRIL
Almost there, just getting a jacket.

CHRISTOPHER
I'll be outside.

April nods quickly, and resumes digging. She selects her trusty old hooded sweater, then throws it on.

When she looks up, Peter is standing in the room and looking at her. Water teems from his clothes, drenches the carpet beneath him. He looks pale and half crazed.

APRIL
(slightly nervous)
Peter... what's going on?

PETER
Can I talk to you?

APRIL
Could it wait? I really need to get going...

Peter ignores her and takes another step forward.

PETER
I don't know what's happening to me... but I don't feel like myself.

April gives him a strange look, uncomprehending. Is he playing a game with her? Whatever is going on with him seems too complicated for her to deal with at the moment.

APRIL
I told you that you looked under the weather -- is that what you mean?

Peter just stares at her blankly, almost looking through her.

CHRISTOPHER (O.S.)
Get a move on, slacker!

APRIL
Listen, can we talk about this on the phone? I don't want to be late for the show.
(a beat)
I gotta go, okay? Maybe you should get a check-up or something.

April turns around and heads out of the room. Peter sullenly watches her go.

INT. THE BLACK HOLE TAVERN - NIGHT

Rob's metal band TEARS their way through a feverish rock set in the dingy and crowded night club.

April is in the heart of the crowd, being SLAMMED against by the throngs of sweat-drenched dancers! She watches her boyfriend's band, but we can tell that she's not completely there; she feels slightly removed from the action, guilty about leaving her brother when he asked for help.

AT THE BAR: Christopher's EDGED out by the unruly crowd, and pressed up against the bar, where he awkwardly tries to flirt with a busty and tattooed BARTENDER. She either can't hear him over the din, or more likely is just choosing not to.

CHRISTOPHER

(shouting)

I used to play bass guitar in high school! Never really went anywhere with it though!

The bartender shrugs, mouthing, "can't hear you".

BACK IN THE CROWD: April's SHOVED by an especially unruly ROCKER GIRL, and she trips forward, almost hits the ground -- but pulls herself up by grabbing another kid's backpack.

She's done with this madness, just needs to be clear of it -- time to make an exit.

As she pushes through the violent sea of people, for just a moment, Peter's pale face can be seen, staring out at her from the crowd.

His face is exactly the same as it was back in the house: slick from the rain, and obviously frightened.

APRIL

(whispered)

Peter?

She moves towards her brother but he withdraws back into the crowd, disappearing.

April's panicked, trying to shove through people, going after her brother. The sea of moshing "comrades in arms" has become an unforgiving wall.

She REACHES Peter... grabs his shoulder. When he turns around, it isn't him. It's just some shaggy HIPSTER DUDE. He stares at her inquisitively:

HIPSTER DUDE

What?

April backs away from him. Was she seeing things?

ON STAGE: The band has ended their set and is starting to pack up. Rob grips the mic one last time:

ROB

Thanks everybody for coming...
please stick around, it just gets better.

He hops off the stage, running right into a panicked looking April.

ROB (CONT'D)

Hey you!

He instantly pulls her into an embrace... but she slightly twists away; she's unnerved.

APRIL

I need to go back to Peter's...

ROB

Mastodon hasn't even played yet!
You're kidding right?

APRIL

I think there's something wrong
with my brother... he was acting
really weird tonight.

Rob's hulking bass player TOMMY (19) barrels through the crowd towards them.

TOMMY

Death from above!

He lobbs a can of Pabst blue ribbon high up in the air; it spirals then plummets towards Rob.

He CATCHES IT... just barely.

Rob cracks it open, spilling frothy suds all over his shirt.

ROB

Yum... what were you saying?

APRIL

My brother... I think he needs my
help...

ROB

You know that we're leaving tonight
right? When did you plan on
"helping" him?

A SEXY GROUPIE CHICK with too many piercings and bright blue hair sidles up beside April, wraps her arms around her waist. She whispers in April's ear.

SEXY GROUPIE CHICK

Your boyfriend's hot.

April shoots her a withering look -- she backs off.

APRIL

Can I just catch up with you guys
tomorrow before you leave?

Rob shrugs:

ROB

Yeah, whatever. Give me a call
before noon though.

AT THE BAR: Christopher might have struck out with the
bartender... but now he's talking to a DRUNK GIRL who's
practically passed out into her piña colada.

CHRISTOPHER

Those fruity drinks will really hit
you hard... do you know why?
(a beat)
The sugar.

April grabs Christopher's shoulder; he shifts through an
invisible wall of jello before focusing his attention on her.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)

April! I was just talking to my new
friend here...

APRIL

Could you take me home?

CHRISTOPHER

Aren't you going on tour or
something...

APRIL

It's Peter... there's something
going on with him. I can't just
leave him alone. He needs my help.

Christopher leans forward, affecting a thoughtful pose. It
isn't especially convincing.

CHRISTOPHER

Listen... anybody who dedicates
himself that much to studying and
homework is already a bit unhinged.
He doesn't need your help... he
just needs his space. Once you get
to my age you understand those sort
of things.

(a beat)

The subtle things.

Christopher tries to put his hand on April's shoulder -- and spills some of his drink down his shirt... the drops of liquor teem onto the top of his pants, darkening the crotch area.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)

Damn it...

April frowns.

APRIL

Give me your keys, we're getting out of here.

INT. CHRISTOPHER'S CAR - NIGHT

April navigates Christopher's crummy Ford through the rain slick freeway. Christopher grooves to the music on the radio; makes occasional attempts to sing along, then loses interest.

One of Christopher's windows isn't able to close all the way and some of the water is streaming down the glass and spraying April.

She shakes the excess water off her hand, shivers. Christopher takes note, grinning sheepishly:

CHRISTOPHER

Sorry about that. An old girlfriend of mine slammed the door too hard once, and the window's never really been the same.

THE REST OF THIS SCENE IS PLAYED OUT ENTIRELY THROUGH APRIL'S POV:

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)

I really should fix it... but that would cost money.

We momentarily throw a glance at Christopher. His eyes dart from our face... to our chest.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)

Yeah, you're really getting drenched aren't you?

He then looks up sheepishly.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)

I'm sorry... I'm being a creep. I think I drank too much.

We turn our attention back to the rain slicked road.

APRIL (O.S.)
I won't argue with you there.

CHRISTOPHER
That's good...

We then look back at the road.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)
You know, I do have an extra jacket
that you can use. It's in the --

AND OUR VISION GOES COMPLETELY BLACK.

APRIL (O.S.)
Hey... I can't...

We hear the sound of the road rushing past, and the squeaking
of the windshield wipers... but we see nothing.

CHRISTOPHER (O.S.)
April, you're drifting. April!

Our vision returns.

The vehicle's drifted out of the left lane, and dangerously
close to the concrete center divide.

APRIL (O.S.)
Shit...

April corrects the car, and guides it back.

CHRISTOPHER
What the hell was that about? I
thought you were the sober one!

APRIL (O.S.)
Everything just went black... I
couldn't see at all!

CHRISTOPHER
(annoyed)
Be careful with that...

APRIL (O.S.)
I don't know what happened but...

AND OUR VISION GOES OUT AGAIN.

First there's silence, just the sound of the road, then:

CHRISTOPHER (O.S.)
Watch it April... watch out!

APRIL (O.S.)
Christopher, I can't see!

There's A BLARING HORN, and then a terrible wet SKIDDING sound...

APRIL SCREAMS!

Our vision cuts back in, revealing that the car is FACING THE WRONG DIRECTION -- TOWARDS INCOMING TRAFFIC.

CHRISTOPHER
We're facing the wrong way!

High-beams bear down on us, heralding the arrival of a LARGE SEMI-TRUCK moving far too fast to slow down in time.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)
Just back up... back up!

We put the car in reverse... guiding it out of the highway, and onto the shoulder -- JUST AS THE LARGE TRUCK TEARS BY, HONKING THE ENTIRE TIME.

APRIL (O.S.)
I just couldn't see... I just... I don't know...

Christopher grabs her shoulder, deadly sober all of a sudden.

CHRISTOPHER
April... keys... NOW.

INT. PETER'S ROOM - NIGHT

Total darkness... just the mere outline of Peter resting beneath the covers. A crack of pale light cuts into the dark, and the door opens.

April stands in the doorway, peering in... checking up on her brother. She waits there for a moment, lingering, then shuts the door again, letting the room succumb to the blackness once more.

INT. HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - MORNING

April wakes up, and finds a note pasted to the foot of the couch. She leans forward to get a better look.

It reads: "We've been getting some calls from the landlord that your brother hasn't paid him the rent. We've already given him our checks, so please remind him. Thanx, Becky and Christopher."

INT. HOUSE/UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

The house is dead silent, and has a strange lonely quality to it. We hear FOOTSTEPS as April makes her way up the staircase, and reaches the hallway.

Sounds drift from Peter's room: a soft shuffling, as if somebody was raking their heel across the carpet.

APRIL

Peter? I decided to stay one more day...

April stands in front of his door, and knocks twice.

APRIL (CONT'D)

Peter? Are you there?

We hear Peter whispering something behind the door, low and unintelligible.

APRIL (CONT'D)

Can I open up?

(a beat)

Your room-mates said you didn't pay the landlord.

She knocks on the door again, then turns the door-knob, and pushes the door inwards.

Peter's room is completely empty.

April stares into the room, surprised and slightly creeped out.

THERE ARE FOOTSTEPS BEHIND HER.

She turns around, and spots a FIGURE descending the stairway. It slightly looks like Peter, but its hard to tell from this vantage point.

APRIL (CONT'D)

Peter!

April hurries to the edge of the steps just in time to see the back of the figure as it makes a left, and disappears from view at the bottom of the stairway.

INT. HOUSE/STAIRS - CONTINUOUS

April quickly rushes down the stairs.

INT. HOUSE/HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

April makes it to the hallway, and stops. The figure is stepping into the basement door in the kitchen.

APRIL

Peter!

The figure closes the door behind it.

INT. HOUSE/KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

April pauses in front of the closed basement door. She reaches forward, and opens the door, then gazes into the darkness within.

INT. HOUSE/BASEMENT STEPS - CONTINUOUS

April descends the basement steps.

APRIL

Hey!

She reaches the bottom.

INT. HOUSE/BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

April stands in the center of the dark basement, seemingly alone. She turns around to leave -- AND RUNS INTO A WAITING FIGURE!

It's Peter, standing in the dark, and clutching the Dibbuk Box close to his chest. He stares at April without emotion.

APRIL

What the hell Peter? I've been
looking all over for you!

Peter doesn't respond. Just stares right through her.

APRIL (CONT'D)

You haven't paid the rent...

PETER

Yeah?

April takes him in... realizing for the first time how far gone her brother really is. His hair has thinned out considerably, grayed in spots.

She looks down at the Dibbuk Box in his arms:

APRIL
You were trying to tell me
something before about that box...
right?

Peter stares down at the box: his fingers trace its contours in the same manner that Kirk's did.

APRIL (CONT'D)
You said something about it was
affecting you? What did you mean?
(a beat)
Here... let me hold it for a
second.

She reaches for the box... AND PETER SHOVES HER SPRAWLING BACKWARDS:

PETER
(yelling)
Don't touch it!

She hits the concrete floor with a pained grunt.

APRIL
(shocked)
Peter!

His expression takes on a cruel quality; there's something alien and dark behind his eyes now:

PETER
You're worthless you know that?
(a cold beat)
I'm just glad that our parents
aren't alive to see you now;
nothing but a lazy, irresponsible,
little slut.

He coughs raggedly, holding his chest. Droplets of blood FLY out, and spatter his shirt.

April watches in horror, then rises to her feet and tries to tend to him.

Peter quickly turns around and staggers up the stairs, leaving April alone in the dark basement.

INT. HOUSE/DINING ROOM - NIGHT

April, Becky and Christopher sit at the dining room table. Christopher's nursing a practically drained bottle of some "two-buck Chuck"; looks vexed and half in the bag. Vincent and Crispin recline at Becky's feet, unaware of the human drama playing out around them.

APRIL

There's something bad happening here, and I know I'm not the only one who realizes that.

Becky and Christopher stare at her quietly for a moment. Christopher looks particularly shaken from the driving incident. Becky, however, being the consummate realist is stoic.

APRIL (CONT'D)

I lost my sight last night... for no reason. I could have killed both of us.

(a beat)

I almost did.

BECKY

How much did you have to drink?

APRIL

Nothing.

CHRISTOPHER

The girl was stone sober Becky -- I don't think she was just trying to scare me either.

BECKY

You two are letting your imagination run wild. Sometimes when I get stressed, my mind plays tricks on me.

April presses on, ignoring her:

APRIL

Electricity's been screwed up... and it just doesn't feel right in this house. I don't even know how to explain it.

(a beat)

I've heard whispers...

CHRISTOPHER

Like that old woman's voice?

April nods. Becky tries to keep her composure, but that one has her attention slightly.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)
Just like from our nightmare
Becky... the nightmare all three of
us had.

APRIL
It started when Peter got that box.
(a beat)
He's changed too. Just in the past
few days, he's completely
different. I think maybe we should
get it away from him.
(another beat)
Or destroy it.

BECKY
You don't think your sudden arrival
has put undue stress on him; that
compacted with all the work he has
to do for school?

April gives her a look:

APRIL
He's been able to "put up" with me
before just fine.

CHRISTOPHER
You can't put this on April...

And at the worst possible moment Peter steps into the dining room.

CHRISTOPHER
Peter has become really weird
recently.

Peter stands there and silently watches them. It's as if Christopher feels his eyes burning into his back -- he turns around.

Spotting Peter, he casually lifts his glass towards his lips, acting as if everything is fine and dandy.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)
(nervous)
Oh, Peter, hey... didn't see you
there.

Christopher's wine glass SHATTERS!

His palm SPREADS OPEN like a flower in bloom, gushing blood; dark plasma pools on the wooden table.

Christopher HOWLS in pain and hugs his wounded hand to his chest, leaving a red bloody HAND-PRINT on his white t-shirt.

Becky rises from her chair, and rushes to the hallway leading towards the kitchen.

BECKY

I'll get the first AID kit!

Peter appears completely unmoved by the shocking event. He slowly walks over towards the table; his eyes are half-lidded and distracted looking. He mutters under his breath:

PETER

Let me help...

April watches, stunned, as her brother picks up a rag, and sloppily mops the blood off the table top. It collects on the floor in shallow puddles.

PETER (CONT'D)

I'll clean this up...

Christopher shakes the pain off... he takes hold of a piece of glass embedded in his palm, then WINCES as he slowly pulls it out.

He then looks down at the pool of blood on the table.

Peter's reflection can be seen in the surface of the blood, but it isn't him: his skin is withered by age, completely DEFORMED.

Hideous.

Christopher SCREAMS, and backs away from the table, knocking over his chair.

April rushes towards him.

APRIL

Christopher, what is it?

He just shakes his head, and backs away from the table.

Becky re-appears, holding a first AID kit, and notices the stricken Christopher. She rushes towards him.

With an unnerving single-minded intent, Peter continues mopping up the blood on the table, unaware of anything else around him. He mumbles as he slowly drags the already drenched rag back and forth across the wooden surface.

Christopher aims an accusing finger Peter's way while Becky and April try to comfort him.

CHRISTOPHER

His face... it's not his face... so old...

BECKY

(shouting)

Peter, just get out of here for a second, okay?

Peter stares at her listlessly, then still holding the bloody rag slowly trudges his way out of the living room, and towards the stairway.

EXT. HOUSE/DRIVE WAY - NIGHT

Christopher frantically places cardboard boxes into the back seat of his car. His Ford is already filled to the brim with whatever furniture and belongings it can hold. He stops for a moment, cradling his now mummified hand.

CHRISTOPHER

Damn.

(a frustrated beat)

Dammit!

Becky sits cross-legged on the concrete drive and quietly smokes a cigarette. April walks out of the house holding a cardboard box. She sets it down and sits beside Becky.

APRIL

You know that Peter needs our help...

Christopher turns around.

CHRISTOPHER

Help him? How the hell am I going to help him? No, sorry, I never signed up for this shit, and I wouldn't even know where to begin.

(a beat)

I recommend you get him a psychologist... or maybe a priest. Fuck it, I don't know... a witch-doctor?

(MORE)

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)
(another beat)
Either way, it's out of my realm.

APRIL
Christopher, please.

CHRISTOPHER
No way. I'm going to a nice and
normal dorm far away from this
place.

Becky turns to April:

BECKY
I'm sticking around.

For the first time, the two share a quick understanding; a mutual concern for Peter. Becky breaks the moment, standing up so she can give Christopher a farewell hug.

April feels something boring into her, looks over her shoulder and back at the house.

A DARK FIGURE frames Peter's window and stares down at them. It just stands there, motionless.

April shivers, and turns away.

INT. HOUSE/BECKY'S ROOM - LATER

The walls in Christopher's room are now bare, empty of any decoration.

April stares out his window and watches as Christopher's car pulls out of the driveway in a dark billowing cloud of exhaust fumes; her expression screams: "lucky bastard".

Her phone's SHRILL ring shatters the silence.

APRIL
Hello?

EXT. GROCERY STORE PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Rob's crunched up tight inside of a grocery cart while cradling a forty-ouncer to his chest. A PETER PAN style hat is propped on his head at a crooked angle. Tommy is slowly pushing the cart across the bumpy black asphalt.

ROB
Where the hell are you? We waited
like two extra hours before
leaving!

Across the lot we can spot the silhouette of the band's
DRUMMER being pushed in a second shopping cart by the LEAD
GUITARIST.

The two carts seem to be set-up for a sort of jousting duel.

INT. HOUSE/CHRISTOPHER'S ROOM - NIGHT

April leans against the wall, drained by the day's events.

APRIL
I'm still at Peter's house. There's
something wrong with him Rob...
something really wrong.

There's the sound of LAUGHING, and then the SCRAPING sound of
wheels protesting against concrete.

APRIL (CONT'D)
What's that noise?

EXT. GROCERY STORE PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Rob's now speeding across the lot towards the other shopping
cart; his "driver" Tommy is laughing his stoned ass off.

Rob takes another swig from the bottle.

ROB
Listen, we're gonna be in Saint
Louis all day tomorrow... just hop
on a bus and I'll pick you up at
the greyhound station in the
morning!

A SUDDEN RATTLE, and Rob drops the phone. He doesn't seem to
really mind though, as he steadies himself for the upcoming
COLLISION with the other shopping cart.

INT. HOUSE/CHRISTOPHER'S ROOM - NIGHT

April stares at the phone perplexed.

APRIL
Rob? What the hell...

After a moment she just hangs up.

There's a SHUFFLING sound from elsewhere in the room, and Peter shambles into view wearing a black hooded sweatshirt; the hood is flipped up, obscuring his face. He pauses by the entrance.

APRIL (CONT'D)

Peter...

Becky appears behind him, all animated and filled with motherly purpose; she's lugging a garbage bag filled with empty bottles of beer, presumably Peter's.

BECKY

I'm taking your brother out of the house for a bit -- I think he could use the fresh air.

Becky rubs Peter's shoulder sympathetically: you can tell she's taking some relish in this role.

BECKY (CONT'D)

(to Peter)

I'll meet you in the car... just wait for me.

Becky watches him go, then turns to April.

BECKY (CONT'D)

I think I'm gonna run him by the Doctor's too... Peter needs a check-up. Could have caught a bug or something.

APRIL

That's not it Becky.

(a beat)

I'm gonna take that THING he bought back to whoever sold it to him, just get rid of it.

Becky just shakes her head.

INT. HOUSE/PETER'S BEDROOM - LATER

April rummages through the pile of Peter's Dibbuk thesis paperwork, trying to gleam any information she can.

The Dibbuk Box LOOMS behind her, silent and motionless.

April stares at the ominous drawings from Peter's class presentation; frowns at the haunting imagery.

The printed out EBAY ARTICLE catches her eye, draws her in.

We DRIFT over April's shoulder and towards the dark CRACK separating the two Dibbuk Box doors... and fall into an ABYSS.

DARKNESS

April's voice cuts in through the black as she reads from the article:

APRIL (O.S.)

All of the events that I am about to set forth are accurate and may be verified with the copies of hospital records and sworn affidavits that I have included.

The darkness shifts, changing, bringing us to...

EXT. ESTATE SALE - AFTERNOON

Storm clouds build above... casting gloom over a sparsely attended estate sale; curious shoppers congregate in front of the MIDDLE CLASS home and pick through furniture and trinkets that is arranged on a lawn.

A good looking man steps into view -- and we recognize him... it's KIRK! It's shocking how healthy the man looks. He holds the Dibbuk Box in his arms; stares at it intently.

APRIL (O.S.)

I originally found the item at an estate sale for an elderly women who had passed away. Apparently, it was a treasured keep-sake of hers that she'd kept by her bed for many years.

A YOUNG WOMAN watches him holding the object from afar; there's something very frightened and tense in her eyes.

INT. ESTATE SALE/GARAGE - AFTERNOON

Kirk faces the clearly distraught women in the dark garage.

APRIL (O.S.)

Her daughter actually insisted I take it before I made an initial offer... even suggesting that I take it for free.

Tears stream down her cheeks.

Kirk nods, "Yeah, okay, okay, I'll take it!"

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

We see the remnants of a birthday cake and candles. An ELDERLY WOMAN sits at the head of the table, Kirk sits beside her. He presents her with a wrapped gift.

APRIL (O.S.)
I decided to give the cabinet to my
Mother as a birthday gift...

The Elderly Woman starts to unwrap the gift -- Kirk gathers up an armful of filthy dishes, and carries them towards the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Kirk washes dishes under the faint florescent light above. Just over his shoulder we have a glimpse into the dining room:

Kirk's mother isn't moving, she appears slumped forward. Kirk turns to look at her, freaks out, rushing back into the dining room.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Shredded wrapping paper scatters the space in front of Kirk's mother, who is staring intently at the Dibbuk Box. No matter how much Kirk talks to her, or tries to get her attention her face doesn't change its expression.

APRIL (V.O.)
Her face had no expression, but
tears were streaming down her
cheeks.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

We're in a quiet hospital room. It's a study in sterility; rendered the color of pale bone. Kirk stands over a hospital bed, where his mother lies beneath the covers. Half of her face is disfigured, she seems to be drawing or writing something on a scrap of white paper.

APRIL (V.O.)
She'd suffered a stroke.

The woman drops the pencil, hands Kirk the scrap of paper.
It reads in sketchy letters: H.A.T.E.G.I.F.T.

INT. KIRK'S HOUSE - NIGHT

WE DRIFT THROUGH THE HALLWAYS AND LIVING ROOM OF KIRK'S HOUSE; every piece of silverware or furniture made of glass has been SHATTERED. The carpet drowns in an ocean of shards.

APRIL (V.O.)
Shortly after I brought the box
back home... things got even worse.

The trail of devastation leads to the KITCHEN, where a stunned Kirk stands in the dead center -- silverware and glasses lie in ruins at his feet.

INT. REFINISHING STORE/BASEMENT - NIGHT

We're back in the dreary refinishing store basement. Kirk lingers by the narrow window peering out at the rear parking lot outside.

A DARK LAYER of dead insects blanket the entire surface of the window... while a brand new swarm slams their bodies against the wall of their dead brethren.

APRIL (V.O.)
Then the nightmares started...

INT. REFINISHING STORE/BASEMENT - LATER

Kirk lies curled up beneath his covers... while a hunched over FIGURE in the corner of the room shambles through the darkness towards him, its movements erratic and threatening.

APRIL (V.O.)
An awful hag pursues me in my
sleep... and now increasingly while
I'm awake.
(a beat)
Terrible headaches persist... I'm
now starting to have trouble with
my vision...

INT. REFINISHING STORE/BASEMENT - LATER

Kirk is crouched over his computer in the dark; he's now in the same wretched state that we recognize him from earlier.

APRIL (V.O.)

I would destroy this thing in a second, except I really don't have any understanding of what I may or may not be dealing with.

We move past Kirk's shoulder and towards the GAPING MAW of the Dibbuk Box.

APRIL (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I am afraid that if I destroy the cabinet, whatever it is that seems to have come with the cabinet may just stay here with me. I have been told that there are people that understand and specifically look for these sorts of items.

We enter it, and fall back into the darkness.

DARKNESS.

APRIL (V.O.) (CONT'D)

If you are one of these people, please, please buy this cabinet and do whatever you do with a thing like this.

EXT. REFINISHING EXPERTS - NIGHT

The furniture refinishing store lies on the edge of a run-down strip mall. Most of the shops are closed, save for a 24-hour laundry mat lit up with ugly green fluorescence that spills out across the mostly bare parking lot. Peter's car parks, and April gets out, approaches the store.

April reaches the door to the store, and finds it boarded shut. There is a FOR SALE sign plastered in front of the boards.

EXT. REFINISHING EXPERTS/BACK ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

April stalks through the back alley, where there is a half-filled dumpster positioned beneath one of the narrow windows leading into the place.

She pulls herself up onto the dumpster, then squeezes inside.

INT. REFINISHING EXPERTS - CONTINUOUS

The place is filled with furniture covered in a week's worth of dust and dead insects. April makes her way past them, and towards the back of the store, where there is a door leading into the basement.

INT. REFINISHING EXPERTS/BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

April opens her cell-phone, allowing the faint light from the display to guide her way, revealing that the place is in complete disarray.

There is Hebrew writing and bizarre drawings of a monstrous hunched over figure sketched onto the walls. It vaguely looks like the hunched over figure from April's dream.

We also notice the many drawings of the SLEEPING FIGURE.

There are several articles about the Dibbuk Box stapled together, all of them regarding the misfortunes that befell the prior owners.

Featured prominently amongst the articles is an old black and white photograph of a YOUNG BOY leaning against an OLDER WOMAN. The boy has a blissful look on his face.

April reaches for the photograph, and takes it off the wall.

A name scrawled on the back of the photograph reads: SARAH HOROWITZ.

Next to the photograph is a printout from the Red Cross War Victim's Tracing and Information archive: a segment from a photocopied list of names of those that died in Germany during the war.

Sarah's name is circled in dark ink.

April places the photograph into her pocket.

There's a shuffling noise behind her: it's soft and faint, but present. Very close.

April turns her head towards the source: the farthest corner in the basement.

She moves towards it, and discovers an old wooden door against the wall. April tries the knob and discovers that it is unlocked.

She opens the door and steps inside...

INT. REFINISHING EXPERTS/BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

A pitch black bedroom. April fumbles for a light-switch but finds nothing.

She flicks open her phone again, and a small GREEN light begins to weakly highlight the space ahead of her. April takes a cautious into the room.

Stale air permeates the place. There are no windows, and meager decoration. A small bed is tucked against the wall, where the outline of a figure can be seen. There's a bedside table beside it.

We're in the same bedroom from Kirk's dream.

April doesn't realize this of course. Nervous that she'll be caught breaking into somebody's home, she starts to back out of the room. Then she notices something odd and stops.

The DIBBUK BOX is resting on the bedside table.

APRIL
(whispered)
What?

April approaches the dibbuk box, and her meager light illuminates that several ants are crawling across the surface, and onto a plate of rotten food resting beside it.

More insects are moving across the floor, up the bed, and onto the motionless body of the figure resting on top of it.

Ants crawl between the toes of two discolored feet; teem across thin legs barely concealed by a nightgown.

April gasps, bringing the light up the figure, and to the face: It's Sarah, the woman from the photograph.

She's older now, with haggard features and mottled skin.

A cockroach crawls across her fore-head and her LIDS SPRING OPEN, revealing two pale blind eyes, ravaged by glaucoma. Her tongue laps at her dry lips.

Then she begins to whisper, soft and incoherent at first, then her whispers take focus as the same sounds we heard earlier:

SARAH
(whispering)
Jacob?

April starts to back out of the room.

SARAH (CONT'D)
(whispering)
Jacob... is that you?

Sarah's face begins to YELLOW AND ROT, her features cave in on themselves, becoming a nightmare of ruined flesh.

APRIL
Oh god...

Sarah HOWLS in pain and anguish, and crawls off the edge of the bed.

April stumbles back, then falls to the carpet.

Sarah quickly drags herself across the carpet towards her, LASHING out at the air with her filth-encrusted nails.

The closer she gets, the less she looks like an old woman, and the more she looks like the hunched over figure from April's dream... THE DYBBUK.

Terrified, April pulls herself to her feet, and makes it out of the room just before the Dybbuk reaches her.

INT. REFINISHING EXPERTS/BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

When April turns around, the door is gone, leaving nothing but a bare mortar wall. She reaches out and touches the wall, then quickly pulls her hand away.

INT. HOUSE/PETER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

April's crouched low to the ground, digging through the piles and piles of discarded papers and trash which have been steadily accumulating on Peter's floor. April has a phone to her ear.

APRIL
I'm interested in the property that
used to be Refinishing
Specialists...
(a beat)
Is there any way I could contact
the prior owner? Just have a couple
questions.

A beat... then a look on April's face that tells us what we already know: the previous owner of the box is dead.

She quickly hangs up the phone, stunned for a moment, then her eyes rest on what she was looking for: Peter's THESIS ASSIGNMENT PAGE; all of DR. SCHLESSINGER'S info is printed on it.

Beside it, she spots the sole piece of paper with the name in the center:

Sarah.

Where it used to be printed, the red splotchy letters now actually look like they've been written in dried blood.

APRIL (CONT'D)
(whispering)
Sarah.

She stands up -- SLAMMING INTO PETER!

He still has his hood up, darkening his features; his eyes have a drugged up far away quality to them. They peer at April blankly... or rather peer through her.

APRIL (CONT'D)
Peter, are you okay? I didn't know
you were home yet.

Peter just brushes past her, and SITS down on the bed.

BECKY (O.S.)
You're not going to get anything
coherent from him... he's just had
a prescription from Dr. Feel-good.
(a beat)
Sleepy-time pills.

Becky's stepped into the room as well.

APRIL
What did the doctor say?

BECKY
Exhaustion... dehydration..
basically a laundry list of shit
that tells me he hasn't been taking
care of himself.

April gives Peter a little goodbye wave; he's now lying back on the bed, cocooning himself in the thin white sheets.

APRIL
Okay, rest up... I'll be back.

She starts to head out of the room.

BECKY
Where are you going?

APRIL
(evasive)
Just need to go on an errand...

April exits pretty damn fast.

BECKY
(to herself)
With whose car?

INT. PETER'S CAR - NIGHT

April navigates Peter's car through the narrow streets of the college town. The Dibbuk Box rests in the passenger seat. The engraved letters on the back are facing her. She traces them with her finger.

Her face is fixed with grim determination; the terrifying things she's learned about the Dibbuk Box have instilled a real sense of purpose in her.

INT. COLLEGE CLASSROOM - NIGHT

Students filters out of Mr. Schlessinger's classroom. April pushes through, holding the Dibbuk Box. The professor is behind the desk; he looks up at her approach...

APRIL
Can I talk to you about something?
I'm Peter Mcready's sister...

On the teacher's nod, April sets the Dibbuk Box down.

DR. SCHLESSINGER
Ahh, the Dibbuk Box. How is Peter
by the way? He's been missed.
(reaching for it)
May I?

APRIL
Not too well actually...

The teacher touches the cabinet -- and COUGHS RAGGEDLY...

DR. SCHLESSINGER
(covering mouth)
Excuse me...

APRIL
(pointing)
What do the Hebrew letters on the
back mean?

DR. SCHLESSINGER
Sarah.

APRIL
(disappointed)
That's all?

DR. SCHLESSINGER
Just a name.

APRIL
Whoever owned this before him
started having problems. It sounded
like what Peter was writing about
for his thesis...

DR. SCHLESSINGER
That's exactly why he wanted it;
layer in a modern take on that old
folklore, focused through his own
perspectives and beliefs.

APRIL
The previous owner is dead.
(a beat)
Peter is starting to experience the
same things he went through before
it happened.

Dr. Schlessinger COUGHS again... shaking his head, now
vaguely bothered by the conversation.

DR. SCHLESSINGER
Every culture has their boogymen --
which tended to serve some social
function. For the Jewish people,
the dybbuk acted as a sort of
symbol of the individual's
responsibility to the community,
and the past, those who have died.
(a beat)
But they didn't really exist back
then... and they certainly don't
now.

APRIL

Please, just humour me... what if it was real? What would you do for somebody who's possessed by one?

The teacher stares at the box, frowning. One of his eyes visibly TWITCHES... his cheek TENSES slightly. The box seems to have a subtle negative effect on him.

DR. SCHLESSINGER

What was your name again?

APRIL

April -- please... just tell me...

Looking at those eyes filled with concern, it's hard to refuse. She's obviously going through something intense.

DR. SCHLESSINGER

In the basic mythology, the afflicted would be taken to a Ba'al shem. That's a Jewish mystic.

(a beat)

They would perform an exorcism on them.

APRIL

An exorcism, exorcism?

DR. SCHLESSINGER

The Jewish style of exorcism is different. No holy water, no chanting. A loved one watches over the possessed, while the Ba'al shem tries to soothe the restless soul; perhaps seek out the root of whatever has wronged the spirit and make amends.

The teacher peers at the smooth wooden finish on the side of the item. His reflection stares back at him.

DR. SCHLESSINGER (CONT'D)

Okay, I've humoured you enough. Please have Peter come in and...

Dr. Schlessinger's mouth twists into a frown... and stays cemented that way.

APRIL

What is it?

The man's hands are TREMBLING, but the rest of him is frozen in place. Concerned, April touches his wrist.

Dr. Schlessinger looks up, facing April... and the skin on the left side of his face slowly SLIDES down, collecting in terrible folds by his jowls.

Drool pools out of his mouth, and his entire body violently quivers as he experiences a MASSIVE STROKE.

EXT. COLLEGE PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Red and blue ambulance lights flicker violently, bleeding color through the dark parking lot. April watches from afar as paramedics load Dr. Schlessinger's body into the back of an ambulance.

THE BLUE LIGHT casts colored shadow on her face...

INT. BECKY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Which CARRY OVER as April now hunches in front of Becky's computer.

April is on the RED CROSS home-page, and is scanning the War Victims Tracing and Information archive; searching for Sarah Horowitz. The web-page is currently LOADING.

There's a HARSH ringing sound... she looks at her cellphone.

The CALLER ID reads: ROB.

April stares at the phone longingly for a moment, then hangs up. When she looks back at the screen the results are showing.

The woman is listed as diseased, with only one other surviving relative: JACOB HOROWITZ, an elderly man living in the SUNNY CREST RETIREMENT HOME in downtown St. Louis.

A HAND touches April, STARTLING her.

It's Becky.

BECKY

You've been stealing your brother's car... and now you're going through my things? Gonna have to draw a line here...

APRIL

I'm just trying to help him; I've figured out what's going on Becky, really.

BECKY

I obviously can't make the decision for Peter... to tell you to leave. But I do think it would be the best thing for him right now.

April's intense, driven by her journey, her goal:

APRIL

He's possessed by that thing, that woman we all dreamed about. If I don't do something about it, he could die.

Becky looks at April like she's just sprouted wings, and zipped around the room in circles.

APRIL (CONT'D)

You know it's effecting all of us too...

BECKY

Peter just needs some sleep. That's all he needs... and no extra stress.

April stands up, heads towards the door.

BECKY (CONT'D)

April, don't just walk away!

APRIL

I have to stop this, I think I found a way!

And she's gone. Becky shakes her head.

INT. PETER'S ROOM - LATER

There's a CREAK as Peter's bedroom door opens. Becky stands at the threshold, cautious in the silence.

BECKY

Peter? Just wanted to check on you.

She steps into the dark room, and walks past his bedroom mirror.

His body lies beneath the sheets, rising and falling slowly in the darkness.

Becky approaches the bed, notices that the bed sheets are only half covering him; she pulls them up the rest of the way.

BECKY (CONT'D)
This sister of yours... she's the
reason you're so drained.

As she looks down at Peter's motionless form... we watch the mirror behind them, as his REFLECTION rises, sitting up in bed.

His physical body doesn't move.

The darkness masks most of the REFLECTION'S features; but even through the gloom, they seem to have a yellowed withered, quality.

The two dark pits for eyes stare at Becky from the other end of the room... she doesn't notice.

EXT. PETER'S CAR - NIGHT

April navigates the car through the freeway. A soft rain has begun to fall; prancing droplets obscure her view of the road.

She takes out her cellphone and places a call to Jacob Horowitz.

APRIL
Hi... is this Jacob Horowitz?

There's silence on the other line, then we hear a low pained whisper:

JACOB HOROWITZ (ON PHONE)
Yes.

APRIL
I was wondering if I could talk
with you for a moment...

A pause, and then:

JACOB HOROWITZ (ON PHONE)
I'm busy right now.

APRIL

Is there any chance that I could
come over and visit you?

(a beat)

I'd really like to ask you a couple
questions about your mother, Sarah.

A CLICK as the line goes dead.

APRIL (CONT'D)

Hello?

April pulls the phone away from her ear, then stares at it
distastefully.

EXT. SUNNY CREST RETIREMENT HOME - NIGHT

The run-down retirement home rests on the edge of downtown
St. Louis and is surrounded by several towering industrial
factories. The building is painted a depressing brown; its
windows are frosted over by the chilly weather.

April's car pulls into the parking lot and she steps outside.
She stuffs the Dibbuk Box into her backpack and approaches
the entrance.

INT. SUNNY CREST RETIREMENT HOME/LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

April steps into the lobby.

The musical equivalent of Valium plays faintly in the
background. Decades old couches line the walls, where an
ELDERLY COUPLE sit and watch an old black and white sitcom on
a television the size of a lunch-box.

A long hallway looms behind the front desk, where a middle-
aged NURSE argues with a male VISITOR.

VISITOR

Listen, she's been leaving me these
weird messages...

NURSE

I understand sir...

Her expression screams a total lack of understanding.

VISITOR

She seems really confused and out
of it. Maybe she's getting the
wrong medication...

(MORE)

VISITOR (CONT'D)

(a beat)

I need to see her now.

NURSE

Unless you make an appointment, I can't let you visit... we have to verify your identity. For security purposes.

VISITOR

I'm her grandson!

(a frustrated beat)

Here, let me show you some ID... we share the same last name.

The visitor digs into his wallet and flips through his various cards. Meanwhile the Nurse's eyes quickly dart back down to the cross-word puzzle she was previously working on.

April, deciding to bypass the bureaucratic process, creeps past the desk, and into the hallway.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

April quietly walks through the hallway. The doors on either side of her have rusty brass numbers on them. The carpet is a stained and faded flower-print that doesn't look like it's been vacuumed or washed in ages; the wallpaper curls downward in spots.

A door ahead of her opens, and a male ORDERLY steps out, pushing a steel cart covered with plates of half eaten food ahead of him.

April hurries up and catches up with the man.

APRIL

Excuse me...

ORDERLY

Yeah?

He still has the door he stepped out of propped open with his foot, giving a view into the room.

APRIL

I'm trying to find one of your resident's... his name is Jacob Horowitz.

The Orderly squints, trying to place the name:

ORDERLY
(remembering)
Jacob... Oh, yeah, that crotchety
guy that never sleeps.

April looks past the Orderly and into the room.

An ELDERLY MAN in his boxers sits on the edge of his bed and stares at the floor. His skin hangs loosely from his scarecrow-like frame.

ORDERLY (CONT'D)
Third floor... three-twelve.

The elderly man slowly lifts his head: his features are mostly in shadow, but there's something slightly off about them; the eyes are so deeply sunken they threaten to fall back into their sockets.

April stares, her attention drifting to the odd sight.

ORDERLY (CONT'D)
You get that?

Snapping out of it, April looks back at the Orderly.

APRIL
Yeah, yeah... thank you.

The Orderly then lets the door shut behind him, and pushes his cart down the hallway in the opposite direction.

April makes her way to the end of the hallway where she stops in front of an ancient looking elevator. She presses the up arrow button, and waits.

The elevator DINGS, and the doors open. April steps inside.

INT. SUNNY CREST RETIREMENT HOME/ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

Steel walls on either side, harsh fluorescence above. April presses the second floor button. The elevator shudders as it rises.

There's a solid THUD, as the elevator comes to a stop, and the doors spread open.

Standing out in the hallway is a thin OLD WOMAN wearing a light blue flower print dress. She seems to be staring at the wall, with her back faced towards us.

April holds the door open.

APRIL

Ma'am?

The Old Woman doesn't respond. She just stays there, motionless in the hallway.

APRIL (CONT'D)

Do you want to come inside the elevator?

The Old Woman softly whispers something unintelligible.

APRIL (CONT'D)

Okay. Guess not.

April steps out of the elevator and into the hallway.

INT. THIRD FLOOR HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

The Old Woman still isn't moving as April steps past her, and begins to make her way down the hallway.

Concerned, April stops several yards away and looks behind her.

APRIL

Do you need any help or something?

The Old Woman turns away from the wall, and looks at her.

Her features are drowning in ageless flesh, leaving nothing but a mask of folds; wrinkles and varicose veins.

April staggers backwards, horrified, AND BUMPS INTO A FIGURE WAITING BEHIND HER!

It's a tall and lanky OLD MAN, wearing a drab brown suit. His face is identical to the old woman's: yellowed drooping, withered skin. He has no mouth, and two scarred slits for eyes.

Impossibly, the Old Man seems to whisper at April... the Old Woman chimes in; their soft murmurs drift through the quiet hallway.

OLD MAN/OLD WOMAN

(whispering)

Jacob?

April steps away from them, and quickly hurries down the hallway towards Jacob's room.

As she passes by several other rooms, she realizes that all of the elderly people in the retirement home bear the same features.

Features similar to the Dybbuk.

Some of them rise from their beds, and trail after her, following closely, whispering in the Dybbuk's voice. Others just stand there, motionless.

April finds Jacob's room, twists the handle, and steps inside.

INT. SUNNY CREST RETIREMENT HOME/JACOB'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

When she turns around, JACOB (70s), an imposingly grim looking man waits behind her, watches her coldly. He appears like a man who's never known the comfort of a night's rest; he's haggard and obviously sleep deprived.

JACOB HOROWITZ
You're the one who called.

It isn't a question.

APRIL
(breathless)
Yes... yeah, that was me...

Jacob takes a step towards her, bringing himself uncomfortably close. He may be old and frail, but there's still something threatening about him.

April takes a nervous step backwards:

APRIL (CONT'D)
I'm sorry for just showing up, but
I didn't have any other choice.

JACOB HOROWITZ
I understand. You wanted to talk to
me about my mother, correct?

April nods vigorously:

APRIL
Yes, I just wanted to ask you a few
questions... anything... just a
couple minutes of your time.

Jacob turns around and walks over to a phone resting by his bedside. He picks it up, and begins to dial a number.

APRIL (CONT'D)
Wait, who are you calling?

Jacob casually looks over:

JACOB HOROWITZ
Just security. Why don't you take a seat?
(a beat)
They're relatively prompt... even in a dump like this.

APRIL
Please sir, hear me out...

April sets down her backpack, and unzips it. She reaches inside.

Jacob pays her no mind, his attention is focused on the phone.

JACOB HOROWITZ
Hello... can I please speak to security?

April pulls the Dibbuk Box out of the backpack.

Jacob then freezes, his eyes straining wide. After a tense beat:

JACOB HOROWITZ (CONT'D)
No... actually, I'm sorry. It was a false alarm.

He hangs up the phone, and promptly takes a seat. For a moment he stares at the box as if it could saunter across the room and crawl into his lap.

JACOB HOROWITZ (CONT'D)
Where did you get that?

APRIL
From my brother.
(a beat)
Could you tell me where it came from?

Jacob slowly nods, then rises to his feet.

He approaches April, who cowers slightly... then she hands him the box. He takes it and sits down on the edge of the bed. He stares at it for a moment, then opens the cabinet doors.

JACOB HOROWITZ
This was my mother's.

APRIL
Sarah?

Jacob nods:

JACOB HOROWITZ
Her father had given it to her when
she was young. She never parted
with it.

April watches him intently, surprised that he's opening up.

Jacob puts the box down.

APRIL
So... what happened to her?

JACOB HOROWITZ
We lived in Belszewo, which is a
very small town Poland, this was
1942. Reports were coming back that
something very bad was happening in
other parts of the country.
(a beat)
Everyone was trying to leave as
fast as possible.

Jacob is quiet for a while.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

We're in the same stale old bedroom we saw back at the
refinishing store, and Kirk's dream.

Sarah lies fast asleep under the covers. A younger version of
Jacob stands over her bed and watches her. Jacob's WIFE looms
nearby, cradling the tiny infant. The packed suitcases are
now gone; they've obviously finished packing and are ready to
leave.

JACOB HOROWITZ (V.O.)
We had a three week old infant, and
Sarah's glaucoma had stricken her
blind, she couldn't walk.

Jacob's wife finishes, then grabs onto his shoulder. He
doesn't move, just continues staring down at his sick mother.

JACOB HOROWITZ (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I knew that I had to make a choice
between my child and my mother.

Jacob's wife screams at him, then rushes out of the room.
Jacob stays behind another minute, a torn expression on his
face. Then, he slowly turns around and walks out of the room.

APRIL (V.O.)
You just left her alone?

For a moment the room is still, then Sarah stirs in bed and
opens her eyes. She peers out into the darkness, slowly
sitting up.

JACOB HOROWITZ (V.O.)
Yes. I'd left her to die.

END FLASHBACK

INT. SUNNY CREST RETIREMENT HOME/JACOB'S ROOM - NIGHT

Jacob stares at the floor, lost in the past now, still buried
by it.

April considers all of this, then realizes something:

APRIL
(to herself)
That's it... that's...

Jacob looks up at her.

APRIL (CONT'D)
This is going to sound insane...
but, Sarah, your mother...

JACOB HOROWITZ
What?

APRIL
She's not at rest...

Jacob squints, as if waking from a dream. He shakes his head.

APRIL (CONT'D)
When my brother bought the box,
he... he brought her spirit into
his house...
(a beat)
Sarah's possessing him... taking
him over... killing him....

Jacob is staring at her, aghast. He doesn't even speak, just listens to this "strange" young woman speak.

APRIL (CONT'D)

The only way to save him is if her spirit is settled.

(a beat)

You need to come to my house and see my brother... you have to...

JACOB HOROWITZ

What is this? Some sort of scam.

Any trust or amiability has completely taken flight, leaving a suspicious bitter old shell.

He rises to his feet.

JACOB HOROWITZ (CONT'D)

Get out of here. Just leave now...

APRIL

I need your help Jacob...

JACOB HOROWITZ

You come in here, dredge up these memories, and then tell me this nonsense... get out of here before I call the police.

April stands unsteadily and heads out of the room.

EXT. SUNNY CREST RETIREMENT HOME/PARKING LOT - NIGHT

April leans against the car door, sighing in frustration. She doesn't know which way to turn or what to do next. A soft rain has begun to fall.

BRRRRINNNNG!

April's phone calls out shrilly.

She silences her phone's protests; puts it to her ear.

APRIL

Hello?

BECKY (ON PHONE)

April, you need to get here quickly...

The reception is poor, so April can barely hear what Becky is saying. Her voice drowns in the poor reception.

BECKY (ON PHONE) (CONT'D)
Peter... he's... Peter... help
April...

There's a torrent of ABRASIVE static, then the connection dies completely.

April stares at the phone... dejected and afraid.

INT. SUNNY CREST RETIREMENT HOME/BARRY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Jacob paces the room; he then reaches into his drawer and pulls out a photograph of Sarah back when she was younger. He sits down on the edge of his bed and stares at it.

The face of his mother smiles back at him... then a WRINKLED and yellowed hand comes from the darkness behind him... eases up his arm, encircling it with long corrupted fingers.

Jacob freezes in place, terrified. The wrinkled hand then slowly draws away.

Jacob stands up sharply... whirling around. The bed is empty.

When he looks back down at the photograph of his mother, her features have begun to sag... gradually wilting and rotting.

He drops the photograph, darting towards the other side of the room... just as a wheezing, whispering sound fills the space.

JACOB
No... it can't be real... can't be.

EXT. SUNNY CREST RETIREMENT HOME/PARKING LOT - NIGHT

April's sitting on the asphalt now, letting the rain drench her. Then, she slowly looks up... something crossing her face, filling her eyes with fire. She rises to her feet.

INT. SUNNY CREST RETIREMENT HOME/LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

April strides across the lobby, paying no attention to the Nurse who tries to signal her.

NURSE
Excuse me... miss? You can't
just...

But she's already gone.

INT. SUNNY CREST RETIREMENT HOME/HALLWAY - NIGHT

April makes her way through the dim hallway of the retirement home... heading towards Jacob's room. She reaches it, and just throws open the door.

Jacob is pressed with his back against the wall, his features pale. He slowly raises his head at April's approach.

She stands in the doorway looking more determined then we've ever seen her.

APRIL

You know why you're having trouble sleeping at night Jacob. You know what I was telling you is true; I'm not going to let my brother die just because you're afraid of facing what you did.

(a beat)

You started this Jacob... together we can end it.

Jacob looks up at her, nervous as hell.

EXT. SUNNY CREST RETIREMENT HOME/PARKING LOT

Dark storm clouds build muster in the sky, blocking the moon and threatening an even more serious downpour. Rain batters Peter's car from all sides as it eases its way out of parking lot and onto the main road.

EXT. PETER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Jacob stands behind April as she unlocks the door and enters. Behind them the rain hammers down, punctuated by brilliant white flashes of lightning. They enter the house.

INT. PETER'S HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The living rooms a total abyss, darkness reigns. Jacob and April cautiously step inside, shutting the door behind them.

There's a CRASH OF THUNDER which rocks the house, causing Jacob to grip April's wrist.

LIGHTNING STRIKES, casting brief illumination, which reveals that the living room is crawling with insects.

April winces in disgust.

APRIL

Becky! Peter! Is anyone here?

As if in response the television suddenly COMES TO LIFE. The noise is disorienting and abrasive, nothing but white noise, with a disturbing undertone that faintly sounds like human whispering.

There's also an odd mewling sound that can be heard seeping from upstairs. At this distance its indistinct, but there's a violent quality to it.

April leans down to mute the volume on the television. Jacob stands by the stairwell.

APRIL (CONT'D)

Becky!

With the cacophony of static gone, the only sound is the odd mewling upstairs, and the pattering of rain against the roof of the house.

JACOB

Maybe they're gone.

A bouncing beam of light reaches the bottom of the stairs, followed by a pale figure that wraps its arms around Jacob's neck.

Jacob yells in surprise, pitching forward, dragging the strange figure with him.

APRIL

Jacob!

April rushes to his aid, and pulls the figure off him, revealing Becky!

The left side of her cheek has been split open, and bleeding wounds crisscross her fore-head.

APRIL (CONT'D)

Becky, what happened?

Becky just sobs, shaking her head back and forth. She weakly points upstairs and passes April her flash-light.

APRIL (CONT'D)

Is Peter up there?

Becky doesn't even respond, just continues to sob.

JACOB

I'll tend to her.

INT. PETER'S HOUSE/STAIRCASE - CONTINUOUS

April slowly climbs the staircase, letting the narrow beam of the flashlight penetrate the gloom in front of her. The violent mewling and rasping sound grows louder, closer.

As her beam moves across the head of the stairs, it highlights a silhouetted figure darting just out of view.

April stops in her tracks.

APRIL

Peter?

There is a soft creaking at the head of the stairs, and then the sound of a door closing shut.

April frowns, then keeps climbing.

INT. PETER'S HOUSE/HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

April directs her flashlight to the side of the hallway, and gasps:

The hallway wallpaper is covered in deep grooves and slashes. Spattered blood stains the wall on either side.

She then swings her flashlight over towards the source of the noise: Becky's cats are locked in a violent frenzy, lashing out at each other with abandon.

APRIL

(to herself)

God...

Their yowling becomes frenzied, and shifts to pained gurgles, as the two animals rip each-other to bloody bits. Mercifully, they come to a stop, their glistening little bodies resting on the carpet.

April continues down the hallway, towards Peter's door, where the majority of the cat's violence seems to have been directed. She tries not to look at them as she passes.

The door is slightly ajar.

APRIL (CONT'D)

Peter?

No response. April lightly pushes open the door and enters.

INT. PETER'S HOUSE/PETER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The silhouette of Peter's prone figure can be seen laying on top of the sheets on his bed.

April aims the flashlight at the bed and gasps at Peter's appearance:

Haggard, with yellowed skin, and deep sunken eyes; he appears as if he's recently passed away, and has just begun the early stages of decomposition.

April staggers towards him, her hand almost creeps over her eyes. She can't bear to look.

APRIL
(breathless)
Peter... I'm here now... I brought
him, the man responsible. He's
going to help you.

Overcome by emotion she takes his hands in hers. His eyes are closed, his breathing shallow. It's unclear if he's awake or not.

Peter stirs and slowly looks up at her.

APRIL (CONT'D)
Peter?

Peter parts his lips slightly into a half smile that seems to say that he understands her.

April smiles, overjoyed... and then she winces slightly. She looks down:

Blood is trickling down her wrists and collecting on the floor.

APRIL (CONT'D)
Oh... owwww... Peter...

Jagged nails are emerging from her brother's fingertips and sinking into her skin.

Peter's smile grows loose on his face, unwieldy, until we realize that it isn't a smile, it's his features going through some painful, hideous change.

April's flashlight flickers and dies, plunging the room into darkness.

APRIL (CONT'D)
Peter!

In the thickness of the gloom we watch as Peter's face continues to change, the skin withers further, and then rots, spilling out into awful folds and wrinkles of corrupted skin.

April tries to violently yank her arms away from his terrible clutch, but she ends up falling backwards... AND PULLING THE DYBBUK/PETER THING WITH HER ONTO THE FLOOR.

Her backpack falls off her, and goes sliding across the ground.

April's SOBBING wildly. The wretched thing lowers its ruined face towards her: it's nowhere near recognizable as Peter now. It's mouth opens like a spreading wound and it SCREAMS!

April pulls herself out from under the Dybbuk -- AND IT RAKES ITS CLAWS ACROSS HER BACK, SHREDDING HER SHIRT, AND SLICING HER SKIN!

The Dybbuk lurches forward closing in on her -- and then the door to the room opens.

Jacob steps into the darkness, a confused look on his face. Then, terrified by the sight of the Dybbuk, he quickly tries to back outside, but the door doesn't open.

Both Jacob and April are sealed inside of the room.

JACOB HOROWITZ

April? What's happening?

The Dybbuk quickly turns its head to Jacob, and grows more enraged. Its features are now more drastically distorted; the yellowed folds sag down hideously.

It moves towards him, backing him against a corner -- and then begins to lash out at him with its claws. He huddles into a ball, and lets loose a keening howl of pain.

April pulls herself to her feet, and rushes towards the thing. She tries to pull the Dibbuk off of him, but it swipes her away.

She smashes into the closet doors, crumpling one of them. Coming to, she unzips her backpack and takes out the Dibbuk Box.

APRIL

Hey, Sarah!

The Dybbuk gives her a sideways glance, then freezes.

It fixates on the item -- its face seems to flicker in the darkness, and for a moment we see the normal face of Sarah.

An injured Jacob recognizes his mother, and shocked at first, slowly gains his resolve.

JACOB HOROWITZ

(gasping)

I only left you behind because I was afraid.

(gathering himself)

I was afraid of what would happen to my son if we had stayed. He was only a child. There was no way we would have been able to take you with us.

The Dybbuk HOWLS, then takes hold of Jacob's neck, and its claws dig in deep, drenching his clothing with blood. He's gasping for air.

JACOB HOROWITZ (CONT'D)

I'm sorry I left you mother...

Everything stops...

Jacob's eyes are closed from the pain... he opens them. The Dybbuk's hand is slowly raking across his leg; the nails are receding into the finger tips... the withered skin is smoothing out.

The slowly changing Dybbuk is now in a dark corner of the room, and sitting there motionless, cloaked by shadow. When it moves forward again, we notice that Peter is in its stead.

APRIL

Peter!

He still looks like hell, but one thing is certain... he's back. He looks up at April, and smiles, recognizing her.

PETER

April?

April rushes to him and the two embrace each other tightly, for what seems like the first time in ages.

Jacob watches the reunited siblings and smiles weakly; it's as if years and years of guilt and regret have dropped from his face.

INT. PETER'S HOUSE/PETER'S BEDROOM - MORNING

SUPERIMPOSE TITLE: "OCTOBER 12, 2003"

Peter's room is filled with cardboard boxes of packed belongings. There are also several items that have been separately packed and ready to be shipped out for sale on EBAY. Becky can be seen in the hallway, lugging her own boxed items.

April sits at his desk and types away. Peter stands behind her, leaning over her shoulder. We notice that she's currently writing an entry for The Dibbuk Box.

She's taken KIRK'S STORY and added her own addition to it. As she types, we hear her voice in the background.

APRIL (V.O.)
These are just some of the events
that befell me, my friends, and
family, shortly after my brother
brought the item into his home.

We continue to hear the soft clicking of his typing, and her voice as we leave the scene.

EXT. HIGHWAY - MORNING

April's dressed in the requisite community service outfit, and buffing GRAFFITI on the side of the freeway with a group of other delinquent teens.

There's a loud HONKING. April turns around to see Peter parked on the shoulder, grinning at her. His smile isn't mocking though. There's something new in his eyes now; a sense of respect for his sister, who's actually on the road to becoming a woman.

APRIL (V.O.)
None of us could have ever imagined
how it would have affected us...
changed us.

INT. CEMETERY - MID-DAY

April and Peter stand beside each-other at a sparsely attended funeral. The head-stone reads "Loving Son of Sarah Horowitz".

APRIL (V.O.)
Jacob passed away in his sleep some
time after everything happened. His
nurse told us that in the weeks
before his death he slept more than
he did his entire stay.

Brother and sister watch the casket lower into the grave and lock hands.

INT. POST OFFICE - MID-DAY

Peter is placing item after item onto the post office counter. The MAIL CLERK, dutifully registers each one. Peter stands in front of him and digs through his wallet. April stands behind him. She reaches into her pocket and places some of her own cash onto the counter.

APRIL (V.O.)
I've included full disclosure of
what happened, and that although to
the best of my belief any evil that
may have once existed in the object
has been put to rest...

EXT. RURAL COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT

A familiar DELIVERY TRUCK makes its way out of the city. The driver focuses on the road, ready for the long trip. His radio plays a mournful pop tune from the forties.

APRIL (V.O.)
To be safe, I can only say, please,
as always, buyer beware.

We move behind him, and into the darkness where all the packages and mail are piled up, ready for delivery. In the center of the pile is a tightly wrapped package, a package the exact same size as the Dibbuk Box. The song on the radio distorts, ridden with static -- and then we hear a faint whispering sound.

BLACKNESS

INSERT TEXT: The Dibbuk Box is currently in the possession of a museum curator in Greentop, Missouri.

FADE OUT.