

VERVE

a talent and literary agency

GRIM NIGHT

by

Brandon Bestenheider & Allen Bey

364 days a year, we are safe.
One night a year, we are not.

Across the world, they come with the dark.
They come to your front door.

Give them what they want.

Tonight is Grim Night.

FADE IN:

EXT. DOWNTOWN - NEAR DUSK

The setting sun casts a fiery haze over the city.

Streets normally bustling with rush hour traffic are eerily silent. A few stragglers hurry along, crossing barren intersections. Store shutters rattle closed.

There is a sense of foreboding, like things are shutting down... for good.

EXT. CITY - VARIOUS - CONTINUOUS

A construction site is littered with bills depicting black, shrouded figures. Underneath is a single word: BEWARE.

Posters at subway entrances and bus shelters portray the same iconic silhouettes and a warning: FEAR THEM.

A billboard bears a chilling fact: 37,112 DEAD. NEVER FORGET.

EXT. CITY STREET / INT. SHOP - CONTINUOUS

A wall-mounted LCD in a PIZZA JOINT displays local news. The MAN cleaning up inside pauses to watch.

ON TV

A FEMALE NEWSCASTER stands on a rooftop overlooking the city.

FEMALE NEWSCASTER

Tonight marks the 15th annual Grim Night, a dark "holiday" recognized the world over... a night marked by mass murder, and mystery. Hello, I'm Gail Reyes.

A car WHIZZES past.

INT. / EXT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

PAUL GREEN, 40, speeds down an empty lane in his modest sedan. A red light forces him to suddenly STOP.

The sedan idles at the light...

PAUL

C'mon, c'mon.

He taps the wheel... The light turns green. He accelerates.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Paul screams past a weathered FLYER flapping on a telephone pole. STAY ALIVE, it reads. STAY HOME.

EXT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

He takes a corner tight, passes an ELECTRONICS STORE in a blur. The televisions inside all display news footage.

EXT. ELECTRONICS STORE WINDOW - CONTINUOUS

ON A GRID OF TVS

Pixelated home video displays a dark alley. At the far end, a tall, HOODED FIGURE hovers in a black, flowing cloak.

MALE NEWSCASTER #1 (V.O.)

It has become the most feared phenomenon in human history. The Unknowns, or Grims, invade our cities each year... always on this particular date.

The thing quickly moves out of sight.

MALE NEWSCASTER #2

They appear after dark... roaming our neighborhoods... knocking on doors... making strange requests...

Another clip presents a POV of a darkened residential neighborhood. A Grim hovers at the front door of a row home across the street. It KNOCKS three times...

MALE NEWSCASTER #3

At sunrise, they vanish. The pattern is always the same...

Police pile body bags before an inner city home.

MALE NEWSCASTER #3 (CONT'D)

And after fifteen years, the question remains... why?

A police siren BLURTS and whines.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Paul spots a POLICE CRUISER on his tail, gaining fast. Its lights and siren are at full-tilt.

PAUL

Shit!

Paul pulls over as the cruiser closes on him. It blows by in a BLUR. He sighs with relief.

RADIO PERSONALITY (V.O.)
*No one knows what the Grims are, or
where they come from... We do know
these things are killers that prowl
the night. So if any of our
listeners are outdoors right now,
please... get inside.*

Paul FLOORS it.

EXT. BRIDGE / INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

He screeches to a halt at a bridge ramp clogged with traffic.

PAUL
This isn't happening.

A chorus of horns HONK. Drivers hurl obscenities.

PAUL (CONT'D)
(shaking his head)
People.

Paul changes the radio station, accepts his predicament.

RADIO SHOW GUEST (V.O.)
*...all I'm saying is, statistically
speaking, you have a better chance
of being struck by lightning twice
than you do encountering one of
these hoods...*

A MESSAGE BOARD on the shoulder flashes instructions:

NATIONAL CURFEW, 7PM... MARTIAL LAW IN EFFECT UNTIL DAWN...

Paul eyes the IN-DASH CLOCK. It's 6:03.

He retrieves his PHONE and taps the name "Liz". As he waits for an answer, he eyes his fuel gauge. It's on empty.

PRERECORDED VOICE
*We're sorry. All circuits are
busy. Please try again.*

He clicks the phone off, frustrated.

PAUL
(softly)
Goddammit.

In the rear view mirror, the SUN shimmers like a band of fire on the horizon. Paul watches it burn awhile.

EXT. SUBURB - CONTINUOUS

A SERIES OF SHOTS

Vertical blinds snap closed. Garage doors whine down. Dogs are called in for the night. Deadbolts lock...

EXT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

A modest HOME sits at the foot of a cul-de-sac.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

LIZ GREEN, 36, sips a glass of wine. She paces the kitchen, snacks nervously. A TV atop the counter keeps her company.

ON TV

Clips document the aftermath of slayings from last year's Grim Night. Bodies are hoisted into ambulances. Sidewalks are stained with blood.

MALE NEWSCASTER (V.O.)

(during the above)

Will this year's Grim Night be another bloodbath?

(beat)

So far, military and local law enforcement have been unable to capture or kill one of these so-called Grims. There is little comfort as the sun begins to set.

Liz swallows the rest of her wine in one big gulp.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - CONTINUOUS

SASHA GREEN, 15, and EMILY, 15, traverse the neighborhood. The red-orange glow of dusk backlights the pair.

SASHA

How much further?

EMILY

Not far.

From a second story window, a WOMAN flags them.

WOMAN

Get home kids! It's almost dark.

EMILY
 (sassy)
 We *know*.

The woman scowls as the duo marches on.

EXT. SIDEWALK / VACANT HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

The girls round a CORNER. Sasha studies each house. Emily watches her phone intently, shakes it in frustration. Sasha suddenly STOPS dead in her tracks.

SASHA
 (eyes something nearby)
 Is it too late to back out?

The teens recognize the dark, dilapidated HOUSE. The yard is overgrown with gnarled vines and branches. It's been neglected for years.

EMILY
 Yup, too late. You ready?

Sasha swallows hard and nods. She steps softly on a cracked, concrete walkway up to the house. As she reaches the porch she pauses, looks back at her friend.

EMILY (CONT'D)
 That's right... *all the way*.

Sasha creeps up the porch steps. Her hand hovers above the rusty handrail but she doesn't touch it.

Emily uses her CAMERA PHONE to capture the moment.

INSERT - CAMERA PHONE FOOTAGE

EMILY
Hi losers, Emily Moore here with...
(pans to Sasha)
...the always amenable Sasha Green.
We are standing at 2237 East Rebus
Road, site of Springton's worst-
ever massacre,
(whispers)
and our town's only confirmed
"ghost house".

She pans to the horizon, now only glowing embers.

EMILY (CONT'D)
It's Grim Night, folks... and as we
near sunset, our daring diva is
about to go where few have been.

She points the phone at herself.

EMILY (CONT'D)

*So tomorrow, all of you who bet
against our little Sasha will have
to pony up. And remember, if she
gets munched... this was your idea.*

EXT. VACANT HOUSE / FRONT DOOR - CONTINUOUS

Sasha closes her eyes and places her hand on the DOORKNOB.
She reluctantly turns it. To her surprise, it opens...

Sasha stiffens as dead, stale air escapes the house. Cold
creeps over her goose flesh. Every hair stands on end as she
turns to Emily.

EMILY

*C'mon, Green. Reputations are on
the line here.*

Sasha inhales, closes her eyes and takes a step.

CAMERA PHONE VIDEO

Sasha ENTERS the house.

EMILY (V.O) (CONT'D)

Holy shit. She's in!

INT. VACANT HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Sasha stands just inside, barely breathing... eyes closed.
She opens them to find herself enveloped by darkness.

Fragments of the room are visible due to light bleeding
through a window. The house appears empty, devoid of life.

Sasha looks down at her feet where something rests in a
crevice on the floor. She bends over and cautiously plucks
the item from the pit in the wood.

She raises the little object to her face for close
inspection. It's a BLOODSTAINED TOOTH, the sharpened incisor
of a predator. She stares at it, entranced...

EXT. VACANT HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

CAMERA PHONE VIDEO

The door is ajar, Sasha is out of sight.

EMILY (V.O.)

*Okay, ladies and gentlemen, Sasha
Green has been inside for almost a
full minute now.*

EMILY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
*There's no telling if she's alive
or dead... or undead. Just gonna
to have to wait and see...*

Another quiet moment passes. Emily watches... waits...

EMILY
(shouts)
Hey, you still breathing in there?

Emily is suddenly jolted by clamorous noise behind her - SCREECHING TIRES. An AMBULANCE guns by like a bullet from hell, ablaze with orbiting lights. It blares its siren at an intersection and runs the stop sign with reckless abandon.

Emily returns her attention to the house.

INT. VACANT HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Sasha is still fixated on the fang.

EMILY (O.S.)
Sa-sha!

The spooked girl snaps her head. She EXITS clutching the sinister tooth.

EXT. VACANT HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

CAMERA PHONE VIDEO
Sasha emerges wobbly-legged and pale.

EMILY (V.O.)
She lives.

Emily greets her friend with a hug. Sasha is shaking.

EMILY
What's wrong?

SASHA
You're not gonna believe what I
found in there... look.

Sasha holds up the tooth. Except... it's just a ROCK, a jagged little stone.

EMILY
Yeah...? So...?

Sasha is deeply vexed. She studies the shard of sediment, then turns her attention to the vacant abode.

The sagging structure resembles a face. Its blank expression mocks the frightened girl.

EMILY (CONT'D)

What?

Sasha doesn't answer.

EMILY (CONT'D)

Oooooohh....

(cracking up)

You got scared, didn't you?

Emily teases her friend down the block. Sasha plays along.

Behind them, the front door of the decrepit house stands ajar. Somewhere inside and unseen, a floorboard CREAKS...

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - CONTINUOUS

Sasha and Emily walk side by side.

EMILY

I have to say, I don't think I
could've actually gone in there.
Does that make me a total wuss?

SASHA

By definition, yes. It's just a
house, right?

EMILY

Right. Just a house. So you'll be
going back then?

SASHA

No, thanks.

Emily laughs.

A streetlight buzzes and flickers as the girls pass underneath. Sasha takes one last look at the vacant house as they round the bend.

EXT. EMILY'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Emily turns down the FRONT WALK to her house.

SASHA

What are you gonna do now?

EMILY

We're going to my uncle's... whole
fam's gonna be there.

EMILY (CONT'D)

They act like Grim Night is
Thanksgiving or something, it's
really twisted.

(beat)

Wanna come with?

Sasha shakes her head.

SASHA

I gotta get home. My mom is
probably freaking out right now.

Emily nods, Sasha playfully waves bye.

SASHA (CONT'D)

See you tomorrow.

EMILY

(bug-eyed)

If we survive.

Sasha frowns.

SASHA

Call me later?

EMILY

I'll try... but it's Grim Night,
you know how that goes.

SASHA

Yeah. Bye.

The girls part ways.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - MOMENTS LATER

A howling wind blows black branches against a blood-red sky.

Sasha continues home alone, lost in her thoughts. Something
startles her - a deep, BREATHY SOUND, a creeping feeling.

She slows her pace and spins around, half-expecting to catch
some stalker off guard. She looks up and down the block, her
imagination running wild. The streets are empty.

She resumes her trek cautiously - then makes a RUN for it.

EXT. GAS STATION / INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Paul pulls up to a pump. He notices the proprietor, HARUT,
53, outside cleaning some gunk from his store window.

Paul eyes the in-dash clock. It's 7:13.

PAUL
Hey! You still open?

Harut turns, his face is partly DISFIGURED. The storekeeper nods solemnly.

PAUL (CONT'D)
(trying not to stare)
Great... I'm running on fumes.

Paul kills the engine, gets out.

HARUT
You smell it?

PAUL
Excuse me?

HARUT
Can you *smell* it?

PAUL
(sniffs, mulls it over)
Yeah... what is that? Somebody
burning leaves?

HARUT
Not leaves.

PAUL
What then?

HARUT
It's a sign.

PAUL
(incredulous)
A *sign*?

He indicates a Grim poster in the window.

HARUT
They're coming.

Paul studies Harut for a hint of sanity.

HARUT (CONT'D)
The credit machine at the pump is
broken. Pay inside.

The proprietor heads indoors and works the register.

Paul heads over to the PUMP and begins fueling his car. He takes in his surroundings. A long stretch of tree-lined road. Smoldering sky. Everything is peaceful.

At once, a slow rush of wind whistles through the station. Paul tilts his gaze upward, following the sound of a panicked chorus in the sky...

A SWARM OF BIRDS fly overhead in a frenzied migration.

The gas nozzle safety-valve triggers and stops the flow.

INT. GAS STATION MINI MART - SAME

Harut watches the news on a TV behind the counter.

ON TV

A BRAZILIAN WOMAN with severe cataracts speaks Portuguese to a reporter off-camera. The interview is subtitled.

BRAZILIAN WOMAN

This was tall... wearing a long, black cloak. With a hood.

REPORTER

Did you see its face?

BRAZILIAN WOMAN

I only saw its eyes. It was the last thing I ever saw.

BELLS JANGLE as Paul enters the store, wallet in hand.

PAUL

(approaching the counter)
I'm pretty sure you're the only game in town. Why haven't you closed up?

HARUT

You see that sign?

Harut points to the backlit 24-HOUR SIGN outside.

PAUL

You're not worried about getting fined or anything?

HARUT

Fines don't concern me.

(beat)

Death is coming... Someone has to bear witness.

Paul furrows his brow.

PAUL

Right...

(beat)

Look, I'm just gonna grab a few things. Can't go home empty-handed if you know what I mean...

Harut looks on. Paul snags a shopping basket and proceeds to load up on junk food around the store.

HARUT

You should hurry. It won't be long, now...

Paul ignores the warning. The store owner travels down the counter to remain in speaking distance of his patron.

HARUT (CONT'D)

Tell me... What will you do if one comes knocking?

Paul takes a moment to answer.

PAUL

Well, they've never come to Springton, so...

HARUT

So?

PAUL

So, why stage a terrorist attack out here? Doesn't seem worth the effort, does it?

HARUT

You think these are terrorists?

PAUL

Aren't they?

Paul peruses the chip aisle.

HARUT

I should tell you... I'm a survivor of the Mumbai attacks.

Paul drops a snack in his basket, heads to the counter.

PAUL

(intrigued)

You're kidding.

HARUT

No, sir.

PAUL

You saw one of those things?

Paul looks at blocky video footage of a Grim on the television. Harut nods, starts bagging.

PAUL (CONT'D)

And you were attacked?

Harut nods again. Paul is wary.

PAUL (CONT'D)

How did you...

HARUT

Survive?

The men look at each other.

HARUT (CONT'D)

I was at a dinner party when it happened. We had the music up, nobody heard the creature at the door. Back then, we didn't know the rules...

FLASH ON

Camcorder footage of the party as told by Harut.

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

When it entered the house, there was panic. I was knocked down, trampled by my own friends...

(beat)

Fractured my spine in two places, had my face worked over...

(beat)

When I awoke... I was *pinned*.

BACK TO SCENE

PAUL

Pinned? How?

HARUT

Bodies. I was... *underneath*.

FLASH ON

Harut's bloodied face is sandwiched between fresh, human remains. He's buried beneath an ARMLESS TORSO, framed by severed limbs and meat. His eyes pop awake.

From Harut's BLURRY POV, we observe a GRIM down the hall hovering above the hardwood. Harut chokes on a silent scream. The fiend turns, observes him... then moves on.

BACK TO SCENE

Paul absorbs the gory details with a worried brow.

HARUT (CONT'D)
Whatever it was looking for...
(shrugs)
It wasn't me.

PAUL
How long were you trapped there?

HARUT
Thirty-seven hours.

PAUL
Jesus...

A POLICE CRUISER screams past the store. Paul follows the red and blue lights as they disappear down the road.

HARUT
For me, the Grims have become something of an obsession.
(beat)
So, I do a lot of research. And those "experts" on TV... they're not always right.
(beat)
\$53.26.

PAUL
What? Oh.

Paul hands over his card and Harut swipes it. The two men stand in silence while they wait. Paul signs the slip.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Thanks.

He heads for the door.

HARUT
Paul...

Paul shoots a suspicious look.

PAUL
How'd you...

HARUT

It's on the receipt, sir.

(beat)

You forgot something.

Harut pushes his bags across the counter. Paul returns to retrieve them. Harut holds them a moment.

HARUT (CONT'D)

Go home. Lock your doors. And if one comes knocking... Give it exactly what it wants.

They share a LOOK. Paul takes the bags.

EXT. GAS STATION - CONTINUOUS

BELLS JANGLE as Paul exits the store. He pauses a moment and scans the streets, superstitious for perhaps the first time in his life.

He looks back at the man inside. Harut gives the peace sign.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Liz peers through the window, watching the sun fade. She puts her hands on her hips and scowls.

ON TV

An attractive REPORTER stands beside an ELDERLY MAN occupying a rickety lawn chair. He's got a portable TV in his lap.

REPORTER

This is Paula Huntley coming to you from the South Side of Chicago, where the sun is about to set.

(beat)

I am standing with Emol Crothers, a terminally ill cancer sufferer, who has spent the last two Grim Nights on this sidewalk in front of his Newton home.

(beat)

Can you tell our viewers why you do this, Mr. Crothers?

EMOL

Weather's good, and nuthin's gonna keep me from it.

REPORTER

And tell us, what role does your illness play in your decision to stay out here?

EMOL

*Well, I look death in the face
every single day. So... I guess I
ain't too afraid of these damn
trick-or-treaters.*

BACK TO SCENE

Liz grabs the house phone from the counter and dials.

CANNED VOICE

We're sorry, all circuits are busy--

LIZ

*(annoyed, mimicking)
Please try again.*

She hangs up.

JOSH GREEN, 14, tiptoes into the room wielding a sheathed KATANA sword. He shadows an imaginary foe in a rigid attack pose. Liz turns, watches her son perform.

LIZ (CONT'D)

Josh.

JOSH

Shhh.

Josh continues stalking the room.

LIZ

*So, you're a ninja now? When did
this happen?*

JOSH

It's samurai, mom.

LIZ

Samurai.

He tucks into a precise forward roll and lunges, mortally wounding the invisible enemy.

JOSH

There's a difference.

LIZ

Okay, samurai.

She eyes the sword.

LIZ (CONT'D)
Is that thing *real*? Where'd you
get that?

JOSH
Relax, mom.
(beat)
My blade shall remain sheathed.

Josh continues to maneuver around the room with his weapon.
He tips drapes aside to view the BACKYARD.

JOSH (CONT'D)
Where's Dad?

LIZ
I don't know. I've been trying
them both for an hour.

JOSH
Sasha's not here either?

Liz shakes her head as she eyes the red glow on the horizon.
It's dead quiet, not a soul in sight.

LIZ
(softly)
This is so stupid.

Liz goes to another window and peeks out.

LIZ (CONT'D)
Where the hell are they? I'm gonna
kill 'em.

Josh angles his sword menacingly.

JOSH
Can I do it?

LIZ
(pushing the blade aside)
Nice. Don't you have any homework?

She shoos him away.

JOSH
Homework? This is no time for
homework, Mrs. Green.

He dashes out of the room with balletic grace.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - CONTINUOUS

Sasha stands with hands on knees, catching her breath. She observes her long, widening shadow on the sidewalk.

There's a fleeting disturbance, *something* passes behind her.

Sasha whips around, finds nothing. She squints into the darkness of trees, between homes, around corners. She is completely alone. Then...

Something approaches. Not human. There's the sound of padded PAWS on concrete. Panting...

Across the street, a sickly COYOTE emerges from the shadows. Rail thin and wounded, the weak canine limps along the sidewalk. It's dangling a broken rib cage.

The creature stops and looks Sasha in the eyes. Then it wobbles and collapses.

Sasha is horrified. Her wide eyes shift from the dead canine to her house somewhere in the distance.

She scans her surroundings, silently daring unseen enemies to strike. She plots a shortcut and darts across a nearby lawn.

EXT. CONCRETE FENCE / BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

Sasha pulls herself up and over the wall in a huff, CRASH-LANDS on the other side. She scrambles to her feet and looks back over the cement barrier to check for stalkers.

Again, something moves in the shadows. Sasha takes off.

She crosses the yard, up the steps to the KITCHEN DOOR...

She fumbles with her KEY CHAIN...

Inserts her house KEY...

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

The door swings open and Sasha bursts through. She SLAMS the door shut, locks it and backs away.

JOSH
What's with you?

SASHA
There's something out there.

Josh dramatically removes the sheath from his SWORD. Liz enters, puts her hands on her hips. The boy smiles weakly.

LIZ
 Joshua, *put* that thing away.
 (to Sasha)
 Where the hell have you been?

Her daughter is in outer space.

JOSH
 Yeah, you got a death wish or what?

LIZ
 Josh. I got it.
 (to Sasha)
 Well? I can't wait to hear this.

SASHA
 Mom. Someone was following me.

Liz is suddenly quite concerned.

LIZ
 What? Following you, are you sure?

They share a look. Sasha runs, embraces her mother. Josh rolls his eyes.

LIZ (CONT'D)
 (quiet)
 What happened out there?

SASHA
 First... I went in the Kirby house.

JOSH
 You went *inside* the Kirby house?

LIZ
 What does that mean? What's the Kirby house?

JOSH
 The place they found all those kids with their heads chopped off.
 (to his sister)
 Are you *nuts*?

LIZ
 (remembering)
 How do you kids know about that?
 Were you even born?

SASHA
 Everybody knows, mom.

LIZ
What were you doing there?

SASHA
It was a dare.

LIZ
A dare? Are you kidding me?

SASHA
Also... something killed a coyote.
It happened right outside.

Sasha points toward the living room.

JOSH
There's a dead coyote out there?

He flies out of the room.

LIZ
Josh.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Josh goes to the WINDOW, scrutinizes the street for evidence of Sasha's claim. Liz and Sasha enter.

SASHA
I couldn't see who was following me
but I could *feel* them...

JOSH
(looking outside)
I don't see anything.

LIZ
(to Sasha)
Honey. I'm sorry you got a scare,
but what did you expect?
(beat)
You know you shouldn't trespass on
other people's property, right?

JOSH
Actually, I don't think anybody
owns the Kirby house, mom...
It's like totally abandoned.

Liz raises a stern finger to silence her son.

LIZ
(to Sasha)
From now on, we're gonna stay away
from creepy murder scenes. Right?
(beat)
Please?

SASHA
Right.

LIZ
What am I going to do about you?

SASHA
Don't tell dad, okay? I'm sorry.

JOSH
Not sorry enough.

The boy FLASHES his blade.

LIZ
Josh, *goddammit*. Put it away.

He poses with his weapon.

JOSH
(husky, samurai voice)
Calm your mind... Be still...
Like a pool of water reflecting
the brilliance of the moon...
Empty yourself completely...

Liz cocks her head, she's had enough. Josh turns and retreats up the stairs... stealthily, in character.

INT. BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Josh slides the sword under his bed. In this moment, he glimpses the window.

Outside, the evening sky is alien - RED like he's never seen, truly surreal.

JOSH
Cool...

He goes to the window, lifts it and studies the neighborhood. He inhales and furrows his brow...

He trains his eyes on something in the distance, the CARCASS of an animal on the sidewalk. A coyote.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREETS / INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Paul's sedan hurtles down an empty two lane road. He streaks by dimmed strip malls, supermarkets, deserted car lots.

RADIO PERSONALITY (V.O.)
Good evening, wherever you may be.
We're still taking calls here at
89.9 and we want to hear from you.
How do you spend Grim Night...?

Paul turns into a neighborhood and observes:

A FATHER AND SON hammer nails into a boarded window, securing the final plank.

A YOUNG WOMAN watches Paul from her bedroom window behind drapes, wearing a worried brow.

In a DRIVEWAY, an ornery WIFE scolds her HUSBAND as they emerge from a minivan. They argue on their way indoors.

Through a living room window, we see a FAMILY kneeling in prayer. Amid clusters of candles, the patriarch recites passages from a book. A sad LITTLE GIRL draws the blinds.

A frayed AMERICAN FLAG hangs limp above a porch. Below, gas cans with cloth wicks sit beside a BEARDED MAN in a rocking chair. The would-be vigilante rocks slowly with a shotgun across his lap, his eyes trained on the passing car.

Paul meets his stare, warily... and presses on.

Ahead, the road grows darker... There's not a soul in sight now. The few remaining house lights switch off as Paul nears the end of the block.

RADIO CALL-IN (V.O.)
They take some of us out, weaken
our resolve, and return later in
larger numbers. I'm telling you,
Tom. They're chipping away at
us... and it scares me.

HIGH ABOVE the car, a POV descends rapidly... A second later, it IMPACTS the windshield. Paul stops abruptly.

The sedan sits in the road, chugging exhaust.

Staring him in the face is a dead BLUE JAY. Black fluid gurgles from the bird's open beak. In shock, Paul turns on his wipers and the bird is thrown to the street. He observes the winged corpse on the asphalt.

Paul gets his bearings and hits the gas...

EXT. GREEN HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

He pulls into his driveway...

INT. LIVING ROOM - SAME

...headlights bleed through the window.

LIZ
Oh, thank god.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - CONTINUOUS

Paul pops the trunk. His neighbor PITNEY, 71, slides her window up. With bony fingers, she sets an ashtray on the sill and lifts a slim cigarette to a wrinkled purse of lips.

PITNEY
Well, you made it. I was beginning
to wonder if you'd been, you
know... eaten or whatever.

Pitney exhales smoke.

PAUL
Nope, not me.

Pitney chuckles, coughs.

PITNEY
Just wait'll your wife gets her
teeth into you.

She indicates Liz standing at the window. Paul sees what he's in for, no escaping it. He cradles grocery bags and elbows the trunk closed.

PAUL
Hey, Pitney... you wanna spend the
night? We have the extra room.

Pitney exhales.

PAUL (CONT'D)
I've got a sixer in the fridge...?

PITNEY
Beer is for lightweights.

Paul smiles. She takes a drag.

PITNEY (CONT'D)
 You know, you invite me over every
 year. Aren't you tired of getting
 turned down?

PAUL
 By you? Never gets old.

Pitney smiles affectionately as Paul starts walking around
 the car. He spies a small, black smear on his windshield.

PAUL (CONT'D)
 (still eying the stain)
 If you need anything, you know
 where we are.

PITNEY
 Don't need anything I don't already
 got, young man...

Paul turns to face her. Pitney winks.

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Paul enters with an armful of groceries. Sasha rushes him.

SASHA
 Daddy!

He hugs her one-armed. She squeezes hard.

PAUL
 Okay, okay... Sorry, I'm late guys.
 I got stuck in traffic, nearly ran
 out of gas --

LIZ
 (crossing her arms)
 Had time to make a stop, I see...

Paul puts the grocery bags down.

PAUL
 I just picked some stuff up at the
 gas station.

Liz is unmoved.

PAUL (CONT'D)
 Why are all the lights still on?

LIZ
 We were waiting for you.

JOSH
Dad, whaddya get --

LIZ
(interrupting)
Didn't we agree that no matter
what, we're all home before curfew?

The room goes silent.

JOSH
I came home right after school.

Sasha shoots him a look.

PAUL
(to Liz)
Honey.

LIZ
Don't honey me...

PAUL
Look, I goofed, okay? Things have
been crazy at work, what can I say?
I'm sorry...
(beat)
We're all here now and that's all
that really matters... right?

LIZ
No.

PAUL
No?

Liz fights off a laugh, manages a smile.

JOSH
Holy crap, these bags are full of
junk... nice!

Josh and Sasha PICK THROUGH the brown sacks.

PAUL
(playful)
I'm sure there's something with
nutritional value in there.

SASHA
Awesome, *cheese puffs*!

PAUL
See? Cheese.

Liz smiles at her husband half-amused, half not. She beckons him with a finger.

LIZ
A word, please?

PAUL
Of course, *dear*.
(to the kids)
Guys, you think you can handle the
lights? Get some candles going?

SASHA
Sure, Dad.

JOSH
We know the drill.

Both parents exit. A moment passes.

JOSH (CONT'D)
You think they're gonna do it?

SASHA
Gross.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Liz crosses the room, plucks a bra from a basket of clean laundry and places it on the bed. Paul straddles the doorway, unwilling to commit to the room.

LIZ
(folding clothes)
We had a deal.

PAUL
Yeah, but if I don't put in the
hours down there, someone else
will. You know how it goes...

LIZ
That's beside the point.

PAUL
Beside the point? Babe, we are
barely surviving right now.

Liz rolls a pair of socks and stacks them neatly.

LIZ
We'll figure it out.

PAUL
Figure it out?

Paul begins to pace, his mind swirling.

LIZ
 Paul... I was *scared*.

Paul stops.

LIZ (CONT'D)
 I had this feeling like something
 really bad was going to happen...
 I couldn't shake it.

PAUL
 Babe...

Paul approaches and pulls his wife close.

LIZ
 (against his chest)
 I dunno, it's just this night...
 it's awful.

PAUL
 (cradling her)
 I know... I'm sorry. I'm just...

He sighs.

LIZ
 I know.

She savors a moment of comfort in Paul's arms. But it's short-lived. Harsh THRASHING sounds invade the room.

Outside, a snarling wind whips power lines against a darkening sky. Jagged branches claw wildly at the house.

The WINDOW PANES bow and flex with each gust, as if resisting some malevolent force. Paul and Liz watch in awe. Until...

The assault suddenly stops, all is still. NIGHT has fallen.

EXT. NIGHT SKY / GREEN HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

A full moon casts pale luminance upon the house. An upstairs light switches off.

INT. GREEN HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

A SERIES OF SHOTS

Josh and Sasha turn off various LIGHTS in the house and dim others. They burn CANDLES in the kitchen, dining room and living room. Sasha latches a couple WINDOWS.

Inside the fireplace, Josh reaches up and pulls the flue closed with a loud CLANG.

INT. SASHA'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

A SERIES OF SHOTS

Josh and Sasha fold out an enormous WORLD MAP and tack it to the wall. It's riddled with dozens of red sticker dots scattered across the continents.

Josh holds a handful of push pins as he watches a video on his sister's computer.

ON THE SCREEN

Two teens pull up to a drive-through window at night. The kid in the passenger seat is filming with his camera phone. A hooded figure unexpectedly appears in the window. The teens quickly peel away, shouting obscenities.

JOSH

That one never gets old.

Josh loads another clip, low-res POV footage.

SASHA

C'mon, quit stalling.

JOSH

Wait, check this out...

ON THE SCREEN

A large Grim hovers atop the roof of a suburban house. The silhouetted figure is gripping a tall rod.

JOSH (CONT'D)

It's holding something. Never seen that before.

SASHA

(scrutinizing the screen)

I have. They were saying it's a scythe, like the Grim Reaper carries. But I don't think so...

The image freezes and breaks up. Josh clicks repeatedly.

JOSH
Internet is crapping out...

SASHA
All right, c'mon, man...

Josh returns his attention to the large map on the wall. He thinks a moment before confidently pressing a pin into Philadelphia, PA.

SASHA (CONT'D)
You always guess the same places.

JOSH
You know I can't stand the Flyers.

SASHA
I seriously doubt these things
follow professional hockey.

Sasha takes a pin from her brother's hand and thinks...

JOSH
How do they decide where to go?

SASHA
Maybe it's like a game...

Sasha drifts away a moment... then slowly begins to press her pin into SPRINGTON. Their burg doesn't actually appear on the map - it's been added in marker.

JOSH
Why would you do that? How am I
supposed to sleep now?

SASHA
Well, not supposed to sleep on Grim
Night anyway...

EXT. GREEN HOME - LATER

We watch the house from multiple angles. The neighborhood is dark and eerily quiet. Only crickets chirp.

Through a window, we observe the Greens at the dinner table. Utensils CLANK on plates.

INT. DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Dinner is New York strip steak, mixed green salad and a side of bright orange CHEESE PUFFS. Sasha takes a crunchy BITE.

JOSH
I heard a Grim once asked a guy for
his finger.

SASHA
Shut up.

Josh swears a silent oath.

SASHA (CONT'D)
What happened?

JOSH
(pantomiming)
The guy... cut it off.

SASHA
Ewww.... *nu-uh*.

PAUL
Josh, stop teasing your sister.

JOSH
What? That's what I heard.

PAUL
Mm-hm.

LIZ
Nobody is coming, guys.
(beat)
We take precautions... that's all.

Paul doesn't voice an opinion. An uneasy silence follows.

PAUL
You know, when my parents were
growing up, they lived in constant
fear of nuclear annihilation.

JOSH
By the Ruskies.

Josh pantomimes mushroom cloud explosions. Paul nods.

PAUL
In school, there were routine bomb
drills where they'd have the kids
hide under their desks.

JOSH
Cuz that'll stop a nuke.

Sasha laughs. Paul smiles. Sasha bites another puff.

PAUL

And when *I* was a kid, we actually did have a fallout shelter in the backyard. Grandpa would schedule these sleep-overs where we'd spend the night down there. You know... to get *acclimated*.

JOSH

Cool.

LIZ

(to Paul)
You never told me that.

PAUL

It's true.

LIZ

Your dad's a real piece of work.

JOSH

(suddenly distracted)
Whoa....

The boy squints across the room. He swiftly flies out of his chair, bound for the kitchen.

LIZ

Josh.

Sasha drops her fork and follows.

PAUL

Sasha! Guys, c'mon...

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Josh slides to a stop at the TV on the counter.

ON TV

A GRAPHIC READS: "GRIM NIGHT - FIRST FATALITIES"

Sasha appears at her brother's side.

SASHA

(shouts)
First attack!

She tears out of the room.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Sasha races across the room, quickly turns on the TV and plants herself down. Paul and Liz enter seconds later, still chewing their food. They fix their eyes on the SCREEN.

ON TV

A local news affiliate presents aerial footage of a Scandinavian city. Several homes are on fire.

PAUL

Where?

SASHA

Bergen.

LIZ

Where's that?

JOSH (O.S.)

Norway.

Josh joins the gathering, giddy with morbid curiosity. He grabs the remote and turns it up.

ON TV

The camera zooms in on a body spilling from an open doorway.

Paul looks at his family, notes their worried expressions.

PAUL

Okay you guys... here's the deal.
If one of these things comes to the door, all we have to do is give it what it wants... and that'll be the end of it. Right?

SASHA

What if it wants a finger?

PAUL

No fingers.

Just then, there's a KNOCK at the front door.

LIZ

What was that?

JOSH

No way.

KNOCK, KNOCK.

Liz throws her arms around her kids. Sasha squeals.

SASHA

Mommmmm...

PAUL

Whoa. Whoa. Everybody calm down,
calm down. Stay here...

Paul grabs a fire poker and slowly heads for the entryway.

At the door, another knock. Paul cranes up to the peephole.
Liz and the kids are suddenly right behind him.

LIZ

(whispers)

Is someone there? Can you tell?

PAUL

(hushed)

It's blocked. Guys, you gotta get
back. Seriously.

KNOCK, KNOCK.

Everyone shudders and backs away. Paul creeps toward a FRONT
WINDOW and peers out.

LIZ

Is something out there?

PAUL'S POV of the front steps is obstructed by shrubs. He
approaches the door again, waving everyone back.

PAUL

(weakly, against the door)

Hello?

A moment passes.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Is somebody there?

Something SHIFTS on the concrete outside.

DEEP VOICE

Women.

The Greens freeze. An eternity passes as they each consider
the implications of the word.

PAUL

What?

DEEP VOICE

Bring me all your women.

The voice breaks up, turns to laughter. Josh raises an eyebrow, moves over to the door.

JOSH
Cooper?

PAUL
Cooper? Who the hell is Cooper?

Josh eyes the peephole, goes for the doorknob.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Josh, don't --

Josh yanks the door open. COOPER, 15, stands outside.

COOPER
Gotcha!

JOSH
Coop.

The "stranger" enters. Paul is seething.

LIZ
Close the door!

Paul swiftly shuts the door and secures the chain. He turns to his son, furious.

PAUL
Josh, who the hell is this?

JOSH
Chill, Dad. It's just Cooper...

PAUL
Well, *Cooper*, pleased to make your acquaintance. You scared the hell out of us.

JOSH
Hey, I wasn't scared.

LIZ
(to Cooper)
What are you doing out after dark?

Cooper shrugs.

COOPER
I was bored.

Cooper looks Sasha up and down. Paul tenses.

PAUL

Your parents know where you are?

COOPER

Nah. My folks split up to the mountains like they do every year. It's not my bag.

PAUL

Not your *bag*? Josh, where'd you meet this guy... a Jefferson Airplane concert?

LIZ

Cooper, you really should be with your family. Don't you think?

COOPER

No, I don't.

Liz is taken aback.

JOSH

All right then... we're going upstairs now.

The boys race up the steps. Paul shakes his head.

LIZ

(calling after them)
Josh, I want a word with you later... Okay, *darling son*?

JOSH (O.S.)

Okay, mom...

Liz is not pleased.

INT. ATTIC - MOMENTS LATER

Josh and Cooper climb out a window. A set of binoculars reside on the sill. Josh grabs them.

EXT. ROOF - CONTINUOUS

The boys are perched on an eave overlooking the neighborhood. Cooper produces a joint and takes a hit. Josh turns it down. He proceeds to scan the neighborhood with his field glasses.

COOPER

So, you guys take this night pretty seriously, I see?

JOSH
(while peeping)
Of course. Everybody does.

COOPER
Not everybody...

He takes another hit.

COOPER (CONT'D)
There's probably a room full of
spin doctors somewhere making this
shit up... conjuring all this
footage and crap.

JOSH
Sure, I suppose the moon landing
was fake, too.

COOPER
Dude, I read about that.

JOSH
(mockingly)
Dude.

Cooper cocks his fist, Josh cowers.

COOPER
Okay, you flinched. Take a hit.

He extends the joint. Josh reluctantly accepts.

COOPER (CONT'D)
This is how the fascist leadership
keeps its death grip on us. They
show us scary pictures, tell us
we're under attack... then they can
get away with whatever they want.
We live in a culture of fear, man.

JOSH
But people are dying, that's real.

Cooper rolls his eyes.

COOPER
All these years and *nobody* has seen
what's underneath those weird
robes? C'mon...

JOSH
I'm sure the people who died got a
pretty good look.

COOPER
Convenient, isn't it?

Josh shakes his head. Cooper turns his attention elsewhere.

COOPER (CONT'D)
What's that?

JOSH
What?

Cooper points at a house down the block.

COOPER
That.

Josh raises the binoculars.

MAGNIFIED VIEW
Lights FLICKER on and off in a house at the end of the street. Curtains in a second story window flap violently.

JOSH
Holy shit. I think the front door is open...

COOPER
Let me see.

Josh passes the binoculars.

SASHA (O.S.)
(at the top of her lungs)
Mom! Dad!

The boys turn to one another.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Sasha and her parents are fixated on the television.

ON TV
A news outlet presents chilling video - a dark shape stalks the city from the POV of a traffic camera... in real time.

NEWSCASTER (V.O.)
Again, you are looking at live footage from New Brunswick... a traffic camera at the intersection of Maryland and East 98th.

PAUL
New Brunswick... that's close...

ON TV

The cloaked thing moves toward camera, down the center of a deserted street. Overhead lamps dim as it passes beneath them. Its gait is even and unwavering, as if it were not walking at all... but levitating.

LIZ
(terrified)
That isn't human.

ON TV

As the billowing silhouette passes underneath the camera, the image distorts... then turns to STATIC.

Josh and Cooper come bounding down the stairs.

JOSH
What's up?

SASHA
Grims are in New Brunswick.

COOPER
Really? How many miles is that?

JOSH
Not many.

ON TV

The newscaster touches her earpiece.

NEWSCASTER
I'm being told we have tape of another incident... happened just moments ago. What you're about to see contains graphic content. Viewer discretion is advised.

Josh and Sasha look to their mom for approval but Liz is too engrossed in the broadcast to care.

ON TV

The incident is presented from a POLICE CRUISER DASH CAM:

POV DASH-CAM

The cruiser stops before an overturned truck blocking the road. Two officers exit their vehicle. Suddenly, a shape appears from out of the shadows.

The cops draw their guns and shout demands. The creature turns its head sickly and studies the officers. It begins to drift towards them. The cops open fire, but the Grim is completely unfazed. It lunges at one of the officers, taking him down... and out of sight.

The second officer continues to fire when he's suddenly yanked violently out frame. A horrible RIPPING sound follows... and a harrowing scream. A copious amount of blood sprays across the windshield of the police cruiser. The cam cuts out...

Cooper and The Greens reel back in horror... but Sasha doesn't budge.

JOSH

Holy fuck!

Liz shoots her son a look. A sudden, loud BOOM outside startles everyone...

COOPER

What was that?

The SKY rumbles again. At the window, Josh observes.

JOSH

Dad?

PAUL

Yeah?

JOSH

Is it normal to have thunder without rain or lightning?

PAUL

I dunno.

JOSH

Well, just so you know, that's what's happening.

Suddenly, the TV goes dark, then cuts to bars and tone. Paul grabs the remote, switches channels. They're all the same.

ON TV

A graphic suddenly appears, accompanied by a staccato warning tone. Text scrolls beneath an official emblem:

THIS IS THE EMERGENCY BROADCAST SYSTEM...

RESIDENTS OF BROWER COUNTY...

PLEASE TUNE RADIOS TO 1060 AM IMMEDIATELY...

LISTEN FOR DISTURBANCES...

IF VISITED, OBEY ALL REQUESTS... AVOID EYE CONTACT...

FAILURE TO COMPLY MAY RESULT IN INJURY OR DEATH...

THIS IS NOT A TEST.

Everyone absorbs the gravity of the moment.

LIZ

Oh my god.

PAUL

Josh - radios still in the garage?

JOSH

Yeah.

PAUL

Okay, everybody come with me.

INT. ATTACHED GARAGE - MOMENTS LATER

The Greens retrieve old-school boom boxes and hand radios stacked on utility shelves. They check the on/off switches and swap dead batteries for fresh ones.

INT. KITCHEN - LATER

Liz places a RADIO on the counter.

INT. OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Paul places a BOOM BOX on his desk and extends the antenna.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Sasha puts a POCKET RADIO on her nightstand. It's pink, shaped like a bunny.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Josh sets a PORTABLE STEREO on his windowsill. He dials through several stations before arriving at 1060. There's faint static.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

Paul, Liz and Sasha huddle together on the sofa. Cooper sits on the floor.

Josh creeps over to the stereo cabinet. He crouches and watches the equalizer for any sudden moves. The digital bars dance calmly in a tight range, mimicking the dull hiss.

They all wait and listen. An eternity seems to pass...

LIZ
Hey... why don't we play a game?

SASHA
A game?

LIZ
Yeah... a driving game... like
twenty questions.

COOPER
I'm in.

INT. DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A wine glass begins to vibrate on the credenza where Liz left it. The liquid inside ripples... the glass oscillates like a tiny bell ringing at a high frequency.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

SASHA
(to Cooper)
Are you a potato?

COOPER
Nope. Not a potato.

Liz suddenly jerks her head.

LIZ
Do you hear that?

Everyone listens. The ringing gets louder and louder.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

The radio on the counter suddenly BLARES...

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Sasha clings to Liz. Paul gets up, steps carefully towards the kitchen.

LIZ
(breathless)
Paul...

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Paul skulks into the room...

A BLENDER suddenly pulses erratically. Its center blade spins and stops, spins and stops.

In the sink, drifting towards the drain, into the blackness of the disposal... the ROTARY BLADE whirs intermittently.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The lights flicker and dim. Sasha whines. Cooper looks dismayed. Josh is on the move, heading for the stairs.

LIZ
Where are you going?

JOSH
I'll be right back.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

The disturbance on the radio grows unbearably loud and PEAKS. Paul holds his ears.

Without warning, the cacophony ceases. Just static now.

LIZ (O.S.)
Paul!

SASHA (O.S.)
Daddy!

PAUL
(calling to them)
It's okay!

Josh barges in, gripping his unsheathed Katana.

JOSH
What's happening?

Paul eyes Josh's sword, not sure what to make of it. Liz and Sasha soon enter.

SASHA
Dad?

Liz keeps her close.

PAUL
I don't know, honey.

Cooper suddenly appears, sidling up next to Liz. She shoots him a strange look.

INT. OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The radio comes alive with GRIM DISTURBANCE.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

They all hear the noise. Paul runs toward it, Josh follows.

PAUL
Josh, make sure you don't stab me
with that thing.

INT. OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Paul and Josh enter the room, train their eyes on the radio.
The LED LIGHTS dip as the disturbance dwindles.

INT. GUEST ROOM - CONTINUOUS

One room over, a CLOCK RADIO begins to roar with the now-familiar sound.

INT. OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

JOSH
Guest room...

INT. HALL / GUEST ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The two rush down the hall and check the guest room. The radio call peaks and fades, as before.

They now hear the disturbance travel around the house, from one radio to the next.

JOSH
It's heading for the living room...

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Paul and Josh enter. Liz and the others soon follow. For now, all is quiet.

PAUL
Liz, honey, take the kids upstairs.
Hide in the closet.

LIZ
Only if you're coming too.

PAUL
Please, honey... Someone has to
stay down here to answer the door.

She shakes her head in disbelief.

JOSH
I wanna stay and help, dad.

Josh's eyes are wild. Paul squeezes his shoulder.

COOPER

Me too.

At that precise moment, a deep, OMINOUS TONE swells and shakes the room. Speakers buzz and rattle with Grim disturbance. Everyone covers their ears.

A SHADOW passes the window...

PAUL

(shouting)

Liz... Go!

Liz grabs Sasha by the hand and hurries upstairs.

The living room stereo is pushed to its limit. In a final scream of static, the SPEAKERS BLOW, the room falls silent.

A moment passes...

Paul grips the fire poker, Josh his Katana. Cooper nervously twirls his lighter. All eyes are on the door. Then...

KNOCK, KNOCK.

Two measured HITS resound. They jump back.

Paul gives Josh and Coop a hard look and creeps toward the door. His heart POUNDS...

At the door, Paul puts his ear to the wood. He can hear BREATHING on the other side... labored and menacing... the malignant rasps of some unknown thing.

Paul cautiously presses his eye against the peephole - it fractures. He jerks his head and steps back. Something below catches his eye.

A small piece of PARCHMENT has been slipped under the door. Paul stares a bit before daring to touch it. He finally picks up the note.

ON THE PARCHMENT

Scrawled in black ink are the words: SIX FOUR COIN

Paul studies the note, puzzled...

JOSH

(whispers)

What is it?

Paul looks up at the boys.

PAUL
Search your pockets.

COOPER
What?

PAUL
We need change... *coins*, whatever
you can find.

Everyone checks their pockets. Paul comes up empty, Cooper too. Josh turns over couch cushions and hits a small jackpot. He shows his dad a handful of change.

JOSH
(weakly)
Thirty-seven cents. Is it enough?

Paul plucks a dime from his son's palm.

PAUL
Six plus four... is ten.
This is it.

Paul hands Josh the note and starts for the door. Josh and Cooper study the cryptic message.

COOPER
(mouthing the words)
Six... four... coin?

KNOCK, KNOCK.

The teens reel back.

INT. CLOSET - CONTINUOUS

Huddled together under hanging clothes, Liz and Sasha react to the sounds. Sasha buries her head in her mom's chest. Liz tries to maintain.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Paul is at the door with the dime.

JOSH
(whispering)
Dad, what happens if you're wrong?

Paul thinks a moment.

PAUL
I want you guys upstairs now.

JOSH

Dad...

His father looks him in the eye.

PAUL

Go.

The boys start up the stairs. Paul clutches the dime, practically crushing it in his fist. He kneels, presses the coin to the floor... starts to inch it under the door.

COOPER

Wait!

Paul freezes.

COOPER (CONT'D)

What if it's a date? Six-four...
sixty-four!

Paul considers this, quickly withdraws the dime and retreats from the room.

JOSH

Dad?

INT. OFFICE - SECONDS LATER

Paul desperately rummages through his desk. He pulls the drawers open, empties them. Josh and Cooper appear in the doorway behind him.

JOSH

What are you looking for?

PAUL

Something your grandfather gave me
a long time ago.

He finds a cracked, leather case and snaps it open. Inside is a shimmering SILVER COIN.

JOSH

What is it?

PAUL

The 1964 Peace Silver Dollar. Dad
said it was about the rarest coin
there is.

JOSH

How can that thing know we have it?

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

KNOCK. KNOCK.

Shock waves reverberate through the house...

INT. CLOSET - CONTINUOUS

These additional hits terrify Liz. She holds onto her daughter for dear life.

LIZ
(under her breath)
Paul...

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

At the door, white light shines through the keyhole... then disappears.

Paul stalks in and kneels down. Josh and Cooper tail behind. A floorboard creak gives them away.

PAUL
(turns, whispers)
I told you guys to stay back. Now,
get back! Way back.

Paul places the coin flat on the floor and pushes it under the door. On the other side, a subtle scraping sound indicates retrieval.

Paul stands up. Another quiet moment passes... He looks over at Cooper and nods, silently thanking him for his help.

The quiet continues. Paul nervously eyes the peephole again.

Through the fractured lens, a SHROUDED FIGURE is fragmented and multiplied... as if being viewed through a kaleidoscope. It STRIKES the door once and Paul jumps back.

He looks down. There's another NOTE. Paul reads it to himself, lets the words sink in.

JOSH
What's it say?

INT. BEDROOM CLOSET - MOMENTS LATER

Paul OPENS the door on his wife and daughter. They haven't budged an inch from their hiding spot.

LIZ
Paul, what...

PAUL
It wants something else.

LIZ
Something *else*?

SASHA
Dad... *are we gonna die*?

PAUL
No. Everything's fine. I think we
just need to give it what it wants
and we'll be fine.

LIZ
What does it want?

Paul presents the note. Liz reads it several times, stunned.

LIZ (CONT'D)
What...? What does...

THE PARCHMENT reads: HER RING

PAUL
It must mean your wedding band...

LIZ
But... why?

She tears up.

LIZ (CONT'D)
Why would it want my ring?

PAUL
I don't know, honey. Just...

Paul stifles his emotions. Liz looks at the ring and
contemplates its meaning.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Please, just...

Through tears, she tugs at her wedding band but to no avail.

LIZ
It's *stuck*.

She starts to panic.

LIZ (CONT'D)
I can't get it off.

PAUL
Ok, calm down. We'll get some soap
on it and it'll come right off.

Josh and Cooper enter.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Josh, stay with your sister.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Paul and Liz creep past the front door. RASPY BREATH is heard on the other side.

Liz reacts to what sounds like some animal sucking wind, perhaps inhaling her scent as they pass.

THUMP, THUMP, THUMP.

A BARRAGE OF HITS pound the door. Liz shrieks in terror as they race for the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Liz bangs into a table.

LIZ
Ow...

She hobbles over to the sink, rubs her knee.

PAUL
We've gotta hurry, honey.

LIZ
I am...

She squirts liquid dish soap onto her hand. Again, a loud, impatient fist POUNDS their door.

PAUL
Hurry...

LIZ
I am...

Liz rotates her ring freely on the soapy, lubricated finger. It SLIPS OFF and falls, ricochets around the sink. She grabs at it desperately, but it ends up in the disposal.

LIZ (CONT'D)
Shit... *Shit!*

Paul eases his wife aside and rolls up a sleeve.

The front door is pounded *again*. The overhead light in the kitchen flashes and dims... The blender on the counter jerks and whirs... Paul eyes the DISPOSAL, expecting it to follow.

PAUL

Holy shit.

Paul huffs a few breaths to psych himself up. He plunges his hand down the drain.

Inside the disposal, Paul's fingers feel their way around the cylinder, nudging the edges of the rotary blade. His digits find the ring and retreat as the motor RIPS into action.

Paul jumps away from the sink. He inspects his unharmed hand in disbelief.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Paul and Liz approach the front door. The knob is slowly turning back and forth.

Paul crouches down at the door and immediately attempts to slide the ring underneath... but it doesn't fit. He tries every possible crevice. No use.

PAUL

Honey, you've got to get out of here. Now.

LIZ

What...?

(realizing)

No.

She tugs at him weakly.

LIZ (CONT'D)

Please... don't...

PAUL

If I don't open this door, we're all going to die.

LIZ

Please...

PAUL

You have to trust me... Do you trust me?

Liz nods through tears.

PAUL (CONT'D)
The kids need you...

He squeezes her hand and lets it go. Liz reluctantly backs away and starts to sob. She heads up the stairs.

INT. UPSTAIRS / ATTIC DOOR - CONTINUOUS

Liz finds Josh, Cooper and Sasha standing at the top of the steps, beneath the lowered entrance to the attic. Josh has his sword, Coop a baseball bat.

JOSH
Everybody up, we'll guard the door.

LIZ
Not a chance, you get up there with
your sister.
(eyes Cooper)
Both of you.

She points a shaking finger at the attic steps.

LIZ (CONT'D)
I mean it.

COOPER
Can't do it, lady.

Liz stands in awe. Both boys hold fast. Liz squeezes Sasha.

LIZ
Go on, honey.

Sasha climbs up into the attic. Her mother doesn't follow. Liz proceeds to raise the folding steps and shut the door.

SASHA
Mom!

LIZ
Don't worry baby, you'll be safe up
there. This'll all be over soon.

Liz closes the door and confronts the boys. She locks eyes with Cooper, then her son. Both remain vigilant. She puts a hand on each of their shoulders.

LIZ (CONT'D)
Okay.

INT. LIVING ROOM / STAIRS - CONTINUOUS

Paul stands at the front door, shaking.

PAUL
(shouts toward the stairs)
All right, this is it now! Don't
anybody dare come down here!

Upstairs, Liz and the boys watch with bated breath as...

THE DEADBOLT slowly withdraws from its socket...

THE DOORKNOB turns ever so slowly...

THE DOOR creaks open... stops at the CHAIN'S LENGTH.

Cold, dead air rushes in. Paul eyes his visitor with a
sideways glance.

INT. ATTIC - SAME

Sasha creeps toward a small, DORMER WINDOW.

INT. FRONT DOOR / EXT. PORCH - CONTINUOUS

The GRIM towers on the step. Its ancient robes are tattered
and soiled. Mist leaks from the folds of the copious cloak.
Within its hood is a black void, like the vacuum of space.
Each breath is a DEATH RATTLE...

Using the door as a shield, Paul blindly extends the ring
through the small opening. The dark figure doesn't move.

INT. ATTIC / EXT. ROOF / PORCH - CONTINUOUS

Sasha pokes her head out the window. She has a bird's eye
view of the front porch.

With wide eyes, Sasha spots their visitor hovering below.
She slowly raises Josh's binoculars to get a closer look...

But the lenses buckle and shatter. With a jolt, Sasha moves
away from the window and drops the specs on the floor.

INT. FRONT DOOR / EXT. PORCH - CONTINUOUS

Paul continues to extend the ring. His hand trembles.
He won't look directly at the hooded thing.

PAUL
Please... take it.

The Grim thrusts out a raven, rotted claw. Its long finger
bones crack sickly as it opens.

Paul drops the ring into the Grim's waiting hand. A tense moment ensues. The Grim finally closes its rotten fist around the offering.

The creature turns and slowly drifts off... disappearing into the night. Paul finally shuts the door. He leans his back to it and slides down.

He exhales as if he's just been held underwater.

JOSH (O.S.)
Dad... is it gone?

Josh appears on the stairs. Paul nods, exhausted.

EXT. GREEN HOUSE - SAME

We drift away from the front door, leaving the home far behind, in peace...

INT. KITCHEN - LATER

Ice cream containers frost and drip on the kitchen table. They've been sitting awhile. Josh and Coop eye their melting dessert with complete disinterest.

Paul plucks a bottle of his best scotch from a high cupboard and lines up a glass on the counter below. He can feel Josh and Coop's eyes on him.

Without thinking twice, Paul grabs two additional tumblers and returns to the table. He proceeds to pour three drinks - a double for himself and smaller shots for the boys.

He pushes the glasses toward the teens. They look to him. Paul nods approvingly and *the men* take a drink.

Coop's eyes water, Josh suppresses a cough. Paul once again nods in approval, then takes their glasses away.

INT. UPSTAIRS BATHROOM / HALL - CONTINUOUS

Sasha stands at the mirror, lost in thought. She itches a spot on her neck - a BIRTHMARK. The brown pigmentation is an odd spiral shape.

Liz appears in the doorway.

LIZ
Sash?

Sasha remains entranced.

LIZ (CONT'D)
C'mon pretty girl, we're doin' ice
cream now...

SASHA
I want a bath.
(beat)
I'll have ice cream after.

Liz strokes her daughter's hair sympathetically and smiles.

LIZ
Everything okay?

SASHA
Yeah. I'm just cold.

LIZ
You're taking a bath because you're
cold? You sure you're okay?

Sasha shoots her mom a back-off look. Liz relents.

LIZ (CONT'D)
All right... Okay...

Liz shrugs off her daughter's mood and exits down the hall.
Behind her, the bathroom door closes firmly.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Josh and Coop spoon ice cream in silence - the mood remains
muted. Liz enters and Paul looks up at her.

LIZ
She's taking a bath.

Liz pours herself a glass of wine, plops down at the table.

PAUL
Well...
(raising his glass)
We survived Grim Night. May we
never have another like it.

Liz and Paul clink glasses. The boys raise ice cream bowls
and smile knowingly.

LIZ
(to Cooper)
So what were you before?

COOPER
What?

LIZ
Twenty questions.

COOPER
Oh... I was a kiwi fruit.

Liz nods and smiles.

COOPER (CONT'D)
You know Mrs. Green, my mom makes jewelry. I could probably get you a new ring, no charge.

Liz is genuinely touched.

LIZ
That's very sweet.

She smiles, eyes her husband.

PAUL
Cooper, I've changed my mind. I'm not going to kill you anymore.

The group shares a cathartic laugh. Liz lifts her glass to her lips and nearly sips... but stops short.

A DROP OF WATER falling from above ripples the surface of her drink. Another drop... then another...

She reluctantly looks UP... everyone follows her gaze. A wet, SAGGING PATCH of drywall is leaking over the table.

LIZ
Oh, God...

Paul and Liz react in tandem. They abandon the table, racing from the room at top speed...

INT. STAIRS - SECONDS LATER

...they hurry up the steps.

LIZ
Sasha!

PAUL
We're coming!

INT. UPSTAIRS BATHROOM / HALL - CONTINUOUS

At the bathroom door, water spills out underneath. Paul and Liz approach, fling the door open...

Inside, the tub is overflowing... but Sasha is *gone*.

LIZ

Oh my god... *Sasha!*

Paul quickly switches off the faucet and yanks towels onto the floor. Liz looks up and down the hall. No sign of her.

JOSH (O.S.)

Mom! Dad!

Paul and Liz share a terrified look.

INT. LIVING ROOM / EXT. FRONT YARD - CONTINUOUS

Josh and Cooper are staring out the front window. Paul and Liz quickly join them and see...

...Sasha standing on the FRONT LAWN with her back to them. She's fully dressed.

LIZ

Sasha!

Paul and Liz RUSH out the front door to meet her.

EXT. FRONT YARD - CONTINUOUS

PAUL

Sasha?

LIZ

Baby, what are you doing?

Liz hugs her daughter, then holds her at arms length. The girl's eyes are open but she's clearly somewhere else.

LIZ (CONT'D)

(to Paul)

She's sleepwalking.

(to Sasha)

Honey, wake up.

A noise in the trees snaps Paul's head around. A BLACKBIRD gilded by moonlight sits on a bobbing branch. It tauntingly flits its shiny wings. Paul turns back to his daughter.

PAUL

(loud)

Sasha!

He shakes her gently, she comes to.

SASHA

Daddy?

PAUL

Let's go.

They hurry back inside and slam the door. Behind them, the night is dead silent.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

ON TV

The EBS alert repeats in silence. "MUTE" appears on-screen.

Sasha lay in a bean bag chair under blankets. Cooper's crashed on the couch. Josh is next to him, nodding off. Paul and Liz cuddle in an armchair.

LIZ

Think it's safe to put 'em to bed?

PAUL

Sure... But I think I'm going to stay up a little longer.

Liz gives her "protector" a kiss and heads for the kids...

LIZ

(hushed)

C'mon, guys. Up to bed...

Suddenly, the mute overlay on the TV disappears. The set BLARES miserably loud. Everyone snaps to attention.

Then, The TV shuts off completely, goes black. Silence...

KNOCK, KNOCK, KNOCK.

LIZ

(weakly)

No, no, no...

Paul eyes the door. There's a NOTE on the floor. Not wanting his orders disobeyed, Paul becomes extremely stern.

PAUL

Everybody out, now! Hide.

Liz quickly leads Sasha out of the room. Josh and Coop duck behind the couch in the darkness.

INT. UPSTAIRS BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Liz and Sasha enter the bathroom. The floor is littered with wet towels. They climb in the tub, pull the curtain closed.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

JOSH
(whispering to Cooper)
*They're not supposed to
come back...*

Paul studies the latest demand. His face is a mask of dread.

The parchment reads: HAIR OF GIRL

INT. UPSTAIRS BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Paul OPENS the door.

PAUL
Liz?

Liz eases the shower curtain back. Sasha is curled in her lap, clearly ill.

LIZ
She's not doing well.
(beat)
What is it?

Paul holds the piece of parchment in his hand.

PAUL
Can you come out here a second?

Liz squeaks out of the tub, minding her listless daughter.

LIZ
I think she has a temperature.

PAUL
(to Sasha)
We'll be right back, okay?

Both parents exit, the door clicks shut.

INT. HALL - CONTINUOUS

Paul shows Liz the note. Liz snatches it from him and covers her mouth in horror.

LIZ
Her hair? *Why?*

INT. UPSTAIRS BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Sasha lies still, curled in the tub, eyes wide, listening.

LIZ (O.S.)
How does it even know she's here?

PAUL (O.S.)
How does it know to ask for any of
this stuff... it's madness. But we
have to do this.

INT. HALL - CONTINUOUS

LIZ
I can't, I can't...

JOSH (O.S.)
I'll do it.

Paul and Liz eye their son down the hall, then each other.

INT. UPSTAIRS BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The door opens slowly.

JOSH
(whispers)
Sis?

Josh enters carrying scissors, stoops over the tub.

JOSH (CONT'D)
(whispers)
Sis, it's me.

Sasha is out of it.

JOSH (CONT'D)
I'm just going to give you a little
trim, okay?

He leans in and stretches her brown locks between the blades.

JOSH (CONT'D)
Sorry about this.

Snik, snik. Josh clutches the trimmings and turns to his dad in the doorway. Sasha's severed locks float and land in Paul's cupped palms.

KNOCK, KNOCK, KNOCK.

INT. FRONT DOOR / LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Paul immediately slides the hair under the door, folded in the same parchment he was given. Paul moves back several paces. He waits and listens. A silent eternity passes.

Startlingly, ANOTHER NOTE appears. The paper seems to move on its own, sliding across the floor, right up to Paul's foot. He boldly snatches the note.

It simply says: GIRL

Paul's breathing changes. He starts to shake.

KNOCK, KNOCK.

Paul looks up at the door. When he returns to the note, the ink begins to *bleed*. The letters shift and twist. They form a familiar symbol, a spiral shape - SASHA'S BIRTHMARK.

Josh and Cooper peer out from the railing.

JOSH

What's happening, dad?

The Grim BANGS on the front door with a force that threatens to bust it off its hinges.

INT. UPSTAIRS BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Paul enters the bathroom where Liz is cradling Sasha. Liz eyes the note in Paul's hand.

LIZ

What is it? What does it want now?

Paul looks her deep in the eyes, looks at Sasha. He tears up. Liz instantly understands.

LIZ (CONT'D)

Paul, no...

She grabs the note and studies it, momentarily vexed. But it quickly sinks in. She gently pulls her daughter's hair aside to confirm what she already knows -- the symbol on her neck matches the note.

LIZ (CONT'D)

Her birthmark...? How --

PAUL

The attic. Let's go.

INT. UPSTAIRS - MOMENTS LATER

The ATTIC STEPS come down. Liz follows Sasha up, placing her hand on the girl's back.

PAUL
(to Liz)
Block the entrance.

Liz turns back to her husband.

LIZ
Paul...

Liz stares at Paul longingly. She places her hands firmly on his cheeks and KISSES him hard, then ascends into the attic.

Paul turns to Josh and Coop.

PAUL
Boys, come with me. Stay close.

INT. STAIRS / LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Josh brandishes his katana. Cooper wields the bat. Paul grips the fire poker.

From the railing, we watch the three *men* descend into the living room. The house seems darker than ever.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

The RADIO on the counter blares with disturbance.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

JOSH
Kitchen.

Josh starts toward the kitchen but his father stops him.

PAUL
Wait.

At the other end of the house, another radio sounds....
then another... and another...

Horrible noises emanate from every room.

PAUL (CONT'D)
(softly)
They're all around us.

BANG, BANG!

The front door is struck so hard, the wood CRACKS. Startled into action, the men make for the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

JOSH

What are we gonna do?

From down the hall, they hear a thunderous CRASH against the side of the house...

COOPER

They're coming...

INT. ATTIC - CONTINUOUS

Liz finishes sliding some boxes over the door on the floor. Sasha stands silent, looking lost.

LIZ

Baby, do you have your phone?

Silence.

LIZ (CONT'D)

Sasha!

The girl slowly retrieves a PINK CELLPHONE from her pocket. Liz takes the little handset and quickly dials 911.

PRERECORDED VOICE

We're sorry. All circuits are busy. Please try...

Liz curses under her breath.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Paul, Josh and Coop are in the eye of the storm - surrounded by harsh, whirling noise. Small appliances operate in fits.

During a brief lull, a grating sound emanates from a window along the wall...

The men turn at the sound. They watch in horror as the latch flips over on its own. The window slowly RISES.

A BLACK HAND reaches through... Josh instinctively lunges forward and strikes with his Katana sword.

PAUL

Josh!!

The blade shatters on impact, as if the Grim were stone, and the sword made of glass.

With supernatural speed, the Grim grabs Josh on his bare arm. The boy screams.

Paul leaps to Josh's aid and swings his fire poker. In a flash, the Grim releases Josh and intercepts the iron rod.

Paul and his son scramble away from the window as the Grim disappears with the old tool.

PAUL (CONT'D)
(to Josh)
Let me see it...

Paul inspects his son's arm. The impression in his flesh is red and deep.

JOSH
I'm okay...
(abruptly)
Dad!

The Grim has returned. It watches from the window, spies Cooper standing helpless in a corner...

Two LUMINOUS ORBS twinkle within the Grim's black hood. Cooper is transfixed by the white lights...

JOSH (CONT'D)
Coop, no!!

Cooper loses his grip on the bat and it falls to the floor. The boy's eyes become clouded by cataracts. He SCREAMS in agony... he's gone *blind*.

The Grim drops out of sight. Paul races to the window and LOCKS it shut. Cooper stumbles about, covering his burning eyes with trembling hands.

COOPER
(in pain)
I can't see, man... *I can't see.*

Paul gently takes him by the shoulders.

PAUL
(voice cracking)
It's gonna be okay...

The boy is inconsolable. He wrestles free of Paul and staggers toward the window. Josh approaches his friend.

JOSH

Coop...

Suddenly, the window SHATTERS... Two raven hands reach through the explosion of glass and grab Cooper by the face.

The Grim begins to pull the boy through the window...

Josh grabs Cooper's hand but loses his grip as the teen is yanked outside. Josh sticks his arm out the window, probing for his friend.

PAUL (O.S.)

No!!

Paul rushes over and quickly restrains his son. He yanks him away from the broken window and pushes a free-standing cabinet in front of the gaping hole.

EXT. BACKYARD / INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Outside, Cooper has been thrown to the ground. He scrambles to his feet. There are no Grims in sight.

Blind and disoriented, Cooper stumbles further into the yard.

Inside, Josh moves toward the back door but Paul stops him. The teen struggles in his father's arms.

JOSH

(tearing up)

Let me go!

Cooper ambles helplessly across the grass....

Paul and Josh watch from the window above the sink as the boy enters a clearing in the backyard. Paul holds his son tight, they tremble together...

In the yard, FOUR GRIMS converge on Cooper in a flurry of frenzied activity. Rips. Screams. Moist, smacking sounds.

Josh cries out. He STRIKES the window with his FIST. Paul averts his eyes.

PAUL

Don't look...

In the yard, a cluster of BLACK SHAPES pull away from their prey, disappearing once more into the darkness. They leave behind only a BLOODY SMEAR in the grass.

INT. ATTIC - CONTINUOUS

LIZ watches the floor with a hand cupped over her mouth.
Sasha idles a few paces behind her.

SASHA

Mom...?

Liz doesn't respond. Instead, she tries the phone again. It rings several times.

LIZ

C'mon... c'mon...

OPERATOR

911. What is your emergency?

LIZ

(talking fast)

*Oh thank god, my name is Liz Green.
You have to help me, my family is
under attack...*

OPERATOR

Okay, okay, slow down, Miss. What
is your location?

LIZ

Yes, the address is --

The conversation is suddenly interrupted by harsh static.

LIZ (CONT'D)

Hello? Hello?

Behind Sasha, a shadow stirs. A familiar FORM silently emerges from the dark. The child senses something but turns too late... Sasha is promptly enveloped in black robes.

Liz whips around, sees nothing.

LIZ (CONT'D)

(faintly)

Sasha... ?

She panics, scans the attic. The MAIN ATTIC WINDOW is wide open and vibrating. Wind-kicked curtains float back into position. *She's gone.*

INT. KITCHEN - SAME

Paul and Josh are still reeling from Cooper's murder. They stand in the middle of the room - shards of glass and metal at their feet. They're locked in an embrace, the boy sobbing into his father's chest.

JOSH
I wanted to save him...

Paul strokes his son's hair with a trembling hand.

PAUL
I know you did, son. I'm sorry...

Paul tightens his grip on Josh as the churning clamor on the RADIO begins to taper off...

INT. ATTIC / EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

AT THE WINDOW, Liz scans the street below. A PACK OF GRIMS are on the move, racing away from the house. They disappear into the night.

LIZ
No...

A moment of complete STILLNESS follows. A terrible peace.

LIZ (CONT'D)
(barely audible)
Paul...

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Paul and Josh are suddenly jolted by a hoarse CRY...

LIZ (O.S.)
PAUL!!!

Father and son lock eyes and immediately bolt from the room.

INT. ATTIC - CONTINUOUS

Liz clears the door in the floor. Paul scrambles up with Josh in tow.

LIZ
(in total panic mode)
Oh my god Paul, *they took her, they took her...*

PAUL
What? How?

LIZ
I don't know how they got in here.
I don't know, I mean I was here...
I was *right here!*

Paul tries to keep it together.

PAUL
Okay, what did you see?

LIZ
I saw them through the window, they
carried her away... *she's gone.*

PAUL
They carried her away...

Paul goes to the window and looks out.

JOSH
(realizing)
All they wanted was her. They
didn't care what happened to us.

LIZ
Paul, she's *alive*. I know it...

A terrible moment passes, no one knows what to do...

Paul GLOWERS, his gaze intensifies.

PAUL
Okay. I'm going.

JOSH
What?

Josh is beside himself.

JOSH (CONT'D)
Out *there?* Dad, don't...

The boy clings to his father.

JOSH (CONT'D)
(whimpering)
...they'll get you like they got
him. Please, don't...

Liz meets her husband's eyes. In that moment, she knows
Cooper is dead.

PAUL
Son, please.

LIZ
(with finality)
No.

Paul and Josh turn to face the woman of the house.

LIZ (CONT'D)
We all go.

INT. STAIRS / LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Paul, Josh and Liz race downstairs and split up. Liz rushes to the front window and peers outside.

Through the window, all is quiet... peaceful.

INT. ATTACHED GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

Paul bursts through the door and rushes toward a shelf on the far wall, stumbling over bins and boxes to get there.

At the shelf, he eyes a RIFLE CASE and shoots it a look of disdain. Guns won't help. Nothing will.

Paul grabs the FLASHLIGHTS he came for.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Josh stares out the window blankly. He's cradling the hilt of his broken KATANA. Suddenly, the boy's HAND starts to twitch and tremble. Josh looks at it, furrows his brow. A single bead of sweat rolls from his cheek. The trembling stops as...

...Liz approaches.

LIZ
Josh, honey?

Josh doesn't answer. Liz casts her eyes downward, comforts her son with a hand on the shoulder.

JOSH
Mom?

LIZ
Yeah.

JOSH
What are they doing with her?

Liz goes blank, suddenly disarmed. It's a question she doesn't want answered.

PAUL (O.S.)
Guys...

Paul enters and hands out flashlights.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Careful how you use these, okay?
We don't want to attract attention.

At the backdoor, Paul puts his face against the window. He studies the backyard for predators but instead finds a single, BLOODY SNEAKER catching moonlight in the grass.

PAUL (CONT'D)
I'm gonna make a run for the car.
Don't come out until I give the
signal, okay?

No response. Paul turns to find his wife and son holding one another for dear life.

PAUL (CONT'D)
(pleading)
Okay?

They both nod somberly.

PAUL (CONT'D)
We're going to get through this...

JOSH
Dad?

PAUL
Yeah?

JOSH
What's the signal?

Paul raises his arm and gives a THUMBS UP. They lock eyes one last time. Paul takes a breath and twists the knob.

PAUL
Lock this behind me.

He exits the house. The door clicks shut.

EXT. BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

Paul navigates the steps and proceeds cautiously on a paved path to the driveway.

At once, a chorus of CRICKET CHATTER explodes around him, perhaps a million strong. But Paul sees nothing. He hastens toward his vehicle.

INT. KITCHEN WINDOW - CONTINUOUS

Liz stands cross-armed, her back to the action. She can't watch. Josh is glued to the window.

JOSH
He's almost there.

EXT. DRIVEWAY / CAR - CONTINUOUS

But Paul fumbles keys as he approaches the driver's side. They slip from his fingers and hit the pavement with a CRASH. Startled and exposed, he ducks down.

INT. KITCHEN WINDOW - CONTINUOUS

Liz now hovers over Josh's shoulder.

JOSH
He dropped the keys.

EXT. DRIVEWAY / INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Paul picks up the jangling ring, keeping a watchful eye on the surrounding darkness.

He quickly unlocks the car door and opens it. Once in the driver's seat, Paul gives the THUMBS UP.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

JOSH
Mom...

LIZ
Okay. Let's go.

They OPEN the backdoor...

INT. CAR / EXT. DRIVEWAY - CONTINUOUS

Paul watches his wife and son stalk toward him. He waves them on. They quicken their pace.

Car doors creep open in silence. Mother and son enter carefully - Liz getting in the front seat, Josh the back. They pull the doors shut as quietly as possible.

PAUL
Seat belts.

His wife and son oblige. *Click, click.*

Paul starts the ENGINE and immediately tunes the radio to 1060. For the time being, the station produces only static.

He shifts into reverse with a white-knuckled grip and glances up at Pitney's house. It's dark, nothing stirs.

The car backs out slowly...

EXT. CUL-DE-SAC / INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Rolling away, the sedan proceeds with its headlights off. Only street lamps light their path. All residences are blacked out. Not a soul in sight...

PAUL
Everybody keep your eyes open. She
could be anywhere.

FLASH ON

Sasha's sleeping face is revealed by flashes of moonlight. Her cascading hair drifts over swaths of concrete, grass and dirt. She's being carried aloft, taken somewhere.

At once, BLACK FLUID leaks from the girl's hairline. Two thin streams trickle down Sasha's forehead, past her eyelids and over her cheeks. It gives the impression of black tears.

BACK TO SCENE

Liz and Josh study their surroundings with furrowed brows.

From the rooftops, we observe the sedan navigate the darkened road. Its whining engine is the only sound in the dead calm.

Behind them, their home sits wounded, lonely. Josh watches it shrink on the horizon as they sail into darkness...

EXT. DARK ROAD / INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Paul clicks a FLASHLIGHT on and holds it out the window, scanning darkened homes and driveways for clues...

He glimpses an open doorway with a pair of STIFF LEGS sticking out. The man is missing one shoe. Inside, lights flicker and strobe.

PAUL
Jesus...

From afar, we see Paul's narrow BEAM projecting out the car. A SECOND LIGHT appears from the passenger seat and probes wildly, illuminating flashes of grass and trees.

Paul quickly kills his flashlight, then snatches the one Liz is wielding. He switches it off.

PAUL (CONT'D)
That's it. We're gonna give ourselves away.

LIZ
But how are we supposed to --

PAUL
We're a moving target with these things on, it's not gonna work.

LIZ
(frustrated)
Let's just keep looking...

Josh squirms in the backseat. The boy grimaces and grabs his ARM. Then...

A MILD DISTURBANCE is suddenly heard over the radio. Josh sits up straight. Liz and Paul lock eyes.

The sound is getting louder...

Far ahead, a lone, SHROUDED FIGURE drifts down the street. Paul hits the brakes.

The Greens watch in horror as the dark thing *floats above* the asphalt, heading away from them.

LIZ (CONT'D)
(breathless)
Oh god...

The car begins to crawl forward... Liz shoots her husband a look. Paul paces the Grim, keeping a safe distance...

JOSH
Dad...

The Grim STOPS in its tracks. Paul brakes again.

LIZ
(mouth agape)
Can it hear us?

They wait. Josh SHIVERS.

Ahead, the Grim suddenly rotates as if on a swivel. Its gaze passes over their car and lands on a house nearby...

The creature advances toward it, passing an abandoned ROCKING CHAIR on the porch as it glides up to the front door...

A haunting and familiar sound echoes through the night...
KNOCK. KNOCK. KNOCK.

The Greens watch with morbid fascination. Liz swallows hard.

Suddenly, a bloody HAND slaps the window next to Liz. She jumps in her seat. Outside the car is a frantic WOMAN wearing only a housecoat. Her cheeks are hot with tears, her forehead gashed and bleeding.

WOMAN

Please... help! Would you...?

In a split second, the desperate woman is wrenched away into the dark - TAKEN by unseen hands.

LIZ

Paul! Go!

Paul snaps to and cuts the wheel. They promptly U-TURN and drive away. They're in the clear, until...

A POWERFUL EXPLOSION rocks the neighborhood behind them. A ball of fire roils upward, momentarily turning night to day.

INTENSE LIGHT flashes through the car windows. Liz screams.

PAUL

What the hell was that?

Beads of sweat cover Josh's forehead. The boy seems to have slipped into shock. With glazed eyes, he observes the fireball reflecting on the window...

He then shifts his gaze down the road only to spy ANOTHER CLOAKED FIGURE... The Grim drifts toward an alley...

It has SASHA.

JOSH

Dad, stop! Stop the car!

PAUL

What?

JOSH

*It's Sasha. I just saw Sasha!
Stop now!*

Paul hits the brakes. Before he or Liz can react, Josh pops open his door and bolts from the car.

LIZ
(grabbing after him)
Joshua!

PAUL
What the hell?
(shouts)
Son!

Paul and Liz quickly exit the car.

EXT. SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD - CONTINUOUS

Josh dashes off in pursuit of his Grim. The boy's face sweats profusely - he's delirious. He turns down an alley.

Paul and Liz chase after him on foot.

PAUL
Josh!

EXT. ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Josh stumbles into trashcans with a loud CRASH. He falls...

Liz and Paul key on the sound. They race further into the dark and find their son lying amid overturned refuse.

LIZ
Josh!

Josh rises to his feet, trying to catch his breath...
Paul grabs him by the shoulders, looks him in the eye.

PAUL
Are you okay?

JOSH
(unsure)
Dad, I thought I saw her...

Josh cranes his neck, looks toward the end of the alley.
Paul follows his son's cue... and in total desperation TAKES OFF down the backstreet.

LIZ
Paul!

Liz and Josh race to catch up with him.

EXT. ALLEY / EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

The Greens emerge from the alley to face an empty street.
The road disappears into dark horizons on either side.

PAUL
(hushed)
Which way?

JOSH
(scanning the streets)
I dunno, dad... I --

Suddenly, there's a FLUTTERING SOUND overhead...

All at once...

Thousands of SPARROW CORPSES fall from the open sky in a
torrent of gore. The Greens backpedal as a glut of rotted
meat and feathers SPLASH DOWN before them.

They observe the dead heap, mouths agape...

PAUL
(gravely)
Okay... back to the car, *now*.

He grabs his wife and son and hustles them back toward the
abandoned sedan... We follow on their heels.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Behind them, street lamps begin to BLOW OUT...

One by one, the fluorescent bulbs explode, from farthest to
nearest, catching up with them...

PAUL
Move!

EXT. STREETS / INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Car doors swing open. The Greens quickly take their
positions inside the vehicle. Paul starts it up and they
SPEED away.

At the end of the street, they halt at an intersection, a T
in the road.

LIZ
Honey?

PAUL
I don't know....

He continues to idle.

LIZ

Paul, pick a *direction*, we have to keep moving...

Paul grips the wheel in hopeless frustration... then something comes over him. He looks up at Liz.

PAUL

I might know someone who can help.

He makes a quick LEFT. Josh slumps in the backseat. The boy uses his shirtsleeve to wipe his brow...

EXT. GAS STATION - LATER

The full moon hangs enormous and bright above Harut's shop.

INT. HARUT'S STORE - CONTINUOUS

The store is illuminated by the soft glow of refrigerated grocery cases. Harut sits behind the counter and handles a clunky cassette RECORDER.

Harut pops in a homemade tape. He presses PLAY and soaks up the soothing sounds of Andy Williams:

"Moon river... wider than a mile... I'm crossing you in style... someday..."

By the register rests a framed photograph of a lovely Indian woman. A solitary flower leans against it.

Harut gets up and looks out the glass doors of his store, scans the empty street. He then proceeds to collect various items from the shelves and cases: BREAD, MEAT, CHEESE.

The storekeeper builds an unusual sandwich, thickly buttering his bread and mashing a pile of potato chips into the ham and cheese between.

As he takes an enormous bite, Harut stops the cassette player and reaches for another tape. He pops it in, picks up a small mic attached via cable and hits RECORD.

HARUT

(in Hindi)

Question...

(beat)

What if all of this is our fault?
Human beings have a strange need to believe in monsters...

Harut takes another bite, pleased with his latest insight.

HARUT (CONT'D)
 (in Hindi)
 Is it possible that we --

Harut is interrupted by a KNOCK at the door. Startled, he looks up and sees THREE FIGURES silhouetted behind the glass.

Harut picks up a FLASHLIGHT and cautiously approaches the storefront. He pans the light across the faces of his three visitors: Josh, Liz, then Paul.

When he reaches Paul, a look of recognition comes over Harut. He swiftly unlocks the door and pulls it open.

HARUT (CONT'D)
 Come in, come in. It's not safe to
 be out on the street.

The family enters. Harut locks the door again and looks outside, sees nothing.

HARUT (CONT'D)
 What are you doing here?

PAUL
 It's our daughter, Sasha...

LIZ
 (blurts out)
 They took her.

HARUT
What?

LIZ
 (emotional)
 One of them came to the door and
 asked for her. We couldn't...
 (beat)
 We tried to hide her but *those*
things, they kept coming...

The storekeeper is mortified.

LIZ (CONT'D)
...and they took her.

Harut looks at them sharply, first Liz then Paul.

HARUT
 I've never heard of such a thing...
 (beat)
 How old is your daughter?

LIZ
 She's... fifteen. Why?

Harut turns away, uncertain. He gazes upon the night with sad, reflective eyes.

PAUL
 When we spoke earlier, you seemed
 to know a lot... about *them*.

Harut turns, locks eyes with Paul.

PAUL (CONT'D)
 Please...
 (beat)
 What can we do to get her back?

Liz grabs Paul's hand.

HARUT
 (with grave certainty)
 If they took her...

FLASH ON / INTERCUT

A GIRL'S BODY is dragged across a dark surface. We glimpse a mess of tangled hair - flashes of filth on pale, naked flesh.

HARUT (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 ...she's lost.

The girl's head flops over sickly - it's Sasha. Her eyes are distant, mouth agape. She's listless...

Sasha is dragged out of frame. Into a dark void.

BACK TO SCENE

HARUT (CONT'D)
 The Grims bring only death.

LIZ
 (weeping)
 No... she's alive... *and we have to find her.*

Harut eyes her with deep empathy. He shakes his head, no.

HARUT

I'm sorry...

PAUL

We have to try, dammit. We have to try *something*. If we give up on her... I don't... *Please*.

Harut thinks long and hard, wrestles with unwanted memories. He sighs deeply.

HARUT

I've always questioned the notion that these attacks are random.

(beat)

There must be some purpose... Something we don't understand.

JOSH

They collect things.

Harut stops and looks at the boy. His gaze lingers a moment on Josh's pale, perspiring face.

HARUT

That's right.

(to Paul and Liz)

They took your child - this cannot be chalked up to chance. So if the Grims are still here, she is too.

(beat)

Perhaps... perhaps they're keeping her somewhere...

LIZ

But where? Where do we look?

Paul eyes Harut's portable player on the counter.

PAUL

The radio... it goes crazy anytime one gets close, right? So what if instead of driving away...

LIZ

We drive *towards* the signal.

Paul and Liz lock eyes, perhaps onto something.

Harut lowers his gaze and shakes his head.

HARUT

I can't say I like your chances...

LIZ
We are going after her.

HARUT
Then you must hurry. Only a few
hours until sunrise...

Suddenly, a chill jolts through Josh's body. In a feverish haze, he CRASHES into a magazine rack.

PAUL
Josh!

The sick teen clutches his arm, Paul and Liz rush to his aid.

JOSH
My arm...

Paul quickly examines the boy's appendage...

LIZ
Oh my god! What is it?!

On Josh's arm, the flesh has turned BLACK and infected from the Grim's touch. The dark marks look like a cancer beneath the skin.

PAUL
He... he was touched.

LIZ
What?!

PAUL
Before... in the kitchen.
(beat)
I thought...

HARUT
(eyeballing the wound)
My god... he needs *immediate*
medical attention.

Harut grabs a TOWEL from a nearby shelf. He creates a makeshift tourniquet and ties it around the boy's bicep. Liz and Paul watch, dumbfounded.

PAUL
St. Mary's isn't far from here...

LIZ
The hospital? But *Sasha*...

HARUT

This infection *must* be kept from
spreading... it's his only chance.

Harut's words hit them hard. Liz caresses her son.

LIZ

Sweetie...

JOSH

Mom, I think I can--

KNOCK. KNOCK. KNOCK.

They all turn and see a visitor whose shape is
unmistakable... It's a GRIM.

LIZ

Oh, God...

The family huddles close together and backs away, taking
refuge behind a food display.

Harut slowly approaches the door until he's within inches of
the creature - only a plate of glass divides them.

Harut quickly looks down and spots a slip of PARCHMENT at his
feet. He picks it up and studies it a long while, not saying
a word. He appears deeply disturbed.

Harut looks back at the family, then returns to the note.

PAUL

(whispers)

What does it say?

Harut shakes his head and crumples the paper in his fist.
He approaches the family.

PAUL (CONT'D)

What is it?

HARUT

(speaking softly)

Leave. Go out the back.

PAUL

What?

Harut hands over his car keys.

HARUT

Take my car. It's parked outside.

The family hesitates, studies Harut.

HARUT (CONT'D)

Go *now*.

Paul nods, gives Harut an intense farewell look. The family retreats through the back of the store.

The Grim impatiently POUNDS the glass doors. Harut closes his eyes and takes a deep breath.

EXT. BACK OF HARUT'S STORE - CONTINUOUS

As the family cautiously approaches Harut's vintage TOWN CAR, they suddenly stop.

Five BIG BLACKBIRDS are perched atop the vehicle. The creatures turn and study the family with evil eyes.

Josh picks up a crumpled soda can discarded on the ground. He pitches it at the birds and they disperse into the air. But the effort further weakens the boy... he doubles over.

LIZ

(to Josh)

Honey...

PAUL

C'mon, quick!

INT. TOWN CAR - MOMENTS LATER

The family piles into Harut's car. Paul takes the wheel as Liz climbs in the backseat with Josh. The teen shivers in his mother's arms.

Paul twists the ignition. The engine turns over instantly and roars to life. Paul shifts into reverse and gives the store a last look as they slip away.

INT. HARUT'S STORE - CONTINUOUS

At the glass doors, the SILVER LOCK twists and opens on its own. The Grim sweeps inside - vapors curl in its wake.

The PHOTOGRAPH of Harut's lost love looks on as...

Harut turns to face death. Filled with terror, he looks upon the evil entity. The Grim grabs Harut by the lapels and pulls him close.

Two LUMINOUS ORBS appear within the Grim's hood. The glow from these orbs hits Harut dead in the eyes, like spotlights.

Harut starts to IMplode, literally collapsing upon himself. Soon, there is nothing left but a small clump of carbon. It falls to the floor...

The GRAY CLOUD then rises off the ground and settles into the Grim's waiting hand...

It CRUSHES Harut's charred remains to DUST...

On the floor, we see Harut's hated note beneath falling ash. It reads: *PHOTOGRAPH*.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

The Greens hurtle down the road. Paul turns up the radio. The speakers hiss static...

LIZ
(cradling Josh)
That man... is dead now.

PAUL
We don't know that.

JOSH
Yes, we do...

At Josh's feet, SCALES glisten in the darkness.

Josh looks down with glazed eyes to see a BLACK SNAKE coiling around his leg. Serpents slither on the floor... crawl all over the seat... flick forked tongues...

Josh cries out in horror. The hallucination fades. Liz tries to comfort her son.

LIZ
Shhhhhhh...
(beat)
Paul...

He presses the pedal to the floor.

EXT. STREET / INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

The Greens race past car dealerships, fast food joints, strip malls... An ILLUMINATED SIGN on the horizon reads:

ST. MARY'S HOSPITAL

As they approach the hospital, there's trouble - the main entrance is jammed with abandoned vehicles. It's impassable.

LIZ

What...

PAUL

I'll get as close as I can.

EXT. HOSPITAL / INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Paul pulls along the sidewalk and kills the engine. They survey their surroundings. All is quiet. They'll have to hoof it across a long stretch of manicured lawn.

LIZ

What if it's closed up?

Paul ignores the question.

PAUL

C'mon...

Liz emerges from the car holding Josh. But her son's legs give out and they TUMBLE to the ground.

Paul rushes to their aid and the family scrambles across the hospital lawn. It may as well be a thousand miles wide...

A HOVERING POV drifts toward them from a treeline. The Greens press on, unaware.

The POV closes in. Something large drifts overhead. The Greens sense it and look up... but the black SHAPE is inscrutable against the night sky.

LIZ

What is it?!

PAUL

Keep moving!

EXT. HOSPITAL ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

The hovering POV descends ever closer as they reach the EMERGENCY ROOM entrance...

Automatic doors whoosh open and the Greens hasten inside.

INT. HOSPITAL - CONTINUOUS

Josh is dazed, practically sleepwalking. Paul watches their back, makes sure no one follows. Then...

The family finds itself inside a large RECEPTION AREA. All is dead quiet, nothing moves. Overhead lights flicker.

It takes a minute for the family to absorb the horrors that lay before them...

The floor and walls are smeared with copious amounts of blood. A silver wastebasket overflows with shredded meat and steaming entrails.

On the reception counter, a SEVERED HAND sits abandoned. Paul notices a slip of PARCHMENT resting in its palm.

The note is inscribed with a single, cryptic word: FAITH.

PAUL

I think we have to leave.

Paul looks over at his wife. She holds her mouth, her eyes are big and tearful.

LIZ

Oh no...

Paul follows his wife's gaze and soon sees the source of her terror. A BODY sits upright against the tiled wall, perhaps twenty feet away. A trail of blood leads to the spot, as if the carcass were dragged and discarded there...

The face and torso are covered with a bloody sheet. The victim appears to be a young girl. Her hair, her body type... it could be *Sasha*.

LIZ (CONT'D)

No...

Paul and Liz approach the mystery girl with trepidation. Josh idles behind, leaning against a pillar.

At the body, Paul clutches the bloody sheet.

LIZ (CONT'D)

Wait...

She's not ready for this. Paul hesitates a moment, then reveals the face...

The dead girl is *not* Sasha. Paul allows himself to breathe once more.

LIZ (CONT'D)

(whispers)

Thank god.

Paul tears away the rest of her covering. The murdered girl has been cruelly defiled. Her torso is CORED OUT, a monstrous wound. Liz looks away.

Paul eyes a black MOSQUITO feasting at the gore. He replaces the sheet. Liz suddenly remembers her son and looks around.

LIZ (CONT'D)

Josh...

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

The boy has strayed into the adjacent HALLWAY. He stares straight ahead, as if in a trance. Inky fluid trickles from his nose and pee-soaked jeans.

Paul and Liz join their son. They see what captivates him. Up ahead, beneath a pulsing light, are...

...TWO GRIMS. They hover with their backs to the family. The creatures are inexplicably *vibrating* - their evil forms *coursing* with some dark power.

The cloaked figures then start to *swivel*, turning toward the Greens. Paul grabs his wife and son, whisks them into an adjoining corridor.

INT. CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

They hustle... then stop. Down the hall, a GRIM hovers in profile, silently observing a gore-spattered wall.

The Greens quickly spin around, opting to go back the way they came. But POINTED SHADOWS are creeping into the corridor, angling towards them...

In a panic, Paul tries a door nearby... it's locked. Liz tugs at her husband. Behind them, a DARK ROOM is wide open... waiting. They hasten inside.

INT. DARK ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Paul seeks to close the door but its hinges are twisted and broken. Sounds approach... breathing.

The Greens retreat further into the room and huddle in the darkness. They WATCH the open doorway with bated breath.

Josh shakes violently. He looks as though he might cry out. Paul hugs the boy and covers his mouth.

TWO GRIMS soon come into view. The pair's gait is slow and deliberate. They stop at the doorway, standing in profile.

One is carrying a man's SEVERED HEAD. Drops of blood hit the FLOOR. A moment of tense uncertainty follows.

The Grim TIGHTENS its grip on the cranium's curly mop and the hooded monsters continue on...

INT. ROOM / CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

After a few quiet moments, Paul cautiously peeks out into the hallway. The Grims are nowhere to be seen. Paul hears the faint sound of automatic doors swishing open and close...

PAUL
(whispering)
I think they're gone...

Josh suddenly CRIES OUT in pain. Paul spins around and flicks a switch by the door. The room fills with soft light.

Paul sees Josh writhing on the floor as Liz hovers over him. She looks up at her husband pleadingly.

LIZ
Paul...

Paul quickly eyes a NURSE'S CART nearby.

ON TOP is a set of surgical tools. Paul eyes a SCALPEL, looks back at Josh's diseased arm.

BELOW is a tray loaded with PHARMACEUTICALS. Paul starts rifling through bottles and vials, scanning the labels. One is labeled ANTI-VENOM.

Paul furrows his brow and sets it aside. He picks up a second bottle that also reads ANTI-VENOM. Again, Paul discards it.

PAUL
(to himself)
What the hell...

Meanwhile, Josh is beyond rational thought. He's convulsing in a pool of his own sweat. His eyelids flutter. Liz wipes her son's FOREHEAD and tries to hold him still.

LIZ
Paul, we're losing him!

Paul returns to his wife and son. The infected area on Josh's arm is quite large now - a BLACK MASS beneath the skin. It's growing before their very eyes.

In a panic, Paul heads for the SURGICAL TOOLS atop the nurse's cart. As Josh WAILS behind him, Paul grabs a SERRATED KNIFE. He returns to his son and KNEELS beside him.

LIZ (CONT'D)
(to Paul)
What the hell are you doing?

PAUL
It's gonna kill him. We have to do
it, Liz. We have to do it...

Liz goes slack, unable to speak, unable to breathe.

Paul hovers with the knife, his face twisted with agony.
He pretends he has the courage to do the deed.

About to act, Paul studies the infection up close. He
notices something strange - a texture resembling SCALES, like
the flesh of some pernicious reptile.

Paul looks at his blade a moment, then back at the nurse's
cart. He jumps up and beelines for it.

LIZ
Paul!!

Paul grabs a syringe wrapped in plastic. He frantically
tears it open and stabs a vial of ANTI-VENOM.

LIZ (CONT'D)
What is it?

PAUL
(filling the needle)
Don't worry, I know what I'm doing.
I think I know what I'm doing...

He returns to Josh's side, brandishing the syringe.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Hold him...

But as Paul closes in with his needle, the cancerous shape
starts to *move*... It actually forces its way up Josh's arm -
as if trying to escape. The makeshift tourniquet comes
undone and falls away.

LIZ
What's happening?!

The dark mass travels all the way to Josh's throat where it
stops and *tightens*. The boy is being *choked*.

Josh's eyes roll over white. He drools BLACK FLUID.

LIZ (CONT'D)
Do something!!

Paul finally PLUNGES his needle into the evil infection. Josh's limbs flail wildly. His parents are pushed back... but the boy soon settles.

The disease on his throat quickly shrinks, folds like a dying spider. Paul and Liz watch in amazement as the dark mark dissipates completely.

LIZ (CONT'D)
Josh, are you okay?

He's out cold.

PAUL
(pleading)
Josh, buddy. Wake up.

He JOSTLES his son lightly. Josh comes to. He wipes his chin, massages his throat. The boy is returning to normal.

JOSH
Hey dad...

PAUL
Hey, kiddo.

Paul smiles faintly and sighs with relief. Liz kisses her son's forehead.

INT. HOSPITAL - CONTINUOUS

The Greens stalk through the white-walled labyrinth, working their way back toward reception, cautious at every turn. They round a corner and see...

A wall-mounted emergency kit has been busted open. Below...

A NURSE lay slain. Crimson sludge leaks from her ears as she cradles a FIRE AXE with lacerated hands. The Greens creep past the body when...

The nurse springs to life. She jumps up, wailing and flailing with her axe. The poor woman's eyes are cloudy and sightless, her face contorted and anguished.

The Greens jump back. Paul raises his hands.

PAUL
Lady, don't --

The nurse lashes out in a final fit of crazed desperation. The axe FLIES from her hands and impacts drywall, inches from Josh and Liz. They observe the thick blade with wide eyes.

The nurse gasps a final, pained breath and collapses on the tile. The Greens can only watch as she dies before them...

Paul pulls the fire axe from the wall and grips it tightly. They continue on...

INT. HALL / HOSPITAL CAFETERIA - MOMENTS LATER

The family stalks toward the dining area where SEVERED LIMBS are piled high on tables. Peeled skins hang from the lights.

The Greens try to keep it together as they move past the carnage. They don't dare pause.

INT. CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

The family passes the hospital CHAPEL, its door wide open. They round a bend and stop dead in their tracks.

At the end of the hall lies a DECAPITATED PRIEST with a rosary spilling from his hand. The headless corpse is sprawled against white tile, in a sticky crimson pool...

Scrawled in blood on the wall above are these chilling words:

NO GOD

NO DEVIL

ONLY US

As the Greens absorb this dark message, they seem stricken, bereft of hope. Suddenly, a heavy shadow eclipses the evil inscription. The family turns...

A GRIM is observing them.

LIZ

No!

They flee for the exit. The Grim follows. They run like *mad*. They blow past gurneys, gear and GORE. The Grim keeps coming. Up ahead... glass doors, freedom.

PAUL

Faster!

They reach the exit, come within inches of the glass. But the automatic doors are unresponsive... they won't open. Paul and Josh try to pry them apart - it's futile.

LIZ

It's coming!!

The Grim is closing in. Paul takes hold of his axe. He swings it hard against the glass - but it only creates a hairline fracture. The Grim's eyes *ignite*.

Paul STRIKES a second time and the transparent door SHATTERS.

PAUL

Go! Go!

EXT. HOSPITAL - CONTINUOUS

The Greens flee the hospital and don't look back. The night is a blur of black bushes and pregnant shadows. They descend upon Harut's car...

INT. CAR / EXT. HOSPITAL - CONTINUOUS

...and pile in. Paul sets the axe on the floor. He turns the ignition and instantly peels out. He clips an abandoned vehicle, breaking off its rearview mirror. The Greens race away into the darkness...

INT. CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Paul catches his breath, finds Josh in the rearview mirror.

PAUL

You okay back there?

JOSH

Yeah dad, I'm OK.

A quiet moment passes.

JOSH (CONT'D)

Dad?

PAUL

Yeah?

JOSH

Are we gonna find her?

Paul looks at his wife. He then eyes the in-dash clock: 5:17. Time is running out. Just then, a CELLPHONE goes off. The ring tone is unique... familiar.

JOSH (CONT'D)

That's Sasha's phone...

Liz reaches into her pocket and removes Sasha's pink phone. She looks at it with a mixture of hope and dread.

The ringing continues. Liz answers on speaker.

LIZ
Hello?

EMILY (V.O.)
(speaking softly)
Sasha?

LIZ
No... this is Liz, Sasha's mother.

Silence.

EMILY (V.O.)
Mrs. Green... it's Emily... I'm in
trouble... it's in the house.
(beat)
I... I think everyone is *dead*.

LIZ
Where are you, sweetie?

EMILY (V.O.)
I'm upstairs.
(abruptly)
Oh God... it's coming...

LIZ
Baby, tell us where you're at...

Through the phone, the Greens hear a door being struck violently. Emily SCREAMS. Her phone hits the floor. More banging. The sound of splintering wood. Panicked breaths.

PAUL
Liz...

LIZ
No...

Crashing sounds. Crying.

PAUL
Hang up the phone, Liz.

A final SCREAM. Sounds of ripping meat. Spilled blood.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Hang it up!

Silence... Then breathing... *Something* is breathing into Emily's phone.

Paul snatches the cell from his wife and hangs it up.

JOSH

Dad!!

Paul looks up from the phone to see THREE GRIMS hovering in his path. He panics and SWERVES off the road.

EXT. STREET / INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

The car COLLIDES with a tree in a crunch of metal and glass. One headlight is smashed, a front tire blown. The engine is still chugging. The radio CRACKLES...

PAUL

Christ! Are you guys okay?!

LIZ

(shaken)

Yeah...

There's no response from Josh. He's facing the back window.

PAUL

Josh!

JOSH

(softly)

Shit...

Paul looks in the rearview mirror. The Grims still loiter in the road behind. They stand motionless like statues, like some dark monument to evil itself. Their cowls are angled towards the car...

LIZ

(to Paul, whispering)

Get us out of here.

Paul SLAMS into reverse and hits the gas. The vehicle lurches but goes nowhere as metal GRINDS against fibrous wood. They're fixed to the tree.

The Grims wait. Paul REVS the engine over and over to no avail. The Grims begin to move...

JOSH

Dad!

The position of their bodies doesn't change, the creatures simply drift towards the car in a sick, unholy unison.

PAUL

Lock the doors... lock the doors!

Liz and Josh frantically secure the old car's manual door locks. The Grims keep coming.... Josh tries to scramble into the front seat with his parents.

Suddenly, there's a crack of inexplicable THUNDER in the distance. All three Grims stop abruptly and turn at the sound. The Greens watch, wide-eyed...

Finally, the cloaked things start to DRIFT AWAY... as if being beckoned somewhere. They soon pass out of sight.

LIZ

Paul... we have to go that way...
go wherever they're going.

Paul gives her a look. He hits the gas again. With a sound like the snapping of meaty bones, the car breaks free of the tree and reverses out onto asphalt.

They turn around and sputter off in the direction of the summoned Grims. The blown front tire makes a horrible KA-CHUNK-KA-CHUNK noise as they go.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Five big BLACKBIRDS feed on a dead coyote. It's the same animal Sasha saw earlier. The scene is bathed in moonlight.

INT. CAR / EXT. STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Paul checks the radio, makes sure it's tuned properly. Only white noise hisses from the speakers.

Liz stares out the window, up at the moon. It appears to be tailing them.

PAUL

(hushed)
C'mon, girl... where are you...?

As if in response, the radio suddenly comes alive with GRIM DISTURBANCE - loud and harsh. Paul slams on the brakes, sending sparks from their damaged wheel.

The family scans their surroundings. The ominous tone rages inside the car, leaks out into the night.

Paul begins to idle slowly through the suburban neighborhood. The Greens' senses are on high alert.

A DISTORTED VOICE cuts through the din.

DISTORTED VOICE

Who's there?

Liz and Paul eye the radio in disbelief. Josh sits forward.

DISTORTED VOICE (CONT'D)
What is it?

PAUL
Oh my god -

JOSH
It's Sasha.

LIZ
Sasha? Baby, where are you?

We drift towards the in-dash SPEAKER, into the darkness of its rumbling woofer...

SCREEN BLACK

Static swells as we travel into nothingness... we're somewhere else...

The black screen ripples, is *displaced*... SASHA'S FACE emerges from thick, oily liquid...

The girl gasps for air, chokes on clotted fluid. She's fighting for her life...

SASHA
(sheer terror)
Mommmmmmm!

Sasha disappears again beneath the surface, violently sucked down by some nefarious undertow.

The pool bubbles and calms... back to BLACK and nothing more.

INT. CAR - SAME

Sasha's shrill cry lingers in the car.

LIZ
Sasha!

JOSH
Mom... where is she??

Dash lights and radio DROP OUT. The car DIES completely. The suddenness of it seems unnatural.

Paul frantically tries to restart the car but it's stone cold - a lifeless heap in the middle of the street.

PAUL

No! We're *close*. We have to be.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Paul EXITS the car, throwing caution to the wind. He walks down the center of the road, carrying his axe. Liz and Josh follow. They are flanked by darkened homes.

Paul stops and stares straight ahead. A faint glow appears on the horizon.

JOSH

Sun's coming up...

PAUL

They'll be gone soon... *c'mon*...

They begin to stalk down the road, scanning the rows of houses for any kind of sign.

LIZ

Which one?

A hopeless moment passes. Then...

A low, rushing tumult creeps into the sound scape. Sloshing, wet... subterranean... Josh spies a STORM DRAIN. Somewhere below, behind that mouth of vertical bars is a flood.

The trajectory points toward a dilapidated house at the end of the street. Josh tugs at his mother's sleeve.

JOSH

Mom... that's the Kirby house.

Liz looks at her son, then the flagging STRUCTURE.

LIZ

She's there.

PAUL

Let's find out...

Huddled close, the family approaches the spooky house. A sliver of SUNLIGHT shimmers on the horizon. They're running out of time...

EXT. PORCH / INT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The front door is slightly ajar. Paul slowly opens it and makes an unfortunate creaking sound.

The Greens peer into the front room. Moonlight streaming through the windows provides some visibility. The dwelling is devoid of furniture, deathly quiet.

The desperate trio ENTER the house, Paul brandishing the axe. Josh eyes the weapon without hope.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Paul eyes a heap of brittle leaves beneath an open window. The debris is shaped like a burial mound.

Paul traverses the hardwood and tests the spot with his foot. It's just a pile of leaves and dirt, after all.

Across the room, Liz and Josh stand before a large MIRROR fixed to the wall. They're mesmerized, in awe.

Liz feels her own face as if to confirm its existence. Josh studies his hands. Paul soon joins them.

PAUL
(whispers)
What the hell?

He sees what vexes them... the Greens cast no reflection whatsoever. The mirror is a portrait of an empty room.

PAUL (CONT'D)
(softly)
*We're definitely in the right
place. C'mon...*

They move on through the house.

INT. HALLWAY / BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Paul, Liz and Josh creep down a long hallway. They come to a BEDROOM DOOR that's shut. Liz leans close to it...

LIZ
(whispering)
Sasha?

Silence. Paul nudges his wife aside and reaches for the knob. With a trembling hand, he cautiously OPENS the door.

From the GREENS' POV, we survey the room and find it completely empty. Then...

A faint rumbling swells beneath the bedroom's floorboards. BLACK SLUDGE proceeds to seep up through the cracks. The flow increases until...

A TIDE of dark crud rushes toward the doorway.

JOSH

Dad...

Paul quickly shuts the door and they all back away. Sludge leaks out into the hall - black tendrils lick the floor... then recede back into the room.

Paul looks at his wife and son.

PAUL

Be ready for anything.

The Greens hold hands as they continue on.

INT. HALLWAY / BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

They creep toward an OPEN DOOR.

PAUL

Stay behind me now...

The family stops to peer inside ANOTHER ROOM. What they see freezes their hearts...

A child's bedroom is decked out in early 80's decor. But the toys, furniture and books are rotting and covered in crud.

THE SKELETAL CORPSE of a young girl sits on the edge of the bed. Her dusty skull rests in her lap, wisps of blond hair still clinging to it.

Liz covers her mouth as Josh eyes the HEADLESS BOY lying on the floor. The skeleton's weathered cub scout uniform has a name sewn into it: Pat Kirby.

Other HEADLESS REMAINS litter the floor amidst the rot.

JOSH

This isn't real...

PAUL

(gravely)

We have to keep moving.

Paul ushers his family away from the door. As they push on, Liz looks back again, her eyes filled with tears.

INT. HALLWAY / BASEMENT DOOR - CONTINUOUS

The Greens come to a large, solitary DOOR at the very end of the hall. They eye each other... this must be it.

The door has no knob or handle, no hole in which one might be set. Careful to remain quiet, Paul and Josh PUSH the heavy plank. It won't budge.

They try to PRY the door open with their fingers. No use.

LIZ
(whispers)
Paul...

Something above has her attention. Fixed to the ceiling is an ornate DOORKNOB, revealed by a shaft of moonlight. It's too high for anyone to reach.

On the handle are engravings - strange cuneiforms from another age. A snarl of black disease poisons the plaster where the spindle meets the ceiling.

LIZ (CONT'D)
Lift me up.

Paul and Josh lift Liz and she turns the peculiar knob.

The strange door slowly swings open to reveal a wooden staircase. It descends into a shadowy BASEMENT.

Stale, dead air rushes up from below. The Greens know they must go in. Dread descends upon them.

Paul lovingly studies his wife and son... perhaps a last look. He strokes Josh's hair. Paul turns to Liz and KISSES her tenderly. He speaks to them in a low voice.

PAUL
If anything happens down there...
you turn around and run...
(stifling tears)
You run and get the hell out of
this place. Understand?

Liz and Josh nod solemnly. The Greens hold hands - and their breath - as they creep down into the dark.

INT. CELLAR - CONTINUOUS

The family treads softly down the STEPS...

At the bottom, they set their feet on the DIRT FLOOR and take stock of their surroundings...

The dank CELLAR is vast and black. Several small WINDOWS provide patches of moonlight in the cavernous space. Liz spies something and tugs at Paul...

Ahead, they encounter heaping piles of junk: coins, rings, timepieces, keys... There's a pair of BIFOCALS. Paul eyes a SEVERED FINGER protruding from one pile... then eyes his son.

LIZ stoops down and pinches an object between her fingers - a SILVER BROOCH, some antique heirloom.

PAUL
(hushed)
C'mon.

Their search continues past the mounds of junk, through dimly lit dilapidation.

In a CLEARED AREA they discover something unexpected. Five discarded GRIM ROBES are crumpled on the floor. The Greens don't know what to make of it.

Josh notices something else amongst the crumpled cloaks. It's a kind of thick rod, partially buried in the dirt.

A beam of moonlight shimmers upon the object's black, textured surface. Josh bends and frees it from the soil.

PAUL (CONT'D)
(hissing)
Careful.

Josh examines this four-foot STAVE. The weapon was perhaps forged from some gnarled chunk of ancient obsidian. It reeks of power and prestige. Father and son share a look.

Liz then turns, hears something... Faint HISSING, undulating... she follows the sound into darkness...

LIZ
(whispers)
Sasha?

The sound continues... hollow RUSHES of wind. No... *breath.*

Liz stumbles upon a pair of girls' SNEAKERS. She finds discarded striped socks... jeans... panties... a t-shirt...

A look of grave realization washes over Liz. She gasps...

Paul reacts instantly, rushes to his wife's side. Liz is gathering up the articles of clothing, frantic and tearful. Josh tightens his grip on the stave and joins his parents.

EXT. SKY - SAME

A hint of amber HAZE appears in the night sky. Dawn nears...

INT. BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

The family steps further into shadow, wandering in near blindness. They listen for breathing...

PAUL
(whispers)
Sasha...

The trio continue on in the dark.

JOSH
(whispering)
Where does it end...

Paul examines their surroundings, perceives dirt on both the floor and ceiling.

PAUL
(hushed)
What the --

They soon come to the edge of a body of water. No, not water... BLACK FLUID. In the darkness, it's impossible to tell how far it extends.

JOSH
This is insane...

Liz looks on in utter despair. She scrutinizes the darkness for any sign of her daughter. Then, further down the macabre shoreline, something catches her eye...

LIZ
Paul...

He follows her cue, drops the axe he's been carrying.

A girl's UNCLOTHED BODY protrudes from the cruddy lagoon. She's submerged up to her shoulders in its dingy liquid. Half her face is mashed into the dirt. It's *Sasha...*

LIZ (CONT'D)
My baby...

Josh looks on in horror as Liz and Paul rush to her aid. They pull Sasha from the black pool. She's unconscious, perhaps drowned - her flesh a deathly pallor. Dark rivulets drip from her pale body...

Paul and Liz cradle their soaked, naked child. Racked with worry, they check her vitals.

LIZ (CONT'D)

Paul?

PAUL

I can't tell...

Paul and Liz lay Sasha on the ground. They struggle to redress their baby girl. They rub her arms and chest, urging her body to life. Josh approaches, looking helpless, unsure of his sister's condition...

PAUL (CONT'D)

C'mon, baby.

LIZ

Please...

A quiet moment passes as they watch and wait...

From the shadows, we observe The Greens mourn their loss...

Paul bends down and scoops up his daughter.

PAUL

We have to get her out of here.

LIZ

(voice shaking)

She can't be, she can't be...

Paul carries Sasha back toward the stairs as Liz hovers close by. Josh follows, still gripping the stave.

PAUL

Hurry now...

Behind the Greens, four GRIM ROBES start to stir. They soon rise up off the floor and fill out, becoming full-bodied.

Sensing a presence behind them, the Greens TURN and look. They nearly collapse at the sight of the evil figures lurking nearby. Paul steels himself.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Back away, slowly.

The Greens each take one step backwards. Then another. The Grims advance, keeping pace.

Paul eyes the STAIRS as the Grims prepare to strike.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Run!

Paul and Liz move as fast as they can...

But Josh stands his ground, channeling the courage of great warriors from some distant age. He raises his black stave and wields it like a Katana sword.

The Grims stop and pull back, clearly afraid of the object.

Liz and Paul are amazed. They continue up the stairs, Liz helping her husband support Sasha.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Josh!! C'mon!!

Josh protects the rear, ascending the stairs backwards. He grips the railing with one hand and frantically waves his weapon with the other.

He keeps the Grims at bay, but they do not give up pursuit.

INT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The Greens escape the basement and RACE through the house. The four Grims give chase. They move as one, a pack of shrouded devils.

INT. BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

On the floor, one remaining Grim robe rises from the dirt and fills out. This one is different from the others... larger, more menacing.

The PRIME GRIM has taken form.

INT. LIVING ROOM / FRONT DOOR - CONTINUOUS

Paul holds Sasha while Liz struggles to open the FRONT DOOR.

LIZ
It's locked!

PAUL
From the outside?

The Grims are advancing. One of them boldly rushes the family, its eyes *alight*...

In a split second, Josh switches to the offensive. His eyes are ferocious, VENGEFUL. He raises his weapon and STRIKES the oncoming ghoul - this time *the stave* makes it count.

On impact, the enemy's robe loses form, collapses to the floor. The remaining Grims slow their approach, fall back.

Josh can't believe it. Paul eyes Josh's mysterious artifact and has a flash of insight.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Josh, try the door! Do it now!

Holding the stave, Josh tries the door with his free hand - it miraculously OPENS.

Outside, the neighborhood is bathed in a predawn glow. They all flee the house, Paul cradling Sasha.

The three Grims follow...

INT. BASEMENT DOOR / HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

The Prime Grim emerges from the basement and sweeps through the house...

INT. FRONT DOOR / EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Arriving at the front exit, the Prime Grim's hulking form fills the doorway. The hooded thing silently observes its minions chase the Greens down the street.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

The family races toward the rising sun with the Grims on their heels. Paul's legs are wobbling - he can't support his daughter much longer...

The hooded fiends are very close now.

Suddenly, the Greens stop dead in their tracks. FOUR MORE GRIMS have appeared not thirty feet in front of them. The other three continue to approach from behind.

Still *more* cloaked figures EMERGE from the shadows - to their left and right. The family is surrounded.

LIZ

Paul, what do we do?

JOSH

Dad!

Paul has no words. They *almost* made it...

The Greens huddle close together in the street. Josh readies his stave, knowing full well he can't take them all.

The dark horde closes in, reaching out with raven claws. The Greens brace themselves for the end. Then...

EXT. SKY / STREET - CONTINUOUS

At last, the SUN ascends above the horizon. Golden light washes over the land... painting long, angling shadows... obliterating all vestiges of night.

Bathed in sunlight, The Grims begin to VANISH. One by one, they turn to nothing, they become rumors carried on a breeze.

Josh watches as the black stave DISSIPATES before his eyes. The Greens look on in awe, speechless, when suddenly...

Sasha's eyelids flutter. She's conscious - *alive*.

LIZ

Oh my god...

JOSH

Sis...

PAUL

Sasha... you okay, baby?

Sasha is fully sober now - her terrible nightmare ended.

SASHA

Daddy...

She buries her face in her father's chest.

Overcome with exhaustion and relief, the family plops down on the asphalt. They sit stunned, exasperated. Paul pulls everyone close and holds on for dear life, thankful.

The Greens hear someone emerge from a neighboring house. An OLD MAN saunters into his yard. He eyes the shell-shocked family sitting conspicuously in the road.

Without saying a word, the old man proceeds to work his garden hose and water the lawn. He regards the Greens with complete indifference. Paul almost laughs.

EXT. THE GREEN HOUSE - LATER

The new light of day embraces the family home.

INT. DOWNSTAIRS BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

In the bathtub, hot water cascades from the faucet. Sasha is up to her neck in soapy bubbles. She turns the faucet off with her foot.

Liz sits nearby on the cushioned toilet lid. She's handling their house phone. She hangs it up, frustrated.

LIZ
Still not working... can you
believe that?

INT. JOSH'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Wearing wet hair and a towel, Josh enters and slips on pajama pants. He picks his dirty jeans up off the floor, quickly sniffs them and makes a disgusted face.

He wads up the jeans and stuffs them into a wastebasket.

INT. DOWNSTAIRS BATHROOM - SAME

SASHA
Mom, can we order pizza?

LIZ
It's eight o'clock in the morning.

SASHA
But it's lunchtime in Argentina.

LIZ
That's *true*...

PAUL (O.S.)
Phone working?

Paul stands in the doorway. Liz shakes her head. Sasha sinks lower in the tub.

PAUL (CONT'D)
I'm gonna go check on Pitney.

LIZ
Okay.

Paul eyes Sasha.

PAUL
How you doin', munchkin?

SASHA
Um, I'm in the tub, dad.

PAUL
Okay, I'm going. I'm going.

EXT. FRONT DOOR - MOMENTS LATER

As Paul exits the house, he takes notice of the damage on the front door. There's a crack. CLAW MARKS mar the entrance.

The door locks, clicks shut.

INT. DOWNSTAIRS BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Liz sits down on the edge of the tub.

LIZ
Sasha... are you sure you don't
remember anything from last night?

Sasha is quiet for a moment.

LIZ (CONT'D)
You want to talk about it?

Sasha shakes her head.

LIZ (CONT'D)
That's okay, honey.

Liz leans over and kisses her daughter's forehead. She gets up to leave.

SASHA
It was like a dream...

Liz freezes and turns.

SASHA (CONT'D)
I was running through tunnels...
or caves...
(beat)
They kept grabbing at me... their
hands were so cold.

Liz is haunted by her daughter's words.

EXT. PITNEY'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Through a window, we see Paul and Pitney at the kitchen table. The old woman smokes, Paul sips a cup of coffee.

INT. PITNEY'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

PAUL
Mmm... this is serious Joe.

PITNEY
Well, it's too early for Scotch.

Paul smiles.

PITNEY (CONT'D)

All bull aside, I thank god that
little girl of yours is all right.

(beat)

If anyone is gonna have their check
cashed, it oughta be an old dog
like me.

PAUL

I'm pretty sure you're
indestructible, Pitney.

The old woman smiles, takes a drag off her cigarette.

PITNEY

Nah... just a mean old lady.

Paul cracks up. Pitney joins him.

PAUL

So what about you? Did our friends
pay you a visit last night?

PITNEY

Yeah, one of those things showed up
all right. I'd already gone to
bed, too. The bastard woke me up.

Paul smiles curiously.

PAUL

What happened?

PITNEY

I had to give up my husband's
reading glasses - and pocket watch.

(beat)

Hard to believe they'd be valuable
to anyone but me...

Paul takes another sip of coffee.

PITNEY (CONT'D)

I can't hardly think of Stan
without seeing those glasses
dangling around his neck... or him
checking that cheap watch...

(beat)

...a lot of memories attached to
those silly old things.

INT. JOSH'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Josh lies on his bed, staring up at the ceiling, his mind racing. He grabs his cell and brings up a photo.

ON THE PHONE

A shot of Cooper is displayed.

Josh's friend is laughing, dressed in a t-shirt that reads: BURGERS R MURDER. Josh sighs and sets the phone aside.

He closes his eyes a moment, picks up a remote and turns on the TV at the foot of his bed.

ON TV

News footage flashes from one shocking clip to another.

ANCHOR (V.O.)

*Reports continue to come in from
London, Moscow, Hong Kong, Tokyo...
I don't think we've seen this kind
of devastation since the very first
Grim Night... fifteen years ago.*

EXT. GREEN HOUSE - SAME

Paul crosses the lawn up to his house.

ANCHOR (V.O.)

*Indeed, a complete account of what
happened last night may prove this
year's event was the worst yet.*

Paul grabs the doorknob - it's locked. He checks his pockets, rolls his eyes, stands with arms akimbo.

ANCHOR (V.O.)

*We're going live now to Austin
Texas where Bob Gale is reporting
from the governor's mansion. Bob.*

INT. JOSH'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

ON TV

A REPORTER stands before the gate of a palatial estate.

REPORTER (BOB)

*Thanks, Tom. All across the Lone
Star State, flags are at half-mast
this morning. Governor Thompson
and his family were butchered last
night... along with several
security officers...*

INT. DOWNSTAIRS BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Sasha scoops up some suds and BLOWS them away. Liz stands in the doorway.

LIZ
You better get out soon. You're gonna prune.

SASHA
(playful)
Okay, mom.

LIZ
(teasing)
Okay, mom.

Sasha smiles. Liz looks relieved. Things are beginning to return to normal.

INT. FRONT DOOR - CONTINUOUS

Knock. Knock.

INT. DOWNSTAIRS BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Liz SNAPS her head at the sound and touches her chest. Sasha shoots her a look, her grin now gone.

LIZ
Your father must've locked himself out... I'll get it.

Liz turns to leave.

SASHA
Come right back, okay?

LIZ
I will, sweetie.

INT. LIVING ROOM / FRONT DOOR - CONTINUOUS

Knock. Knock. Knock.

Liz approaches the door without caution.

LIZ
Honey? That you?

At the door, Liz twists the lock and turns the knob.

INT. DOWNSTAIRS BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Sasha stares at the tub's faucet. It starts to drip.
The droplets are BLACK...

INT. LIVING ROOM / FRONT DOOR / EXT. PORCH - CONTINUOUS

Liz opens the front door... mist rushes in. Looming before her in broad daylight is the PRIME GRIM.

At least nine feet tall, the evil thing towers above. Liz is frozen. The hulking creature waves its hand and Liz is sent flying backward into the wall. The impact jars the house.

INT. JOSH'S BEDROOM - SAME

Josh sits up in bed...

INT. DOWNSTAIRS BATHROOM - SAME

Sasha continues to gaze at the BLACK TRICKLE swirling into her bath water...

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

On the floor, Liz struggles to regain her bearings as the Prime Grim sweeps into the living room. Floorboards rot and blacken in the creature's wake.

Sensing the dark presence through her blurred vision, Liz crab-walks backward into a corner.

The TV suddenly crackles to life. It begins to FLASH CLIPS from random movies and television shows.

ON TV

A desperate man holds a gun to someone's head...

MAN

Where is she?!

An old man on his death bed utters his final words...

OLD MAN

The girl...

A little boy tugs at his mother's skirt...

BOY

Where is she, mommy?

In the corner, Liz looks upon the television with bleary eyes. She struggles to comprehend what is happening.

The TV repeats its message over and over. The Prime Grim waits patiently, its cowl angling sickly between the set and Liz, as if beckoning her to speak...

At the stairs, Josh comes running down but freezes at the sight of the intruder.

INT. HALL / LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

We follow SASHA as she takes slow, measured steps toward the living room... as if being pulled there. She appears in the entryway wearing a bathrobe. She's in a fog.

The Grim turns its head and moves toward her.

LIZ

No!

Sasha snaps to and sees her nemesis. She runs for the kitchen. The Prime Grim follows.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

LIZ (O.S.)

Sasha!

The girl races through the kitchen. She heads out the backdoor into the yard.

EXT. BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

SASHA flees across the grass with bare feet. She heads for the fence but suddenly crashes to the ground - she's stepped on something sharp.

SASHA

Owww!!

On the ground, Sasha removes something embedded in her foot. It's a WHITE INCISOR identical to the one she found earlier, the serrated tooth now speckled with her own blood.

In a flash, the Prime Grim is upon her. It towers over the helpless girl, HOLDING HER DOWN by sheer will.

LIZ (O.S.)

Sasha!

At the house, a panicked Liz dashes out into the yard. Josh comes after her.

JOSH

Mom!

But as mother and son set foot ON THE GRASS...

Their legs SINK DOWN into the turf as if it were quicksand. Their bodies become stuck in the ground.

LIZ

Josh!

They're soon submerged to their necks in worm-infested soil.

Meanwhile, the Prime Grim reaches down at Sasha with its black claw. Sasha turns her head and shuts her eyes...

A GUNSHOT rings out. Liz and Josh whip their heads. Paul has emerged from the house wielding the RIFLE he neglected earlier. He quickly jerks the bolt up and back to reload.

PAUL

Get away from her!

The Prime Grim cocks its evil cowl. Paul takes aim but his rifle hits the ground. He's pushed backward, pinned to the wall of the house by some unseen force. The impression of a HAND appears on Paul's chest.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Liz!

(struggling)

I can't move! I can't help her...

In the soil, Liz is being swallowed alive, her head barely above ground.

LIZ

(pleading)

Paul, I'm sinking...

JOSH

Mom! Hang on...

Josh fights to break free of his earthen prison. A BLACK CENTIPEDE crawls across his face. Liz struggles for air as the soil creeps around her jaw. She spits dirt.

LIZ

Paullll....

The Grim remains focused on the girl. It hovers over her, leans closer... draws her near with an outstretched hand.

In the center of its palm we see a large, RAISED SCAR. A spiral shape, like a coiled snake... like Sasha's birthmark.

Sasha suddenly opens her eyes and stares directly into the Grim's black hood. Her gaze is intense.

PAUL
Sasha, don't look at its eyes!
Look away! Look away!

But the girl doesn't obey...

The Grim's silver orbs begin to LIGHT UP within its cowl. Sasha holds her gaze - the two lock eyes.

LIZ
 (sheer terror)
Sasha! No.....

Sasha's eye sockets fill with white light, her jaw hangs slack. She appears lost...

But -- in a shocking reversal, it is the Prime Grim that starts to IMplode. Its wretched form cracks and crumples. The creature is soon reduced to a small, sooty CLUMP.

Liz and Josh look on in shock, mired but no longer sinking. The earth loosens around them. Paul is kneeling on the ground, feeling about his chest.

Sasha eyes the charred remains of her adversary. She picks up the hunk of black crud and CRUSHES it to dust. Tears stream down her cheeks.

Paul rushes toward his little girl as Liz and Josh crawl from their wormy graves. Paul soon EMBRACES his daughter, then holds her at arms length - looks into her eyes.

PAUL
 (tearful)
 You're okay...

Sasha nods solemnly as Liz and Josh quickly join them. The Green family is whole again, safe.

PAUL (CONT'D)
 (reassuringly)
 It's done now, it's done.

Still reeling from her encounter, Sasha stares back at the house with vacant eyes...

A SERIES OF SHOTS

We slowly creep in on the WORLD MAP tacked to Sasha's wall, pushing toward Springton...

We drift down a SUBURBAN STREET past homes with doors ajar and blood-stained steps...

We hover down the aisle of HARUT'S MARKET as a gust of wind kicks sooty remains up off the floor...

We glide through a HOSPITAL WING slaughterhouse towards the body of a decapitated priest...

We exit the KIRBY HOUSE, drifting backwards to reveal the home's full facade... that evil, mocking face...

BACK TO SCENE

Sasha continues to stare blankly.

SASHA

Dad?

PAUL

Yes, honey?

The harrowed girl looks up at her father.

SASHA

Next year, can we skip Grim Night?

PAUL

You bet, sweetheart.

They share a brief smile as Sasha reaches over her shoulder to scratch an itch...

ON THE BACK OF HER NECK

We see Sasha's coiled birthmark - it TURNS BLACK before our eyes. She scratches at it, turns her head.

ON SASHA'S PROFILE

We behold her face and blackened mark together. She appears empowered, triumphant. As the girl gazes off, a gentle wind lifts her hair... her eyes intensify...

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END