

INK AND BONE

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BANG BANG of a fist on wood.

INT. DARK BEDROOM - NIGHT

The sound echoes through a large, windowless bedroom. A king size CANOPY BED the only landmark.

The deep shadows in the room unaffected by a small OIL LANTERN, guttering, the only light source.

The BANGING continues, far off.

DERRICK STONE (37) sits up from the bed -- spills the heavy comforter to the floor. Eyes blink at the darkness.

His fingers move to tired eyes, rub the sleep away. He was attractive, a lifetime ago.

The shadows pool close to the bed --

-- almost hiding DOZENS OF FIGURES IN THE GLOOM.

They stand just out of the light's reach, shadowed faces STARING SILENTLY.

At the foot of the bed crouches a DARK MAN -- his skin painted black with FLAKING PITCH TAR. Crusty hands clutch the bed frame.

Stone winces into the shadows -- reaches for the lamp.

The Tar Man moves CLOSER TO THE LIGHT -- his lips OPEN, bare WHITE TEETH that float in the black shadows.

Stone's fingers quickly snatch the lantern -- TURN THE DIAL --

-- the small fire GROWS --

-- to reveal an empty room. Wood floors lead to barren, dark oak walls, devoid of any decoration.

Stone tries to peer into the shadowed corners for any sign of the intruders --

BANG BANG BANG

He quickly stumbles out of the bed -- drags the lantern with him like a lifeline.

INT. STONE HOUSE - FOYER

A heavy front door marks the entrance to the house, past an expansive and modestly furnished entryway.

The smoked glass window in the door obscures whoever is on the other side -- whoever continues BANGING for entry.

The front hall sits below a high second floor balcony -- the swinging light announces Stone's approach seconds before he reaches the bannister.

He looks at the front door --

BANG BANG BANG

Licks his lips.

In the pitted black of the lower floor, he can see MORE OF THE DARK FIGURES.

They CLUTCH with black hands, scrabbling in the dark TOWARDS THE FRONT DOOR -- whoever lays beyond it.

The wind BUFFETS against the outside of the house -- sounds almost hungry.

Stone lowers the lantern.

STONE
GET THE FUCK OUT OF HERE! LEAVE ME
ALONE!

A pause -- the slapping of feet on pavement from outside. The LAUGHING of teenagers.

Stone looks into the cold dark below him. The hands creep back into the shadows, denied.

He turns back to the second floor hallway. It leads away from him, a dark abyss. He LIFTS the lantern.

Stares.

Deep in the dark -- pitch tar lips pull away from WHITE TEETH.

He lowers the lantern -- CASTING THE HALL INTO BLACK.

SMASH TO:

TITLE

The darkness becomes filled with car horns, traffic -- a taxi cab emerging out of a TUNNEL into

EXT. BROOKLYN RESIDENTIAL - DAY

KEATS LOWELL (26), a confident woman with a brown BOMBER JACKET contrasting her business skirt, sits in the back staring out the rain streaked taxi window. *

Distracted -- her hand idly plays over the tip of a BURN SCAR creeping out of her right sleeve.

Residential buildings slide past. *

The cabbie eyes her in the mirror. *

She ignores him -- watches the buildings blur.

INT. ADAM'S BUILDING - DAY

A small lobby trying to be charming. A wall of mailboxes sits above floors that need cleaning.

The glass front door pushes open -- Keats rushes in, shaking the rain out of her hair.

Looks around the dim entrance -- no one in sight.

Small duffel in hand, Keats glances at a small residence placard -- sees FIELDS 1B -- moves down the hall.

1A on her right -- baby crying inside.

1B the next door down -- one last hand through her wet hair -- KNOCKS --

-- the door nudges AJAR.

She pushes forward -- lets it swing open.

KEATS

Hello?

An open living room -- PICTURES line the walls and furniture, surrounded by a clutter of complex looking machinery and devices.

Her eyes stray to the snapshots -- professional, showing SOLDIERS in varying countries.

A small cluster shows a PRETTY FEMALE SOLDIER holding hands with ADAM FIELDS, a journalistic boy scout with a camera. His smile is engaging, even on film.

JORDAN (O.S.)

I'm Jordan, who are you? *

Keats JUMPS -- caught -- spins to face JORDAN (8). The young boy eyes her suspiciously. *

KEATS

I'm, ah-- I'm Keats Lowell. *
Derrick Stone's copy editor. I'm *
here to see your-- ah, Adam. *

Jordan relaxes a little bit -- moves to the small kitchen off the living room.

As he passes closer, Keats BACKS UP -- her purse knocking into the bookshelf and toppling a frame.

She turns and rights it, face red.

Jordan shows only mild interest -- he points across from her to a CLOSED DOOR -- disappears back into his room with a mug of water.

Keats tries to catch her breath, hands SHAKING.

Smiles, to no one -- approaches the door.

It OPENS before she reaches it -- reveals CHLOE (23), tattoo sleeves beneath pierced lips and bruised makeup.

The two women size each other up.

KEATS

...Adam?

CHLOE

(snorts)

Do I look like an Adam?

Keats takes in the girl's faux hawk and jack boots.

KEATS

I have no idea what you look like.

Chloe goes to respond -- a hand moves her out of the way, revealing ADAM FIELDS (30), the man from the photos in name only -- a beard and dark eyes in place of the bright smile.

ADAM

Mrs. Lowell?

She smiles and sticks a hand out.

Chloe rests on the open door, POPS her gum -- Keats' eyes stray to the room behind them --

-- sees the walls are COVERED IN CLIPPINGS, DOCUMENTS, PICTURES.

Whiteboards line the living room -- filled with scrawled writing and symbols.

Pictures of DERRICK STONE pinned up -- multiple shots of a BROWNSTONE HOME.

Dozens of COPIES OF STONE'S BOOKS stacked on the floor. *

Standing in the center is PROFESSOR HAMILL (38), tweed jacket over a band t-shirt.

He cleans his glasses, avoids eye contact.

On the floor cross legged sits MITCHELL (23), the poster child for the internet generation.

Dark hair hangs over his face -- he studies the carpet past the torn legs of his jeans.

KEATS

Hello.

No one meets her eyes -- Chloe's gum POPS.

Adam quickly slides into the living room -- SHUTS the door behind him.

ADAM

Sorry. It's a, uh -- project we're collaborating -- you're not in until tomorrow. Your flight wasn't until tomorrow.

KEATS

It was. Instead, here I am, now.

ADAM

Right. It's nice to meet -- I wish you'd called. *

KEATS

I bet.

She looks knowingly at the closed room behind them. The soft sounds of ARGUING can be heard behind the door.

ADAM

We should get going then, I'm sure you're eager to meet him. I was about to make my morning delivery anyway --

KEATS

You do that every morning?

Adam pauses, a little unsure.

ADAM

Ah. Yeah.

KEATS

Hm.

She turns and looks at the walls, the pictures -- moves on to the several HIGH TECH DEVICES lining the furniture.

Behind them sit books on the PARANORMAL -- GHOSTS -- AMERICAN HAUNTINGS.

Keats smiles back his way.

KEATS

This why you requested to be Mr. Stone's assistant?

*
*

ADAM

...I don't really understand what --

KEATS

You were a photojournalist, right? Stationed overseas during Operation New Dawn.

ADAM

I was a documentary film maker.

KEATS

My mistake. Why the switch? I think you took a pay cut.

ADAM

(bristles)

The same reason a popular true crime writer might suddenly switch to editing books instead of writing them.

*

Keats smiles, thin.

KEATS

I hope not, for your sake.

Keats continues to admire the walls -- Adam stares at her, unsure.

ADAM

...I don't entirely understand what's going on. I was told you were being sent to assess the progress of Mr. Stone's latest novel.

KEATS

I am. In part. What do you deliver?

ADAM

Food, mostly. Fresh bread, vegetables, jugs of water. A ream of paper, two typewriter ribbons --

KEATS

He still writes using a typewriter?

She turns from the device she's holding, curious.

ADAM

You don't seem to know a whole lot about the writer you're here to help, Mrs. Lowell.

*

KEATS

What do I need to know?

ADAM

(sarcastic)

You know his name right? They at least told you his name?

KEATS

Pretty sure everyone knows who Derrick Stone is.

ADAM

You know anything not on the dust jacket?

KEATS

(air quotes)

Highest selling horror novelist of the last decade, the master of the macabre, baron of blood--

ADAM

Read any of his books?

KEATS

I don't read a lot anymore. How often do you make deliveries?

ADAM

Every day.

KEATS

And do you believe the house is haunted?

Adam freezes.

KEATS

Stone hasn't left his house in over ten years. He claims it's because it's haunted. Yes?

ADAM

Yes.

KEATS

Have you ever seen a ghost on the premises?

ADAM

I've never been inside. No one has.

KEATS

Because of the "ghosts"?

*

ADAM

What exactly are you here for? Exactly?

Keats puts what she's holding down and turns to face him, still smiling politely.

KEATS

I'm here to prove the house isn't haunted.

ADAM

Why?

KEATS

The new manuscript is fifteen months behind schedule. Mr. Stone refuses to answer emails from us --

ADAM
He doesn't have a computer.

KEATS
-- phone calls --

ADAM
He doesn't have a phone.

KEATS
-- and the company's sick of it.
Derrick Stone and his haunted house
act are only worthwhile when he's
putting out product.

ADAM
You think he's faking it?

KEATS
Either he's faking it, or he's
insane. Regardless, my goal is to
provide proof to the upper floor
that the house is just a house.

ADAM
You think he'll leave of his own
free will? If you can find proof?

KEATS
It doesn't matter. If I can prove
he's insane, they can have him
removed. Be great for his sales,
probably.

ADAM
(realizing)
Jesus Christ. You're going to stay
in that house?

KEATS
Can't prove much from a Motel 6.

ADAM
You don't understand -- once you go
into that house, there's no coming
back out.

KEATS
So I've heard.

ADAM
I can't help with this -- you can't
possibly expect me to help you go
through with this.

Adam moves to the kitchen -- grabs a small bottle of vodka, a glass.

KEATS

You might want to hold off on that for two shakes there, Adam.

He looks at her -- leaves the bottle.

KEATS

You're aware that any plan to publicly release information you've researched about Derrick Stone is a violation of the non-disclosure confidentiality agreement you signed when you took this job, yes?

Adam goes white.

KEATS

Whatever book you're planning with the A-Team in there --

ADAM

It's a documentary. About the house. Not Stone.

She smiles.

KEATS

You mean it's only about the house he owns and currently resides in. Not about him at all then. I'm sure that will hold up.

He sinks -- caught.

KEATS

You can go ahead and have that drink now.

He unscrews the top -- drinks STRAIGHT from the bottle.

KEATS

I'm not going to tell the company about your side project.

Adam wipes his mouth -- looks at her sideways.

KEATS

You can breach your contract. I don't care. Not even a little bit.

(MORE)

KEATS (CONT'D)

But I need your help, your
research, to prove the house is
harmless.

ADAM

And what if it isn't? Harmless?

She smiles, placating.

KEATS

Then I suppose I won't be around
for you to say I told you so.

Adam pours a large gulp into the glass -- DOWNS IT.

KEATS

Cab it is.

EXT. STONE HOUSE - DAY

The house sits, menacing -- a MASSIVE FOUR STORY BROWNSTONE
shoved into the middle of a Brooklyn apartment block. As
wide as FOUR of the apartment buildings that share its walls.

Kid's CHALK DRAWINGS mar the sidewalk twenty feet away in
either direction -- none even come close to the steps leading
up to Derrick Stone's front step.

Keats stands out front -- rain bounces off the fur lined
collar of her jacket. She hefts a duffel.

Looks puzzled up at the front of the building.

KEATS

Something's off.

Adam lifts a crate of supplies from the back of his car --
doesn't look up.

ADAM

No windows.

Keats looks back. The apartments on both sides of the home
have glass breaking up the front -- Stone's home simply has
dark brick FACADES where windows should be.

KEATS

Commitment.

Adam slams the trunk -- steps up behind her.

ADAM

Not too late.

She smiles -- gestures him up the steps.

He sighs -- produces an old BRASS KEY from his pocket.

INT. STONE HOUSE - FOYER

Black shadows pool in the corners -- the bustle of the street completely SILENT in the wood halls.

The CLUNK of the key -- the front door OPENS.

Adam sets the first box down immediately inside, careful not to step over the threshold. Goes back for a second load.

Keats leans through the door. Admires the old woodwork. Peers up at the second story balcony, empty, dark.

KEATS

Hello?

A CREAK, somewhere inside. No reply.

She looks down -- the dividing line of the doorstep before her.

Feet firmly on the outside.

Looks back up -- the shadows, the dark. The unknown.

ADAM

'Scuse me.

She JUMPS despite herself -- he gently brushes past to put the box down.

Delivery done, he stands -- looks at her. A hint of pleading on his face.

She avoids his gaze -- STEPS INTO THE HOUSE.

He closes his eyes.

KEATS

Adam.

Opens them.

KEATS

I'll be--

STONE (O.S.)

Who the fuck are you?

She turns.

On the balcony above stands STONE.

KEATS
Keats Lowell. Your editor.

STONE
What happened to Eli?

KEATS
He quit.

Stone grunts.

STONE
Shit. I liked Eli. What do you
want?

KEATS
I'm here for your new manuscript--

STONE
Isn't ready.

The air hangs thick around them. Adam takes an involuntary
step back -- COUGHS.

Keats smiles sweetly.

KEATS
Then I'll be staying here with you
until it is.

Stone's face betrays no emotion -- just a narrowing of his
eyes.

STONE
That's not possible.

KEATS
I'm afraid it is.

STONE
This is my house.

KEATS
Not for long, if we pull out of
publishing your next novel.

STONE
That won't happen.

She shrugs.

KEATS

I'm staying. Unless you want to catch a flight to Boston. We can all discuss the new book with the backers. Ease some of the tension.

STONE

I have money. I don't need yours.

KEATS

It's been fifteen months since your last deadline. Three years since your last book. We're completely within our rights to demand compensation for marketing, promotion, fiscal...

His face studies her. She smiles again.

KEATS

Look, I'm staying. Call the cops, or show me the guest room.

He lowers the lantern. Peers down at her.

STONE

The house won't let you stay.

KEATS

That's funny. I keep hearing it won't let me leave.

Stone lets it hang there --

STONE

Your choice.

-- TURNS, disappears back into the house.

Keats turns to Adam.

Looks up at the old walls.

KEATS

It's so quiet.

ADAM

Thick walls. Original masonry. Electricity is spotty, from what I've heard. Phone line never even installed.

KEATS

I suppose I won't get cell phone
reception either.

Adam scoffs.

ADAM

Please. You're in the middle of
Brooklyn. Walls aren't *that* thick.

He holds out her duffel -- carefully hands it to her across
the threshold.

Their hands meet, part as the luggage slips into her hand.

KEATS

I'll be fine.

She sounds less sure.

He reaches for the door knob.

ADAM

I'm five minutes away. Any time of
night.

Hesitates.

ADAM

Be careful. Please.

Swings the door SHUT.

The latch CATCHES with the sound of a tomb sliding shut.

The lack of sound is claustrophobic. Just rain pounding on
the old roof above.

Keats turns -- looks up at the second story.

With no lantern, no lights, all she can see of the house
comes from the small light casting through the front door
glass.

Hallways lead off to her left -- right -- another in front of
her.

A dim WHITE LIGHT glows from the middle hall -- far off,
reflected.

She hesitates -- moves towards it.

The light falls away around her -- she reaches into her bag --

-- pulls out a small PENLIGHT -- CLICKS it on.

KEATS

Mr. Stone?

No sound in the black halls. Nothing but her own steps.

She shines the light over the polished wood -- DOZENS OF PICTURE FRAMES line the walls.

Looking closely she can see they are ALL EMPTY.

The light at the end of the hall is brighter, reflecting around the corner.

She peers in a dark side room -- furniture, covered in THICK WHITE SHEETS.

A floorboard creaks -- she JUMPS, SPINS -- nothing.

She moves quickly to the corner, turns it to face the

ATRIUM

The light comes from a GLASS WALLED ROOM, a dozen feet across, FILLED WITH PLANT LIFE --

A white limbed CHERRY BLOSSOM TREE reaches skyward from the center of the garden.

Keats approaches the glass -- peers up --

-- the glass walls go up four stories to a WIDE SKYLIGHT.

Sunlight spills down onto the peaceful scene.

The glass wall in front of her has a small handle -- a door to enter the garden.

She reaches for it --

STONE (O.S.)

What are you doing?

Keats spins, hand clutching her chest.

Stone stands a few feet away, lantern in his hand -- face passive.

KEATS

I was -- I'm sorry, I --

STONE

Spare bed's this way.

He turns back to the dark halls leading away from the garden.
Keats looks wistfully at the sunlight.

STONE

Come on.

She follows.

INT. STONE HOUSE - GUEST ROOM

Stone uses his lantern to light a SMALL CANDLE --
illuminating the small bedroom they stand in.

The walls contain more frames, empty. The furniture sparse,
the bedsheets dusty.

STONE

I need you to stay in this room.

KEATS

I'm sorry?

He points to a side room.

STONE

Bathroom.

KEATS

Where will you be?

STONE

My bedroom is across the way.
My... study... is upstairs. I'll
be there while writing. I write
most the night. The day too.

KEATS

Then you should be close to done.

Stone turns to leave.

KEATS

I need to see what you have.

He stops.

STONE

I'll bring you what I have. If you
stay in this room.

KEATS

What's outside of this room?

His eyes flicker with something -- fear maybe.

STONE

What kind of name is Keats?

KEATS

My parents were literary snobs. I was named after --

STONE

I know who you were named after. For a book editor, don't you think that's a little on the nose?

KEATS

I used to be a writer. It was even more on the nose then.

STONE

Why'd you stop?

KEATS

I don't like being obvious. It was either that or change my name.

Stone studies her.

STONE

I hope you live until morning.

Without waiting for a response, he LEAVES.

Keats lets out a TENSE BREATH.

LATER

Keats sits on the floor of her room -- MANUSCRIPT PAGES spread around her in a circle.

She makes notes in RED -- CIRCLING typos, repetitive words, crossing out sections.

Her pen skips feverishly over words like BLOOD -- CHILDREN -- RIPPED -- TEAR -- DEVOUR --

-- her pen SCRATCHES into a page, halting the flow.

She stops. Raises a hand to the bridge of her nose.

Checks her watch.

11:15 PM.

Slides out her cell phone --

TEXTS Adam: YOU UP?

She stands, stretches.

Looks at the closed door.

Moves to it -- LOCKED.

She smirks -- reaches into her jacket pocket --

-- FLICKS out a black pocket knife.

INT. STONE HOUSE - HALLS

The door to Keats' room POPS open -- her face appears in the crack.

She walks into the hall with a CANDLE.

Looks to her right, the dark stretching away from her.

Turns to her left --

-- illuminates a BLACK SNOOT RIMMED WITH TEETH.

She takes a backwards step -- brings the candle back up --

-- casts light on a MASSIVE BLACK HOUND -- its black eyes stare into her -- drool DRIPS from its jaws.

Breath coming ragged in her chest -- she extends a hand forward, palm out.

A heartbeat --

-- the hound walks forward, LICKS her hand -- tail WAGGING.

She sighs.

KEATS

Jesus Christ. Some ghost.

The dog turns, tail wagging -- walks down the hall.

KEATS

Guess he's not totally alone here,
is he boy?

Keats casts a look around at the empty darkness.

The dog STOPS a dozen yards away -- SITS -- watching her.

She moves to the door a few feet down -- KNOCKS gently.

No sound from within.

Slowly opens the door to reveal

STONE'S BEDROOM

The high canopy bed, thick blankets, barren edges that Derrick Stone calls home.

The room seems bigger from this side.

Lonely.

Keats moves back into the

HALL

Closes the door silently behind her.

The dog sits patiently at the end of the hall. Still watching.

She follows slowly.

Her foot CATCHES, almost trips -- steadies --

-- looks down to find a WINDOW, set squarely in the middle of the floor.

She frowns -- looks up -- another window above her in the ceiling.

KEATS

(joking)

So that's where you put them.

Steps over.

The dog calmly disappears around a corner.

She follows into the

KITCHEN

High counters circle a center island -- grey spices hang from an overhead vegetable rack, forgotten.

She moves past an oven caked with dust.

Stoops to investigate a brick fireplace -- runs her fingers over a METAL SPIT resting above.

Opens the fridge -- light's out --

-- the candle reveals shelves full of ROTTING FOOD.
Near the bottom sits the fresh produce Adam delivered.
She rips off a chunk of BREAD.
Chews thoughtfully -- looks around for the dog.

KEATS

Here boy. Here creepy dog.

Nothing answers.

She looks up at the small dark bulb near the back of the fridge -- sets the candle down on the floor.

Reaches an arm back -- TWISTS -- pops it into place.

The fridge light comes on with a STUTTER --

-- REVEALING A MAN LEANING OVER HER SHOULDER -- a WHITE PLASTIC SACK WHERE HIS FACE SHOULD BE --

The opaque plastic SUCKS into the man's mouth with each breath, FURIOUSLY -- INCHES FROM HER EAR --

-- Keats' fingers SLIP -- the light goes out, casting the figure back into BLACK --

She readjusts, reaches further in -- seats the bulb home.

The light COMES ON, STEADY -- reveals the EMPTY KITCHEN behind her.

She picks up the candle, lets the door slide shut -- unaware.

Looks around for the dog.

INT. STONE HOUSE - FOYER

Searching -- she comes back out into the entrance hall.

She's above it now, on the second floor balcony.

Grey light filters in from the small front door window -- shining on a GIANT SYMBOL INLAID IN THE FLOOR.

Keats frowns -- pulls out her cell phone.

Aims its lens down, finger on the camera button --

-- the phone BUZZES TO LIFE -- RINGTONE LOUDLY echoing in the halls.

She curses, hits ANSWER --

-- Adam's face comes up on the screen.

ADAM
(on screen)
Are you ok?

KEATS
Yes. Christ.

ADAM
You sound out of breath.

KEATS
You scared the shit out of me. I'm
looking around the house now--

ADAM
(excited)
What's it like? Move the camera
around, I want to see it.

She hits the FLIP button -- the small square showing her feed shifts to where she points the phone instead of on her face.

ADAM
Holy shit. It's --

CHLOE (O.S.)
(on screen)
Boring.

Chloe leans over Adam's shoulder to see.

ADAM
(annoyed)
Keats, this is Chloe.

CHLOE
We met.

ADAM
Chloe hosts a ghost busting video
series on YouTube, they visit --

CHLOE
It's not just ghosts. And it's a
paranormal investigation blog. We
have our own channel.

ADAM

Right. Keats, can you swing it around? We want to see more of the architecture.

KEATS

Who else is there with you?

Adam's face shifts away on the screen, shuffles -- reveals MITCHELL in front of a laptop.

ADAM (O.S.)

Mitchell, say hi.

He doesn't.

CHLOE (O.S.)

My brother's strictly behind the scenes.

The view gets pulled back to Chloe's face, CLOSE UP.

CHLOE

I'm the talent.

A SNORT from Mitchell off camera -- Chloe lets go of the phone to SMACK him.

Keats keeps panning the camera around the room, using the light to examine the dusty wood BEAMS overhead.

Adam hands the phone to PROFESSOR HAMILL, who smiles.

HAMILL

(loudly)

I'm Professor Jacob Hamill, Mrs. Lowell. The academic backbone of this little --

CHLOE (O.S.)

The mic is right there, you don't need to yell.

HAMILL

Oh.

Adam snags the phone back, his face sliding back in front of the lens.

ADAM

I met Professor Hamill through the university. He set me up with Chloe and most of the equipment. We've been running--

KEATS

Adam.

She stops panning the camera, turns it into her face.

KEATS

I don't care.

The screen facing away from her, Adam rolls his eyes and
FLIPS HER OFF --

-- nothing but SMILES when she brings it back around.

Adam stays in the center -- the others crowd around to try
and see the small screen.

KEATS

What am I looking at?

HAMILL

Ah... looks like typical turn of
the century architecture. That
block was built early 1910, which
lines up with what we're seeing--

KEATS

Great.

She shifts it down to the lower floor -- the SYMBOL.

KEATS

Any idea what that is?

ADAM

What is that? Is that in the
floor?

KEATS

It's big. Covers the whole
entryway. Doesn't look like much
until you see it from above.

MITCHELL (O.S.)

It's from his book.

The screen shifts to the stringy geek, still in front of his
laptop.

MITCHELL

His first book. *Feast of
Innocence.*

KEATS

I thought the house was built in 1910.

HAMILL

It was.

KEATS

So he saw it here, put it in his book?

ADAM

No. He didn't buy the house until after *Feast* made it big.

KEATS

Who owned the house before then?

Adam looks at the others, a little nervously.

ADAM

Ah. No one did.

KEATS

What do you mean? He had to buy it from someone. Who paid to build it?

ADAM

We, uh, we can't find that out. Public records show he bought it from an unknown third party. Before that it's just... it's not listed at all.

KEATS

Right. Of course it wasn't.

She leans into the wall, trailing the camera over the EMPTY PICTURE FRAMES.

KEATS

There has to be dozens of empty frames on the walls -- hundreds maybe. You know what kind of person hangs empty frames in their house?

They have no answer. She hits the button -- FLIPS the feed to the front lens, facing her.

Looks into their scared eyes.

KEATS

The same person with enough
commitment, enough money to bribe a
public works officer to change
ownership records for his home.

HAMILL

You think he's faking it?

She looks around the dark halls, devoid of life.

KEATS

I think I'm tired of crawling
around in the dark.

ADAM

Maybe we can--

KEATS

Find out what that symbol means.
See if it shows up anywhere other
than his writing, this house. If
we can find out who owned the house
before, we can prove at least that
part is fake.

She hangs up without waiting for a response.

Lifts the candle to peer at the ceiling up above.

KEATS

Derrick Stone, in the Study, with
the typewriter.

INT. STONE HOUSE - STAIRWELL

Keats opens a heavy door -- coming out onto the SECOND FLOOR
STAIRWELL.

The stairs around her spiral up a center space -- she
approaches the middle and peers over.

A bundle of RAGS sits on the floor below her.

She frowns -- looks UP at the two flights above --

-- below, the bundle of rags MOVE --

-- a GAUZE WRAPPED FACE turns towards the light -- rodent
like eyes REFLECT ORANGE at the candle light.

Keats lifts the candle higher -- the figure falls into shadow
-- only those REFLECTING EYES remain.

The figure SCURRIES out of sight --

-- just as Keats turns back to look below.

She frowns, unsure if she saw something.

Begins to ASCEND the stairs.

The third floor landing comes too soon -- no door leading out.

She frowns.

A few feet further, she sees the third floor door set flush in the middle of the next set of steps.

The RAILING has ENDED -- nothing between her and open air.

Keats moves closer to the wall -- looks down and confirms that the STAIRS ARE GETTING NARROWER.

Frames still line the walls, but inside are MIRRORS instead of photos.

The candlelight bounces around her -- reflects oddly in the gloom.

She stops to examine a large mirror -- peers close -- wipes away DUST.

In the reflection behind her she sees a LARGE SHAPE HANGING FROM BENEATH THE STAIRS.

She frowns --

-- the shape MOVES, a TANGLE OF EXTENDED LIMBS.

Keats SPINS --

-- TOO FAST --

-- STUMBLES, candle SWINGING out over the open air --

-- GRIPS the wall for balance -- TURNS --

-- to nothing.

The candlelight bounces off the underside of the far staircase.

She looks back at the mirror. Nothing.

Tries to catch her breath.

Moves higher -- the stairs only a few feet across now.

Four stories stretch out beneath her. The light doesn't reach the bottom.

Her head HITS THE CEILING.

She looks up -- lifts the candle.

The stairs go STRAIGHT INTO THE CEILING, without stopping.

The middle remains OPEN a few feet away.

Keats LEANS as carefully as she is able -- lifts the candle to peer above.

BEAMS crisscross overhead -- hold the roof up over the ATTIC.

More FURNITURE sits forgotten above, DOZENS of odd shapes casting odd shadows -- all covered in WHITE SHEETS.

She leans FURTHER -- trying to see more -- stretches out over the abyss.

On the beam straight above -- the same SYMBOL from downstairs.

She grabs her cell phone out of her pocket -- tries to angle a picture.

Can't. LEANS -- uncomfortably aware that she isn't holding onto the wall anymore --

-- presses the button --

-- FLASH --

-- ONE OF THE WHITE SHEETS MOVES --

Keats SHRIEKS -- DROPS the candle.

Throws herself back against the wall to keep from going over.

Eyes SHUT TIGHT with vertigo --

Misses the small light as it falls silently down the center passage --

-- ILLUMINATING DOZENS OF FIGURES HUDDLED AROUND THE STAIRCASE.

The candle hits BOTTOM -- SNUFFS OUT.

Keats is left in BLACKNESS.

Breathing -- heavy, panicked.

A fumbling --

-- the light from her cell phone dimly illuminates her face.

She reaches into her pocket, struggles -- pulls out her PENLIGHT.

Snaps it on -- glances around.

She's alone on the stairwell.

Pockets the cell phone -- leans back into the center -- peers up --

-- the ATTIC IS COMPLETELY BARREN.

Her light flashes over the support beams -- NOT A SINGLE WHITE SHEET, let alone whatever was beneath them.

KEATS

Holy shit.

Leans back, glances around.

KEATS

How the fuck.

She retreats down the stairs -- carefully.

Back presses into a HANDLE set into the wall.

Stops.

Reaches back -- TURNS the handle --

-- pushes the SMALL FOURTH FLOOR DOOR open.

A normal sized hall rests beyond the miniature portal.

With only a small glance behind, Keats LEAVES the stairwell.

INT. STONE HOUSE - FOURTH FLOOR

The beam of her penlight casts claustrophobic light on the surrounding walls.

The hall looks like all the others -- smooth woodwork, bare decorations and dust.

A DOOR on the left -- tries the handle, OPEN.

Swings it toward her to reveal a WALL -- set only a few inches in.

Keats looks left, right -- confirms that the small inch of space goes on into black.

Like the room was built that way.

On the floor she can see DOZENS OF BROKEN FRAMES -- crowded into the small space on top of one another.

She takes a PICTURE with her phone -- FLASH.

Shuts the door.

Moves to a door on the right -- opens it --

-- four walls, normal sized -- more FRAMES --

-- she almost steps into NOTHING.

Glances down -- the room has no FLOOR. Her penlight lights on a BED -- FURNITURE -- FOUR STORIES below.

Frames line the walls the whole way down.

FLASH of her camera.

The door swings shut.

Ahead the hall opens into a LARGE OPEN ROOM -- candles sit on wood pillars, dancing light.

A pair of worn stairs lead UP into the OPEN RAFTERS of the ATTIC.

Keats looks nervously above -- the wood support beams block any view of the attic past a dozen yards.

The stairs in front of her look worn, faded --

She reaches the bottom -- glances up.

At the top sits a RED DOOR.

The flicker of CANDLELIGHT can be seen from underneath -- behind the faint TAP TAP TAP of a TYPEWRITER.

Phone out -- FLASH on the door.

The bright light shows the same SYMBOL resting above the door.

Her foot rests on the first step -- CREAK -- the next one.

Behind her the house sits quiet.

All she can hear is the TAP of the typewriter -- the faint BEATING of rain on the roof above.

She reaches the door -- places a palm on it.

The typing inside hits a fever pitch -- TAPTAPTAPTAP

--she turns the handle -- pushes it open into the

WRITING ROOM

-- The room has NO WALLS -- simply more SUPPORT PILLARS that extend the length of the attic.

A simple table marks the center. A small stool in front.

On top rests an ornate TYPEWRITER. UNOCCUPIED.

The sound of typing is gone.

Keats looks to the left, right -- whoever was typing is nowhere to be found.

KEATS

Stone?

Moves deeper into the room.

As she passes the pillar closest, she STOPS -- peers closer.

An odd design marks each pillar, the floor.

Closer, she sees it isn't a design.

A single word CARVED into the wood, varying sizes and shapes, THOUSANDS of times.

WRITE.

WRITE.

WRITE.

Keats stoops down -- the FLOOR is covered in the same carvings. Every square inch.

She approaches the table in the center.

A small worn stool sits in front.

The typewriter lays dormant -- a PAGE caught in its feed.

A STACK OF PAPER sits to one side.

Her fingers stretch out to grasp the typed sheet.

STONE (O.S.)
You can't be here.

Keats JUMPS -- SPINS to face Stone. The red door rests open behind him.

KEATS
What is this place?

STONE
I told you to stay in your room.

KEATS
This whole house. I've never seen anything like it.

He takes a step closer -- ANGRY.

STONE
What are you *doing* here?!?

She steps back -- bumps into the table.

KEATS
I'm here to help.

STONE
I don't need your help.

His face is manic -- trembling.

KEATS
You believe all this, don't you?
The hauntings, the ghost stories --

*

He moves for the table -- she BLOCKS him.

KEATS
Why haven't you left this house?

Stone's eyes are fearful -- darting to dark corners of the attic nervously.

STONE
You don't understand.

KEATS
What exactly do you think is here with you?

*

STONE

...Everything I've ever written.

*

She looks closer -- tries to see if it's a joke.

KEATS

Are you -- what do you mean?

STONE

They... KEEP me here.

Suddenly he GRABS her hand, holds it TIGHT. The words flow like a dam burst.

STONE

They make me stay. They make me write. Terrible, *terrible* things.

*

KEATS

You can't be serious.

His face shows he wishes he wasn't.

KEATS

We can leave. Right now.

STONE

No. No, we can't. They stop me. They'd stop you. They'd do such terrible things. They need me. To write more stories. You, they... you shouldn't have come here.

KEATS

How is it possible? That the things you write come to life.

STONE

Not everything. Just the worst.

He SITS on the stool -- head in his hands.

STONE

I'm so tired.

Keats moves around him, unsure.

She PULLS at the page -- rips it free of the typewriter.

KEATS

It's been over ten years. Since you shut yourself in here. Since your wife died.

Stone's head raises.

KEATS

You suffered a break.

STONE

You've seen things. I know you have.

KEATS

I've seen what anyone will see in a dark house, left to their own imagination. Especially someone who hasn't seen the outside in ten years.

STONE

You don't--

KEATS

I said I was a writer. Truth is, I was a true crime writer. I was paid to follow cases. The bad kind. When the dust had settled, I would stay in houses, some like this one, and I would separate the truth from the fiction.

His head has returned to his hands.

KEATS

The walls here have their fair share of truth. But also a good dose of the other thing.

STONE

Please.

KEATS

You think you create these beings? That you have some kind of power?

STONE

No. I don't know. Of course not.

KEATS

Then if they're real, these ghosts, they must write the stories for you, yes? A kind of inspiration, from beyond the grave.

*

STONE

I don't know.

She holds up the PAGE -- full of black type.

CRUMPLES IT INTO A BALL -- SHOVES it into a jacket pocket.

KEATS

What did you write?

He looks at her, defeated.

KEATS

If it's coming from a higher power,
what did it say?

Stone's face breaks into a sad smile.

He stands.

STONE

My first book, have you read it?

KEATS

Feast of Innocence.

STONE

Yes.

KEATS

Not really my thing. *

STONE

Then you don't understand. The
Beast. Devourer of children. The
worst thing I've ever--

He stops.

STONE

Everything I write is in these
halls. Except for... that. I
wrote it before I came here.
Before I knew I was cursed.

His finger traces the typewriter, the cool black keys.

STONE

I don't want it here, to join the *
others. Not that. I don't want it *
in the dark -- to wake and find *
it... *

Turns to her. Looks at the page, hidden in her pocket. *

STONE

"His world was nothing but the thing's breath; hot, sticky with hunger. Small fingers clutched at rough blankets, seeking aid, escape. None would come."

Keats' face drains of color -- she doesn't need to check the pages to know the words match.

STONE

"The weight of the creature pressed the child's body down, suffocating."

*

Keats TURNS away --

STONE

"The teeth descended, splitting flesh, and hair, and cartilage, and bone"--

*

*

*

*

-- she RUSHES through the red door -- down the steps.

*

STONE

(to himself)

They're making me write the Beast again.

*

*

*

*

It swings SHUT as she passes -- Stone stares after her before it BLOCKS him from view.

INT. STONE HOUSE - KEATS' ROOM

Keats BURSTS through the door -- out of breath.

Runs a hand through her hair, tries to control the panic clutching at her neck.

Her eyes find the bed -- STONE'S MANUSCRIPT IS STACKED NEATLY ON HER PILLOW.

The floor is clean, free of the mess she left while working earlier.

Face a grim line -- she SNATCHES the pages off the bed -- rushes into the

GUEST BATHROOM

Sets her lit CANDLE down on the sink, opposite a BATHTUB surrounded by a plastic curtain.

Grips the pages in her hand -- stares at the flame.

Lifts the manuscript over the fire -- holds it there.

On the curtain behind her DOZENS OF HANDS PRESS AT THE PLASTIC.

The paper hovers over the heat -- starts to CURL.

The hands PUSH CLOSER -- STRAIN against the fabric.

Keats SIGHS.

Pulls the paper away.

The hands RECEDE -- the curtain falls limp.

She sets the manuscript to the side.

KEATS

Get a fucking grip.

Turns -- GRABS THE PLASTIC CURTAIN TO OPEN IT --

-- her PHONE RINGS.

She takes it out of her pocket --

-- SLIDES BACK THE CURTAIN --

-- reveals an empty bathtub.

Answers the call -- Adam's face pops up.

KEATS

Did you get the pictures I sent
you?

ADAM

(on screen)

Sure, but, ah, Keats, what exactly
are we looking at here?

KEATS

Honestly? I have no idea. This
house -- I've never seen anything
like it. Halls double back, stairs
lead to nowhere, it's like M.C.
Escher's wet dream. There are
windows in the floor, the ceiling--

Adam shuffles some papers on screen -- hands the phone to
Chloe.

ADAM

The symbol you sent us, we haven't been able to link it to a particular architect, but there's a lot of early history to sort through. We might still get lucky.

KEATS

Also, I'm not sure, but I think it's... bigger somehow. On the inside.

CHLOE

(on screen)

It's not.

Keats chuckles.

KEATS

You're not seeing what I'm seeing. I'm not saying it's anything supernatural, but there is something going on in this house.

CHLOE

It's called a ghost house.

KEATS

Comforting, really.

Professor Hamill leans into view.

HAMILL

(on screen)

It's not what it sounds like. Turn of the century, dozens of them started popping up. The rich and lonely would build these elaborate houses, hundreds of rooms, no discernible layout. The staircases and windows you're describing -- I'm very confident this is exactly what you're seeing.

CHLOE

They're ghost traps. People who thought they were haunted, by the dead, their family, their dog, whatever. The houses were made to trap restless spirits, make it impossible for them to get out, find the owners.

HAMILL

Didn't know we had any this far into the city, but it makes sense. Out on the West Coast, a few have become tourist attractions, if you can believe--

Keats turns the FAUCET -- water begins to fill the tub.

Adam pulls the camera over to his face.

ADAM

Are you taking a bath?

KEATS

Calm down. The house isn't really haunted.

The camera slides back to Chloe.

ADAM (O.S.)

(muttering)

I'd be more worried that Stone hasn't had a girl in his house for a decade...

Chloe rolls her eyes.

CHLOE

Look, I've stayed in ghost houses before. Plenty. They're spooky. That's the point. It's all optical illusions, make it look bigger, hallways that go on too long. There's a science to it, nothing more.

KEATS

None of that helps me get Stone out of this house. Whatever is going on, he really believes it.

ADAM (O.S.)

(to himself)

Maybe you should too.

KEATS

What was that?

The camera slides back over to Adam. He pulls it close.

ADAM

Maybe you should too.

The view returns to Hamill, who eyes off screen nervously.

Keats lets her hand run underneath the faucet.

HAMILL

There's a lot of things that can't quite be explained in the world. But there just might be some *scientific* explanations as to the existence of the paranormal.

KEATS

(disinterested)
Oh yeah?

HAMILL

I'm glad you asked. The book I'm researching --

Chloe pulls the camera back.

CHLOE

All right, we're all trying to stay awake Professor. Keats. Don't let the house get to you. It's just a house.

KEATS

The voice of reason.

Turns the faucet -- the water STOPS.

She removes her boots.

KEATS

Stone believes the stories aren't coming from him. They're coming from outside, from ghosts. There has to be a way to disprove that.

Adam comes back on the screen.

ADAM

We can cross reference all the dates in his books, the victims. The killers.

*

KEATS

He believes the killers in his books, the monsters... he believes they're in here with him.

Adam's smile falters.

ADAM

Then I hope you're right about that house.

Keats goes to answer. Doesn't.

ADAM

I'll see you for the morning delivery. Just...

Not sure how to say it.

Chloe smiles into view.

CHLOE

Sleep with a light on.

The call ENDS.

Keats thinks -- taps the phone on her leg.

Stands -- starts to undress.

Behind her the bath tub rests full --

-- A SCREAMING WOMAN WRITHING UNDER THE WATER'S SURFACE.

The top remains STILL despite the THRASHING LIMBS underneath.

Keats leans to place her phone on the counter -- the tub drops out of view -- she turns --

-- to EMPTY clear water.

Pulls off her pants, deep in thought.

LATER

Her head rests comfortably on the tub lip.

Hand draped over the side -- casually tracing the cold floor.

Eyes closed -- drifting off.

The candle on the sink FLICKERS.

BLOWS OUT.

Keats remains unaware of the darkness.

Her hand draws up into the tub -- PUSHED almost.

The porcelain edge is on her shoulder -- bicep -- elbow -- now forearm -- STRETCHING AWAY FROM HER.

The tub is FIVE FEET ACROSS -- the edges continue to SLIDE AWAY into NOTHING.

Her hand SLIPS away from the receding edge, into the water -- the movement STARTLES her. Her face STIRS.

The edges move out of sight now -- nothing but WATER around her body.

She SLIPS as the BOTTOM of the tub DROPS AWAY -- her eyes SHOOT open.

Treading water -- panic on her face. She can't touch bottom.

KEATS

Help.

Struggles to stay afloat.

From the black water behind her a DARK FORM RISES.

Water pools from its open arms -- LEANING towards her.

She senses it, as the arms SWEEP TOWARDS HER --

-- Keats WAKES UP

-- SHOOTS out of the claw tub --

The bathroom is as it was. The candle gutters harmlessly on the sink.

Keats sits naked on the floor, clutching her bomber jacket over her chest -- black POCKET KNIFE in her hand.

Drops it to the floor -- breathes.

KEATS

Fuck.

INT. STONE HOUSE - GUEST ROOM

Keats wrings water from her hair, dressed in simple pajamas -- folds a towel she brought back into her duffel bag.

Sits on the bed -- frowns.

Hesitates, just for a moment -- pulls the covers back.

Bare sheets underneath.

She sits -- looks down at herself.

BURN SCARS cover her right forearm -- she pulls up her shirt sleeve and absently traces the ridges -- all the way up to her shoulder.

Eyes refocus -- YANKS the sleeve back down.

Puts her cell phone on the bedside table -- pulls out the BATTERY -- inserts a FRESH ONE.

The door to her room CREAKS open.

Her head snaps up -- stares.

It STOPS -- teeters.

The SKITTER of claws on wood.

She stands.

Peeks around --

-- to see the BLACK HOUND sitting at the foot of the bed.

Its tail wags.

She smiles -- pushes the door shut with a CLICK.

KEATS

Keep watch.

Turns back to the bed -- a gentle KNOCK on the door stops her.

She looks at the dog -- head on the floor.

Reaches for the handle.

STONE (O.S.)

(through door)

Mrs. Lowell?

Breaths out -- swings the door open.

Stone leans against the wall -- eyes bleary, disheveled.

KEATS

Miss. It's Miss.

STONE

Sorry. I was just -- I wanted to make sure you were -- if you need anything.

KEATS
Still here. Thank you.

He stands there, awkward.

KEATS
I promise you, I'm going to figure
this thing out. I don't give up.

Stone looks up -- his smile is genuine, though placating and
full of disbelief.

STONE
You should leave. Please. While
you can.

KEATS
I don't give up. As I said.

He nods, expecting as much.

KEATS
Besides, I've made a friend.

His head SNAPS up.

She gestures back to the foot of the bed --
-- which is now EMPTY.

KEATS
I-- your dog was right --

STONE
I don't have a dog.

She looks at him, smiles -- expecting a joke.

There is none.

STONE
If it comes back... I suggest you
don't let it in.

He walks down the hall to his room.

A last forlorn look behind -- he SHUTS the door.

Keats ROUNDS on the room -- looks in the bathroom--

Ducks to peer under the bed.

NOTHING.

Stands, confused.

KEATS
(to herself)
You probably should have seen that
one coming.

She moves to the hall. Looks at the light under Stone's door.

CROSSES quickly -- hand raised to knock --

-- hears voices within.

She stops.

Moves her ear closer -- listens.

Too low to make out -- WHISPERS, back and forth.

Her hand drops.

Keats smirks.

KEATS
(under her breath)
I'm not playing this game.

She turns and goes back to her room -- door SLAMS.

From within Stone's room the WHISPERS continue -- one of them sounds FEMALE. *

INT. STONE HOUSE - GUEST ROOM

The candle on Keats table has long since gone dark.

Keats sleeps, blankets pulled tight around her body.

-- or rather TRIES to sleep -- she turns onto her back, eyes open.

Sighs.

It's not happening.

Rolls onto her side -- reaches for her PHONE on the desk -- presses a button to check the time -- 4:36 AM --

-- behind her the light from the phone ILLUMINATES THE NAKED BACK OF A MAN SITTING ON THE FOOT OF HER BED.

He doesn't face her -- RIDGES OF HIS SPINE RISING WITH EACH FRENZIED BREATH.

With another sigh, she SWIPES the display -- starts to scroll info --

-- hears something.

The man's BREATHING ratchets louder, SCRATCHY.

Keats FREEZES -- turns, slow --

The breathing STOPS --

-- without facing her, the man SCREAMS.

Feet kicking, Keats PROPELS out of bed -- SLAMS into the bathroom door -- pushes THROUGH.

Back pressed to the tub -- phone THRUST in front of her for light, protection.

The room lays silent beyond -- she can't see the foot of the bed from here.

Breath ragged -- she makes her way to her feet.

Steels herself -- STEPS forward -- glances in --

The room is empty again.

Her eyes catch SOMETHING in the mirror --

-- behind her the tub is full of GLISTENING BLACK TRASH BAGS.

She turns.

Steps closer -- the phone's dim light reflecting off the opaque black sacks.

Crimson BLOOD smears the tub, the walls -- every surface.

Closer -- each bag is LIMB SHAPED -- clearly a HAND -- a FOOT -- the large one a TORSO resting in a red puddle.

Near the top -- a center trash bag -- black plastic pulled tight over a DECAPITATED HEAD. The shape can't be anything else.

Keats reaches a hand out, slow -- touches the STICKY fluid coating the plastic -- fingers come back RED --

-- the head BREATHES IN, IMPOSSIBLY --

-- the severed fingers CLUTCH --

-- torn legs TWITCH --

Keats backs into the bedroom -- face STRICKEN.

Grabs her jacket off the floor -- slips it on -- pulls the PENLIGHT out of the pocket.

Clicks the beam on -- swings it back to --

-- the EMPTY BATHROOM. No sign of the bags, the blood.

It's impossible.

She uses the light to glance back around the front of the room, the bed, the front door -- glances back --

-- the bathroom is GONE.

The wall SMOOTH where the door was -- like it never existed.

Keats SITS on the bed -- mind close to snapping.

Frozen.

Grabs her boots -- SHOVES her feet in -- eyes never leaving the space the bathroom was.

Stands. Moves to the wall -- to touch it --

-- thinks against it.

Moves to the bedroom door instead.

Pulls it open, steps into the

HALL

Moves towards Stone's room --

-- FREEZES.

Her light catches on PLASTIC -- a WHITE PLASTIC BAG gripping tight to a LARGE MAN'S FACE.

He stands NAKED ten feet away -- massive, hulking, somewhere between muscular and fat.

His breathing STRAINS the WHITE PLASTIC -- sucking IN and OUT of his mouth, FURIOUS.

Keats back pedals -- eyes locked on the threat.

He begins to RUN TOWARDS HER.

She TURNS --

-- FALLS THROUGH THE WINDOW IN THE FLOOR BEHIND HER.

Flails, glass SHATTERING around --

-- her arms CATCH on the floor --

-- hands struggle for purchase -- glass CUTTING into her chest, forearms -- CHIN resting on the wood floor.

Behind, she can only hear the POUNDING FOOTFALLS of the hulking man. CLOSER.

With a SHOUT she

-- LETS GO

-- FALLS

-- CRACKING into the window on the FLOOR BELOW --

-- it HOLDS.

Wind knocked out of her lungs.

The glass CRACKS -- THIN WEBS CHIP away from her weight.

She quickly PUSHES off the window before it breaks.

Tries to catch her breath on the solid floor.

Looks above -- no sight of the man through the window in the ceiling.

Turns -- eye catches --

-- TEETH. White teeth, seeming to FLOAT in the dark.

She scrambles -- SCOOPS up the penlight -- turns --

-- lighting up the PITCH TAR MAN -- CROUCHING on all fours -- skin FLAKING BLACK.

His mouth opens WIDER -- a SILENT SCREAM -- TONGUE FLAILING.

Keats turns -- feet SLIDE in broken glass -- pushes to a RUN.

Her light leaves the figure -- nothing but those TEETH.

INT. STONE HOUSE - FOYER

Keats STUMBLES into the entryway -- eyes WILD.

She moves to the front door -- fingers snatching at the lock--

-- MISS -- the sound of POUNDING FEET -- BREATHING -- behind her -- ON HER NECK

The latch TURNS --

-- she YANKS the door open --

-- TRIPS out the front -- RAIN SOAKING INTO HER JACKET, DRENCHING HER.

She FALLS down the steps -- lands on her back near the street.

Turns, breath tight in her throat.

Inside -- STONE stands on the second floor balcony.

Watching her.

His face a mix of sorrow and defeat.

He turns -- disappears from view.

The front door SLAMS.

Keats SCREAMS.

INT. ADAM'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The SLAMMING of a fist on wood.

Adam stumbles into the living room.

Pulls his front door open.

Keats stands, DRIPPING in her boots. Jacket pulled tight around her pajamas.

Her face says everything.

INT. ADAM'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN

BOILING WATER drops onto a tea bag -- two STEAMING MUGS clutched in Adam's hand.

Keats PACES in the living room -- phone to her ear.

KEATS

(on phone)

Mason. You aren't *fucking* listening to me. It's not -- no, I said it's *not* --

She listens.

Adam sets the tea down next to her.

She grits her teeth. HANGS UP.

KEATS

(to Adam)

More of Stone's bullshit. His 'spookshow'. That's what they think. I saw it. It's not -- there's no way it's --

ADAM

I believe you.

His voice calms her. She smiles thinly at him.

JORDAN (O.S.)

Dad?

They turn -- the young boy sits by his open door, blinking at the early hour.

Keats immediately GOES ON EDGE -- BACKS AWAY to the far wall. Her face casual, her body language anything but.

Adam clocks it -- looks to his son.

ADAM

Hey, Jordan. Did you meet Miss Lowell?

Turns to Keats -- she stares at the floor.

ADAM

Ah-- It's a work thing, buddy, don't worry about it. Go back to sleep.

JORDAN

Is she ok?

Keats turns her face to the boy, smiling -- her eyes stay locked on the floor, however.

KEATS

Fine.

ADAM

She's fine. Go back to bed.

Jordan turns -- door softly closing.

Adam looks at Keats curiously.

Looks to his side, holds out a BUNDLE of clothes.

ADAM

You should change. They, uh. They
were my wife's. They should fit
you.

Keats nods -- takes the clothes -- begins to pull her jacket
off.

Adam turns away.

ADAM

We have a bathroom.

Keats pulls her shirt over her head, turned away. Not
seductive, just in a hurry.

*
*

KEATS

(ignores him)
We need to get him out of there.

ADAM

How are we supposed to do that?
I'm surprised *you* got out.

She pulls a tank top on, yanks her bottoms off.

Adam picks up a device from the counter -- tries not to
notice he can see her reflection in the photos of his wife.

KEATS

It *wanted* me out. The only one it
wants is Stone.

She pulls jeans on. Adam turns.

ADAM

It sounds like it was trying to
kill you --

KEATS

It's an act.

*

ADAM

You can't possibly still think
someone is *faking* this --

KEATS

No way. Whatever is going on in that house -- I've never seen anything like it. I doubt anyone has.

ADAM

If it's real, I don't think going back in is the best plan.

KEATS

Whatever -- thing -- is in those walls, it wasn't trying to kill me. It's still just an act. It wanted me *scared*. It wanted me gone.

ADAM

Not the worst plan.

KEATS

An act. Nothing has changed. Only now we know Stone isn't the one putting it on.

ADAM

Then who is?

KEATS

I don't know. That's what we need to find out. Get the others.

Adam nods -- pulls out his cell phone. Dials.

ADAM

(on phone)
Chloe, something's hap--
(listens)
...what?

INT. ADAM'S APARTMENT - LATER

Keats stands, looking down at DOZENS OF COMPUTER PRINT OUTS.

Adam leans against the counter -- PROFESSOR HAMILL stands with him, MITCHELL sits on the couch.

Chloe PACES in front of all of them -- points down.

CHLOE

I did what you said, we started looking up names from the books, perpetrators. He sees the killers, right? The monsters?

KEATS

I've seen them too.

CHLOE

There's nothing. No record of any killers, or even descriptions of any of the ... things. They aren't real people, weren't real people. They never existed. They're not ghosts of *anyone*.

KEATS

They're coming from somewhere.

CHLOE

Stone. They're coming from Stone. He's creating them. That's just it.

She pushes a STACK of printouts forward.

Keats flips through -- dozens of PICTURES. CRIME PHOTOS, REPORTS.

CHLOE

His second book. *Pitch*. Deep South, man who was burned alive, covered in tar. Chews his victims. Typical horror schlock --

KEATS

Right, ok, so?

CHLOE

When the book was published, murders involving cannibalism rose 800%. All over the country. Too widespread, unrelated, for local PD to draw any connections.

KEATS

People were killed like they were in the book?

CHLOE

128 cases, in the span of *two weeks*.

She pushes another stack forward.

CHLOE

Third book. A group of religious fundamentalists, Puritan types, who murder sinners with a axe. 387 cases.

*

She just points now.

CHLOE

Fourth book. Town where all the dogs turn rabid. 986 cases of dog mauling.

A few stacks over.

CHLOE

Eighth book. Best seller list. Man hangs women with industrial chains, meat hooks. More than 1700 hundred cases, and that includes 328 women overseas.

ADAM

Jesus Christ.

KEATS

No one noticed the similarities?

HAMILL

Over a thousand murders, hundreds of miles, some an ocean apart? It was chalked up to coincidence -- nothing more. After a few weeks, they died off. No reason to follow up.

KEATS

When his books come out --

She spreads the papers out. Images of BODIES -- BLOOD -- GORE.

KEATS

What about his first book?

CHLOE

The Beast. Murders children. Eats them, really.

Chloe shrugs.

CHLOE

Nothing. No cases. Just re-released in hardcover.

(MORE)

CHLOE (CONT'D)

An American classic or some shit.
Still, no deaths.

ADAM

The symbol, from the book -- it's
in the house, right?

Mitchell nods, from the couch.

MITCHELL

Its the symbol for the Beast.

ADAM

He moved into the house after
writing the first book. Maybe it --
maybe it somehow, affected...

He doesn't know. No answers.

CHLOE

Symbol or no, we know that the
murders started happening *after* his
first book.

HAMILL

Thank god.

They look down at the destruction, gore pictured beneath
them.

KEATS

It's a sequel.

She stares at all of them, grim.

KEATS

The book he's writing now. It's a
sequel. About the Beast.

Their faces drop.

ADAM

He... can't.

HAMILL

If the victims continue to build
the same way, exponentially, it
could mean...

Silence. They know what it means.

HAMILL

All those children.

Adam moves to JORDAN'S DOOR -- slips inside to check on him.

Keats watches him go.

HAMILL

I know someone who might be able to help.

(checks his watch)

I can call her. She'll come.

KEATS

We need to get him out of that house. Before he finishes the book. Before it's too late.

EXT. STONE HOUSE - MORNING

A leather gloved fist POUNDS on the front door.

The sun sits behind black clouds -- RAIN smashing against the building.

Two POLICEMEN stand on Stone's front porch.

Keats and Adam stand on the sidewalk below, watching.

The cops KNOCK again.

POLICEMAN

Open up!

STONE (O.S.)

It's open.

The cops look at each other -- open the door.

Stone stands on the second floor balcony -- his position.

STONE

How can I help you officers?

POLICEMAN

We have reports that you're being held here against your will.

STONE

Only the will of my next book, I'm afraid.

The officers share another look -- glance back at Keats on the sidewalk.

KEATS

Please. He's not well. We -- if we could just get him outside, we need him to see a doctor.

POLICEMAN

Is that true sir?

Stone smiles.

STONE

Do I look sick?

The officer peers at his face.

POLICEMAN

Sir. If someone is holding you against your will -- do we have your permission to enter your home?

Stone looks past the uniforms -- Keats pleads with her eyes.

STONE

No.

The two officers exchange another glance -- smile up at Stone warily.

POLICEMAN

Sorry to waste your time, sir.

They SHUT the door.

Keats approaches.

KEATS

You don't understand. He NEEDS help --

POLICEMAN

I'm sorry. If he says he's fine, there's nothing we can do.

KEATS

Please --

POLICEMAN

I'm sorry.

They return to their SQUAD CAR -- pull off.

Adam watches them drive away.

ADAM

Should have said he killed someone.
Body under the floor boards,
something.

KEATS

He doesn't want people in the
house. He doesn't want anyone
getting hurt.

ADAM

What now?

Keats sets her jaw.

EXT. STONE HOUSE - DAY

A large BLACK VAN parked out front -- Hamill and Mitchell
unload LARGE BOXES OF EQUIPMENT.

Chloe stands on the grass -- SMILING.

CHLOE

'Bout damn time.

Adam stands at the OPEN FRONT DOOR -- peers at the shadows
inside.

Keats stands in the

FOYER

Looks around at the cold halls. Quiet.

Large industrial CRATES sit around her -- covered in sturdy
WORK LIGHTS.

She looks at Adam's pale face.

CHLOE

Jordan?

ADAM

With a neighbor. I need to get
back. I can't leave him.

KEATS

I need you.

ADAM

I haven't left him. Haven't been
in the field. Not since his
mother...

Keats smiles kindly.

KEATS

If we fail. If we can't get Stone out. If he's trapped here, to finish this book...

Adam sighs.

STEPS OVER THE THRESHOLD.

Shivers.

ADAM

It's colder in here.

KEATS

Yeah.

Chloe and Mitchell carry a HEAVY PIECE OF MACHINERY through the door -- drop it with a CRASH on the symbol.

ADAM

Careful.

CHLOE

Wouldn't want to break the spirit house.

She looks at the walls around them.

CHLOE

It's fuckin' freezing in here.

RUTH (O.S.)

They always are.

The group turns.

RUTH (48) stands in the open door. Brown hair back in a ponytail, over simple black clothes.

Adam nods.

ADAM

Keats, this is Ruth. She's our... expert.

RUTH

I hope you're not really calling me that.

ADAM

For lack of a better term.

Keats extends her hand.

Ruth examines the halls -- carefully sets a foot inside.
Takes Keats hand in both of hers with a thin smile.

Up close, Keats notices she wears a WHITE PRIEST COLLAR and a few ROSARY BEADS dangle from her wrist.

KEATS

I wasn't aware the Catholic Church
ordained women.

Ruth chuckles, distracted by the house.

RUTH

We're not as backwards as our
public image might appear.
Changing that takes more time.

KEATS

What's the point of being ordained
if it's in secret?

Ruth moves past -- eyes the symbol on the floor.

RUTH

The same as being called to service
in front of everyone else, I
imagine. Just with a different
workload.

Keats looks at Adam -- who nods.

KEATS

Wait, you're what? An exorcist?

RUTH

I'm a cleric. There's more to the
priesthood than Mass and bake
sales. Although I also bake.

CHLOE

Fantastic lemon bars. Seriously,
fantastic.

RUTH

Thank you dear.

STONE (O.S.)

You came back.

Stone appears from the center hall -- eyes wide at the
equipment filling the front room.

Keats moves to him. Smiles.

KEATS

I told you. I don't give up.
We're getting you out of here.

STONE

I can't leave.

CHLOE

I mean, have you ever tried? The
door is right there--

*

STONE

(fierce)

Yes.

(softens)

I mean... yes. I've tried. Many,
many times.

CHLOE

What happens?

STONE

Some way or another -- it doesn't
work out.

He turns back to Keats.

STONE

You're going to get killed. This
house won't let me leave.

KEATS

That's just it. Derrick -- it's
not the house. There are no
ghosts. It's you. You're creating
all this.

*

*

STONE

I'm not.

HAMILL

It's important we find out what
it's like from your side. When did
you first come to the house? After
your novel?

*

STONE

I don't deserve to be saved.

KEATS

You don't deserve to be left,
either.

Stone's face wavers --

STONE

You have five hours. I would leave
before dark. It's worse at night.

-- he turns, marches back down the center hall.

Keats moves to follow -- Adam grabs her arm.

ADAM

We can't separate.

She smiles back -- kind.

KEATS

I'll be fine. Get set up.

She walks away -- leaves Adam standing, alone, watching after
her.

INT. STONE HOUSE - ATRIUM

Stone sits in the middle of the GARDEN -- back to the high
white branches of the CHERRY BLOSSOM TREE.

Keats looks at him through the glass -- debates -- OPENS the
glass door.

His eyes open -- smiles at her.

Looks up at the SKYLIGHT -- FOUR STORIES above.

Sunlight beams down on his upturned face.

STONE

This is the only place I have. The
closest I've been to outside in --
over a decade. I don't remember
how long exactly.

*
*

KEATS

Derrick...

He smiles warmly at her -- a touch of SADNESS at the edges.

STONE

Thank you. For coming back for me.

She doesn't know what to say. Sits down next to him.

KEATS

...your wife...

His fingers massage a flower beneath him -- lightly brush the petals. *

The wind RUSTLES HIS HAIR -- his eyes close. *

STONE

It was a fire. I wrote the first book. In a frenzy. The words burned through my hands onto the page. When it sold, it was similar. Just -- caught. Like dry kindling.

Keats lets him speak, ramble. Enjoys the sun, although the wind doesn't seem to touch her.

STONE

I woke one night -- she was burning. The house was burning, but she... she was all that I saw.

He pulls the flower from its stem --

STONE

I held her, while she died. While she burned.

-- lets it float down to the ground.

STONE

When I gained consciousness, I was in this house. I haven't been allowed to leave since.

Keats frowns.

STONE

Sometimes, I pretend the wind I feel by this tree -- that it's her hands. Playing with my hair. That if I just open my eyes, I'll wake up.

KEATS

Your wife died in an apartment fire. You bought the house three months later. Are you telling me you don't remember any of that?

STONE

It's not blank. Not a mystery. I'm telling you there wasn't anything to remember.

Keats leans over -- picks up the petal with her RIGHT HAND.
Lets her sleeve ride up over her BURN SCARS

KEATS

I stopped writing when my son died.

Stone looks at her, her scars, stunned.

KEATS

Down in Texas writing a book. Car crash. Fast. Faster than you'd think. I was thrown free, but Danny -- the engine caught on fire. Burned into the car, quick enough.

*

The petal twirls in her fingers.

KEATS

I held onto my son's hand for as long as I could. Through the window. Eventually --

She tries to find the words.

STONE

You have to let go.

His hand finds hers, comforting.

KEATS

My husband left. Emotional distance. He said. Personally -- I think he blamed me for not holding on just a little longer.

Smiles -- a tear slides down her chin.

KEATS

I couldn't write after that.

STONE

Sometimes -- sometimes the right thing to do *is* to let go.

The petal floats down between them -- lands on the grass forgotten.

KEATS

It's not just the monsters, is it?

Stone takes his hand back -- guarded.

STONE

What?

KEATS

You see your wife, don't you?

Stone's face drops.

STONE

...only when I write.

Keats stands.

STONE

She comes to me at night. Holds
me. Tells me it's ok. Only when I
write.

KEATS

You don't want to leave.

*
*

STONE

She's my world. Seeing her again,
night after night -- it's all I
have left.

*
*
*
*

KEATS

Something else is causing this. It
isn't ghosts.

STONE

I didn't create my wife.

Keats moves to the door -- opens it.

STONE

The book is almost finished. I
can't have the Beast in here with
me. Please.

*
*
*

KEATS

Stall.

STONE

I can't. It comes when it comes.
Since you arrived -- I can't stop
writing.

KEATS

Then write.

Walks into the hall.

KEATS

Buy us whatever time you can.

INT. STONE HOUSE - FOYER

Keats rejoins the group -- Mitchell is currently using a NAILGUN to hang long power cables to the wall.

Work lights hang at regular intervals -- the cord traces back to a large INDUSTRIAL GENERATOR.

Ruth is crouching over the SYMBOL -- looking through a SMALL NOTEBOOK.

KEATS
We're running out of time.

CHLOE
We just got here.

KEATS
Then time we never had.

Adam has a large WHITE PAD spread on the floor -- grease pencils in his palm.

ADAM
I need you to sketch the layout --
close as possible.

Keats kneels -- starts to draw.

KEATS
The house is confusing.

Chloe leans over -- a small handheld CAMERA in her palm.

CHLOE
It's built to be confusing.

KEATS
What are you doing?

CHLOE
Are you kidding? This is going to
be gold. I'm winning a YouTube
Pulitzer. Also, they're gonna
invent that.

Keats steps back -- her floor outline is sparse -- CHUNKS missing.

ADAM
That it?

KEATS

Far as I can remember. It's easy to get turned around in here. I think it... the walls move. Change.

Mitchell KA-CHUNKS another LIGHT into the wall.

ADAM

If anyone gets lost -- follow the lights back.

She looks at her watch.

KEATS

Five hours until sunset. Five hours to figure out what's doing this.

ADAM

What happens then?

*
*

RUTH

If we know how Stone is summoning these beings to life, we'll know how to banish them from these halls.

*
*
*
*
*

CHLOE

Out of the halls and back to the bargain bin. This is why no one reads anymore.

*
*
*
*

ADAM

(to Keats)

I meant what happens at sunset?

*
*
*

Keats picks up her flashlight.

*

KEATS

I don't want to find out.

*
*

INT. STONE HOUSE - HALLS

Mitchell walks forward -- NAILS another LIGHT to the wall.

Behind him, Chloe SPOOLS more cable -- films with her free hand.

Adam scans with a large EMF READER.

The needle floats at ZERO.

ADAM

No EMF. Not even normal background levels.

CHLOE

It's like the 1920s in this bitch.

Mitchell NAILS another light -- CHUNK --

INT. STONE HOUSE - FOYER

Hamill scratches a SAMPLE off one of the wood walls -- uses a small pick to chip at the SYMBOL on the floor.

Using a JEWELER'S LOUPE to peer closer.

Behind him Ruth CHANTS in a low LATIN, paces --

-- looks around. Nothing.

Shrugs. Flips to a chapter further on -- TRIES A NEW PRAYER.

INT. STONE HOUSE - SIDEROOM

A small study -- EMPTY of all books. A single RED CHAIR in the center.

FLASH of a strobe -- rapid FLASH FLASH FLASH --

-- Adam checks a small digital display on a camera with a FISHBOWL lens.

Nothing.

INT. STONE HOUSE - FOYER

Hamill examines the symbol from the second floor using a pair of HIGH TECH GOGGLES.

Through the lens, the symbol looks GREEN -- RED -- YELLOW --

Ruth stands next to him -- jotting more notes.

HAMILL

Nothing on infrared, ultraviolet --

RUTH

Because it's wood. It's the symbol that's important.

Keats steps out from below -- shines her penlight down the hall the CABLE runs down.

The other team's out of sight.

KEATS
(to Ruth)
What does it mean?

Ruth shrugs.

RUTH
It could be Aramaic. Early forms of Hebrew. Maybe even Sanskrit. I don't recognize it.

KEATS
It's from his book. It started this. It means something.

RUTH
I'm sure it does.

She pulls out a FLASK from her robe -- takes a SWIG.

RUTH
Just nothing to me, or any religion on this planet.

*
*

Hamill looks at her through the goggles.

RUTH
(re: the flask)
If it helps, pretend it's Communion wine.

INT. STONE HOUSE - HALLS

CHUNK of another light nailed into the wall.

Adam lifts a radio.

ADAM
(into radio)
Nothing yet.

CHLOE (O.S.)
Check it out!

She stands at the end of the hall up ahead, peering up with a grin.

Adam walks forward and enters the

STAIRWELL

The steps SPIRAL up above. Since they get smaller as they go up, the room appears much taller than it actually is.

CHLOE
Trip, right?

Adam looks at the floor in the center -- where a COLLECTION OF RAGS SITS.

Approaches it nervously.

Chloe reaches into her back waistband and pulls out a HANDGUN.

Adam stares at her.

ADAM
Is that a fucking gun?

CHLOE
(yes)
No.

ADAM
What the hell do you plan on doing with it?

CHLOE
Hey, maybe it won't do anything. But you know what they say. You never know until you shoot a ghost in the face.

He turns his attention back to the rags.

Large -- anything could be hidden underneath.

KICKS -- they rattle over, fall -- NOTHING.

Mitchell looks at the debris.

MITCHELL
Better shoot it.

INT. STONE HOUSE - FOYER

Keats shifts through BUNDLES of paper -- research notes, pictures, victims --

-- throws them down.

Frowns. All the fresh printouts are WILTED -- yellow with age. She kicks a stack -- ALL THE PAPER SHOWS SIGNS OF AGE.

KEATS

The paper we brought is rotting.
Like the food in the fridge.

*
*
*

HAMILL

That must be what happened to the photos in the frames. Fascinating.

*
*
*

KEATS

It's still nothing, there's nothing here. Nothing that hints at a root cause.

*

RUTH

You know what the cause is.

Keats peers up at the holy woman.

RUTH

It's Stone himself. Or something within Stone.

KEATS

You think he's possessed.

RUTH

The house or the man. It doesn't look like the house. So.

Keats glances around at their 'base camp'.

Lifts her radio.

KEATS

(into radio)
We're coming to you.

INT. STONE HOUSE - STAIRWELL

The two groups have met HALFWAY up -- the railing GONE.

Keats moves high -- Ruth follows, with Hamill.

Adam grabs the Professor's arm.

ADAM

I'll go. Groups of three. Stay on the third floor with the others. We still have no idea what we're looking at. No one goes off alone.

Hamill nods -- moves back down.

Keats moves to the HIDDEN FOURTH FLOOR DOOR -- pushes it open.

Ruth moves through -- Adam stops to look at the ATTIC above.

ADAM

It's amazing. The place feels so much larger on the inside.

CHLOE

It is.

He looks back.

She smiles, holds up a GPS. *

CHLOE

According to this -- we're three doors down.

Adam looks around, nervous. Disappears onto the

FOURTH FLOOR

Keats shines her light in his eyes -- turns to the hall.

KEATS

This way.

INT. STONE HOUSE - THIRD FLOOR

Hamill leads the way -- the CHUNK of Mitchell placing lights following him.

Chloe ZOOMS her camera into a sideroom -- gun in the waistband of her pants.

Hamill looks down at the WINDOW in the floor in front of him.

Looks up at the window above -- just in time to see KEATS walk past.

Frowns.

HAMILL

Keats said she fell through the window on the second floor, yes?

Chloe POPS her gum -- almost timed to the nailgun CHUNK.

CHLOE

Yup.

HAMILL

They're all intact. The floor
below us. It's fixed.

Chloe peers down -- tapes it.

CHLOE

Ghosts don't like leaving a mess. *

Hamill lifts his goggles -- stares at the floor below in
BRIGHT WHITE INFRARED.

Nothing.

Lifts --

-- to find the LARGE BLACK HOUND STARING HIM DOWN.

It sits at the end of the hall.

HAMILL

Uh. I'm picking something up on
the Infrared.

Chloe reaches -- LIFTS his goggles off. *

The dog is STILL THERE.

HAMILL

Ah.

MITCHELL

It's so real. What kind of ghost
shows up in the normal spectrum and
doesn't give off EMF readings? *

Chloe crouches -- looks the dog in the eye.

CHLOE

Here boy. Heeeeere boy.

Behind her back, her fingers GRIP the pistol.

INT. STONE HOUSE - FOURTH FLOOR

Keats leads the group into the OPEN HALL leading up to
Stone's writing room.

Adam admires the pillars -- casts a flashlight beam up
towards the rafters overhead.

ADAM
(to Ruth)
Anything?

She shakes her head.

Keats takes a step up onto the stairs. Looks at the others to follow.

The sound of TYPING comes from behind the RED DOOR.

INT. STONE HOUSE - THIRD FLOOR

The dog stands watch.

Chloe puts her hand out -- steps closer.

The dog emanates a LOW GROWL.

She stops.

CHLOE
Fuck it.

PULLS the pistol out.

The dog BACKS up, into shadows --

-- Chloe raises her flashlight --

-- the dog is GONE.

An empty hall, doors closed on all sides.

CHLOE
Did you see that?

HAMILL
It -- amazing. Wow. As soon as...

MITCHELL
Guys.

They turn.

He points down.

THE WINDOW IS NO LONGER IN THE FLOOR.

Smooth wood lines the whole hall.

Chloe smiles.

CHLOE

We took our eyes off it.

*

She takes her walkie -- keys the mic.

CHLOE

(into radio)

Got something. The house moves--
it's changing. But I don't think
it can while you're looking at it.

INT. STONE HOUSE - FOURTH FLOOR

Keats nods at the info --

-- TURNS HER RADIO DOWN.

Looks to Adam -- he does the same, nervously.

She glances at Ruth -- PUSHES the red door OPEN.

They step into the

WRITING ROOM

The space is PITCH BLACK.

The mechanical buzz of TYPING ahead.

Keats shines her penlight -- finds STONE. His BACK TO THEM.

Banging on the typewriter -- in the dark.

Adam steps closer to the pillars -- the words CARVED into
every surface.

ADAM

Holy shit.

Keats takes a step forward -- gestures to Ruth.

KEATS

...Derrick?

RUTH

Mr. Stone?

Stone continues typing -- in a TRANCE.

Adam moves around -- light in his face.

Stone SEES NOTHING -- his eyes stare through the page in
front of him.

Keats goes to take his shoulder -- Ruth stops her with a shake of her head.

Adam peers closer -- leans in to read the page he's writing.

ADAM

"Blood -- spilling hot on the creature's breath. The Beast sucked the child's marrow through needle white teeth..."

Looks over his shoulder at the others.

ADAM

We might want to hurry this up.

Ruth steps closer -- leaning into Stone's slack face.

RUTH

Mr. Stone. My name is Ruth, can you hear me?

Adam moves past her -- looks back the way they came.

Taps Keats on the shoulder.

ADAM

Look.

Lining the walls against the door rests THOUSANDS OF PAGES. Stacks of paper up to TEN FEET high.

Keats ran out earlier, didn't see it.

Moves closer now.

Adam picks a clump of papers out of a stack.

ADAM

They're his manuscripts. All of them, I think. The originals.

Keats realizes.

KEATS

Find the first.

At the desk, Ruth gently takes Stone's hands -- PULLS THEM OFF THE KEYS.

RUTH

Mr. Stone?

Adam races to the front -- YANKS a stack of paper down.

ADAM
 Here. It's here.
 (reads)
 It's different.

KEATS
 His contract. He sold the first
 book as is -- the publisher edited
 it. Once he made it big, he held
 final copy approval.

ADAM
 It's... flipped. And it's not
 named *Feast of Innocence*. It
 says... I don't know how to
 pronounce this.

Ruth turns back to them, curious.

RUTH
 Is the symbol the same?

Adam nods -- frowns at a passage.

ADAM
 Yes -- Wait. The Beast. It's not
 called that.

RUTH
 (wary)
 What is it called?

ADAM
 I... I don't think it's in English.

Keats grabs a stack near the end, out of order.

Written with LONG LOOPING SCROLLS by pen.

KEATS
 This is written by hand.

Adam glances over.

ADAM
 What is that?

KEATS
 A missing part of the book.

Flips through.

KEATS

"The Beast came forth, in fire, on feet of gnarled bone and black coarse hair..."

(flips)

"Voice calling to be fed, demanding meat, demanding hot blood for its throat--"

(flips)

"It called out to be heard, to be given life, to silence the void that had once silenced it."

(flips)

"I..."

She stops. Looks at the others.

RUTH

What does it say?

Keats stares at Stone, fear evident on her face.

KEATS

"I answered."

Adam looks at the scrawls, black ink run dry and pooled.

ADAM

This isn't a missing chapter.

They all turn to Stone.

ADAM

It's a journal.

INT. STONE HOUSE - THIRD FLOOR

Chloe yells angrily into the radio.

CHLOE

Hello? Copy? Stat? Fucking over!

Nothing.

Hamill stands over her shoulder.

HAMILL

Where the hell did they go?

Mitchell nervously raises another light -- HOLDS IT UP over the door to a side room --

-- the door SWINGS open.

Mitchell freezes.

Hamill is preoccupied with Chloe, arguing in whispered voices.

Mitchell peers into the room -- raises the LIGHT.

A young PURITAN GIRL kneels in the center of a BARE ROOM -- praying to a CROSS ON THE WALL.

Mitchell stares -- jaw slack.

The girl TURNS -- aware of her audience.

Smiles, seductively -- reaches to unclasp her DRESS down the front --

Mitchell grabs an EMF RECORDER off his belt -- aims it.

The Puritan Girl has unbuttoned her dress down to her waist -- teasingly lets the fabric drift apart.

Mitchell takes a STEP INTO THE ROOM.

The EMF reads ZERO.

The young girl begins to shrug the dress off her shoulders.

Mitchell keeps his eyes on the girl -- ANOTHER STEP, leans the EMF closer --

MITCHELL

Uh, guys?

INT. STONE HOUSE - WRITING ROOM

Ruth pulls Stone out of the chair -- he shakes his head, groggy.

ADAM

(pages in hand)

It's the missing three months.
Jesus Christ. "I dreamt the
symbol, and the Beast dreamt me."

KEATS

It's not ghosts. And it's not
Stone either.

RUTH

No. It's something else entirely.

*
*
*
*
*

*

ADAM

The Beast is a single thing, just
pretending to be all the others.

*
*
*

RUTH

Something that sought Stone out,
across the darkness. Using his
writing to get access to our world.

*
*
*
*

ADAM

How is that possible?

Ruth smiles at him -- shrugs.

RUTH

I have no idea.

KEATS

What do you mean you have no idea?

*
*

RUTH

Whatever this thing is, appearing
to us as all these ghosts, these
things, pretending to be this house
-- it's older than anything we have
a word for. It scratches its way
into our plane however it can, in
whatever form it can take. However
horrible Mr. Stone's creations may
be -- I think if we ever caught a
glimpse of the *real* Beast, we would
chew our own tongues out before we
could name it.

*
*
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*
*

Stone leans against a pillar, finally realizing they're all
there.

STONE

Keats?

INT. STONE HOUSE - THIRD FLOOR

Mitchell watches as the Puritan Girl removes her bonnet --
flipping her hair free.

She wets her lips with her tongue -- motions COME HERE.

Mitchell laughs.

MITCHELL

Yeah fucking right.

He TURNS HIS HEAD --

MITCHELL

Hey! Guys!

-- turns back to see the girl has been replaced by a BEARDED PURITAN MAN.

The man holds an AXE in both hands.

INT. STONE HOUSE - WRITING ROOM

Keats drops the pages -- moves to Stone's side.

KEATS

It's ok. We're going to get you out of here.

Ruth turns -- walks towards the stairs, looking over her shoulder at them.

RUTH

Whatever it is, it is caught in this house, and it seems to need Mr. Stone. We need to get him outside --

*

STONE

Don't say that--

*

*

RUTH

-- even if we need to drag him ourselv--

*

*

*

Ruth STEPS INTO NOTHING.

She drops WITHOUT A SOUND.

ADAM

RUTH!

Their flashlight beams scan the floor -- where there used to be stairs leading out there is now an OPEN VOID.

Keats runs to the edge -- the hole goes straight down FIVE STORIES TO THE BASEMENT.

KEATS

Jesus. Jesus.

INT. STONE HOUSE - BASEMENT

Ruth lays facedown on the concrete floor of the basement -- legs BENT awkwardly, SHATTERED.

A large metal FURNACE casts a red glow over the hot empty space.

With a HACK of BLOOD on the concrete -- Ruth STIRS.

RUTH

Oh. Oh.

Tries to stand -- push herself up with a wrist BENT IN HALF.

RUTH

Oh.

The SKITTER of NAILS on stone.

Ruth tries to turn her BROKEN NECK.

Out of the darkness comes the BLACK HOUND.

Its eyes catch the furnace light, dull RED.

Pads over --

-- begins to DIG ITS JAWS INTO RUTH'S BACK.

Meat TEARS free from the bone.

The holy woman SCREAMS.

INT. STONE HOUSE - WRITING ROOM

Keats and Adam sit near the hole, wide eyed -- Ruth's SCREAMS echo throughout the wood house -- fade into a GURGLE.

Stone rests against the pillar, eyes shut.

STONE

It won't let me leave. And it
won't let you take me.

Keats turns to Adam -- his face wide, pale.

KEATS

We're getting you out of here.

Adam reaches to his belt, snatches his radio -- turns the dial --

-- the volume raises up and reveals the other team is SCREAMING.

INT. STONE HOUSE - THIRD FLOOR

Mitchell SLAMS into a wall -- blood flowing from a LARGE CHEST WOUND.

Hamill is SCREAMING.

The sideroom door SWINGS shut -- blocking the PURITAN from view --

-- Chloe leads with the gun --

-- KICKS the door in, racing forward --

-- except the room is now GONE -- the floor OPEN to the basement below --

Chloe tries to STOP -- fails -- GOES OVER THE EDGE.

Reaches back -- free hand CATCHES THE DOOR HANDLE --

-- she SWINGS on the open door -- HANGING out over nothing.

The pistol drops away into the BLACK --

-- GOES OFF as it hits the basement --

-- the MUZZLE FLASH lights up THOUSANDS OF WRITHING BODIES -- fingers REACHING to claim Chloe when she falls.

The door SWINGS -- BOUNCES off the far wall.

She tries to reach with a free hand -- grab the FLOOR of the open door frame.

In the hall Hamill STARES -- SCREAMING.

CHLOE
Professor...!

Frozen.

Chloe's fingers SLIP -- the door bounces away.

CHLOE
Professor Hamill!

Hamill looks at the dangling girl -- Mitchell bleeding on the floor --

-- turns and RUNS into the darkness.

Chloe grasps the door knob in both hands --

-- bunches both feet up, flat against the wall --

-- pushes OUT -- tries to SWING the door back towards the opening -- safety --

Fingers reach, CATCH --

-- the door knob BREAKS --

-- Chloe FALLS --

-- catches the open doorway ONE HANDED.

Tries in vain to pull herself up.

Knees kick at the door to the room below her --

-- which OPENS.

Chloe FREEZES -- breath steaming the wood in front of her face.

BLACK TAR HANDS come out of the dark doorway below -- begin to CARESS HER LEGS -- STEAL UP HER SHIRT -- OVER HER STOMACH.

CHLOE

Fuck! Help! Someone! Please
fucking help!

The Tar Man COMES INTO VIEW -- hands GRASP her shirt, her back --

-- he's HANGING UPSIDE DOWN FROM THE SECOND FLOOR CEILING.

His WHITE TEETH NIP at her flesh -- draw BLOOD.

CHLOE

Jesus! HELP ME!

Those black lips open -- tongue SLIDING OUT to lick the DRIPPING BLOOD --

Chloe SCREAMS --

-- A hand SHOVES DOWN from above -- GRABS her --

Mitchell hauls his sister to safety -- spilling them both gasping on the wood floor.

Below -- the second story door gently CLICKS closed.

INT. STONE HOUSE - HALLS

Hamill runs in the DARK -- flashlight BOUNCING as he tries to find his way.

Away from the worklights the halls are twisted, confusing.

He's lost.

The professor licks his lips, looks around behind him --

-- turns just in time to see the LARGE NAKED MAN disappear around the corner.

HAMILL

Holy fuck.

He backs into a

SIDEROOM

Closes the door behind him.

HAMILL

Holy fuck holy fuck.

Turns with the light, sees the back wall of the room -- normal sized, empty.

Frames line the walls.

Turns again -- THE DOOR TO THE ROOM IS MISSING.

HAMILL

No.

Spins around -- the BACK WALL IS CLOSER.

Shoves left -- his side meets the WALL where there was only air before.

HAMILL

Please.

Tries to go back -- CAN'T. The wall on his right is only a foot away now as well.

Looks in front -- the far wall is ten feet away.

Behind -- five feet.

Shines his light to the front -- now only an INCH AWAY.

Looks back -- he can't even turn now, the back wall PRESSED into him.

Walled in on all sides. Two feet square, maybe.

No sound reaches his ears but his own torn breath.

He screams in his coffin.

INT. STONE HOUSE - ATTIC

The criss-cross rafters underneath the tiles of the roof -- lights BOUNCE off at odd angles from ADAM'S FLASHLIGHT.

Keats leads the way, Stone in the middle -- they keep their eyes on the floor, wary of any traps.

KEATS

Watch where you're going. It can't change while you're looking.

Around the edges of the attic sit DOZENS OF WHITE SHEETS -- furniture, maybe, beneath them.

Keats eyes them warily.

Adam GRABS her arm --

-- stops her from GOING OVER THE EDGE OF THE STAIRWELL.

They've found the center of the house.

Adam peers down at the curling steps. Too far below to reach.

ADAM

I think we--

Keats turns -- the white sheets are CLOSER.

ADAM

We need to go.

She grabs Stone's face, turns it towards hers.

KEATS

The atrium. It goes to the skylight, right?

STONE

...yes.

KEATS

We can bust through the outer wall
in the attic, climb our way out.

ADAM

I'm not leaving the others.

Her eyes turn to him.

KEATS

Think of Jordan.

ADAM

I am.

Adam's face is STRONG -- DIFFERENT from the broken man
huddled in his apartment.

ADAM

I'm not leaving them behind.
You're safer with him. The house
won't risk hurting him. You can
get out.

He smiles at her, softly.

ADAM

If --

KEATS

No ifs.

She grabs his hand -- squeezes it.

ADAM

If. Please.

No way out of it.

She nods.

ADAM

Thank you.

He turns -- runs -- LEAPS ACROSS THE STAIRWELL OPENING --
-- CRASHES onto the top stair landing -- only a foot or two
across --
-- fingers SNATCH at the wall to keep from going over.
Steadies.

Looks up above at them.

Keats smiles -- moves further into the dark with Stone.

Adam turns to face the stairway.

ADAM
This was stupid.

Begins to descend.

Shines the light around, trying to keep his eyes everywhere at once.

Comes to a DARK SHAPE -- HANGING UNDERNEATH THE STAIRS.

The light shows only rags -- a glimpse of torn LIMBS.

Adam turns, tries to stay quiet.

-- sees the stairs behind him have DISAPPEARED. Nothing but empty air.

ADAM
Right.

The rags MOVE -- SHIFT.

He looks at them -- turns to look at the stairs on the landing BELOW.

ADAM
Don't blink.

The rags LURCH TOWARDS HIM, CLUTCHING --

-- he JUMPS to the lower landing -- EYES WIDE as he falls to make sure nothing changes.

INT. STONE HOUSE - HALLS

Chloe walks with her brother, supporting his weight.

A trail of bright red blood follows them.

They trace the POWER LINE back to the front door.

MITCHELL
Chloe...

CHLOE
Shut the fuck up. We're going to the front door, and I'm going to tear my way through if I have to use my teeth. Stay awake.

She looks behind them -- the hall well lit from the work lights.

CHLOE
Just don't take your eyes off--

The work light near her face EXPLODES -- they both BLINK at the flash --

-- open their eyes to see the path behind them is now a WALL.

CHLOE
Cheap. Real fucking cheap.

MITCHELL
Chloe.

His eyes sag closed -- dead weight in her hands.

CHLOE
What did I --

She SLAPS his wound. He SCREAMS awake.

CHLOE
-- JUST fuckin' say. Stay awake!

The door to the stairwell is up ahead --

-- the lights suddenly DIM -- GO OUT.

It takes a half second for Chloe to RAISE her flashlight --

-- when it comes up it reveals a SMOOTH WALL where the door used to be.

She trails the beam over the power cable on the wall --

-- sees a FRAYED SECTION hanging down near the wall junction. Cut it half.

CHLOE
I better get so many views. Like,
we're talking Gangnam Style views.
Chocolate Rain level views.

Opens the door alongside -- it leads to an EMPTY ROOM.

CHLOE
Charlie bit my finger level.

The door on the opposite side -- it leads to another PITFALL ROOM.

Closes it.

CHLOE
Keyboard cat --

Turns -- the door on the other side is GONE.

Looks back -- the door she closed is also gone.

To her left -- the back wall is closer.

CHLOE
Leave Britney alo--

A SLEDGEHAMMER CRASHES THROUGH THE WALL BY HER HEAD.

She moves back --

-- it PUNCHES through again -- AGAIN.

Hands CLAW at the wood -- pull it away.

Silence from the other side.

Chloe tries to peer through the hole --

-- Adam's face POPS up.

Smiles.

CHLOE
Sneezing panda.

Adam frowns.

Chloe begins to tear parts of the wall away -- making the hole bigger.

INT. STONE HOUSE - ATTIC

Keats reaches the large CENTRAL SHAFT that supports the inner atrium.

The glass is cool on her hands -- she's able to see the SKYLIGHT just past -- the night sky beyond --

-- she pulls her knife out, careful not to take her eyes off the glass wall in front of her.

Etches the blade into the glass -- winces her eyes ALMOST shut.

KEATS

Don't take your eyes off the
skylight.

Reaches back -- PUNCHES THE KNIFE with the palm of her hand.

The glass SHATTERS -- FLYING EVERYWHERE.

She involuntarily SHUTS her eyes, only for a moment --

-- turns her head back -- the broken glass now BRICK.

KEATS

NO!

Her hands SLAP feebly against the stone, PUNCH -- despair
beginning to creep in.

Stone grabs her hand -- blood marks the bricks where her
knuckles connected.

STONE

The service stairs are to the side.
We can reach the front.

Keats begins to walk. He stops her.

STONE

I can't go with you. You have to
give up. *Let go.* That's the only
chance it will let you and your
friends leave.

She stays silent -- his hands finds hers -- they move towards
the service stairs.

INT. STONE HOUSE - FOYER

Silence. Only the rain pounding on the roof of the house.
Supply crates lay littered around, forgotten equipment.

Adam BURSTS out of the hall -- Chloe supporting Mitchell
behind him.

Reaches a trembling hand into his pocket -- pulls out the KEY
FOR THE FRONT DOOR.

Walks to the door --

-- there's no HANDLE.

ADAM

God dammit.

His hand POUNDS against the smoked glass window in the center of the door -- throws an ELBOW -- it HOLDS.

CHLOE

We can't get out that way, the window's too small. The side.

Setting Mitchell down, she KICKS the top off a CRATE -- yanks out a CROWBAR.

Tosses it to Adam -- he CATCHES it.

SLAMS it into the crack in the door frame.

Keats comes around the far corner -- Stone behind.

KEATS

Adam.

He turns -- smiles softly. Not surprised to see her.

KEATS

Atrium is sealed. Sorry.

ADAM

Doesn't matter anymore.

He LEANS into the crowbar -- wood SPLINTERS.

STONE

(to Keats)

You have to leave me.

KEATS

I can't do that. It's not just you. Not just us. If you finish that book -- thousands will die. Thousands of innocent children.

Shock passes over his face -- confusion.

STONE

I don't -- I don't understand.

KEATS

It isn't ghosts. It isn't your characters come to life. It's just some fucking thing. The thing that killed your wife. It's walking around, pretending to be what's in your head, pretending to be this house. It's *using* you. To get out.

Stone stares at her -- uncomprehending.

He takes a step away -- eyes on the floor.

STONE

You -- just leave me.

Looks up at her. Maybe for the last time.

STONE

Please.

He WALKS AWAY.

KEATS

Stone! Derrick!

Turns the corner -- gone.

Adam is LEANING into the crowbar -- the door starts to give --

-- Chloe JUMPS into him -- adding her weight -- the door
SPLINTERS -- BREAKS --

-- BURSTS OPEN.

The group all stare.

FREEDOM.

Keats frowns.

Walks closer.

CHLOE

No way.

Through the doorway sits ANOTHER HALLWAY -- a BALCONY.

Keats walks through -- looks at the BROKEN WOOD -- the door
laying on its hinges.

Looks back at the others behind her.

Steps up to the balcony on the other side.

Looks over the edge--

-- SEES ADAM, CHLOE, MITCHELL IN THE FOYER BELOW.

They all turn -- LOOK UP.

She glances behind -- sees them STILL BEHIND HER -- all
LOOKING UP AT THE SECOND FLOOR BALCONY.

Adam does a double take through the door -- back up.

Keats rests her arms on the railing.

Chloe starts to LAUGH.

KEATS

We might have a problem.

INT. STONE HOUSE - BEDROOM

Stone pushes into his bedroom -- SLAMS the door shut.

Glares at the bed -- fist CLENCHED.

With a scream he GRABS the comforter -- TEARS IT IN HALF.

-- SMASHES the canopy -- SNAPS THE SUPPORTS and sends it CRASHING to the ground.

Grips the base of the mattress -- FLIPS IT -- sends it END OVER END into the wall.

Collapses in the wreckage -- breath coming fast, hard.

CRIES into his hands -- tired, hot tears flow down his arms.

His hair brushes aside --

-- A WOMAN'S HAND CUPS HIS FACE FROM BEHIND.

He tries to turn -- look. She remains out of view.

STONE

I know the truth.

The fingers brush his lips --

WOMAN'S WHISPER

what do you know

STONE

You aren't my fucking wife.

The voice laughs -- a soft, delicate whisper of paper on skin.

Stone looks close to breaking -- eyes shut TIGHT.

WOMAN'S WHISPER

does it matter

The hand moves to his hair -- Stone HUGS his knees -- looks up --

THE TYPEWRITER SITS ON THE FLOOR IN FRONT OF HIM.

The walls blocked by MASSIVE STACKS OF PAPER -- his MANUSCRIPTS.

WOMAN'S WHISPER

write

Stone's body SHAKES -- WRACKED WITH SOBS amidst the wreckage.

INT. STONE HOUSE - FOYER

Chloe sits next to her brother on a crate -- hands rubbing his shoulders to try and keep him warm -- CONSCIOUS.

Her CELL PHONE is in her hands -- suddenly NO BARS. *

She CHUCKS it into the wall, PLASTIC and GLASS showers. *

CHLOE *

How fuckin' original. *

Adam looks out the open front door -- back into the house.

ADAM

It's not going to let us go. Now *
that we know what it is. *

Keats glances around.

KEATS

We need to...

Chloe picks her head up -- listens.

Keats falls silent.

CHLOE

Yeah. That's about right.

Keats stares at the symbol on the floor -- debris covering its edges.

ADAM

I'm sorry. Jordan. I'm sorry.

Chloe fidgets with a long CAPPED TUBE --

-- Keats eyes it.

KEATS

There are no pictures in the house.

CHLOE

Keen eye.

Keats stands. Thinks.

KEATS

The food goes rotten when you bring it. That's why he had to restock every day. The food we brought with us is already decomposed.

CHLOE

That's a depressing ass update.

KEATS

How are all his manuscripts upstairs?

Adam looks at her -- frowns.

KEATS

I mean. Why? Why would those stay fresh, and nothing else? *

CHLOE

Maybe it's like keeping a copy of your own greatest hits album in the house. All the favorites-- *

KEATS

The -- whatever this thing is. It uses Stone to write it into existence. It needs him.

Adam sits forward -- eyes alive.

ADAM

Holy shit.

KEATS

The pages aren't *about* this thing. The pages *are* this--

A BLADE HOOKS THROUGH KEATS SHOULDER FROM ABOVE --

-- she SCREAMS

-- blood PEPPERS ADAM'S FACE

-- Keats is YANKED TO THE SECOND STORY on a CHAINED HOOK

Adam moves for her -- MISSES -- Chloe grabs a hand -- SLIPS AWAY.

Keats SCREAMS again -- above, the PLASTIC BAG MAN hauls her closer a handful of chain at a time.

His naked girth SHAKES in anticipation.

Adam JUMPS at her flailing legs -- misses --

-- turns and RUNS AWAY.

CHLOE

Adam!

Chloe CLIMBS the wall -- GRABS one of Keats' flailing boots -- PULLS --

-- the hook sinks DEEPER -- blood FOUNTAINS DOWN --

Adam runs THROUGH THE FRONT DOOR --

-- comes out on the second story and TACKLES the Bag Man.

The chain runs out of the shape's grasp --

-- Keats CRASHES to the floor.

Chloe slides over to her -- looks at the HOOK EMBEDDED THROUGH HER SHOULDER.

KEATS

Pull it out!

Chloe doesn't hesitate -- YANKS the hook free.

Keats CRIES OUT.

CHLOE

Can you stand?

KEATS

I'm fine, help--

Adam CRASHES down on them from above -- bleeding from a WOUND IN HIS HEAD.

They all push up to their feet --

-- look up at the EMPTY balcony

-- back at the front door

-- where the PLASTIC BAG MAN stands -- CHAIN in hand.

CHLOE
Mitchell.

Chloe moves for her brother -- the MASSIVE SHAPE is faster.
Plants the HOOK STRAIGHT UNDER HIS JAW --

CHLOE
NO!

-- TEARS IT FREE.

Mitchell falls back -- blood SPLASHING FREE from where his neck used to be. *

Adam grabs a small BACKPACK -- backs away from the killer.
Keats grabs Chloe by the shoulder.

KEATS
Run.

They turn to the empty halls --
-- the naked man begins to RUN AFTER THEM.

INT. STONE HOUSE - HALLS

Adam LEADS -- flashlight glancing in OPEN DOORS along the path --

-- inside each room sit FACELESS SHAPES. Watching them.

His beam goes up -- the WINDOW in the ceiling.

Hefts the sledgehammer -- KNOCKS the glass down.

Looks back -- the hall is clear -- the heavy footfalls coming CLOSER.

ADAM
Help me!

Chloe grabs Keats foot and they both PUSH her to the second story --

-- she GRABS hold -- pulls herself up.

Turns to help them.

Adam tosses up the BACKPACK.

Chloe reaches --

-- Adam SHOVES her down --

-- the hook sailing for her head SPLITTING into the wall instead.

The Bag Man YANKS the chain free -- mouth WORKING behind the mask.

Chloe looks up.

CHLOE

GO!

Keats hesitates -- TURNS and RUNS out of sight.

Adam lifts the sledgehammer and SWINGS --

-- missing

-- the hulk SLAMS HIM with a massive palm to the neck

-- TOSSES him into a sideroom.

The door SLAMS shut.

Chloe RUNS.

The Bag Man turns to follow.

INT. STONE HOUSE - SECOND FLOOR

Keats stumbles down the hall -- blood flowing down her shoulder -- reaches a door, stumbles into

STONE'S BEDROOM

He sits -- CRYING -- fingers TYPE a blood streaked page.

The white paper stacks of the MANUSCRIPTS make claustrophobic PILLARS around him.

She approaches --

-- sees a WOMAN'S SHAPE pass behind -- out of view.

INT. STONE HOUSE - STAIRWELL

Chloe kicks open a door -- emerges into the spiral staircase.

Takes out the cylinder from her pocket -- pops the top --

-- a BRIGHT GREEN FLARE SPRINGS TO LIFE.

She moves further in --

-- Her foot kicks her GUN, resting on the floor.

CHLOE

(manic)

My lucky fucking day.

Scoops the piece up -- turns to the door.

The Bag Man STANDS in the hall. STARING through that white mask.

She SLAMS the door --

-- runs to the opposite side, FLINGS the door open --

-- to the SAME HALL.

The Bag Man STANDS -- WATCHING. CLOSER THIS TIME.

Slams this door.

Moves to the next.

Hesitates.

Aims.

FIRES THREE ROUNDS THROUGH THE WOOD.

In the door BEHIND HER -- THREE BULLET HOLES CHEW THROUGH.

She doesn't notice, somehow.

Moves to the door -- slides it open --

-- sees the SAME STAIRCASE ON THE OTHER SIDE.

Looks in at HERSELF at the far door.

Spins -- sees herself looking in from the door opposite.

Looks down at the gun.

CHLOE

Not... not fuckin' fair.

Turns -- THREE BULLET HOLES TORN RED INTO HER BACK.

She stumbles -- falls.

The pistol spins out of her grasp.

Blood pools in her mouth.

On the bottom of the stairs above -- a SHAPE OF DARK, LONG LIMBS DETACHES ITSELF.

Slowly CRAWLS DOWN ONTO HER -- RODENT LIKE EYES GLOW ORANGE IN THE FADING LIGHT OF THE FLARE.

Her legs JERK as it tears into her.

INT. STONE HOUSE - STONE'S BEDROOM

Keats moves closer -- sees the crusty tears running down Stone's cheeks.

STONE
It's almost finished. Please.

He looks up at her.

STONE
Kill me.

She looks down -- the black pocket knife is OPEN in her hand.

INT. STONE HOUSE - SIDEROOM

Adam KICKS at the door -- it finally SPLINTERS open.

ADAM
(whispers)
Chloe!

Picks a fallen TUBE off the floor -- another FLARE.

POPS IT.

The green light shines down the halls --

-- reflecting off a set of WHITE TEETH.

Adam eyes the dark shape -- looks up at the broken window above him.

TOSSES the flare --

-- the Pitch Tar Man SCREAMS in the light --

-- Adam catches the lip of the ceiling -- PULLS himself up --

-- a THUNK from below.

He stumbles.

Fingers grasp at the smooth wood floor --

-- a meaty SCHLICK --

Fingernails pull at the floor seams -- no leverage --

ADAM

Jordan.

He FALLS back onto the floor --

-- stomach RIPPED OPEN.

The Tar Man comes from the shadows.

Crouches to SMELL HIS NECK.

Reaches down--

--forces crusty black hands inside Adam's stomach.

Adam SCREAMS.

The hands pull out ROPES of intestines -- to those TEETH.

INT. STONE HOUSE - STONE'S BEDROOM

Keats looks down at the knife in her hand.

Back up at Stone.

His hands waver over the keys.

Almost finished.

KEATS

I can't.

Stone CRIES -- starts to press down.

Keats POPS THE FLARE IN HER OTHER HAND --

-- TOSSES IT INTO THE MANUSCRIPT STACKS --

The paper goes up like it was SOAKED IN GASOLINE.

In the corner something pretending to be female SCREECHES --

-- Keats tosses the WHOLE BAG of FLARES ONTO THE FLAMES --
the room SPARKS with GREEN LIGHT --

-- GRABS Stone by the hand and YANKS HIM OUT THE DOOR.

The fire ROARS BEHIND THEM.

The thing SCREAMS.

INT. STONE HOUSE - HALLS

Keats DROPS through the second story floor window -- landing a moment before Stone.

He stares at her, hopeful.

STONE
(relieved)
It's over.

KEATS
No.

She pulls him along -- turns a corner -- RACES down the hall.

In each room they pass a CREATURE sits on the bed, SCREAMING.

The Puritans.

The Plastic Bag.

The Pitch Tar Man.

Their eyes stare at nothing -- their screams merge into ONE.

Keats pulls Stone around the corner to the

ATRIUM

The plants green inside -- cherry blossom tree still.

Keats' hands slap at the glass -- YANK open the door --

-- they both COLLAPSE in the cool grass.

Through the glass they can see the WOOD of the house begin to BLACKEN as the fire spreads.

The skylight rests four stories above -- the night sky black and out of reach.

Stone looks up -- wind RUSTLES his hair.

He smiles.

STONE

It's not over. While I'm alive,
the pages are in my head.

KEATS

We can't -- there's nowhere to go.
I'm sorry.

STONE

No. I'm sorry. I stayed. Long
after I should have gone. Because
I couldn't -- I didn't want to
forget my wife.

*

KEATS

Derrick, it --

STONE

No. That wasn't her. But here.
She was always with me here. I
just -- I never realized it.

The wind plays on his face. His eyes close.

Opens.

He looks at the ORANGE FIRE burning behind the glass.

Dark shapes WRITHE in the blaze.

STONE

She was always with me. Trying to
give me the strength to do what I
needed to do.

He SMILES at her -- without a hint of the weariness that
plagues him.

STONE

What we need to do. It's never...
it's never what we want to do. Is
it?

Keats looks up at him. Confused.

He takes her hand and KISSES it.

STONE

Let go, Keats.

He opens the glass door --

-- DISAPPEARS INTO THE FLAMES.

Keats huddles under the CHERRY BLOSSOM TREE. SMOKE SWIRLING AROUND HER.

The fire BURNS BRIGHT on the glass.

Keats CLOSES HER EYES.

The world goes BLACK.

The sounds of destruction and death her whole world.

EXT. STONE HOUSE - DAY

FIRE TRUCKS line the street -- hoses pump STREAMS of water into the smoldering wreckage of the HOUSE.

Nothing is left.

A mass of black wood resting on charred support beams.

Firemen tear through the haze, coming to the

ATRIUM

The CHERRY BLOSSOM TREE STILL STANDS.

The glass walls soot covered, cracked -- miraculously intact.

The firemen look at each other -- unsure what to make of it.

One reaches for the handle -- pulls it open.

Sees KEATS -- ALIVE -- CURLED under the white branches -- the garden alive around her.

FIREMAN

We need an EMT over here, right
now!

Looks back at a COUGHING Keats -- impossible.

She stands, cradling her bleeding shoulder.

Steady.

A survivor.

INT. ADAM'S APARTMENT - DAY

The same apartment from a life time ago. Quiet. Pictures of a SMILING ADAM on the shelf with a PRETTY SOLDIER -- Jordan's mom.

Jordan sits on the couch -- coloring.

A young NEIGHBOR sits on the phone. The TV is on with news of the FIRE.

The front door OPENS -- Keats steps inside.

Jordan looks at her.

Tears line his small face.

She comes over to him -- takes his hand. No longer skittish.

KEATS

Hey Jordan.

He doesn't say anything. Stares at his book.

KEATS

I promised your dad. I promised him I would tell you something. Something I never -- I didn't get to tell my son.

Jordan looks up.

KEATS

Your dad. He was -- he was very, very brave. And he saved a lot of people. He loved you...

Tears begin to come. She doesn't fight them.

KEATS

He loved you so, so much.

JORDAN

Do you miss your son?

She laughs, cries.

KEATS

Yes. Yes. Finally, yes.

JORDAN

(tearing up)
I miss my dad.

KEATS

I know buddy.

She rubs his back -- and he HUGS HER.

She doesn't know how to take it.

HUGS HIM BACK.

The neighbor looks at her -- smiles sadly -- slips out the front door.

Keats smiles down at the small boy -- his face looks up at her.

KEATS

It's ok. I'll stay, as long as you want me too.

He wipes his tears -- sits back on the couch.

Keats stands -- grabs a tissue off the desk --

-- sees her BOMBER JACKET hanging on the hook.

Smiles.

Slips it BACK ON.

KEATS

This was a gift. From my--

Hand stuck in her pocket -- finds SOMETHING -- reaches, pulls out --

-- THE BALLED UP PAGE OF MANUSCRIPT SHE TOOK FROM STONE'S TYPEWRITER.

Her face FREEZES.

KEATS

Jordan--

Every light in the house EXPLODES -- the room cast into SPARKING DARKNESS.

Jordan SCREAMS.

The closet door SPLINTERS OPEN --

-- THE BEAST EMERGES.

MASSIVE -- JAW FULL OF NEEDLE TEETH -- ON FOUR LEGS, BENT BACKWARDS -- A TAIL SWIPING BACK AND FORTH.

Keats mind tries to comprehend.

She moves for Jordan --

-- the Beast gets there FIRST.

It's mouth SINKS DOWN.

Jordan SCREAMS.

Keats sees it all.

INT. ADAM'S APARTMENT - LATER

Keats sits in the middle of the floor.

The lights flicker around her -- the furniture KINDLING.

Blood SLICKS every surface.

She stands.

Moves to the FRONT DOOR -- in shock.

Opens it --

-- walks through

-- BACK INTO THE APARTMENT.

With one difference.

In the center of the floor sits Stone's RED TYPEWRITER.

On the wood in front a single word is CARVED.

WRITE.

Keats opens her mouth to SCREAM.

SMASH TO BLACK