

Mama

a treatment by
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Registered at the WGA



Imprint: A rapid learning process by which a newborn or very young animal establishes a behavior pattern of recognition and attraction to another animal of its own kind or to a substitute or an object identified as the parent.

Synopsis

Uri (38) is filthy. He is tired because he has not slept in days, and he is tired of life, of living. He cannot remember the last time he had a hot meal and he can't figure out what has happened. There's absolutely no connection between the shy, curious boy he once was and the shadow of a man he has become.

Uri drives his old, shitty car recklessly down a wintry road. It's night. He is sobbing. With his right hand he pulls out a map and tries to concentrate through his tears to find the way to Helvecia, an old summerhouse that he's heard is currently empty.

Suddenly we realize Uri is not alone in the car. A tiny head is peaking out from the back seat. It's Victoria (3), staring at her dad with a mixture of innocence and fear. Victoria checks on Lilly (18 months), her baby sister, covered in a blanket with big eyes and a broken pacifier in her mouth...not a sound coming from her.

Uri, Victoria and Lilly arrive at Helvecia. It's a beautiful secluded run-down manor, in the middle of a forest. The house is on a small lake, now frozen. Uri gets out of the car and stumbles through the deep snow. Victoria helps Lilly out and they stumble behind him. Uri, skinny, weak, grabs the thickest thing he can find, a piece of a decaying tree trunk and starts hitting the front door of the house as hard as he can. Out of frustration he starts kicking it. Nothing. Finally he tries turning the doorknob. The door opens. But there's no humor in this. Actually, it's kind of pathetic. One more joke in his life that he just can't get.

In the dark, Uri lights a fire in the big stone fireplace. The girls sit by it and play in silence. Lilly loves her only toy, a set of wooden blocks and balls that someone found in the garbage a while ago. Uri is standing next to the fire;

he takes out some stuff from his pockets. As he sits next to the girls, we realize that the “stuff” is a small gun and three bullets. He places them on the floor next to Lilly’s wood blocks. The girls keep playing like nothing is going on while his sobbing gets worse and worse, uncontrollable. Uri loads the gun and asks the girls to come with him.

Outside, lit only by a huge moon, Uri walks the girls to a clearing. He asks them to look up at the beautiful moon, that’s where their Mom lives. Uri, trembling, points the gun at the back of Victoria’s head. His jaw tightens. He can’t. Lilly... If he can shoot Lilly he’ll be able to shoot Victoria. Shivering and with barely any voice he tells them to keep staring at the moon. No. He can’t. His life is hell, it’s shit, but he can’t. In spite of everything, he can’t. He leaves the girls looking at the moon hypnotically, runs to the car and goes, leaving the girls alone in Helvecia. We follow Uri in the car for a while, who, at full speed, drives off a cliff.

We come back to Victoria and Lilly. In the dark, not able to bear the cold any longer, Victoria turns around and realizes Uri is gone. Not surprised, she grabs Lilly by the hand and walks her back to the house. Victoria leaves Lilly by the fireplace and with the faint light given off by the fire explores the kitchen. It’s not their first time alone. Victoria, barely three years old, knows how to survive.

Someone, from the long shadows of the white forest, is watching the scene. Curious, the little girls explore the room by the light of the fire. The beauty of the picture cruelly contrasts with the terrible, hopeless sadness of the situation.

Hours go by and the fire starts getting weak. The girls don’t know how to keep the fire alive. Victoria starts worrying, she is scared. Lilly is still in her own little world, playing with the set of painted wood blocks. She piles up the blocks and then knocks down the pile with one of the small wooden balls. Lilly could play like this forever...the game continues but the light grows dimmer and dimmer. Lilly rolls the little ball once again but misses the pile. The ball rolls on further and further. Lilly frowns, the broken pacifier still in her mouth. She suddenly smiles when the little ball, as the last flame flickers, comes back to her... the fire dies, complete darkness.

Victoria and Lilly are alone. It's winter. There is no food in the old house. But something is watching over them.

With the first light, Victoria, lying on the floor on some old rags, cradling Lilly, wakes up. She stands up, grabs Lilly's hand and goes out to a grim, white landscape. Victoria calls out "Dad?" "Dad?"...She looks around...But something catches Victoria's eye. There, in the middle of the snow, one of Lilly's balls, the yellow one. Lilly sees it too and without letting go neither Victoria nor the pacifier, she grabs it quickly and stuffs it in her dress. They see, ten feet away, another ball, the red one. The girls follow the balls and blocks until there are none left. The girls now find themselves in an orchard of barren trees. Small, perfectly aligned trees. Victoria and Lilly look around, not knowing what to do, not knowing what they are doing there...suddenly, on the white snow, cherries start falling from above. As they look up, the barren trees are now in full bloom, beautiful cherry blossoms. Victoria and Lilly are neither surprised nor scared. They eat some of the cherries right there and walk back to the house (We see them walking towards the house with handfuls of cherries and as we open the shot, the trees behind them are bare again).

Lilly is tirelessly playing with her blocks again, only stopping to take out her pacifier, eat a cherry and put the pacifier back in her mouth. It's getting dark again and in the same inexplicable way that the fruit fell down from dead trees, a fire starts in the fireplace. The girls look at each other and smile. They are smiling at something that we cannot see, but that they can see (out of frame), at something that is saving their lives.

We watch the season cycle, their hair grows, and they are covered in dirt. But the girls look happy, normal...they run around looking for fruit, eat flowers (Lilly eats a bitter flower and makes a face) and drink water from the lake like puppies. Sometimes they play on their own and sometimes they don't. We see them paying attention to something we don't see. They smile at it, they look for it.

Lucas (38) and Anabel (34) chat in their car. It's a beautiful day on a beautiful green country road. They are enthusiastic, and Lucas suggests that they



make a stop at the little town to buy some sandwiches. The village is small and picturesque. They stop at The town bar. Anabel is on the phone with a friend and stays in the car. Lucas goes in the bar and orders two sandwiches to go and two cokes. As he waits for his order, the only other customer in the bar, sitting there with a spiked coffee and his paper, nods gently at him. It's Cosme (84), a peculiar old man. He asks Lucas if he's here on holiday. Lucas answers that he spent many summers of his childhood about 6 miles north of the town, and that he just bought the house from his grandfather's brother, who has not used it for years because of poor health. Cosme mentions that he thinks he remembers his great uncle, and that he used to know that part of the forest like the back of his hand. Cosme tells him "that house has a strange name..." Lucas answers "Helvecia". Lucas says goodbye and gets into the car. It's getting dark already.

The plan was to arrive while there was still sunlight, so they start one of those typical quarrels in which he recriminates her for taking so long to

leave and she throws back at him deeper, more complex character faults... oh well. After a long silence, Anabel, who obviously can't hold a grudge for more than 5 minutes, says that if there's too much dust in the house they can sleep outside, in the sleeping bags she brought. Anabel is quite anxious. She has never seen the house that Lucas describes as "a paradise for the children...we don't have".

The path to Helvecia from the main road is overgrown, taken over by nature, and one can only see what is lit by the car lights. Anabel starts to question "the paradise". Lucas and Anabel get out of the car, bringing with them a couple brooms, backpacks, candles, flashlights and the sleeping bags. Standing in front of the door they look at each other and give themselves a "go". Lucas tries to open the door with the keys but realizes that the door is open, not good. He looks at his wife with worry. Anabel, brave girl that she is, pushes the heavy door with one finger. The door opens slowly...inside, total darkness.

It takes a while for their eyes to adjust to the dark, darker than it is outside... Lucas turns on the flashlight and with horror they discover that the house has been broken into. Everything is upside down; the walls are stained, with horrible, brute drawings.

But before they can overcome the shock, the silence is broken by the wood floors crackling...both of them jump back, and Lucas screams like a girl. He then clears his throat and with the deepest voice he has, Lucas yells, "who's there?" It doesn't come out as deep as he would have hoped for...Holding hands, they go back in and with both flashlights try to find the source of the noise. They check everything, everywhere, but nothing. "Really, can't people find better things to do with their time? Arrrrg! Idiots!" They get out a couple of gas lamps to have a bit of light and decide it's ok to spend the night. Tomorrow they'll go back to town to buy some paint. Or maybe they should just pay a couple villagers to clean the place. Lucas sweeps the living room, they put down the sleeping bags, and go to sleep: "tomorrow we'll make it all better" says Anabel lovingly.

It's 2 am and in the darkest dark we see a small shadow approaching the sleeping bags...a few seconds later, another small figure stands next to it. Anabel, in her sleep, senses something strange...without opening her eyes,

she reaches for the flashlight. It's not there. She wakes Lucas up in a panic, who turns on his flashlight to find two spectral creatures looking back at him: Victoria (6) and Lilly (4). Lucas and Anabel scare the girls and the girls scare them back. They back up to opposite walls of the room. Lucas slowly moves the flashlight around until he finds them. Their hearts are racing, but looking at them now, Anabel realizes: "They're just little girls". Scrawny, dirty, scary little girls in filthy rags...

Three years have passed since we last saw the girls. Anabel can't believe her eyes. The girls are shivering, and it's not the cold. Lucas calls the police. They ask the girls where their parents are. The girls don't answer. Lucas and Anabel get out of the house and wait for the police in complete shock.

Two officers search the house as they wait for an ambulance. "There are no adults and there's no trace of any. These girls were abandoned here. When was the last time you were here?" It's been at least five years since the last time his great uncle was here. The officer thinks that the girls could not have been there for more than four months; they could have not survived the winter alone.

When the ambulance arrives, the officers try to get the girls out of the house. Like animals, screaming, running, biting, scratching, kicking, Victoria and Lilly do all they can to stay in the house. Finally the officers manage to get them into the ambulance as the girls cry desolately.

The girls are taken to the hospital for observation. It is a small hospital that does not have a lot of activity, this is a big deal. After the physical check ups and psychiatric evaluations, they draw the conclusion that the girls were obviously neglected, but that their physical health is excellent. Nevertheless, Victoria and Lilly don't speak. It's not that they don't want to, it's that they hardly know how to. They exchange little noises between them, but mainly they communicate with their eyes. They look, with fear and distrust at everything around them. When food is brought they smell it, but don't touch it.

Lucas and Anabel, who have been taken to the police station to report the home invasion, decide to go to the hospital to see the girls.

They've been bathed and combed, and a nurse is trying to cut the knots

out of their hair. Anabel smiles at them and tries to help the nurse. She caresses Lilly's head, who jerks back. She then tries Victoria, who accepts the gesture.

Lucas and Anabel try to get them to talk, but it is futile. Lucas tries other languages...nothing. Anabel asks the doctors what will happen to them if their parents/ guardians can't be found. The doctor doesn't know, but he guesses that they will have the same luck as the other abandoned kids in the hospital: placed in the loving hands of foster care.

Lucas and Anabel decide to stay in town for a few days (Anabel is not willing to go back to Helvecia yet, it gives her the creeps), but they visit the girls every day in the hospital.

It's not only a complete mystery to them (where did they come from, how long have they managed to survive on their own) but these girls have awoken in them a devastating tenderness they didn't know they had. In their presence, Lucas is completely disarmed. Anabel is a bit tougher, but still... Anabel grew up motherless, and this situation overwhelms her. The girls start eating, but only if Lucas and Anabel are there, which makes the visits more frequent; sometimes one of them stays all day, other times they come back three times a day.

Anabel and Lucas realize that they cannot part with the girls. A month has gone by, there's a bond.

The local authorities, with the help of the town Judge, who knows Lucas' family, give Anabel and Lucas temporary custody despite having no proof of identity on the girls.

In a parallel montage, we see Lucas and Anabel at the hospital door getting the girls in the car to go back to the city...and we see Helvecia. The camera goes through the house, the halls, the bedrooms, the walls painted with cherries and plums, until we get to the main room and we see, for the first time, in the middle of the dark, the silhouette of someone, not something, someone, that does not have her babies anymore...the car leaves the hospital and Victoria and Lilly look through the rear window at what they are leaving behind.

Two years have gone by. Victoria (8) and Lilly (6) are two normal little girls living with their “parents”. Lucas is a brilliant illustrator, with a beard, a head full of curls, and a belly. Anabel is an architect. Victoria and Lilly now have a brother, Miki, ten months old. Miki is a chubby and busy baby that has Victoria and Lilly wrapped around his short stubby finger.

The girls have had an amazing recovery. A day in the life of the Victoria and Lilly: speech therapy, school, tutors, shrink, play. Anabel has become an exceptional mother and is fiercely proud of her brood, and it’s very difficult for her to admit that Lilly is, different. No developmental issues, she is a beautiful girl that can be very gracious when she wants to. But there’s something strange about her. The other day, as Lucas horsed around the hall with Miki and Victoria, Lilly sat on the couch, watching with fascination the shadows made by the cars as they passed by. When Anabel suggested that she goes join them, Lilly answered: “No.”

Lilly is sitting alone in her classroom. She is waiting for Victoria. Two older kids walk in and try to steal Lilly’s pencil box. She is tiny in comparison. They just want to bug her. They start making fun of her, pulling her hair. Lilly frowns and opens her mouth slowly. Suddenly, the eeriest sound comes out of her lips. It’s not a song but there’s a melody to this noise. It’s like wind. The boys freeze in horror, at which point Victoria comes in and Lilly stops. The boys leave the room running and Victoria grabs Lilly from her arm and brings her to the back of the class where there’s a table with the class’ plants and sprouts. “Look what you’ve done!! You are being bad Lilly”. As the camera pans, we see that all the plants are dead.

We watch the family having breakfast chaotically. Lucas says goodbye and walks out. A glance and a nod between Lucas and Anabel tells us that they are planning something the girls don’t know about.

Lucas is in Helvecia, which now looks a lot more like it used to in his

childhood. It's a beautiful day. The construction workers are fixing the floor and Lucas is transfixed looking at the painter. Before the painter covers up the drawings on the wall the girls did when they were alone, he copies them in his moleskine ... the advantage of being an illustrator.

That night, back in the city, Lucas shows the drawings to the girls, and asks them what those are. Victoria says, "we don't know...it looks like a Blutterfly!" Lilly laughs and says..."You need a speech theuapist!"

Lucas and Anabel, as they are getting ready for bed, talk about the great summer they will have in Helvecia. Both of them will work from the house and the girls' shrink has told them that it will be fine.

Anabel takes the kids to the park. She parks the stroller, sits on a park bench with the girls and tells them that both her and Lucas want to take them to a very special place, Helvecia. "Girls, what do you remember about the house?" They talk about the lake, the cherries, the house, which is way larger than the apartment they live in now, but not much else. Victoria and Lilly anxiously ask Anabel if they can go to the swings and take off. 20 feet away from Anabel, Victoria and Lilly look at each other ... Anabel, now satisfied and relieved, plays and coos with Miki "le slobber".

The day has come. The family is finally going to their summer home. We see the car driving down a beautiful path that leads them to the house. The girls are nervous, but they try to hide it. As they approach the house, their memories become clearer, more intense, provoking a state of withheld anxiety. The family walks into the house, and the girls take off in different directions. They look around in silence, studying the place. Lucas and Anabel watch them carefully. They don't want to interrupt this re-discovery. The girls walk out of the house and when Lilly starts heading towards the forest, Victoria stops her and makes her go back into the house.

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Amelia (72), an elegant, tall woman, arrives in the small town accompanied by a man in his fifties who is obviously her employee. She is expected by the Mayor of the town and after a formal but warm welcome, she is taken to the town hall library to meet the person she's come to see: Cosme. Cosme (84) is a shepherd who lives alone in the mountains outside the town. During a private conversation we find out that at age 14, in 1938, he saved the lives of Amelia and her sister, who were then babies of one and two years old. *It was the Spanish Civil War, and during a bloody attack by troops of the Spanish army, the two little girls were hidden in the forest by their mother. No one ever saw the mother again, but Cosme found the babies under the roots an immense oak tree, shivering and crying as the snow fell hard. Had it not been for Cosme, the girls would have died in the harsh cold.*

Amelia thanks Cosme with great and sincere affection, and tells him she's been postponing this trip for years, but now has cancer, and can no longer save things for later. Her younger sister, Bea, passed away last year and was never able to meet Cosme; she would have liked him as much as Amelia.

Lunch is served in Helvecia. The first lunch. Lucas is sitting at the head of the table telling a funny story about when he was a child running around Helvecia. The girls don't look very interested in his story; their minds are somewhere else. Victoria is looking through the window when suddenly she freezes. In the distance, by the first line of trees, a static figure is watching them. Victoria hides any reaction, but there's a storm of emotion within. As soon as they are done with lunch (which they hardly touched), while Anabel is trying to put Miki down for a nap, Victoria takes Lilly to the forest. After walking for about 15 minutes deep into the forest, they stop.

A sudden breeze creates a storm of spores, and when they turn, the girls find themselves right in front of HER. It is the first time we see this being, the creature that mothered the girls for three years. Something of a woman, but squalid, almost a skeleton, and a somber semblance that gives her a

terrifying air. She floats, just a few inches from the ground. Her long raven hair seems to have a life of its own, and a torn black cloth covers her body that seems to swim, float around her like a spectral medusa. This is Mama. The girls smile and get closer. Mama extends her long, skinny pale arms and the girls disappear under her embrace.

Mama floats through the cherry blossoms. The girls run behind her, laughing and jumping and reaching with their tiny arms. As Mama passes by, fruit falls from the trees. The girls, like they did in old times, pick up the fruit, happy as ever.

The following days, the girls visit the forest repeatedly, picking up cherries as an excuse and with the promise of not going in too deep, but Lilly starts spending more and more time in the forest, and this worries Anabel. Lilly walks back home at dusk, her dress all dirty. That night, once they are both in bed, Victoria tells Lilly off. Anabel and Lucas should never know of Mama, they would never understand it. The next day, Lilly spends all day in the forest. When Lilly comes back, Anabel, furious, forbids her from leaving the house alone again. Lucas tries to calm Anabel down but this turns into a marital fight.

That night, whispering, Lilly reprimands Victoria for not going into the forest with her to be with Mama. Victoria is torn. There are two different worlds inside of her. For Lilly it is all quite clear: that thing outside is her true mother. Lilly does not have any other memories...Victoria does.

Later that evening, Cosme pays Amelia a visit at the beautiful country house she is staying at. He needs to talk to her. With a knot in his throat he slowly begins to tell Amelia what really happened that morning of 1938. The story he has not told anyone in over seventy years but that he cannot keep hiding.

That morning, Cosme was out in the forest, hunting rabbits, when he saw from the higher ground how his village was burning. Fear took over him and he hid behind a thick tree close to the road. That's when he saw one of the village women running desperately with her two baby girls, one in her arms and dragging the older one behind her. He was about to come out of his hiding spot when he noticed four

soldiers running behind the woman. As he turned his head back to the woman, he watched as she hid her babies in a whole under the roots of a very old tree. She kissed the older baby and left running as fast as she could. The soldiers saw her running in the distance and chased after her.

Cosme witnessed the scene from a privileged position: he could see everything, but the soldiers could not see him at all. He followed the men, always keeping a cautious distance, and saw them arrive at the end of the road. And there she was. Standing on the ledge of a cliff, scared to death, knowing that there was no chance for her to get away. She turned to look at the soldiers. They were pointing their guns at her, laughing. But something called her attention behind the line of soldiers. Hiding behind the brush, a fourteen-year-old boy stood there, frozen, with a rifle in his hands, but completely incapable of moving or facing the soldiers. The woman looked at Cosme with her black eyes and with that look begged him to save her babies. As one of the soldiers stepped closer to her to grab her, she walked back and fell off. Young Cosme heard the noise of her body breaking the thick ice that covered the lake...

Cosme breaks down. He's been hiding this for so long. He tells Amelia the men were savages, but that he could have saved his mother, to which Amelia, with a consoling tone answers: "Had you tried anything, we would have all died there". But Cosme is too troubled to hear what she is saying, he must go on with his story. He stands up and walks to the dark window, and after a long pause mutter: "I still have not told you what I came here to tell you..." Two years after the incident (at that point the girls were far away in an orphanage), Cosme went near the lake, in search of a lost sheep. He slipped and hurt his leg. He screamed and yelled for help, but no one came. Distracted and in pain, he looked at the lake and made out this strange shape approaching. Floating over the water, getting closer and closer. So close he could finally see her face. It was the girl with the soldiers, a terrifying obscure version of her. Cosme turns to Amelia and tells him her mother is still out there. Amelia pads him in the arm and a tear rolls down her cheek.

The next day Lucas takes the girls to the village grocery store. Anabel stays home with Miki, and is feeding him in his high chair when the phone rings. She goes to the kitchen to get the phone and engages in a marathon gossip

update with her friend. Miki is left alone in the living room. After a few seconds, we discover in one of the dark corners of the room a black, still figure. How long has it been there? The figure glides from the end of the room in the most horrifying manner. The boy looks at Mama with curious, innocent eyes. Mama stops right in front of Miki in his chair and stares at him hypnotically. The child stares back at her. There's an overwhelming moment of mutual fascination, impossible to explain with words. Mama's face is somber, her facial expression, dead and animal at the same time, is impossible to read. Miki reaches out with a handful of pumpkin puree and tries to touch her face, which is inches away from his. Mama moves back and disappears in the same terrifying manner she came in. As Anabel walks back into the living room, Miki's arm is still stretched out.



Amelia is ready to leave town. Her companion is loading her luggage into a car. When Amelia finally steps out of the house, she mutters, "It's not a good day to travel" and passes out. The companion runs to her but is hardly able to catch her head.

It's getting dark again...we follow Lilly walking around with a grin from ear to ear, coming back from the forest again, but this time...she's got Miki in her arms! Lucas is waiting nervously by the back door of the house. He looks at her with severity but that is nothing compared to what is waiting for her inside the house. As she comes in, Anabel tears Miki off her arms and once she sees that he's fine and puts him in his chair, she goes back to Lilly and slaps her across the face. Lilly starts to cry. Anabel is out of her wits, yelling at Lilly, to the point that Lucas grabs Anabel by the arm. Victoria runs to Lilly. Lilly is not crying anymore, now she's mad. So standing in the middle of the living room, she screams at the top of her lungs...Mama!!!!!!!!!!!!

Victoria's face changes. Oh, no, please no. Suddenly the lights go off, the house is engulfed by a tempest that shakes the house as if it were made of paper, and we hear this monstrous wind song from beyond. All the glass in the house is crackling. Victoria, crying, yells: "Please, stop."

The lights come back and the furious weather goes away. Miki is crying to the top of his lungs. Lilly looks at Anabel full of resentment. Anabel keeps asking Lucas "What was that?!". Lilly runs to her room and locks herself.

Later that night, lights turned off, Victoria watches Lilly from her bed. She is sleeping like a baby, facing the wall. Victoria gets up and stands by the window. And there's Mama, floating next to a beautiful old tree. Moonlight makes her glow, she is breathtaking. Victoria gets out of the house making as little noise as possible and walks towards Mama. Mama opens her arms to her, but Victoria stops. The way Victoria looks at her says everything. The ghost makes a strange gesture with her head...Victoria replies "...because it's our family now". Mama's face darkens with sadness and snow starts falling. It's snowing...in July. The girl stays with Mama for a few minutes and walks back home.

The next morning, Lucas, bewildered, looks at his lawn covered in snow. During breakfast, Anabel declares, "We are going back home this afternoon". The girls are in shock. They are not ready to go, especially Lilly. She looks at Lucas and he's got the face of a man who won't fight his wife over this. Big tears roll down Lilly's face into her cereal.

Lucas takes the girls for a last walk around the lake. Anabel is in the kitchen getting everything ready for the departure. All of a sudden, her hands freeze and her eyes glaze over. She goes to the cabinet under the sink and slowly, but with absolutely no hesitation, she picks up a bottle of Drano and starts drinking from it. After a few minutes she bends over the kitchen counter in pain and starts to jerk violently. As the camera slowly turns around her, we discover Mama standing behind her. Her sinister eyes stuck on Anabel. She falls to the floor, twisted in pain, and tries to make it to the door but the convulsions are terrible. Miki is crying his little eyes out.

As Lucas comes in he senses something is wrong. He follows Miki's cries and finds her on the kitchen floor. Lucas sees the bottle, and desperately picks her up and goes to the car.

At the hospital and after a stomach pump, Anabel is conscious again, still in pain, exhausted. Lucas talks to the doctors. The girls and little Miki are being watched by a male nurse who is doing his best to keep them entertained. Lucas goes to Anabel and before he can say anything: "I know what you are going to say, but this time it was different. I am happy. I was happy at home. I don't know what happened. I don't even remember doing this." He replies, a bit cold "I think you should have gone back to the meds after Miki's birth. It was a mistake to stop taking them". Anabel gets angry and emotional.

Victoria, bored, is walking and dancing around the halls of the hospital. She goes past a patient's room, the door open and inviting. Amelia is standing next to her bed, trying to stretch her legs a bit. Rail thin, in her nightgown, Victoria feels shivers coming up and down her spine. She had never seen this lady before, but her face was hypnotically familiar. Amelia sees Victoria looking at her and invites her in. They start a normal conversation (Amelia lacks of that condescending tone that most adults use with kids) in which they both reveal a bit of each other, After a while, Amelia, who is weak but quicker than lightning, asks Victoria if she's one of the girls that were found

in the Helvecia house. Victoria doesn't answer. After a long pause, and with a sweeter tone, Amelia tells her the story of when her sister and her were separated from their mom in the forest. "She hid us under some roots to protect us from the cold, but she couldn't come back for us...a shepherd found us covered in snow and took us away to a safe place...when Mom came back to that tree, looking for us, we weren't there anymore". Amelia finishes her story and is desperately trying to read Victoria's face. The girl, nervous, stays quiet and takes a step back. Amelia breaks the silence, matter of factly. "Have you seen my mom?" Too much to process for Victoria, she runs away.

Three days later the family is back at the house swiftly packing everything to leave. Alarmed, Anabel notices that Lilly is gone. Lucas instinctively looks through the window at the back and sees Lilly disappearing into the darkness of the forest. He curses and runs behind her. Victoria, scared, begs him to stay. Lucas doesn't understand what she's trying to say and keeps on chasing after his baby daughter. After 15 minutes, he finds her. Lilly is standing in the middle of a clearing. Like waiting for him. Lucas tries to get closer but she asks him not to. Lilly says "I'm staying...with Mama". Lucas, puzzled, grabs the little girl from the arm and when he turns, he stumbles into Mama. Her aspect has changed. She is bigger, darker, furious. Like a rabid animal, she attacks Lucas. Terrified he tries to escape. He rolls down a hill and when he lands, breaks his ankle. He gets up and limps as fast as he can back home.

Anabel tries to calm him down and bandages the wounds. Lucas, still in shock, tries to get some sort of explanation from Victoria. He yells. Finally she breaks down and does the best she can. Victoria tells them how Mama was there in the house and in the forest looking after them when they were left alone, and that they felt safe with her. Mama loves them. Anabel and Lucas are looking at her absolutely bewildered. Lucas asks if the drawings they found in the house were of her. Victoria nods. Victoria begs them to leave, to take Miki away, because Mama is coming for her and she doesn't want them to be there when it happens. A confrontation with Mama would

be terrible, and that if she tries to leave with them, things will be even worse. "Leave Lilly and I here...we'll be ok. She'll take care of us..." These words are coming through her tears, since she loves Anabel, Lucas and Miki. But she cannot bare the thought of any of them getting hurt.

All this sounds absurd to Lucas and Anabel, who are determined to go get Lilly back from whatever this beast is. Anabel sternly asks Victoria to stay in the house with Miki, and the couple leaves to the forest.

They skirt the lake, and as they get to the rocky hill where Lucas broke his ankle, he realizes he is in too much pain and can't go up it. Anabel tells him to stay, that she'll go up on her own faster. Lucas begs her not to but she's already on her way. Anabel is going to save her child.

Lucas, a ball of frustration and pain, leans on a large rock, as he hears his wife calling "Lilly!" "Lilly!" Lucas finds a branch, and using it as a cane, goes north of the forest to see if he can find her. After walking for a while with great difficulty through a very lush path, he finds Lilly again. She is sitting on a rock calmly, and looking at him.

Lucas talks to her very gently. He tells her that Victoria told them the truth and that she'll be better off with them. After a pause, Lilly answers that her house is here, in this forest. Lucas tries to get close and Lilly get on her feet in a swift move. She then starts to sing her terrible song, the one she learned from Mama. Lucas is petrified. It's a sound from beyond, inexplicable and completely foreign to the human ear, the terrifying legacy of a sinister imprint. Lucas covers his ears and is witness to the most horrific show. His daughter's song provokes the sudden death of everything around him.

The grass around Lilly goes black. The circle around her expands, and when it gets to the trees, they go black and birds fall dead from the branches. A confused wild rabbit escapes into the wrong direction and dies in the spot, grey, and old. Lilly's face is abominable. Her eyes have sunk into her face and her skin has turned dead grey. Lucas, desperate, steps backwards. But the stonewall behind him stops him. He yells at Lilly, begging her to stop. The circle of death keeps on creeping closer to Lucas until Lilly comes out of her trance and realizes what she's doing. Lucas breathes deep. Lilly, with a small shakky voice says: "Please...leave..." She turns around and leaves him there.

Anabel keeps walking deep into the forest. As she gets to a clear path, a white figure runs past her, freezing her on her tracks. She turns to see what that was and sees a woman running, her dress all torn up, escaping from something. Anabel follows the woman, asking her to stop. The woman keeps on running. Anabel follow her all the way to the cliff. The woman in white, standing at the edge of the cliff, turns around and looks at a terrified Anabel. When Anabel tries to get closer, the woman lets herself go off the cliff. Anabel shocked, approaches the edge to see, and when she does...from the abyss of the cliff appears Mama, her most frightful semblance ever. Her arms open, like ectoplasmic tentacles. Everything in her is terrifying. For a second Mama's eyes are fixed on Anabel's. Suddenly Mama jumps over her and throws her off the cliff. Anabel falls in the lake.

Lucas, leaning against the rock wall, tries to catch his breath and holds his ankle in pain.

As he tries to get up with his improvised cane, the unexpected: the infernal song comes back. Lucas looks up to discover Mama, who stares down at him as she sings this hideous melody. The grass in front of him is now black. Lucas closes his eyes full of tears and tightens his jaw for the last time.

Back in the house, Victoria gets Miki out of his chair with difficulty and with the baby in her arms she walks to the door. But she feels something. Behind her. Mama is in the house. Victoria confronts her, sobbing, "What have you done?" Only silence from the spectral face. The little girl, knowing what surely happened starts crying. Behind Mama, coming through the back door, Lilly. She stands next to the Ghost and asks her sister to stop crying. "Everything will be fine. We are back with Mama. No one will hurt us. It will all be like it was" Mama looks at Miki cooing in Victoria's arms and reaches out for him. Victoria hold on to Miki, refusing to give him up and leaves the room running. Mama glides behind her, crawling and sliding on walls and roofs, Mama finally catches her.

Fade to black.

Lilly is carrying Miki. The baby is now calm. Lilly stops by the shore of the lake and looks up. At her side, Mama extends her arm, holding Lilly's hand. The ghost is slowly taking Lilly and Miki inside the water. Slowly. Now the water is up to Lilly's shoulders. Suddenly, we hear a faint, tender voice in the distance: "Mama! Mama linda!"

Mama turns around. It's Amelia, 200 feet from the shore, holding herself with a cane and in her hospital robe. The ghost stares at her for a few seconds, and for the first time, Mama's face softens. In her eyes we see a twinkle of humanity. This is her daughter. Amelia is her baby. Mama let's Lilly go. Amelia says to Lilly in a whisper: "Get out of the water, sweetie".

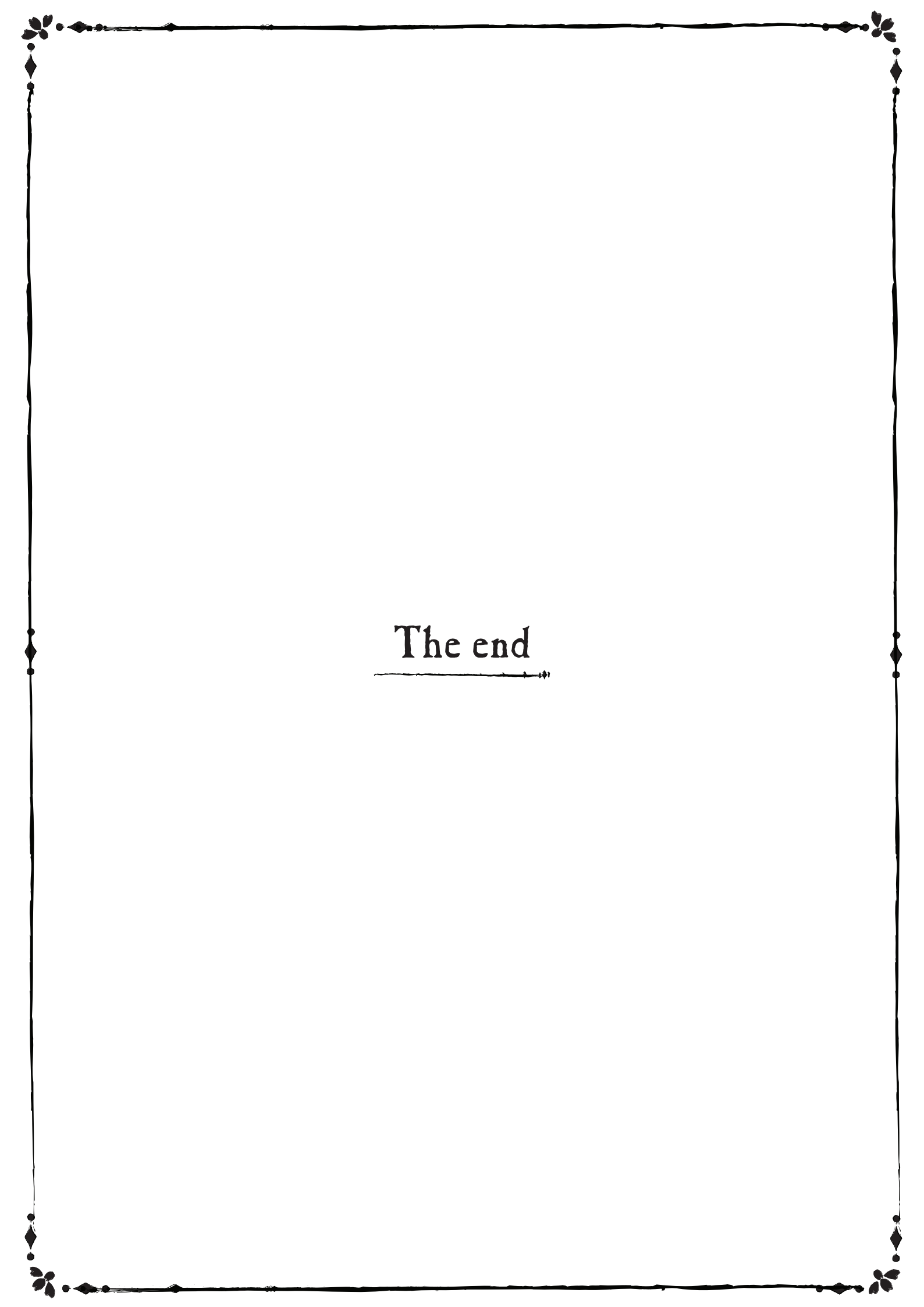
Anabel wakes up on a small beach of the lake. Disoriented. Exhausted. Not knowing where her husband and children are. She gets up and starts her way to the house.

Back at home, Anabel, wet and dirty, finds Victoria passed out in the kitchen. Instinctively she looks outside the back door towards the lake. They see Lilly walking towards the house with Miki in her arms. They run towards them and melt in a massive hug.

Victoria looks back at the lake and sees the last of Mama and Amelia going under the water...forever.



ANDY



The end

Mama

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