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THE PEOPLE UNDER THE STAIRS
(Universal Project # 2)

a feature film
by
Wes Craven

All of history is a struggle
to wake from a nightmare.

Sartre

1 INT. SLUM ROOM -- NIGHT.

1

FADE UP ON WORN WOOD GRAIN. The SOUND of CARDS SLAPPING down as TITLES ROLL. The VOICES we HEAR have an easy intimacy, the woman's edged with mystery and fatigue.

WOMAN'S VOICE

Swords and staves, tough road you
got this year. Judgement, Death and
Mr Devil. Even the Tower...

(laughs softly)

Glad it's your birthday reading.

MOVE TO FRAME TAROT CARDS ON TABLE, a WOMAN'S HANDS laying the last one down -- the distinctive card of "THE FOOL" -- Zero of the deck -- a boy with knapsack setting off on life's journey. Above and behind him is the sun; below and a step in front, the abyss. A white dog rears at his feet.

WOMAN'S VOICE (CONTD)

An' here's your card, Fool, see?
That's where I got your nickname.

BOY'S VOICE

Don't remind me.

WOMAN'S VOICE

Here you go, thirteen today, the
golden-haired birthday boy settin'
off on life's big adventure.

BOY'S VOICE

I ain't no golden haired nobody, an'
all I'm going off to is 7th grade.

WOMAN'S VOICE

Well you the Fool, can't 'scape
that, an' that ain't bad.

FOOL

No?

WOMAN'S VOICE

Naw -- ain't the stupid kinda fool,
just the ignorant kind, cause he
startin' out.

FOOL

That's better, I guess.

WOMAN'S VOICE
 (spooky,
 storyteller)
 But look here, already he got a
 problem, see? One step in front,
 the drop off...

MOVING IN SO THE CARD FILLS SCREEN as a BOY'S THIN, ELEGANT
 FINGER prods the small white dog barking at the character's
 feet.

BOY'S VOICE
 What about him?

WOMAN'S VOICE
 That's Fool's companion, see, his
 spirit, barkin' --
 (dog's voice)
 Fool, don't go marchin' over that
 cliff now -- do the smart thing, the
 high thing --

COUGHING OFF-SCREEN. The WOMAN'S VOICE stops...

BOY'S VOICE
 So what Fool gonna do if he ain't
 gonna fall off the cliff, fly?

WOMAN'S VOICE
 (softly impatient)
 He gonna do what he hafta, Fool --
 turn 'round and walk t'other way --
 right through the fire of the sun.

BOY'S VOICE
 He get burned up, he do that.

AGAIN THE COUGHING. We HEAR the woman get up.

WOMAN'S VOICE
 (low, moving away)
 Just the boy part get burned up.
 Rest come out t'other side a man,
 an' no one call him Fool again.

A distant DOOR OPENS AND CLOSES SOFTLY. The boy's hand
 touches the card as TITLES END.

2 INT. LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT.

2

FIRE CRACKING hungrily through paint-flecked bits of old
 homes. Fennel posts, cornices and carved mantels --
 shattered by bulldozer into pieces small enough to burn.

PULL BACK from a huge HEARTH to REVEAL an over-sized LIVING ROOM dancing in shadows -- well furnished with old pieces. SEEN FROM BEHIND a large WOMAN sews rapidly at a frilled dress. Well-kept, deft, intent. EASY LISTENING MUSIC simmers in the fringes of darkness.

OUT OF FOCUS BG a thin teenage GIRL crosses to a MAN sitting eating in a ponderous wing chair. We HEAR his mastication, her starched white dress.

CLOSER -- the man picks up a rib, hungry. The girl sets a glass before him and backs away. The woman's voice is prim, content.

WOMAN

One more family in the Lenox Avenue building, then it's clear to tear down. Build a nice neat condominium. Get clean people in there. Lots of nice wood for my fireplace, lots of --

MAN

(grunts it)
Money... for... me.
(more eating sounds)

GIRL

Mama, where do people go when y--

The woman stands; the girl steps backwards, silenced; the woman watches the man eat.

WOMAN

Getting them out soon?

MAN

By tomorrow midnight.

He's picked something out of the meat in his mouth and drops it on his plate.

XCU OF WHATEVER IT IS -- metal and round, dinging onto the plate and rolling like a tiny, greasy ball-bearing to join others. Shot. Large buck shot.

3 INT. FOOL'S HOME -- NIGHT.

3

CU TAROT CARD OF THE FOOL -- propped against books -- and WIDEN IMMEDIATELY TO FEATURE FOOL, a fine-boned, huge-eyed black kid of 13, wearing cracked reading glasses, propped against a wall of paperback books. He's reading a "Life of W.E.B. DuBois" by candlelight. The COUGHING begins again, now deep and persistent. Fool puts down the book.

WIDER, REVEALING his "study" to be simply a corner of paperback books stacked around a mattress, surrounded in turn by other mattresses where several younger CHILDREN sleep -- all in a darkened, impoverished apartment.

Fool picks his way through the shadows to a bedroom. A light is on there, and his 19 year old sister, RUBY, (the other opening voice) bends over their mother, MARY. The older woman coughs uncontrollably, then falls back on the pillow. Mid-30's, the shell of a once good-looking woman: thin arms, haunted face, eyes full of feeling. She holds a piece of paper crumpled in her hand.

MARY

I don't know what to do with this,
Ruby. Can't believe the landlord's
doing it. Not now.

(sees Fool, turns)

Ruby hustles over and pushes Fool back out, not unkindly, but firmly. Fool sees the look in her eyes.

FOOL

What's wrong?

RUBY

Go back to your book, Fool.

FOOL

You can tell me.

RUBY

Ain't nothing you can do.

She closes the door. Fool hears the COUGHING again. A CLICK makes him jerk around. In the darkness, a LIGHTER rises to the cigarette of a powerful man hunkered against a nearby wall. Perhaps 26, he smokes, appraising Fool.

FOOL

Who're you?

LEROY

LeRoy. Friend of Ruby's. You the
little brother she call Fool?

Fool nods, uneasy with the man's unblinking eyes.

FOOL

Real name's Poindexter, but Ruby's
hung up on the Tarot Cards.

(back to the
bedroom)

Why she and Mama crying?

LEROY

You been evicted. Y'all gotta be out tomorrow, midnight. Guess she didn't see that one in the cards.

FOOL

(stunned)

Evicted? Why?

LEROY

Y'all were three days late with your payment. Fine print in the lease says y'gotta pay triple or get out. Your mama an Ruby ain't got triple.

Fool looks at the children sleeping in the darkened room.

FOOL

Don't the landlord know mama's sick?

LEROY

Sure don't care. He wants the building, y'all's the last folks in it.

(draws on
cigarette)

Got money you can kick in?

Fool shakes his head, lost in despair. LeRoy cocks his big head, circles Fool's thin wrist with thumb and forefinger.

LEROY

I know a way for you to earn some.
You game?

Fool looks at the man. LeRoy looks back, and there's nothing casual in those eyes.

FOOL

(quietly)

What you got?

4 INT. RESTROOM -- NIGHT.

4

A tiny, darkened room, the only light from a barred window. Almost immediately FOOL hauls himself up into this on the outside, quick and quiet. He tapes the window, glances back down, then kicks in the pane. The glass falls in a broken flap, soundless. Fool tries to fit his head through the bars. No deal.

LEROY (OS)

Go!

CLOSER -- Fool grits his teeth and wedges his head into the opening, pushing hard. An ear starts to bleed, his breath whistles between clenched teeth. Then his skull pops through. He twists, gets an arm, shoulders, even his chest inside gets stuck. A beer can pelts him and a SECOND MAN'S VOICE hisses.

VOICE (OS)

Quit messin round, asshole!

With a hand outstretched to its limits the boy grabs the sink and pulls -- something RIPS and Fool falls head-first into the toilet, then to the floor.

5 INT. STOCKROOM -- NIGHT.

5

Fool darts across a stockroom to a rear door. The stacked cartons indicate a liquor store. He attaches alligator clips and wire to the burglar-alarm contacts on the door and frame and swings the door open. No alarm. A white guy, SPENSER, moves in with a handtruck.

SPENSER

Took you goddam long enough.

A hard ex-con packed into a pinched and tattooed frame, Spenser's already slinging cases of Scotch onto his handcart. Fool reaches for a case, but Spenser hits his hand away --

SPENSER (CONTD)

Get LeRoy in here for that -- move!

He shoves the boy hard -- Fool stumbles against the door -- and knocks off one of the alligator clips. He quickly has it back on, but not before Spenser cracks him hard across the head --

SPENSER (CONTD)

No wonder they call you Fool -- !

Spenser freezes. LEROY looms in the doorway, big.

LEROY

Everything cool, Spensuh? .

SPENSER

(backing off)

Where'd you find this kid.

LeRoy reveals an easy-going alligator smile, touching Fool's soaked head.

LEROY

What's that, the wet look?
Check the register.

SPENSER

Move!

The boy, scared shitless, runs off -- the men set to work loading liquor in earnest.

6 INT. FRONT OF STORE -- NIGHT.

6

Fool scuttles to the cash register. Now in light, clearly visible from the street, his fear shows for the first time. He eases the cash drawer open, but it catches. Too shy to force it, the boy peeks in. At the very same moment, unnoticed by Fool, a POLICE BLACK AND WHITE eases to a stop outside.

Unable to see what's jamming the drawer, Fool grabs it firmly on both sides. Then stops, curious.

CLOSE ON WHAT HE SEES -- a string, hooked to the front of the cash drawer, running under its bottom.

Fool drops to his knees, peering up to the bottom of the drawer. The string runs back into the shadowy shelf beneath the cash register, reverses direction around a bent nail, and ends on the trigger of a sawed-off double-barrel shotgun aimed directly in Fool's face...

FOOL -- looks back to the drawer in mounting horror -- and the drawer starts to slide out -- the string tightening! Fool snaps back to the shotgun in terror and stabs out with his hand --

CU ON THE SHOTGUN'S TRIGGER -- the string pulls tight -- ITS HAMMERS fall -- a split-second after Fool's thin fingers clamp between them and the firing pins. The hammers smack down on his fingers hard -- but the gun doesn't fire!

FOOL

Owwwww!

RACK-FOCUS to the street as the cop car's SPOTLIGHT pops on and falls first over the till, then Fool, rimming him with a fierce, accusatory brilliance. Fool leaps up, startled, striking his head so hard against the bottom of the register drawer he falls again. The boy staggers back up, but already one of the COPS has jumped from the car.

COP

Hold it right there!

Clutching his head with one hand, the shotgun with the other, Fool spins around, raising his gun hand to shield his eyes from the spotlight. The cop sees this and FIRES. The plate glass EXPLODES -- Fool throws himself to the floor in terror -- the shotgun strikes the tiles and DETONATES. Plaster and SPARKS gush from the ceiling. Now it's the Cop that dives for cover, and Fool tears for the back room, bullets from a SECOND COP smashing bottles all around him.

7 INT. STOCKROOM -- NIGHT.

7

Fool looks around desperately, realizing the men have already abandoned him --

8 EXT. ALLEY -- NIGHT.

8

Fool bursts from the doorway on the dead run, sees LeRoy and Spenser, who've already run down the alley towards the street, now tearing right back at him. Behind them the cop car pounces across the alley's entrance, headlights throwing them all into a jagged tunnel of light.

Fool turns the other way -- the alley's a dead-end! He wheels back -- and is knocked flying by the stampeding Spenser. The SECOND COP ducks out behind his car door, gun leveled.

COP 2

Down on your faces! Freeze!

But the momentum is too great for stopping. Spenser ducks back into the liquor store, only to leap back out again with an oath, the first policeman advancing from the front of the store. In desperation LeRoy seizes Fool and lifts him up in the headlights' hard white glare..

LEROY

You gonna hit this boy, you start shooting!

LeRoy holds Fool like a kicking, screaming shield, and backs towards his only escape, the high chainlink fence. The cop at the car FIRES into the air.

COP 2

I SAID FREEZE!

FOOL

LEROY!!!

Cop 1 jumps from the back of the liquor store, shotgun ready. LeRoy flings Fool at him -- Fool crashes into the startled Cop -- LeRoy and Spenser claw up the fence. The cop throws Fool savagely aside, clawing for balance.

BLAM! -- The cop from the car wings one on the run at LeRoy, caught in barbed wire at the fence's top. Spenser's over and tearing for the van.

Cop 1 lurches to his feet, eager to be the one to kill LeRoy -- Fool makes a diving shove and the man pitches forward just as his partner FIRES again. The near cop spins with a shout and falls.

The running policeman stops in horror at what he's done. LeRoy rips free with a triumphant yell and dives into the van as it careens by -- Fool jerks up and streaks for the back door of the liquor store. Cop 2 wheels and pulls the trigger on Fool.

CLICK -- hammer on empty cylinder. He screams in fury --

COP 2

SHIT -- could'a had that sonuvabitch!

9 EXT. FRONT OF LIQUOR STORE -- NIGHT.

9

Fool jumps through the shattered front window and tears across the street. SIRENS converge as he's swallowed by darkness.

10 INT. ALICE'S BEDROOM.

10

CU -- DOORWAY. A BOLT OPENS on the other side and the woman from the first firelit scene ENTERS. OUR SHOT IS LOW; WE STILL DON'T SEE HER FACE.

She crosses TO REVEAL THE GIRL from the first scene -- ALICE. 17, dressed only in a thin shift. She's beautiful, unmarked as a thing bought but kept in its box. Only her eyes betray something -- their deep, arched light crazed with a hairline fracture of fear. She straightens in her chair. Before her, a tiny table set with a single dish and glass.

CU -- PLATE as the woman lifts it -- cleaned -- the barest evidence of food.

THE WOMAN'S FACE -- seen for the first time. A powerful aspect of determination, surveillance and discipline.

WOMAN

You didn't ... lick this, did you?

The girl's eyes pull some interior shutter closed.

ALICE

No.

WOMAN

"No"?

ALICE

No ma'am.

The woman indicates the dress she's brought. Alice pulls it on and is transformed straightaway into a picture-perfect Heidi girl/woman -- gleaming in white cotton frill. The woman snatches up a brush and harshly curries the girl's hair. The girl winces but makes no sound. By now we've noticed the room -- a "perfect little girl's room". White and pink, everything in its place. Spotless.

WOMAN

Do you love your mother?

ALICE

Yes ma'am.

WOMAN

"Yes ma'am" what?

ALICE

Yes ma'am I love you mother.

The woman finishes, smiles without warmth. Alice backs against the wall.

WOMAN

Good girl.

The woman picks up the dishes and moves to the door. Then stops. Turns back, icy calm.

WOMAN (CONTD)

Where's your fork?

ALICE

(instantly alert)

Fork?

WOMAN

I gave you a fork with this. Where is your fork?

The girl looks around nervously.

ALICE

It must've fallen... somewhere. On the floor, maybe.

WOMAN

You don't know?

ALICE

I'm sure it's on the floor -- I mean, I know I dropped it.

The girl falls to her knees -- scrambles behind her chair.

LOW ANGLE WITH ALICE -- moving along the wall as if searching. She glances behind her, making sure the woman can't see, then for some reason pulls back the grating to the wall heating duct at the floorboards. It opens surprisingly easily.

WOMAN (OS)

You know the punishment for losing silverware.

ALICE

I'm sure it's right here.

She holds out her hand as if expecting the fork to walk right out of that heating duct.

And then something extraordinary. A long, pale, thin hand snakes out of the darkness of the duct and carefully places the fork in Alice's hand. The girl snatches it with relief. And then, even more oddly, her hand and the grimy, skeletal hand touch quickly, as if in greeting, then the hand disappears. Alice silently closes the grating and stands OUT OF FRAME.

WIDER -- as the woman crosses suspiciously.

ALICE

I knew it was there.

The woman takes it, eyeing the girl. Next moment the man looms up BG, OUT OF FOCUS, HUGE.

MAN

Niggers robbed the store.

ON THE GIRL'S FACE. Going even more pale.

WOMAN

Again? May they burn in hell...

MAN

I am very tense from this...

WOMAN

You have one of your headaches?

MAN

I am very, very tense about this.

The girl turns, fear in her eyes, looking to the woman.

WOMAN (OS)
(laconic)
Alice has been bad. She licked her
plate and dropped her fork.

ALICE
No -- !

The woman wheels on her, Alice falls silent.

WOMAN
Remember not to bruise her face.

WAIST-HIGH ANGLE ON THE WOMAN as she goes out. The bulk of
the MAN'S BODY STEPS INTO FRAME -- FRAME CUTTING JUST ABOVE
HIS WAIST. Alice BG watches him pull off his belt, loop it
in a red fist. His voice is low, slurred, terrifying.

MAN (FACE OS)
Bad girls burn in hell.

11 EXT. GHETTO -- DAY. 11

SCREAMS of CHILDREN in underwear dancing in the cascade of a
hydrant -- a bottle SHATTERS in a courtyard. It's a
blistering noon-hour, the stoops filled with people driven
out by the heat. Through this FOOL runs, a paper bag under
his arm. He cuts across a no-man's-land of broken brick to
a scorched tenement --

12 INT. HALLWAY & STAIRWELL -- DAY. 12

-- running through a dark tangle of needles, money and half-
naked CRACK ADDICTS. One ADDICT tries to snare Fool's
package, but the boy's too fast -- already up the stairs.

Fool emerges in an upper hallway lit by daylight from a
gutted apartment, knocks at the only remaining door. In the
ruined apartment HALF-WILD DOGS tear at something on the
floor; Fool knocks again, harder. The door, reinforced with
sheet metal, is opened by a LITTLE GIRL. She runs away with
a laugh.

13 INT. FOOL'S APARTMENT -- DAY. 13

Fool enters. In daylight the poverty's even harsher. A
BABY fusses on one tattered couch, TODDLERS wrestle on
another, their machine-gun imitations ricocheting off the
bare walls. The only amenity is a TV with a slowly rolling
picture of a blond holding product next to her face and
smiling. Voices in the kitchen.

RUBY (OS)

Ain't right -- this is a boy just
thirteen yesterday -- you gonna get
him shot, you take him out again.

LEROY (OS)

He don't need to go on the break in,
just help us scope the place out.
Spenser found out they go to church
every Sunday -- we'll do it then,
and Fool can be home havin' a soda.

Fool glances to the bedroom.

14 INT. MOTHER'S BEDROOM -- DAY.

14

His mother lies shaking beneath a thin blanket.

RUBY (OS)

S'pose you gonna look out for him.

LEROY (OS)

He work for me, he do better'n the
resta you.

15 INT. KITCHEN -- DAY.

15

Fool rattles the bag and enters a room severely damaged by
smoke and water. LeRoy, a milk carton for a chair, slumps
near the window, not acknowledging Fool's entrance.

LEROY (CONTD)

Out'a seven, three's dead, there's
you turnin tricks on the strip,
Willy livin for the needle, and
who's that one in the slammer for
'sault?

Ruby, dressed in short shorts and a flimsy synthetic blouse,
stands stirring a pot over a Sterno burner, staring into it
as if into the bitter well of her life.

RUBY

Washington. He didn' do nothin.

LEROY

He tried to put food on the table --
that's what I'm teachin' the boy
t'do

RUBY

He wanna be a doctor --

LEROY

You can't afford rent, let alone
send Fool t'school.

LeRoy flicks a look to the boy. Fool takes a can of beans out of the bag, avoiding the man's eyes.

FOOL

Helped you once, don't need to do it again.

(lower)

Ain't right, anyway.

LEROY

That right? You know your momma got a cancer in her she can't afford to --

RUBY

LeRoy!

Ruby drops the ladle, confronting LeRoy -- Fool stares at them, dumbfounded --

LEROY

Thing any doctor could cut out easy if y'had money to pay --

Ruby lunges at him -- LeRoy grabs her -- muffles her with a big hand as he finishes straight to Fool.

LEROY (CONTD)

But y'don't got the money if y'don't help out on this next -- AGH!!

He doubles over clutching his knee -- Fool's kicked him hard!

FOOL

Don't you mess with my sister.

LeRoy drops Ruby, lifts Fool against the ceiling --

LEROY

Now you listen, you whack snotnose -- this one's the Big One.

(back to Ruby)

LEROY (CONTD)

An' it's someone deserve t'be robbed.

RUBY

(beat, carefully)

Who you talking about?

LeRoy puts Fool down, proud.

LEROY

The landlord, that's who.

RUBY

Landlord? Of this building?

LeRoy pulls a sheet of paper from his pants.

LEROY

Found the treasure map las' night,
in the back room of the liquor store
-- a letter addressed to the owner,
along with the name of his company.

RUBY

So?

LEROY

So the name of that company's the
same as on your eviction notice.
Same guy owns the liquor store owns
this building -- an half the other
buildings in this ghetto.

(lifts his eyes to
her

significantly)

I know where your landlord lives.

Ruby takes this in. Shakes her head.

RUBY

Don't mess with that man -- I heard
things 'bout him.

LEROY

(cool)

You heard 'bout the gold?

Ruby stops. LeRoy grins slyly, shakes the letter.

LEROY

This's from a company wants t'buy
coins the landlord's collected.
Gold coins.

Fool looks at Ruby.

RUBY

You want to be stupid, LeRoy, you
don't need Fool for that.

LEROY

We got a plan for him. Foolproof.

(to Fool)

Or you want your fam'ly eaten beans
in the street?

Fool looks at the man a long moment, then walks out of the room.

16 INT. MARY'S BEDROOM -- DAY.

16

Fool covers his mother more carefully.

FOOL

Some day I gonna buy you a Cadillac
for each foot, Mama -- an' you'll
skate through town lookin so bad.

She lays her long, trembling finger over his mouth, speaking so quietly he can barely hear.

MARY

Just help with the children,
Poindexter. You're the man of the
house now...

FOOL

(softly)
Trying, Mama.

17 EXT. AVENUE -- DAY.

17

A CHANGING NEIGHBORHOOD -- what were once grand houses now a guarded neighborhood at the ghetto's edge. A WHITE VAN cruises by.

18 INT. VAN -- DAY.

18

Spenser driving, LeRoy spotting.

LEROY

There.

MOVING POV -- a rambling house that's had many additions and expansions. Huge.

SPENSER

Jesus, goes on forever.

LEROY

No bars on the windows.

SPENSER

No car in the drive. Maybe we
lucked out -- where's Fool?

LEROY

He's going in -- taking it cool.

19 EXT. THE STREET -- DAY.

19

LOW ANGLE across the street from the house. LEGS in khaki shorts stop FOREGROUND and FOOL CROUCHES INTO FRAME, faking tying his shoes. He's dressed in a full Boy Scout uniform, studying the house across the street. He jerks his shoelace tight and heads for it.

20 EXT. THE HOUSE AND STREET -- DAY.

20

Fool, carrying a shopping bag, marches into the house's huge shadow, dwarfed as he goes up to the porch. Advertising flyers and tatters of leaves litter its floor. There's no doorbell, so the boy knocks on the locked storm door. Knocks again, louder. No answer or movement inside. Fool tries to look through the windows, but curtains block seeing in.

THE DRIVE -- Fool walks to a rear doorway. Stairs lead to an enclosed porch jumbled with old cartons, rusted garden tools. All of the porch windows are protected by heavy industrial-mesh screens. The rear windows of the second floor are similarly clad.

Fool straightens his uniform and knocks smartly on the outer door. He tries the knob quietly. Locked.

Fool walks into the deserted back yard. There's the remains of an old garden there, now rank and overgrown around a lilly pond choked with algae. It's the nearest to a garden Fool's seen, though, and he momentarily forgets the house, fascinated.

It's at this moment that Alice, the girl from the opening scenes, appears in an upper window and peeks down on Fool as one might at a strange animal discovered at a feeder -- quietly, shyly, with enormous curiosity. She's not in the frilly dress now -- but back in the shift. Still, in her pale and ghostly way she's hauntingly beautiful.

Unaware he's being observed, Fool stoops and touches the water.

The girl smiles shyly. Then at the SOUND of a door being thrown open -- the girl disappears.

Fool turns to see the stern WOMAN coming down the stairs.

WOMAN (CONTD)

May I help you?

Fool didn't expect to see a woman. He looks at her for a micro-beat, then smiles and crosses to her, Bryant Gumbling it.

FOOL

Afternoon, Ma'am. Know you're busy.
Just like t'show you some delicious
cookies we're selling.

(brings a box from
his shopping bag)

It's for --

WOMAN

I'm sorry, we --

FOOL

I know it's a bother, Ma'am -- but
so's Cer'bral Palsy, an' if we all
don't do what we can --

WOMAN

I'm sorry.

FOOL

Well, you got a bathroom I could
use? They leave us out here all day
without a place to --

She forces the door closed and latches the lock. The boy
nods, tips his cap.

FOOL

That's alright, that's okay, ma'am.
Thank you anyway -- I understand...

He turns and marches back down the drive under the scrutiny
of the woman.

21 EXT. CITY AVENUE -- DAY.

21

Fool stands on the curb, a tiny figure beneath the tangle of
utility poles and lighted signs. The white van slips up,
obscuring him and when it rushes away again the boy is gone.

22 INT. THE VAN -- DAY.

22

FOOL throws off the cap, jersey and kerchief, pulling on a
dirty T-shirt -- revealing as he does ribs jutting through
his skin. Spenser's grilling him --

SPENSER

Heavy wire screens on the back
windows? They been hit before, you
think?

LEROY

Just the neighborhood, prob'bly.
(to Fool)
How those screens held on?

FOOL
Padlocks. On the outside.

SPENSER
(a take)
Padlocks on the outside? What else?
Alarms?

FOOL
Nothing I could see. She wouldn't
let me in.

SPENSER
I told you tell her you hadda piss.

FOOL
She wasn't buying that one.

Spenser swears under his breath.

SPENSER
I'm gonna take a look.

LeRoy jerks to attention.

LEROY
Don't get stupid, now, Spensuh. The
boy told all there was to see. We
go in Sunday, like we planned.

SPENSER
What if they got a remote alarm to
the police? I'm not going in there
Sunday without knowing what they got
for security. I just check their
doors, maybe their basement for
connector boxes.

Spenser pulls to the curb, LeRoy increasingly nervous --

LEROY
How you gonna do that? Fool said
she wouldn't even let him on the
porch.

SPENSER
Send a boy to do a man's job, that's
what you get.

He climbs into the rear of the van, brushing past Fool.
Fool looks to LeRoy, LeRoy looks away.

23 EXT. THE HOUSE AND DRIVE. DAY.

23

Spenser walks up the drive wearing a Gas Company uniform, carrying a tool belt and clipboard. He knocks on the lower door of the rear porch. Loud, insistent. No answer.

He checks the back windows, garage, fences, rusted swing set -- all in a few practiced glances. The SOUND of a door opening behind him turns him to see the woman watching him.

WOMAN

Help you?

Even more than Fool, Spenser's manner is professional, courteous.

SPENSER

Gas Company, ma'am. Got an emergency -- we need to check your meter.

WOMAN

Passed it on your way up the drive.

SPENSER

That one we already got, ma'am. There's another in your house. That's the one.

WOMAN

There's none in the house, I'm quite sure of that.

Consults clipboard.

SPENSER

Probably aren't even aware of it, ma'am, but it's on the master list and it's gotta be checked -- got a leak somewhere on this block that could be dangerous.

The woman isn't budging from the doorway.

WOMAN

Identification?

Spenser fumbles in his pocket and actually produces an I.D.

SPENSER

Fact is we've legal right to come in, even if we have to call the police, ma'am. Not that we ever have, but...

The woman studies his I.D.

WOMAN

It's just there's been an awful lot of robberies lately -- neighborhood's changing. Has us all a bit on edge.

She steps out of the door, smiles. Spenser takes his card back, also smiling.

SPENSER

Better this little bother than a chance of danger ...

Spenser enters the porch. The woman glances down the drive, then locks the door behind her.

24 EXT. HOUSE AND STREET. DAY

24

ON THE HOUSE FROM THE STREET, THEN PAN DOWN THE STREET TO THE PARKED VAN.

25 INT. VAN. DAY.

25

Fool is in the passenger's seat, watching with those big, luminous eyes. LeRoy, now behind the wheel, lowers the binoculars, uneasy.

FOOL

Don' know how he got past that woman. She's got X-ray eyeballs.

LEROY

Spenser's slippery as a snake...
(gnaws at his lip)
I think he's up t'somethin...

Fool's eyes turn to the man, alert and somehow adult.

FOOL

Something like what?

LEROY

Like maybe grabbing that coin collec'shun hisself, cuttin me out.

FOOL

You mean cuttin us out.
(shyly)

Spenser mess with you, he got me to deal with, too.

LeRoy smiles a big gold-toothed smile.

LEROY

You somethin, Fool.

He holds up his first and second fingers pressed tightly together. Fool smiles, looks away with shining eyes.

FOOL

You knew that policeman wasn't gonna shoot me, didn' you?

LEROY

You mean back a that liquor store?

(laughs)

Ain't no cop want 'be 'vestigated for brutality towards no child... Hell, that's the oldest trick in the book, throwin a kid at a cop.

(watches Fool)

You know you my main man, right?

Fool yields and puts out his palm. They slap five. Next moment LeRoy reacts off-screen.

ON THE HOUSE FROM VAN'S POV -- the woman pulls out of the drive in an old station wagon and disappears up the street. LeRoy's baffled.

LEROY

She leave him alone in the place?
Gotta be kiddin...

FOOL

Maybe there's someone else in there.
Old folks. Kids or something.

The two look back to the house. No movement.

LEROY

Spensuh should stick his ugly head out, give us some kinda sign...

FOOL

Maybe he gonna look 'round a little, make sure it's safe.

LEROY

Maybe the Pres'dent gonna make me Sec'tary of Pussy.

ON THE HOUSE: still as a photograph.

LEROY (CONTD)

He probably in there hidin' the best for himself, skinny bastud...

(beat)

We gonna go in.

FOOL
Spenser said wait, LeRoy...

LEROY
You want him gettin' all the shit
for himself? Why not just throw
your mama out in the street along
with Ruby and the kids?

Fool looks at the house, rips his thumbnail in his teeth.

26 EXT. DRIVE AND REAR OF HOUSE. DAY.

26

LeRoy motors straight up the drive to the rear porch, far enough to block view of himself from the street. Fool, back in his Scout's uniform, hops out and knocks on the door.

No answer.

Satisfied no one's there, LeRoy forces the flimsy door and swings it open. Looks at Fool and smiles.

27 INT. BACK PORCH. DAY.

27

LeRoy grunts as he sees the door into the house is much heavier than the first, and locked. He tries to find purchase for the crowbar; Fool watches a moment, then looks down, eye caught...

He picks up a strange DOLL, hand-made, hastily done -- a male figure with lank black hair, clothed in white coveralls. All in all, it looks a lot like Spenser, and it has its arm crushed in a rat trap. Fool throws it down.

FOOL
Listen, LeRoy, this breaking and
entering might not be so smart right
now... I mean, it's the first day of
my thirteenth birthday -- could be
unlucky.

LeRoy's just skinned his knuckles on the stubborn door.

LEROY
Thirteenth birthday's unlucky
anyways -- too old to get tit, too
young to get ass. Fucked either
way.

LeRoy pops the door, splintering the frame. He swings it open.

LEROY
Oh, Lord. Looka this, now.

They're looking down a narrow corridor of broken pots and dead plants to a second door, this one of steel.

FOOL

They ain't messin' 'round...

LeRoy touches the bare metal, whistling silently through pursed lips. He listens with his ear to the door, then calls quietly.

LEROY

Spenser?

No response, so he starts to work with his crowbar once more. REVERSE ON FOOL -- entering the little corridor reluctantly.

FOOL

Think I got what it takes to be a doctor?

LEROY

Doctor of burglary, maybe.

(straining)

You lucky I teaching you a trade -- ugh!

(at the door)

Fuckin' Fort Knox or what?

LeRoy puts his back into it. With a terrible wrench of steel the lock gives way. He gives Fool a Mr-Cool smile.

LEROY

Ain't no door stands up to LeRoy.

He swings it open, revealing a kitchen. A dark blur speeds across it -- and LeRoy's struck in the chest by a huge dog with no more warning than an enraged RASP. The man crashes backwards with a shout, the giant dog's teeth flashing for his throat!

Surprisingly, Fool reacts well, jabbing the hand of a rake straight through the animal's collar, levering it up -- the dog can't get at him, hung up like this -- and tips it across the outer porch into a stack of boxes.

Fool barely has time to grab an old wooden chair before the big dog re-attacks recklessly, driving Fool backwards. Nearly overwhelmed, Fool does a sudden side-step as the dog lunges for the kill -- and the animal, with nothing to stop its momentum, nose dives down the stairs in a rattling tumble of legs and fangs. Fool throws the chair after him and makes for the kitchen. He beats LeRoy -- who's barely recovered his wits -- through the opened steel door, slamming it behind them.

28 INT. A KITCHEN. DAY.

28

Fool stands there shaking and hyperventilating -- LeRoy slings a heavy wooden table against the door as the enraged animal throws itself against the other side with maniacal abandon. Then suddenly it stops.

LeRoy backs against a row of cupboards, impressed.

LEROY

Now that's one mean motherfucker.
You see that -- he come at me like a
airplane or somethin!

FOOL

(barely audible)
Saw him, all right...

LeRoy peeks through a hole between the door and frame made by his forced entry.

FOOL

He gone?

LEROY

Waitin right there.
(grimly)
Mother didn't even bark...

FOOL

Been trained not to, maybe.

As that observation sinks in, SHOT WIDENS TO REVEAL THE WHOLE KITCHEN. Immaculate, large to the point of being institutional. The heavy wire screens on the windows add to this feeling, as do the rows of big aluminum pots and pale walls of locked cabinets. LeRoy sniffs.

LEROY

Someone need a bath. Bad.

There's an almost subliminal BUZZING DRONE, drawing Fool's eyes to the window sills. There, among a black layer of dying flies is the room's only personal touch: a statue of three huddled monkeys, one covering his eyes, the next his ears, the last his mouth, all over the inscription: SEE NO EVIL, HEAR NO EVIL, SPEAK NO EVIL.

FOOL

Let's get out a here, LeRoy. Out the front.

LEROY

First we see what's what with old Spensuh.

He crosses to a doorway leading to a dark living room.

FOOL

Hell with him, let's just...

LeRoy stops Fool with one of his looks.

LEROY

Hell with all them gold coins?
Maybe you too stupid for this kinda
work. Or maybe too chickenshit.

Before Fool can respond, they both HEAR a measured progress of weight across the ceiling of the kitchen, as if someone was creeping across the floor above. LeRoy smiles.

LEROY (CONTD)

There's that bastud now. Come on,
we'll s'prise him.

He enters the living room. Fool doesn't move.

LEROY (CONTD)

(turning)

You comin, or what?

FOOL

I don't think you should go up
there, LeRoy.

LeRoy looks at the kid.

LEROY

Fine. Just stay here an keep an eye
out. Think you can handle that?

Fool nods miserably. LeRoy turns and disappears into the livingroom's deep shadow. Fool makes a face, forcing himself to step into the room.

29 INT. LIVING ROOM.

29

He stops just inside the door, wondering at the carpets, furniture, dimensions as alien as the interior of a UFO. The heavy damask curtains admit only the most subdued light, giving even more of a feeling of control, stasis -- almost a museum quality.

FOOL

Enough room for ten fam'lies in
here.

LEROY

Somethin, huh?

LeRoy heads up the stairs. A moment after he disappears from sight something falls over on concrete, the SOUND coming up from beneath. In Fool's face the curiosity gives way to a gnawing uneasiness.

30 INT. KITCHEN. DAY.

30

He finds the cellar entrance just into the kitchen from the living room, a reinforced door bolted locked. In its center is a sturdy viewing port. Fool gingerly slides it up -- clamps his hand over his face. A moment after the smell hits him he's aware of the DISTANT SOUND OF A SOAP OPERA'S MUSIC. And then, much nearer, a SLIGHT SCRAPING. Fool slams the hatch. Thinks.

Then he throws the bolt and opens the larger door, holding his nose and looking down the long flight of stairs. On the fourth tread down is Spenser's clipboard.

As Fool goes down to pick it up, we PAN DOWN TO THE DOOR SILL. A dirty string runs from the door over the top stair into the dark beneath the stairs.

31 INT. STAIRS/CELLAR.

31

ON FOOL WITH SPENSER'S CLIPBOARD -- HEARING the SCRAPING again, farther back in the cellar. He tries the light switch. Nothing. He strains to see into the deep gloom. Impenetrable. Suddenly there's a quick sweep of FLASHLIGHT across the floor from some distance away. Then it disappears.

FOOL

(beat)

Spenser? That you back there?

There's a moment's silence, then:

VOICE (OS)

Shhhhhh!

Fool looks confused, contrite, confused again.

FOOL

I ain't stupid.

He starts back up to the kitchen, then stops.

FOOL (CONTD)

(mimicking LeRoy)

Or maybe you too chickenshit for this kinda work.

He turns, lights a Bic and goes down the stairs, pissed at himself for being so scared. Behind him, the string tightens, pulled from beneath the stairs, and the door latches with the merest CLICK. UTTER DARKNESS NOW. And the SOUND OF THE TV goes off.

FOOL -- stops, sensing the drop in light. Then he HEARS the clear, RINGING of a heavy coin falling and rotating on concrete. He turns back to the darkness, listening. No sound now except the drone of the SOAP OPERA, coming back up.

LOOKING OUT AT FOOL FROM BACK IN THE CELLAR, as he advances towards us, illumined only by his lighter. Just as he reaches CU THE BEAM OF A FLASHLIGHT flicks across his face and locks on his eyes.

FOOL -- jerks round and stares into the glare. Whoever's holding the light is about twenty feet away. And the TV goes silent again.

FOOL (CONTD)

Spenser?

IN FOOLS' POV: the light, which has been flashing from between the slats of a rough wall, retreats back, back until it disappears far back in the dark. This is a big cellar.

Then Fool again hears the SOUND OF COINS -- FALLING AND RINGING a considerable distance away, back where the TV's coming up on a bulletin from some hellish desert war.

Fool walks towards this sound until he finds a slat door. Here the SOUND of the TV is loudest. He swings the door open, lifts the lighter, REVEALING a sort of closet before him. Up high on a shelf there's the TV -- face to the wall.

CU ON FOOL, staring up at the back of the blaring set. There's something weird about a television set turned to a wall and left running.

FOOL (CONTD)

(whispered)

Spenser?

Puzzled, even curious, Fool pulls over a crate, climbs up and pulls the TV around. In doing so he uncovers a square hole, like a high window, its opening covered by the ubiquitous steel mesh.

Fool strains up on his tip-toes, trying to look through. The bloodless light of the screen makes an X-ray of the closet, but illumines nothing beyond. The News is very LOUD now, racing through an on-the-scene report of heavy shelling. Fool locates the power cord, runs it through his hands till he finds a junction with an extension cord and pulls the plug. The place plunges into stone black darkness.

FOOL (CONTD)

Spenser? You back in there?

There's a moment's silence, then something back in there lets out a deep, feral WHUFF! A startled, upset, animal reaction.

The lighter snaps back on fast, revealing Fool's gleaming face, lit by terror.

Next, without any sound of passage, there's a loud SNUFFING burst of dust from between the heavy wooden slats right next to Fool's head! Fool lets out a yell and reels backwards -- the lighter goes out, and we can hear Fool CRASHING down head over heels. With a loud HOWLING, whatever it is on the other side PRODS THE SHARP LIGHT OF THE FLASHLIGHT BETWEEN THE CRACKS OF THE WALL AND INTO FOOL'S TERRIFIED EYES.

Fool lurches up and runs into the darkness in white-hot panic, visible intermittently, crashing into boxes, old chairs, stacks of wood, as whoever or whatever it is with THE LIGHT CHASES AFTER HIM ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE PLANK WALL -- trying it's best to keep the flashlight in his eyes. It's in this almost stroboscopic light that Fool trips and falls over Spenser's body.

Spenser lies head-first to the wall, his right arm jammed to the shoulder into a steel hatch perhaps six inches by eight. He isn't moving.

FOOL (CONTD)

Spenser...?

THE LIGHT ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WALL DIPS SLOWLY, MOVING CLOSER, as if itself fascinated by the discovery.

Fool tugs at the body, managing to pull it back a little, so that Spenser's face is visible. It's frozen in a grimace of terrible fright and helplessness, totally bloodless, and his once jet-black hair is now snow-white.

CU FOOL -- working his mouth like someone with a sharp bone caught in his throat.

FOOL'S POV TO THE HAND -- something shines between the clenched white fingers. Fool pries the fist open. A heavy gold piece rolls onto the floor.

XCU: Fool's fingers pick it up. There's a terrible power to the gleaming coin, to its size, its bold, imperialistic design, and to its pure, riveting goldness.

CU FOOL'S EYES -- the disk of bright metal mirrored in them, until they shift to Spenser's body. Then terror creeps in.

Spenser's body is being tugged gently but persistently back towards the hole, pulled by the arm still in the hatch.

Fool jumps up, enraged.

FOOL (CONTD)
YOU CAN'T DO THAT!

Fool kicks the wall near the light with all his strength. THE LIGHT JUMPS AWAY with a SCRAPING, WHIMPERING SOUND, back towards the far end of the basement. Fool stares after it. It stops, still on the boy.

FOOL (CONTD)
Mis'erable stinky thing.
(turns almost
tenderly to
Spenser)
Come on, Spense, get you outta here.

Fool hauls the body backwards, away from the wall. Then he stops, staring.

FOOL (CONTD)
Oh, man. This ain't right.

Spenser's other hand, just emerged from the hole, is half eaten. White bone and tendon where fingers should be.

THE TV SOUND COMES BACK ON, now of a disastrous fall of an airliner, brought down by the war's losing side. Fool stands, looking back towards the SOUND and cold, bluish LIGHT

FOOL (CONTD)
(low)
Who are you...?

A long, wiry, whitish arm snakes out and whips around Fool's face! The kid spins in panic as SOMEONE in long hair leaps onto his back! THE FLASHLIGHT COMES SCUTTLING BACK BEHIND THE WALL. Fool lurches away, THE HAIRY SOMEONE clinging to his back -- SHRIEKING LIKE A BANSHEE!

Fool runs straight at a wall, and at the last second spins, impacting his passenger into the wall with a bone-jarring collision. Whoever or whatever it is on his back lets out a cry of surprise -- Fool throws it off, scrambles up and streaks for the stairs. He's two steps from the top when the entire staircase flattens into a steep chute. Fool digs in his fingernails, but slides backwards and down nonetheless, landing in a heap at the bottom.

He jerks round. Off to one side he can still hear the being he knocked off his back, gibbering in the inky darkness -- but now, from another direction, something very large is slouching, SCRAPING across the darkness of the floor towards him, slobbering in a weird, demented tongue something about ripping blood and bone apart. Fool springs up the ramp with the renewed adrenaline of pure terror, clawing fingerholds and somehow making the landing. But the door is still locked!

He's slamming on it in terror as the ramp shudders and reforms into stairs, and when he turns, he sees whatever it is at their bottom start crawling up!

Fool wheels back to the door -- desperate -- and the door opens, unlatched from the other side! For just one brief moment Fool glimpses the girl -- wide eyed -- staring back at him. Then she's gone!

32 INT. THE KITCHEN. DAY.

32

Fool claws his way out of the door -- just as a dark and hairy hand grabs his feet and hauls him back. Fool kicks free with a yell of disgust and fear, slams the door and throws the bolt -- -- all with the incredible speed of pure terror. Then he reels into the center of the kitchen, rasping, soaked with sweat. Looking --

The house is silent again, the girl nowhere to be seen. Then he's spun round by a CAR rushing past the kitchen window into the back yard. He runs to the window.

33 EXT. BACK YARD --FOOL'S POV -- DAY.

33

The "Xray eyes" woman gets out of her station wagon. The big dog runs madly back and forth between her and the house. The woman looks towards the house, then towards Spenser's van. Then a huge MAN starts to unfold himself from the station wagon.

FOOL

Oh, shit. There goes the neighborhood...

34 INT. LIVING ROOM. DAY.

34

Fool skids to a stop at the staircase leading upstairs -- calls up in a hoarse whisper --

FOOL

LeRoy! Hey, LeRoy!

No answer. He runs up the stairs, sure the man or dog will be on him any second.

Fool stops at the landing, looking up the short second flight, his eyes level with the floor of the hall up there.

CU -- HIS FACE. Growing horror.

35 INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY.

35

FOOL'S POV -- LeRoy's legs stick out from a corner at the far end of the hall, motionless. Fool would like nothing better than to turn and run, but he forces himself to go up the stairs, forces himself to creep down the hall to the legs.

Peeking around the corner he finds LeRoy lying on his belly with his arm and part of his face stuck into another hatch, similar to but larger than the one in the cellar. With a look of infinite pain Fool reaches to roll the big man over. At the touch, LeRoy jumps as if electrified!

LEROY

Jeesuss!!!

FOOL

Yowww!!!!

Both recoil from each other in shock; LeRoy recovers first -- furious -- grabbing Fool and lifting him into the air with one hand.

LEROY

Scared the shit outta me!

FOOL

I t-t-thought you were dead, LeRoy!
You were just layin there!

LEROY

(disgusted)

A man ain't dead just cause he got himself down on the floor!

(indicates hatch)

I was listenin -- somethin's in there.

LEROY CONTD
(casual)
Matter of fact, take a crawl in
there an --

Fool, still treading air at the end of LeRoy's arm, summons
all his energy --

FOOL
You turkeybrain -- you hittin on me
and I come up here t'save your ass!
You got your dumb head stuck in
there and you gonna lose it just
like Spenser!

LeRoy's stopped by the authority that's come over this
skinny kid.

LEROY
What kinda shit you talkin?

FOOL
I'm talking we gotta get outta here
-- that Xray lady's back and she got
a man with her the size'a Detroit!
They out by the van right now!

LEROY
Oh, man --

LeRoy drops Fool like a hot potato and runs to the head of
the stairs, listening. Fool joins him. No sound yet from
downstairs.

LEROY (CONTD)
(low)
You seen Spenser?

FOOL
I seen Spenser, all right.

LEROY
He find anything?

FOOL
Somethin found him.
(LeRoy looks)
He's dead, LeRoy. Bled t'death.

LEROY
(incredulous)
You sure?

FOOL
You thought he was white before, you
should see that sucker now.

LeRoy looks around, something felt now confirmed.

 LEROY
 (very low)
This place is funny...

 FOOL
This place ain't funny.

LeRoy nods and slips down the stairs, followed by Fool.

36 INT. LIVING ROOM. DAY.

36

LeRoy makes it almost to the kitchen when he hears FOOTSTEPS outside on the back porch. Then the man's VOICE -- deep, harsh, frightening:

 MAN (OS)
Doors've been pried open...

 WOMAN (OS)
I told you there'd be another one...

LeRoy stops Fool with an upraised hand.

 LEROY
 (whispered)
Out the front!

They race across the living room to the front door. Fool makes it first -- grabs the doorknob and is instantly convulsed and sent flying backwards as a SHARP BLUE ARC flames between his hand and the metal. He staggers up, holding his burned hand, staring at LeRoy.

LeRoy picks up a heavy marble bookend and throws it at the biggest of the front windows. The thing WHAMS into what must be Plexiglass, bounces right off and crashes to the floor. Both Fool and LeRoy stare in disbelief; then they hear the voices even nearer.

 MAN (OS)
You hear that?

 WOMAN (OS)
Something's against the door -- push
so Prince can get in.

 MAN (OS)
Right!

LeRoy turns to Fool with a "here we go again" look. Already they can HEAR the heavy table blocking the door SLIDING BACK inch by inch -- the dog's FEROCIOUS GROWLS.

LEROY
 (pointing to a
 spot)
 Stand right there -- right out in
 the open so's that fuckin dog can
 see you!

FOOL
 (petrified)
 You think I'm crazy? That mother
 got teeth he ain't even used yet!

LEROY
 (brandishing
 crowbar)
 Do like I say or I take your head
 off!

Fool realizes the simple plan -- gulps and obediently plants
 himself out in the middle of the room. LeRoy jumps behind
 an overstuffed chair, crowbar in hand like a club.

LEROY (CONTD)
 Gonna nail that sucker, don' worry!!

FOOL
 I'm worried.

37 INT. KITCHEN. DAY.

37

The door's already forced enough for the straining dog to
 shove his snarling head through. Now it's manhandled open
 one more critical inch -- and the dog's in!

38 INT. LIVING ROOM. DAY.

38

The dog explodes into the living room, sees Fool and jams on
 the brakes. Freezes right in the middle of the living room,
 snarling, head cocked. Fool is glistening with sweat --
 this is one big son-of-a-bitching dog, and it's smart, too.

THE DOG -- smells something it doesn't like. Looks towards
 the overstuffed chair that is LeRoy's hiding place.

FOOL
 Uh-oh...

LeRoy, not hearing anything else, pops his head up, looking
 to Fool.

LEROY
 Where'd he go?
 (sees dog)
Shit!

The huge dog lets out a blood-curdling RASP and charges!
Before LeRoy can raise the crowbar the animal's all over him
like a cheap suit!

LEROY

Fool!

Fool grabs LeRoy's left arm in desperation and drags him up
as the giant dog sinks his teeth into LeRoy's other arm!
Fool hauls them both one struggling step to the front door
-- the dog shaking LeRoy's arm like a rat -- LeRoy howling
in pain --

LEROY

What the hell you doin'?!

Fool thuds against the door with teeth clenched and grabs
the doorknob. Instantly there's a SHOWER OF SPARKS between
his hand and LeRoy's arm, and between LeRoy and the dog's
jaws. All three are twisted around and sent flying by the
powerful JOLT!

LeRoy lands under a coffee table, Fool at the foot of the
stairs. The dog ends up in the center of the living room,
frothing and snapping at air.

39 INT. KITCHEN. DAY.

39

The man and woman HAMMER on the door from the other side --
the woman hysterical.

WOMAN (OS)

Prince!? Prince!!

MAN (OS)

Watch it!

The man hits with a TREMENDOUS CONCUSSION -- and the door
gives way. Instantly a powerful arm comes through, shoving
the door the rest of the way open with a sharp rending of
wood. And there's a gun in his hand.

40 INT. LIVING ROOM. DAY.

40

ON LEROY -- staggering up, hearing this. Fool rolls over,
nose bleeding.

FOOL

These people crazy or what?

LEROY

You ask 'em!

LeRoy barrels past Fool towards the only escape he can think
of -- back up the stairs. Fool tears dizzily after.

41 INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY.

41

LeRoy runs down the long hall into a doorway into --

42 INT. MASTER BEDROOM. DAY.

42

A large, Baronial bedroom -- beamed ceilings, black shag rug, red-plush drapes and a four-poster custom-made for Leviathan. LeRoy throws back the drapes and tries to lift a window. It's bolted shut.

LEROY

Shit!

He kicks wildly at the "glass," swears out in pain, hobbling back on a sprung ankle. No damage to the window. A swim of panic moves through his eyes.

FOOL

(low)

Now we know why the front windows
don't need bars...

(LeRoy looks at
him)

What kinda shit we in to, LeRoy?

LeRoy wipes his mouth with the back of a shaking hand.

LEROY

Deep shit.

43 INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY.

43

LeRoy and Fool dart to the head of the stairs, listening.

WOMAN (OS)

(sobbing)

Prince! Poor little doggie baby.

(raising voice)

Somebody is in here!

MAN (OS)

(approaching)

People under the stairs got the so-
called gas man...

(beat)

Other one must be upstairs.

WE HEAR THE SLIDE OF AN AUTOMATIC PISTOL CHAMBERING A ROUND.
The thin hard sound slices through LeRoy's spine.

LEROY

(sick)

.45 automatic. You ever see the
hole they tear?

HEAVY FOOTSTEPS start up the stairs. LeRoy backs away, frantically trying doors along the hallway. All locked.

FOOL (CONTD)

We can hide under the bed!

LeRoy waves him away, fear gleaming in his face.

LEROY

Ain't goin back in there. Somethin bout that place...

Just then he finds one door unlocked, a closet. He jumps in, but when Fool tries to join he shoves him right back out.

LEROY (CONTD)

Get your own!

LeRoy pulls the door shut with such selfish enthusiasm that the SOUND is heard by the man still out of sight on the lower section of stairs. The FOOTSTEPS stop.

ON FOOL -- frozen against a wall, listening.

MAN (OS)

(voice low)

Hit that button there.

WOMAN (OS)

(conspiring)

This one?

A powerful CIRCUIT-BREAKER ACTIVATES with a sharp CLACK behind Fool. As he spins round, the door of the master bedroom SLAMS SHUT AND LOCKS WITH A LOUD ELECTROMAGNETIC SHEATHING OF STEEL INTO STEEL.

Fool is trapped between locked doors, LeRoy's closet and the man starting again up the stairs. He darts down the hallway to the corner -- slips around it.

AROUND THE CORNER -- Fool looks up -- there is a second, narrower staircase going up to what looks like it could be the attic. Fool steals up to the door. Locked. He's trapped.

44 INT. LEROY'S CLOSET.

44

LEROY -- gleaming with sweat, holds his breath, pressing against the back wall of the closet, face rigid with fear.

45 INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY.

45

AT THE CORNER OF THE HALLWAY -- CLOSE ON FOOL -- back down at the corner, not breathing, not moving. Down at the other end of the hall the stairs are CREAKING under the weight of someone big approaching.

Then the LIGHTS GO OUT.

For a moment Fool is nothing more than a dark shape. Then a lurching, erratic LIGHT flickers from OFFSCREEN, illuminating enough of Fool's face to show the terror, nothing more. From down the stairs comes the probe of a powerful FLASHLIGHT -- and the blood-red pin-point of a laser-aiming device. Then the big 45. automatic -- juttet out into the flashlight's beam, ready to shoot anything that moves. And the big figure behind all this is crouched, ready.

The man creeps along the hall, clearing each doorway with a robotic sweep of the gun. He's a huge silhouette, fast, silent. No face visible. He comes to a stop near LeRoy's closet, head cocked just like the dogs, attention now focused on the corner behind which Fool hides.

CLOSE ON FOOL. Eyes shining with terror, not moving.

46 INT. LEROY'S CLOSET.

46

LeRoy prays silently. He feels something give behind him. Turns and feels a looseness to the wall behind him. Desperate for a way of escape, he presses ever-so-carefully on the panel there, hoping for a miracle.

It gives an inch, revealing blackness.

LeRoy tries to peer in, see what might lie beyond. He hears a SOUND in the hall outside the door -- a stealthy CREAK of foot and weight. LeRoy Freezes, waits, then once more dares to try to ease the panel back enough to allow him to somehow disappear into the wall.

Then without warning the panel snaps fully open -- revealing the chalk-white, wide-eyed face of a SKELETAL YOUTH whose long white arm snakes out to LeRoy's face -- a hideous HISS of exhalation snaps at LeRoy like a snake's warning!

47 INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY.

47

LeRoy explodes through the closet door with a terrified shriek -- striking the opposite wall full-stride, caroming off in the rimming LIGHT of the blinding flashlight. LeRoy spins around to find himself looking down the gun barrel of the huge man --

CU LEROY'S TERRIFIED FACE -- shouting his last words --

LEROY

Run, Fool!

The laser-dot falls over his chest -- there's a tremendous EXPLOSION -- and LeRoy flies backwards!

Fool covers his eyes --

LeRoy is struck again and again -- a huge puppet dancing against the impact of the big slugs. He lunges at his tormentor, but the big man sidesteps, and LeRoy timbers off-balance toward the stairs, an awful cry ripping from his chest. Like a chain-sawed Sequoia he crashes backwards down the stairs, out of sight, out of life.

WOMAN (OS)

Got him!

The man tears back down the stairs amid INSANE LAUGHTER -- and the upper hallway is plunged into darkness.

MAN (OS)

See that?! Came at me like a bull!

WOMAN (OS)

Just like a bull! Big one!

MAN (OS)

Hear what he called me?

WOMAN (OS)

(a laugh)
Called you a Fool.

MAN (OS)

He's the fool!

WOMAN (OS)

Only good fool's a dead one.

They share another demented laugh, wheezing and gasping in satisfaction as Fool hears a SOUND behind him -- jerks round and freezes -- seeing ANOTHER DOLL -- like the one on the back porch, but this one recognizably him! Brown cotton skin, khaki shirt, it stands upright in the center of the hall next to a lit candle, just out from the corner where Fool hid.

WOMAN (OS)

Better take a look upstairs. Might be a mess.

MAN (OS)

Don't want a mess...

The man's footsteps start up the stairs -- Fool races down the hall, diving for the doll -- but the doll jumps away -- pulled by a length of thread just now visible, scooting around the corner and disappearing. And at the corner, visible for just one split-second, is a bare foot.

Fool snatches up the candle -- charges after whoever it is tormenting him with the doll, hoping for a shield -- anything.

He rounds the corner and finds no one -- only the Fool-doll, ten feet away.

Meanwhile the hulking man tops the stairs at the other end of the hall, listening like a silhouette hunter, gun and flashlight probing the hallway. Fool freezes, just out of sight around the corner.

MAN

Uh oh...

What?, Fool wonders.

WOMAN (OS)

What?!

MAN

(lethal)

I thought I heard something...

Fool doesn't breathe. Neither can see the other, but Fool can hear the man start toward him.

Fool turns -- the Fool-doll's moving again -- right into the little hatch LeRoy was poked into. What the hell -- Fool jams himself in after it -- just small enough to make it -- and just in time to avoid the FLASHLIGHT BEAM PROBING AROUND THE CORNER OF THE HALL!

48 INT. AN ENCLOSURE AND CONNECTING PASSAGES.

48

Pitch black. Fool's only visible when he strikes his lighter and looks quickly around. No doll now, only a DISTANT SCUFFLING, then silence. He's in some sort of tight enclosure of lathing and plywood, with passages leading off into blackness in several directions. Where Fool is right now, there's a nest of rags and rawhide chews, a water dish, a rumpled old blanket and, sticking out from beneath it... a bone, well-gnawed by powerful jaws. A large, long, thin bone.

Fool silently pulls the blanket aside. Claps his hand over his nose. There are more bones, including the thick curve of a human spine, ribs still attached.

ON FOOL -- shaking like a leaf in a growing wind. His eyes rotate at a SOUND.

IN HIS POV -- DOWN ONE OF THE CHUTES RUNNING OFF FROM THIS CHAMBER -- there is a shaft of light revealing a low, narrow passage between the walls -- and moving down it is the doll, tumbling as it's pulled by a young girl peeking into the tunnel at its far end. Next second she has the doll and is gone!

Fool scrambles into the passageway in pursuit -- and a split second later the man's .45 thrusts through the hatch into the dog's bedding area and OPENS UP blindly.

MAN (OS)

You better get back in the cellar,
you little bastard!

49 INT. DOG TUNNEL.

49

TRACKING WITH FOOL -- as he races on hands and knees down this chute (that's maybe two feet wide, two and a half high) towards the light -- bullets spraying in all directions behind him, plaster dust and splinters flying!

MAN (OS)

Little animal shit! I get the dog
up here, you'll be sorry!

Fool reaches a second port, looks back, wondering what the hell the guy's talking about, then peeks out his end of the tunnel. Seems safe.

50 INT. INNER CORRIDOR.

50

Fool finds himself in a second corridor, huge and deserted, this one of cheap labor and materials, and of a meaner, more random design. Fool tries several doors, but they're not only locked but without doorknobs. Then the last door swings open, hinges creaking...

51 INT. MASTER BEDROOM. DAY.

51

HALF-LIGHT POURING THROUGH THE FEW GAPS IN THE HEAVILY CURTAINED WINDOWS. PAN TO CLOSE SHOT ON A HEAVY ANTIQUE DESK. THE MAN'S HANDS thrust under its surface, wide apart and palms up. The thumbs press some invisible trigger and the short combat PUMP SHOTGUN falls from concealment into his hands.

52 INT. BATHROOM. DAY.

52

Fool enters a large, dusty bathroom. Institutional, filthy, abandoned. And at its far end, her back to the sink, is the girl. Fool can't help but stare -- she's weirdly pale and thin, almost angelic in a fragile way. She stares right back, his doll in her hands. Fool walks over to her, scared as she is.

FOOL
(sticks out his
hand)
Name's Fool. What's yours?

She stares at his hand, scared, fascinated. Takes it at length and shakes it delicately.

ALICE
(softly)
Alice.

FOOL
Don't be scared.

She edges farther away. Fool tilts his head.

FOOL
You never meet a brother before?

ALICE
Never had a brother.

FOOL
I mean a black dude. There's black
folks in this neighborhood.

ALICE
Neighborhood?

FOOL
(wondering if
she's a little
slow)
Neighborhood, y'know, outside?

ALICE
Outside. Not in here.

FOOL
So... You get outside, don't you?

The girl shakes her head.

FOOL
You saying... never?

ALICE

Can't get out. No one ever has.

Fool takes this in. Swallows.

FOOL

I'm gonna get out -- I'm a whole other thing.

ALICE

People have tried.

Fool looks back at her, mouth going dry.

FOOL

People in the cellar?

ALICE

(nods solemnly)

Mommy and Daddy looked a long time to find the perfect boy child, but each one they found turned out bad.

(recites)

Some saw things they weren't s'posed to, others heard too much, others talked back. Daddy cut out the bad parts, put the boy in the cellar.

(defending)

They get flashlights and food of some kind, I suppose they're happy in their own way.

Her voice has lapsed into a non-judgemental, almost robotic child's catalog of horror, totally devoid of feeling. It's downright spooky.

FOOL

Right.

(eyes her)

What about you? How come they haven't...

ALICE

(barely audible)

Put me in the cellar? I do not see or hear or speak evil. It's the only way.

53 INT. THE INNER HALLWAY.

53

BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! -- The bolts start unlocking, the doors swinging open. And immediately we begin to HEAR a chilling HOWLING -- garbled, feral -- and challenging!

54 INT. THE BATHROOM. DAY.

54

The staccato HAMMERING of the bolts comes closer and closer -- then the door of the bathroom -- BLAM! -- jumps with the electrical impulse and drifts open. The WAILS are blood-chilling now -- full of rage.

FOOL

(ashen,
whispering)
What's that sound?

ALICE

What sound?

He turns. Alice has her hands clapped over her ears.

FOOL

That yelling-- what is that?!

ALICE

It's Roach -- that's who Daddy's hunting. Daddy hates Roach because he got out of the cellar into the walls -- now Daddy can't find him. When he heard you before -- in the dog tunnel -- he thought you were Roach.

Fool gets this deathly look in his eyes.

FOOL

Somehow I don't think that means if he finds me here instead, he's gonna let me go.

The girl shakes her head.

ALICE

(softly)
He'll send you to heaven like the others.

FOOL

What others?

ALICE

Salesmen, other burglars, workmen -- people who saw too much. He sends them right to heaven.

55 INT. INNER HALLWAY.

55

The man bursts through a doorway from the outer hallway transformed -- now in frightening S&M black leather -- even a black leather hood over his head. Silver chains and studs, gleam everywhere, and the deadly shotgun is at the ready as he charges into the first open door with a cry of fury.

56 INT. FIRST ROOM.

56

The man has pounced into what seems to be a rough storage room, piled with all manner of ratty clothes. But then THE CAMERA'S MOVE REVEALS, in a filthy clearing in a back corner, a SKELETON, linked by handcuffs to an O-bolt screwed into the wall. It's that of a kid of maybe ten. Suddenly, from the walls of the room itself comes the weird WAILING and HOWLING -- moving rapidly, taunting.

The man FIRES wildly into the walls -- BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! -- then he listens, the room swirling with gunsmoke and plaster dust. Then the voice HOOTS from out in the corridor --

MAN

Bastard!!

He races out of the room, reloading frantically!

57 INT. BATHROOM -- DAY.

57

Terrified by the gunfire, Fool's climbed into the sink and is tearing at the window. But it's nailed shut, and the shadow of the omnipresent steel screen lays over the unbreakable plastic glass.

FOOL

There's gotta be a way out!.

ALICE

You can go farther into the house --
that's the only way -- here!

She pulls open an old towel cabinet -- pushes against its back, which hinges inward, revealing a black entrance hole.

ALICE (CONTD)

He's too big to follow, and he's
afraid of what's in there.

FOOL

What kinda place is this, anyway?

ALICE

Bigger than it looks.

Fool looks in. The GUNFIRE begins again, and something scrambles and howls in a slurred string of non-verbal epithets -- back there in the darkness beyond that hole! Fool slams the cabinet shut --

FOOL

Forget it!

58 INT. INTERIOR HALLWAY.

58

The man FIRES into the corridor's ceiling -- then there's a HOWL off in another room -- the man lunges in after it -- more HOWLS and more GUNFIRE.

FOREGROUND -- Fool pokes his head out of the bathroom, starts to ease out. But almost at the same second the SHOTGUN FALLS SILENT and the man bangs back out of the room into the corridor. Fool ducks back, but the man hears the creak of the door -- he turns, his face absolutely maniacal.

59 INT. BATHROOM -- DAY.

59

Fool cringes against the door, out of ideas.

FOOL

Okay, I'll get in there --

He turns to Alice. But she's gone. Fool races to the linen cabinet. Shoves on the back of it, but it doesn't give an inch. And now the man's footsteps stop outside the bathroom door, the shotgun chambers a new round.

FOOL -- jumps into the tub, pulls the mildewed shower curtain shut, trying not to hear the renewed, weirdly sub-human WAILING and HOWLING -- the sound welling up so loudly Fool clamps his hands over his ears.

60 INT. INNER HALLWAY.

60

The man lurches back out into the middle of the hallway, tracking the sound, FIRING directly into the walls -- but being lured away from the bathroom door!

MAN

I'll get you!

61 INT. KITCHEN. DAY.

61

Paying no more attention to the GUNFIRE than a housewife might to her husband nailing up a picture, the woman emerges from the cellar -- blood on her fingers.

WOMAN

Got something for my Princey...

The big dog wobbles into the kitchen; the woman presents Spenser's hand like a dog treat -- the dog snatches it OUT OF FRAME. To the SOUND OF CRUNCHING BONES the woman wheezes maternally --

WOMAN (CONTD)

Good appetite, healthy Prince.
Healthy Prince, secure home.

She stops, suddenly alerted. The dome light of a police cruiser floats by the kitchen window into her back yard.

WOMAN (CONTD)

Stay.

The dog sits instantly, swallowing the last of Spenser's hand. The woman looks up. MORE FIRING from above. The woman snatches open a cupboard, grabs a microphone in there --

62 INT. UPSTAIRS INNER HALLWAY.

62

The man's just reached the bathroom door again when the woman's VOICE booms from a loudspeaker.

WOMAN (SPEAKER)

Daddy -- police out back!

The man turns guiltily with a sharp whimper and runs back through the doorway he entered!

63 INT. OUTER, "PARENTS'" HALLWAY -- DAY.

63

As the man shuts the door on this side, it virtually disappears -- becoming just a panel in the woodwork enclosing the stairs to the attic. The man scuttles into his bedroom and slams the door.

64 INT. BACK PORCH. DAY.

64

The woman shoves the door closed behind her and crosses to the windows overlooking the yard. TWO COPS are out by Spenser's van.

65 INT. BATHROOM.

65

CLOSE ON Fool's sweating face. He lets out a long, shaky exhalation. He steps out of the tub, catches his foot on the tattered shower curtain and falls hard onto the floor. CRASH! He recovers fast, biting his lip. Listening.

66 INT. KITCHEN -- DAY.

66

THE DOG -- head tilted, ears pricked. He looks towards the back porch, then back towards the sound, ears flat in rage.

67 INT. UPSTAIRS INNER HALLWAY.

67

Fool peeks from the bathroom door. The coast is clear -- he slips to a window overlooking the back yard.

68 EXT. BACKYARD FROM FOOL'S POV -- DAY.

68

LOOKING DOWN TO THE POLICEMEN -- one inside the van, the second glances towards the house, gaze drifting up towards Fool's window. Fool taps on the glass -- afraid to bring the maniac back -- but desperate for help, too --

FOOL

Hey -- pssst!

69 EXT. REAR OF HOUSE. LATE AFTERNOON.

69

Unfortunately for Fool the house is soundproof as a recording studio, and worse, the low sun's caught square in the window he's tapping on -- blinding the eyes of the YOUNGER COP, who turns instead to the woman approaching behind him.

YOUNG COP

Afternoon, Ma'am. That your van?

WOMAN

Goodness, no. Just sitting there when we got back from shopping.

YOUNG COP

See anybody around when you pulled in?

MAN (OS)

Trouble?

The man emerges from the house, seen fully for the first time. He's big, but now dressed absolutely straight. In fact both man and woman appear convincingly normal and cooperative.

WOMAN

Matter of fact we did see a couple of men, one black, one white, walking away as we approached. Thought they were service people of some sort.

MAN

Trouble?

YOUNG COP

(pointing it out)

You know they were working on your door, don't you?

The woman nods at its sprung look.

WOMAN

No harm done.

The SECOND POLICEMAN ambles over, a veteran.

VETERAN COP

We'll check the house.

WOMAN

(calmly)

Just checked it -- even looked under the beds. Clean as a whistle.

The cops glance at each other.

YOUNG COP

Let's recon the neighborhood.
There's still a chance.

The older cop scans the house, the heavy screens.

VETERAN COP

Get a lot of this sort of thing?

WOMAN

It's as if we're the prisoners and the criminals roam free.

The officer nods, slipping behind the wheel.

YOUNG COP

Lucky you're all right -- the van was used at a liquor store robbery last night. An officer was shot.

WOMAN

Oh, goodness.

MAN

Liquor store...?

VETERAN COP

I'd advise you to stay inside and keep your doors locked for a while.

WOMAN

We'll do just that.

The cop car pulls out of the drive. The man gives a wave --

MAN

Hope you catch them!

(low)

Catch them in hell.

He looks to the woman, sees she's suddenly fixed on the van.

MAN

What...?

She's inside the van, throwing things around. Then she reappears.

MAN

What is that?

She holds up Fool's Boyscout uniform. Looks to the house, and a terrible darkness crosses her face.

WOMAN (CONTD)

There weren't just the two. There's a boy -- and he's in there right now after our little angel.

70 INT. UPSTAIRS INNER HALLWAY.

70

Fool tears down the hall to the dog port and dives in.

71 INT. DOG PASSAGEWAY.

71

Fool jams himself in, then freezes in horror.

REVERSE -- AT THE FAR END OF THE PASSAGEWAY -- the big dog thrusts his head around the corner and bares its fangs. Fool tries to withdraw, gets stuck --

FOOL

Oh shit.

The dog launches itself like a missile -- all snarling fury.

72 INT. INNER CORRIDOR.

72

Fool tears free and jams his feet against the flap -- the dog hits hard -- gets a paw out, part of his muzzle and teeth -- Fool kicks the flap and dog back, gets up and runs like hell -- the dog in pursuit a heartbeat behind!

73 INT. BATHROOM -- DAY.

73

Fool tears in and slams the door. The dog snarls against the other side in frustration. Then --

MAN (OS)

What ya got, Prince?

There's the unmistakable SOUND of a SHOTGUN LOADING -- FOOTSTEPS APPROACHING. Fool sees there's a bolt on the inside of the door -- eases it locked, holds his breath, wondering if he's been detected. His answer is a TREMENDOUS SHOTGUN BLAST straight through the wood inches over his head! Fool careens to the window, screams out in panic --

FOOL

HEEEELLP!

ANOTHER SHELL RAMS HOME IN ITS CHAMBER. Fool darts to the toilet, pulls the lid off the tank and leaps up on the seat as a SECOND SHOT takes away a huge chunk of the door -- and when the man's head thrusts through the blasted door, Fool breaks the heavy porcelain lid right over his crown -- KA-RACK!

The huge man plunges backwards with a scream of pain, replaced instantly by the ferocious dog, nearly clawing its way through in its first try. Fool shoves it backwards -- the dog snags Fool's wrist -- Fool pokes the animal in the eyes with his free hand a la Three Stooges -- the huge dog falls heavily back into the hall, snapping and shrieking in rage!

Fool staggers back against the sink, Bloodied anew with nowhere else to go. There in the bowl is his doll -- stained now with Fool's own blood. Fool grabs it as if grabbing his own courage -- tears in his eyes.

FOOL

You come in here I'm gonna kick your ass!

The man crashes through the door with an ear-shattering shout -- bloodied and insane with rage. That part Fool expected. But before the man can shoot, the medicine chest behind Fool explodes open, the long thin body of the skeletal kid lunges out and jerks Fool bodily up and through the medicine chest's back wall!

The man FIRES wildly, but the shot only hits where Fool was a second before. Fool is gone! The man screams in fury -- FIRING insanely into the medicine chest --

74 INT. BETWEEN THE WALLS.

74

-- Amid a hail of broken glass and plaster, the thin, wiry kid drags Fool through a narrow space between the walls, keeping low as the wall EXPLODES with SHOTGUN BLASTS.

75 INT. THE BATHROOM -- DAY.

75

The man BLASTS away, but without knowing where the two are on the other side, it's guesswork -- and soon the gun is empty. He throws it down and runs to the medicine chest --

76 INT. BETWEEN THE WALLS.

76

The man's head sticks through -- peering into the darkness --

MAN

Gonna kill you!

WITH FOOL -- terrified -- as his pale rescuer draws back on a crude slingshot and lets fly! The man gives a sharp howl of pain and disappears --

77 INT. BATHROOM -- DAY.

77

The man falls back into the room holding his already bleeding head, wailing --

MAN (CONTD)

KILL, PRINCE! KILL, KILL!

The dog howls through the opening like an air-to-air missile on amphetamines.

78 INT. BETWEEN THE WALLS.

78

Fool sees the dog coming -- then the pale mystery kid jerks him sideways into a new, narrower passageway -- dragging him to its end, then turning to face the dog. The kid's hand is on a loop of rope as the dog rounds the corner, heading straight at them.

FOOL

Do somethin'!

The kid lets out a wheezing laugh -- snatches the doll from Fool and throws it at the dog. The dog grabs it, the kid pulls the rope -- and the sub-flooring beneath the dog drops away suddenly, dumping the big animal into blackness!

LOWER -- the startled animal lands on a chute of planks and cardboard and rockets downward, unable to stop itself on the smooth surface -- STRAIGHT INTO CAMERA.

79 INT. KITCHEN -- DAY.

79

Almost at the same moment the man bursts into the kitchen, clutching his bloody head. The woman reacts in shock --

WOMAN

What hit you?

MAN

Fucking Boy Scout! Prince's after 'im, he'll kill 'em bef--

He's stopped by a SKIDDING WHINE from behind the walls. Next second the huge dog crashes out of a baseboard heating vent, shoots across the kitchen into a set of dinette chairs, sending them flying like ten pins!

WOMAN

What the hell -- !

The dog scrambles up, looking at the humans sheepishly. It still has Fool's doll in its mouth.

WOMAN

He's gotten with Alice...

80 INT. ALICE'S ROOM.

80

THE HEATING GRATE -- Alice and the thin, pale kid from between the walls -- helping Fool crawl out.

FOOL

(shakily)

Thanks.

The skinny kid gives a toss of his head in recognition -- eyes dancing -- but says nothing.

FOOL

Don't talk much, huh?

ALICE

His tongue's cut out.

The kid sticks a blackened stump out of his mouth with a wide grin and makes a hacking motion with his forefinger.

FOOL

(low)

Oh, man...

ALICE

Mama caught him trying to call for help one day. Daddy had to teach him, sp--

FOOL

--Speak no evil, right -- Your father's one sick mother, you know that?

ALICE

(low)

That's speaking evil.
(changing subject,
indicating)
Roach. He's my friend.

FOOL

Roach.

Fool turns to the kid and sticks out his hand. Roach shyly shakes it. Fool grins.

FOOL

I'm Poindexter, but everyone calls me Fool. We sure got the names, huh?

The kid laughs silently and makes a "perfect" sign with his thumb and forefinger. Fool looks from one to the other, sober --

FOOL

I figured it out -- you two been kidnapped -- you know that? They can't do that.

ALICE

They did.

She's got a point. Fool sits down in frustration on the bed. Then sees Spenser's and LeRoy's dolls.

FOOL

Why you make these?

ALICE

To hold their souls when they died.
(smiles shyly)
Yours was early.

FOOL

You always do that?

She nods, lifts the top off a large cardboard box. It's full to the top with dolls -- all colors, all sizes, all male. Many with ripped arms, torn heads, caked with old blood.

Fool claps it shut again -- shoves it away. He turns back to the girl, pale.

NEXT SECOND THE MAN BURSTS THROUGH THE DOOR WITH A TREMENDOUS SHOUT -- SHOTGUN IN HAND!! Roach runs for the grating -- the huge man slams into Fool, driving him into a wall, wheels and FIRES at Roach.

Roach gives a cry and jerks backwards through the heat grate, his blood running down the wall -- Alice screams as the woman storms into the room, screaming just as loudly, pummeling the girl in fury until Alice is cringing defenseless on the bed.

The man hauls the semi-conscious Fool up and jams the gun-barrel under his chin.

MAN

What you want me to do, mama?

WOMAN

It's time to clean house.

She turns and surveys him with a flat, gray stare.

WOMAN (CONTD)

Complete spring cleaning.

81 INT. LIVING ROOM -- SUNDOWN.

81

BLOOD-RED SUN THROUGH THE WINDOWS as Fool strains to haul the dead weight of LeRoy's corpse across the living room -- as the man prods the shotgun into his back, shrieking --

MAN

Move'em, boy -- get-get-get!

82 INT. KITCHEN -- SUNDOWN.

82

The woman flings open the cellar door -- there's an instantaneous upwelling of voices and excited scrambling of feet below. Fool arrives with LeRoy -- groaning under the weight -- prodded by the man.

FOOL

What you gonna d--

The man flings him down the stairs.

83 INT. THE CELLAR.

83

Fool crashes down, and the man and woman heave LeRoy's corpse after -- the huge man tearing down after them both, screaming and laughing in insane pleasure. The woman slams the door, pitching the place into darkness.

84 INT. LIVING ROOM -- SUNSET.

84

The woman drags the stunned Alice down the stairs -- throws her into the living room next to a mop and bucket --

WOMAN

Clean it up, for godsakes!

Alice, dazed and terrified, grabs the mop to do her best against LeRoy's blood -- all the while the woman raves -- tears flying from her eyes --

WOMAN (CONTD)

What's a mother to do? A lazy brat who sits in her room all day -- children misbehaving in the cellar and one in the walls who does his business who knows where -- you kids'll be the death of me!

85 INT. CELLAR.

85

FOOL -- chained to a post amid a horrible DIN from the unseen inhabitants of the place. There is barely any light -- only Spenser's flashlight racing back and forth on the other side of the slated wall.

All this as the man hauls LeRoy up on block and tackle, feet first. Fool reacts in horror -- and though it's grimly dark, we know LeRoy is being disemboweled by the huge maniac. The man lifts something dark up in his hands -- bites into it with incredible ferocity -- then flings it over the slated wall into the darkness. There's immediate SNARLING and CLAWING -- then the SOUNDS OF FEEDING. The man turns and surveys Fool.

MAN

I keep 'em real hungry.

86 INT. MASTER BATHROOM -- NIGHT.

86

The woman drags the sobbing Alice into the bathroom, the room heavy with steam from the super-hot bath being drawn. Alice is smeared with LeRoy's blood -- the woman's voice husky with rage and short-circuiting emotions --

WOMAN

I ask a simple thing -- just clean up that awful man's blood -- and what do you do? -- you get it on your nice clean dress I worked so hard to make!

The woman rips the dress away from the terrified girl --

WOMAN (CONTD)

Now get in that tub and scrub
yourself!

And she throws Alice into the scalding water -- sets upon her with lye soap and scrub brush -- Alice screaming in vain!

87 INT. CELLAR.

87

THE MAN -- viciously kicks the gutted corpse of LeRoy into a pit in the cellar floor. Then he throws a switch and the heavy concrete lid slides back -- and when it falls into place, it's as if the pit was never there!

Meanwhile the man drags Fool screaming across the floor to the doorway into the inner cage -- unbolts it and throws Fool in among whoever or whatever it is that's in there!

FOOL

NO!

The man slams the door behind Fool and bolts it.

88 INT. ALICE'S ROOM -- NIGHT.

88

The woman throws Alice into the room -- the girl clutching a robe around her, red with the heat of the water. No sooner are the two in there than the man arrives from the cellar, covered with blood, absolutely possessed.

WOMAN

Where's the Boy Scout?

MAN

Dead meat!

89 INT. CELLAR'S INNER PEN.

89

WITH FOOL -- lit only by the FLASHLIGHT BEAM. And then the BEAM IS JOINED BY ANOTHER, and ANOTHER -- until there are HALF A DOZEN trained on him -- and at least four times that many HUMAN SHAPES of some sort closing. And though the lights in his eyes are blinding -- the creatures are soon close enough for Fool to catch glimpses of ragged clothing, white and bloody hands, naked feet, long, long filthy hair. And strangest of all, there are three sorts -- some with heads enveloped in leathery masks that leave only a mouth hole -- their eyes completely covered -- others with ears caked with ancient scars -- sewed tightly shut -- and a third group like Roach -- mouths without tongues.

Fool staggers back, trying to get away when there is no escape. They're snatching at his clothing, at his face -- when suddenly there's a SOUND -- A DEEP PUNCH OF ELECTRIC MOTOR, then a HEAVY SCRAPING OF CONCRETE outside the enclosure. The beings stop, arrested by the SOUND OF THE PIT OPENING!

There's a terrified moment of disbelief among everyone -- whoever the hell they are -- then they swing away from Fool and rush to the slats of the wall separating them from the outer cellar, training their flashlights on the opening pit.

The huge concrete slab stops, fully open. Then there's MOVEMENT FROM DOWN IN THE PIT!

The effect on the people under the stairs is electric -- their garbled VOICES register fear, wonder. Fool looks back to the pit and sees in horror why -- the corpse of LeRoy heaves back into view -- LURCHING UP FROM THE PIT!

FOOL

Oh, Jesus -- Oh, no, man!

Head drooping, eyes glazed, LeRoy waves a languid paw and emits a marrow-freezing wail --

LEROY'S CORPSE

OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!!!

The shadowy people in the enclosure drop their flashlights and tear off into the darkest, farthest corners of the cellar -- shrieking and gibbering in animal terror! Even Fool is paralyzed -- cannot move, -- until an abandoned flashlight rolls against his foot. Then, despite himself, he picks it up and trains it on LeRoy. LeRoy straightens slightly as the new light falls over him, as if trying to throw off death itself -- and looks at Fool pleadingly --

LEROY'S CORPSE (CONT'D)

Fooooooooo!!!

Then LeRoy's body sloughs off and falls back into the pit -- and what we see is the person beneath that's been making it move -- a bloody-but-alive skeletal kid with fire in his stricken eyes!

FOOL

Roach!

Roach races to the enclosure's doorway and unbolts it -- and Fool streaks through the dark and is out the door in a second. Roach slams the door and relocks it. Then staggers. Fool sees --

FOOL (CONTD)

You're shot, Roach! We gotta get you to a doctor!

Roach feigns a silent, rasping laugh. Then snaps his head around towards the door upstairs. It's opening, and the man's voice is shouting at the dog --

MAN

Kill 'em if they're out, Prince!

The man clomps away, the dog starts down -- Roach grabs Fool and drags him towards their only refuge -- a huge wood-burning furnace! The dog sees the movement and charges. The furnace door clangs shut a split-second before the dog smashes against it. The animal slavers and tries to bite its way through the iron -- but Fool and Roach are safe inside!

90 INT. FURNACE.

90

They huddle against the back of the firebox, hearing the dog's teeth CLANG off the door in futile hate.

FOOL

Glad it's summer.

He tears off a strip of his shirt, tries to administer to Roach. But the skeletal youth gently pushes his hand away, shakes his head. Instead Roach does something really surprising -- he sticks his arms and head up into one of the heating vents leading out of the fire box, and disappears like an animal into a burrow!

Fascinated, Fool peers into the dark of the little metal tunnel.

FOOL

Hey, where y'going?
(his voice echoing
back)
y'going?going?

For a moment the only sound is that of the big dog WHANGING off the furnace's door -- then Roach swings easily back out of the port. He turns, shaking with pain but pride, and gives Fool a little canvas pouch.

FOOL -- doesn't know what to make of it. Roach sinks against the side of the furnace, a grim smile on his face, and makes the motions of opening to Fool. Fool sits beside him and opens the pouch. Reaches in and pulls out a large, heavy gold coin. Fool hefts the rest of the sack. Half a dozen more.

FOOL
 (awed)
 The coin collection. LeRoy was
 right!

Roach points from it to Fool, makes "a gift from me to you" motion with his hands.

FOOL -- smiles shyly. Looks in wonder to the coin in his hand.
 Even in the dark of the furnace, it shines like the sun.

FOOL
 Thank you, Roach.

WIDER -- in the grime of the furnace's wall, Roach is scrawling a single word -- "Alice".

FOOL (CONTD)
 Alice?

Roach points his thin, pale finger up another of the ports. And then he sits back, looks at fool with the purest, gentlest smile and stops breathing.

The dog slams against the fire door as if in triumph -- snarling and barking -- and the furnace's door starts to pull off its hinge!

Fool turns back to the port pointed out by Roach and starts climbing.

91 INT. THE HEATING DUCT.

91

ON FOOL -- wiggling his way through this narrow but passable passage -- bracing against the sides, grabbing seams, moving steadily upwards.

92 INT. LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT.

92

The dog bursts from the basement into the living room, looking and sniffing, racing across the room to a heating vent. As the dog arrives it gives a high-pitched whine of frustration and rage -- and we SEE FOOL'S FACE move up inside. Fool sees the dog, the dog sees him -- the dog barks and yowls -- Fool moves on up out of sight. The dog spins in circles, howling in frustration. Then it runs up the stairs --

93 INT. THE HEATING DUCT.

93

Fool claws his way upward -- reaching another heating vent -- looking out --

94 INT. UPPER HALLWAY.

94

FOOL'S POV -- the upper hallway -- the dog screeching around the corner from the stairs -- snuffing and finding Fool again -- shrieking and snapping in Fool's face.

95 INT. HEATING DUCT.

95

Fool branches off onto the horizontal line shooting off from his position -- pulling himself along quickly towards the distant light and SOUNDS from Alice's room -- her cries as she's beaten -- the man's demented grunts and laughter.

96 INT. UPPER HALLWAY.

96

The dog chases along the wall board, then bumps into the wall and door of Alice's room -- barking and scratching in rage.

97 INT. ALICE'S ROOM -- NIGHT.

97

The man has the girl by the hair, pressing his gleaming face right up to hers --

MAN

I killed your skinny friend in the walls -- what you think of that?

Alice is sobbing -- the man throws her on the bed --

MAN (CONTD)

I got him good! And the black one, too -- I...

He turns in annoyance -- the dog is BARKING and CLAWING at the door so hard it jumps on its hinges. The man throws it open --

MAN (CONTD)

Shut the fuck up!

He slams the door in the frustrated dog's face.

MAN (CONTD)

What the hell's with him?

He turns and reacts in shock -- and Fool -- seconds out of the heating grate -- hauls off and punches him hard as he can in the groin! AGGHHHH!! -- the man buckles and goes down as Alice reacts in astonishment --

ALICE

He said he killed you!

FOOL

He exaggerated -- come on!

Fool pulls the wall grating open --

ALICE

We can't go in there --

The man leaps up behind them -- charges in livid rage. Fool ducks, the man crashes into the wall. Alice dives into the heating grate as Fool grabs a lamp and brings it down over the guy's head -- KA-WHAM!

Fool dives into the grating after the girl, wiggling to get in and out of reach -- while the man lurches up, clutching his purple head, eyes blazing with vengeance! But by the time he gets to the grating, Fool is gone!

98 INT. HEATING DUCT.

98

Fool races along making good time -- until he catches up with Alice's feet. She's not moving.

FOOL

Keep moving, Alice -- he finds where we are, he'll shoot through the wall!

ALICE

(through clenched teeth)

I'm stuck.

FOOL

Uh-oh.

99 INT. THE CELLAR.

99

The man throws a last chunk of wood into the firebox -- splashes in gasoline from a can -- then looks in --

IN HIS POV -- we SEE ROACH -- slumped against the back wall, half-buried in wood.

MAN

Burn in hell for showing him the way!

The man throws a match into the firebox and a huge BALL OF FIRE BILLOWS OUT!

100 INT. THE HEATING DUCT.

100

The heat hits them in a great wave -- shaking Fool's clothes, instantly breaking him into a sweat --

FOOL

Geez -- who turned on the heat?!

101 INT. LIVING ROOM.

101

The man runs through the living room, armed again with his shotgun -- as smoke and sparks belch from the wall heating grates --

MAN

Burn, burn in hell!

He races up the stairs three at a time!

102 INT. BETWEEN THE WALLS.

102

A narrow defile between the walls, a heating duct running along its bottom, buckling and jumping as Fool kicks frantically at it from inside -- then it parts at a seam, releasing smoke and sparks -- and Fool staggers out, choking and blinded, pulling Alice out after him. They look around, dazed.

FOOL

Which way?

ALICE

Only Roach knew the way through the walls.

FOOL

So, we'll explore!

ALICE

Roach said it was too dangerous --
My Daddy's --

FOOL

(hard)

He ain't your Daddy -- he ain't your
father! He's some pervert
kidnapper!

Alice is brought up short, but she digests this truth in one second flat -- it hits her -- hits her for the first time. She toughens as we watch -- nods.

ALICE

(savoring the
epithet)

The dirty rotten rat's got traps
everywhere! It was his hobby -- to
kill Roach -- make the place
inescapable.

Suddenly the MAN'S VOICE is SWEARING AND CURSING nearby on the other side of the walls. They freeze -- holding their breath. They HEAR the SHOTGUN LOAD.

MAN (THROUGH THE WALLS)
Gonna find you -- gonna kill you!

The man THUMPS against the wall for emphasis -- this dislodges a clump of dust which falls on Fool's face. His nose twitches, he screws up his face trying, trying -- then SNEEZES. Instantly the walls around them EXPLODE with buckshot blasting through plaster and lathe!

Forget the boobytraps -- Fool and Alice run for it in the opposite direction!

MOVING WITH THEM -- as they squeeze through the cobwebs and rat-races, lost in a warren of inter-wall spaces, pipe-shafts and bracing -- until Fool's grabbed by Alice -- jerked to a stop so hard he nearly chokes --

FOOL
What -- ?

The girl points at the thin hanger-wire stuck through a hole in the wall just before them, it's tip reaching nearly across the space between the walls.

They back away from it, around a corner into a pipe shaft. Fool looks at it suspiciously.

FOOL
I think it's just a plain old wire.

Alice grabs a piece of lathing knocked free by the barrage and throws it at the wire, hitting it dead center.

103 INT. AN ABANDONED ROOM -- NIGHT.

103

An elaborate, almost medieval device of wood and bungee cord faces the wall, a grid of sharpened iron pipes bristling on one side. Triggered as we watch, the thing jams the mat of iron spikes with incredible force into the wall -- KA-CRASH!!!

104 INT. BETWEEN THE WALLS.

104

THE WALL LEAPS WITH CONCUSSION as the trap slams into it from the opposite side -- and the spikes puncture the plaster, streaking across the passageway between the walls and burying themselves in the opposite side with a tremendous stabbing SCREECH!

FOOL
Holy...

ALICE
We do have to be careful.

FOOL
 (awed)
 We gotta be very, very careful.

105 INT. ALICE'S ROOM -- NIGHT.

105

The woman charges in, followed by the dog --

WOMAN
 One of the traps went -- you think
 you got 'em?

MAN
 One way to find out --

He turns and wrenches the heating grate off Alice's wall and
 grabs the dog --

MAN (CONTD)
 Kill, Prince! Kill 'em!

The dog picks up the scent, bristles and streaks into the
 heating vent with a whine of homicidal glee!

106 INT. BETWEEN THE WALLS.

106

Fool and Alice have found passage between walls abutting the
 outer shell of the house itself. This is of crumbling
 insulation and battening. Fool lays his hand against it.

FOOL
 Cold -- it's the outside wall. All
 we gotta do is tear through and
 we're outside.

Alice looks around --

ALICE
 If we make noise, he'll hear us...

FOOL
 Look, it's just paper -- then
 probably old rotten wood --

He pulls the insulation away, then reacts. The wall they
 face is of poured concrete. Fool kicks it -- stumbles back
 holding his foot.

FOOL
 Damn!

Alice makes the "shhh!!" sign, cocks her head listening.
 Fool freezes.

FOOL
 What?

CUT TO THE HEATING DUCT WHERE FOOL AND ALICE BROKE OUT. The huge dog thrusts up out of the rupture, nose twitching. Murder in his eyes.

CUT TO FOOL AND ALICE -- listening with bated breath.

FOOL
(whispered
carefully)
I don't hear anything.

ALICE
(even more
carefully)
Thought I heard... heard... h-h-
h...

Her nose wrinkles into the unmistakable preamble to a world-class sneeze! Fool lunges to put his finger under her nose -- slips and falls head over heels -- making enough noise to wake the dead.

FOOL
Oops.

Instantly they can hear him coming -- and a second later the huge dog rockets INTO VIEW from behind a wall, jams on the brakes, sees them, and changes course 90 degrees, tearing down on them with homing ferocity! Fool scoops up a handful of insulation just in time to slam it into the dogs jaws -- the two smash backwards into the wall with a gigantic THUMP! followed by all of their SHOUTS, SCREAMS and SNARLS -- a racket heard all the way to --

107 INT. ALICE'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT.

107

The man hears this and races from the room!

108 INT. BETWEEN THE WALLS.

108

ON THE BATTLE -- the animal and Fool upright in a weird, spinning dance of feint and fending -- lunging and snapping -- Fool hanging on for dear life as the giant teeth flash in his face -- Alice screaming and whacking at the animal with her fists.

109 INT. UPPER HALLWAY.

109

The man streaks through, now fixing a wicked looking bayonette to the front of his shotgun! -- listening, choosing the room, tearing into it!

110 INT. BETWEEN THE WALLS.

110

FOOL & ALICE AND THE DOG -- crashing between the walls of the passage -- a ferocious struggle -- blood streaming from Fool's arm -- smeared across Alice's face -- the animal unstoppable!

111 INT. A RELIGIOUS ROOM -- NIGHT.

111

The man bursts into a room with walls covered with pictures of Jesus, crosses and flags. He wheels as one wall heaves with a tremendous BUMP -- a picture of a Saint tilts madly. The man lunges at the wall and drives the bayonette in to the hilt!

112 INT. BETWEEN THE WALLS.

112

The plaster and lathing EXPLODE above Fool's head -- spraying dust and wood -- the blade of the bayonette barely missing him! Fool twists away with a cry of shock -- the dog struggling with him -- Alice covering her head in terror --

113 INT. RELIGIOUS ROOM -- NIGHT.

113

The man hears the SCREAMS -- readjusts aim and stabs again!

114 INT. BETWEEN THE WALLS.

114

CHAOS -- THE WALL thudding and stabbing through with the bayonette over and over again -- ALL AROUND THEM -- there's absolutely nowhere to hide -- STAB! STAB! STAB! and then a HORRIBLE SCREAM. Fool straightens, eyes wide -- Alice falls back against the lathing, rigid -- even the dog freezes, mouth gaped open.

115 INT. RELIGIOUS ROOM -- NIGHT.

115

The man listens. There's an unearthly SILENCE from the other side of the wall. And the blade of his bayonette is red. Then the largest of the holes in the wall is POURING BLOOD.

MAN
(smiles)
Gotcha.

116 INT. BETWEEN THE WALLS.

116

FOOL -- lets go of the dog. The animal slides down the wall, eyes glazing fast.

Fool's shaking so hard he can barely stand; Alice's white as a sheet, tears streaming down her face. Soundlessly, Fool mouths the words "You all right?" She nods, asks him the same with her eyes -- he nods.

117 INT. UPPER HALLWAY.

117

The man lunges out of the religious room, screaming at the woman who runs towards him.

MAN

I got em -- got em -- got em!

WOMAN

Prove it.

The man looks at her, hurt.

118 INT. BETWEEN THE WALLS.

118

Fool and Alice slip away from the horror, seeking some way out -- Fool looking up --

FOOL

There -- up there -- light!

Alice looks up and sees it too, the narrow wedge of between-wall space opens up -- and there is the beginning of an open space -- its top defined by roof.

FOOL

Come on...

He starts climbing up, bracing himself against the opposing sides of the narrow passage --

ALICE

I can't climb --

FOOL

Why not?

ALICE

Well, I... I'm a girl. I don't know how.

Fool looks back down at her.

FOOL

I don't know how to tell you this, Alice, but there's been a revolution outside. Girls do everything but pee standing up now, and they might be working on that.

Next second there's a CRASHING, SPLINTERING SOUND from not far away -- the man laying into the wall with something. Alice starts climbing and rockets right past Fool!

119 INT. THE RELIGIOUS ROOM.

119

The man's got a pick axe -- pulls apart a huge chunk of wall -- and the bloody head of the dog lolls out.

MAN

Shit!

WOMAN

(horrificed)

You killed Prince!

120 INT. ATTIC -- NIGHT.

120

Fool and Alice crawl out of the narrow innerwall space onto the attic floor. It is a huge space, lit by moonlight pouring in through gabled windows. Fool races to one window and it actually opens! Cool, fresh night air pours in over his face -- the heady air of freedom!

They look down the slanting slate roof to the back yard, fifty feet below. Beyond that the dark haven of the neighborhood.

FOOL

(calling)

Haaaaalp!

The ROAR OF TRAFFIC drowns him out. Alice, giddy with her new climbing ability, starts looking for a handhold.

ALICE

Maybe we could climb down.

FOOL

No way -- nothin to hold on to, and it's a straight drop off the end of the roof.

(thinks,

remembers)

Wait a minute...

He sizes Alice up, sizes himself up, too.

ALICE

What?

FOOL

The water in the garden. I think it's underneath these windows. If we took a jump when we went off the edge, we might hit it.

Alice looks. There's no sight of it from this angle -- it would be a blind jump.

ALICE
The lilly pond? I think it's
farther over...

FOOL
I don't think so...

ALICE
And I don't know how deep it is...

Their speculation is shattered by the SOUND OF THE ATTIC
DOOR FLYING OPEN -- THE MAN'S FOOTSTEPS THUNDERING UP THE
WOODEN STEPS!

FOOL
Alice -- we gotta jump!

ALICE
I'm afraid -- what's out there!

Fool tries to grab her, she tears away into the attic.

FOOL
ALICE!!

Too late -- the man tops the stairs with a shout, whips the
shotgun up and FIRES -- Fool sprawls out the window, the
blast tearing into the wall where he stood!

121 EXT. THE ROOF -- NIGHT.

121

Halfway down the slope, Fool hangs on by a fingernail,
seeing the man lurch into the window -- aiming straight at
him. Fool closes his eyes, doomed --'but a split-second
before the man fires, Alice lunges back into view -- seizes
the shotgun and janks it towards the floor a split-second
before it FIRES!

FOOL COVERS HIS EARS -- sure's he's dead -- starts sliding -
- realizes he's not --

SLIDING WITH FOOL -- as he tries to stop himself --
fingernails shrieking along the slate --

FOOL'S POV -- the blind edge of the roof speeding towards
him -- and then over the edge -- still not seeing the lilly
pond!

122 EXT. HOUSE AND BACK YARD -- NIGHT.

122

ANGLE UP AT ROOF'S EDGE -- FOOL shoots out into space -- his face registering pure horror!! IN SLO-MO he arcs down -- we SEE the rocky border surrounding the pond come INTO FRAME -- Fool heading straight for it -- but somehow -- maybe through pure exertion of will -- Fool barely makes it into the water in a huge bellyflop -- hitting with a TREMENDOUS SPLASH inches from the rock edge!!

THE HOUSE'S BACK DOOR -- the man smashes out and tears across the back porch --

ANGLE AT THE POND -- Fool drags himself out of the muck and weeds, stunned, barely able to move.

BACK PORCH -- the man lets fly with the SHOTGUN -- BLASTING OUT ONE OF THE WINDOWS --

AT THE POND -- the shot misses by inches -- Fool jumps up and runs like hell --leaps the hedge and is gone!

THE MAN -- stamps on the shotgun in rage until the woman rushes out -- grabs both him and the weapon and drags them back into the house --

WOMAN

Never shoot your gun outside -- I told you -- bad, bad boy!

The two slam inside the house. BOLTS FLY HOME. Once again the house is silent as a tomb.

FADE TO BLACK:

FADE UP ON:

123 INT. FOOL'S HOME -- NIGHT.

123

TIGHT ON THE GOLD COINS -- a MAN'S HANDS stacking the last --

MAN (OS)

(somber)

If these were from anybody else I'd tan your hide and make you take 'em straight back --

WIDE -- REVEALING FOOL, RUBY and GRANDFATHER BOOKER, a gentle old man of 60. Dirt poor but with immense dignity.

GRANDFATHER BOOKER (CONTD)

You know that?

FOOL (OS)

Yessir.

The old man glances to Ruby, then back to the coins.

MAN (OS)

(somber)

Well, figuring the rarity of these,
you do have enough to pay your rent
for a while.

(beat)

Say to the year 2000.

Fool and Ruby stop breathing. Look at each other.

FOOL

And mama's operation?

GRANDFATHER BOOKER

And your mama's operation.

Ruby and Fool just stare at him, dumbfounded.

RUBY

I can't believe it.

GRANDFATHER BOOKER

Take it to another pawn broker if
you like. Don't have to trust your
own flesh and blood.

FOOL

Sorry, Grandfather Booker. No
disrespect meant.

GRANDFATHER BOOKER

Then none taken.

(gently)

Keep hold of this till tomorrow.

Ruby takes the gold and looks at Fool with new eyes.
There's something half-man about Fool now that wasn't there
before.

FOOL

Where you goin, Grandpa?

GRANDFATHER BOOKER

Gonna go order an ambulance for your
mama. Tomorrow we'll take that pile
to a good coin dealer and be
smilin'.

GRANDFATHER BOOKER

(pointedly to
Fool)

Meanwhile you be careful. That brother sister act you messed with are evil, plain and simple -- we always suspected -- now you found out.

FOOL

(stunned)

Brother and sister?

GRANDFATHER BOOKER

Tail end of the wickedest family you ever heard of -- each generation more insane than the one before it - - all sorts of rumors about what goes on in there, since I was a kid.

GRANDFATHER BOOKER CONTD

(departing, to
Fool)

You lucky t'be at the crossroad so young and come back alive.

The old man leaves. Ruby carefully puts the coins back into their sack, very quiet. Fool sees her face.

FOOL

I'm sorry about LeRoy. He... died trying to save me.

Ruby looks at her brother.

RUBY

You never could lie, Fool.

(kisses his
forehead)

You should get some sleep.

FOOL

By'n'by. Got a quarter?

RUBY

(giving one)

What you need a quarter for?

FOOL

Gotta make a call, that's all.

He leaves; Ruby looks after him, eyes troubled.

124 INT. FOOL'S MOTHER'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT.

124

A single lamp lit, shaded with a newspaper. The woman's eyes closed and peaceful. Fool bent over whispering to her. We can't hear what he's saying, but there's tremendous intimacy to it, tremendous resolution.

Ruby appears in the doorway, watching a long moment. Fool's silent now, just holding his mother's hand.

RUBY

Fool, you okay?

Fool stands, looking down at his mother. Ruby crosses to him, whispering so as not to wake the woman.

RUBY (CONTD)

I done the Tarot cards on you again,
Fool -- they came out real scary.
Don't go messing with those folks no
more --

Fool looks up at her with the beatific gaze of an avenging angel.

FOOL

Somebody's gotta.

He walks straight out of the apartment. Then something hits Ruby -- she looks back to her mother.

RUBY

Mama?

She races to the bed, throws herself on the woman.

RUBY (CONTD)

Mama!!

CROSS CUT FROM RUBY'S WAIL TO --

125 EXT. GHETTO STREET -- NIGHT.

125

HIGH, WIDE ANGLE on the lights of a thousand tenements like Fool's. Fool, small but strong, walks down the street towards us as CAMERA CRANES DOWN TO MEET HIM AT A PHONE BOOTH. Fool puts the quarter in the slot, dials and makes his connection.

FOOL

(very white voice)

Hello, Police? I want to report a
case of child abuse going on right
now.

126 EXT. THE HOUSE -- NIGHT / INT. HOUSE -- NIGHT. 126

CU POLICE CAR, CRANE UP, REVEALING MORE COP CARS, a COUNTY ANTI-CHILD ABUSE CAR, an AMBULANCE. CAMERA SWEEPS TO THE BACK ENTRANCE. The doors are open, POLICE everywhere. CAMERA MOVES INTO THE BACK PORCH, INTO THE KITCHEN. The woman's there with a tray loaded with coffee and cookies, very reasonable and sane, bemused by it all.

WOMAN

I'm sorry you all had to come out at
such an hour for such a silly
thing...

She takes the refreshments into living room, CAMERA MOVING with her, REVEALING more COPS and a tall female SOCIAL WORKER. They help themselves as the woman continues --

WOMAN

...but you know, it's better there
are a few false calls, if we can
prevent just one child from being
abused. Cream and sugar?

127 INT. UPPER HALLWAY -- NIGHT.

127

AN apologetic POLICE SERGEANT walks out of the bedroom.

SERGEANT

Nice furniture -- didn't get that
stuff at Price Club, that's for
sure.

The man waits in the hallway, calmly smoking a pipe. He wears a baseball cap over the wounds on his head.

MAN

Been in the family for years.

SERGEANT

Ah.

A COP comes up.

COP

Maybe you should take a look down
here.

The sergeant follows the cop to the doorway of --

128 INT. ALICE'S ROOM -- NIGHT.

128

The Sergeant looks around at the small, frilly bed, the pink-framed pictures of Heidi, the girlish toys lined perfectly on the sparkling white shelves. There's no sign of blood, bullet hits in the wall -- none of that. Total House Cleaning strikes again.

SERGEANT

Didn't you say you had no kids?

The man looks at the ember in his pipe, pensive.

WOMAN (OS)

Alice left us a long time ago,
Sergeant.

The sergeant turns to the woman. She walks into the room and gently puts her arm around her brother/husband's shoulder, giving it a little pat.

WOMAN (CONTD)

The Lord saw fit to come an take
her. Never touched the room since.
We're foolish, I suppose, but...

(looks at him, a
tear brimming)

In a sense, she still lives here.
And always will.

The sergeant looks down.

SERGEANT

Sorry. I'm really sorry.

129 INT. UPPER HALLWAY.

129

They walk out, the sergeant already buttoning his coat, when they encounter the tall social worker.

SOCIAL WORKER

(curious)

What's up there?

The social worker points to the stairs to the attic.

WOMAN

Nothing, really. An old attic.

SERGEANT

Let's let these people get a night's
sleep, hm?

SOCIAL WORKER

Might as well take a look.

The sergeant rolls his eyes to the couple. The woman glances at the man, then goes ahead to get the door.

130 INT. ATTIC -- NIGHT.

130

The party enters, climbs the stairs and stops at the top, hesitant to go farther into the darkness.

SERGEANT

Got a light in here?

The woman pulls a cord -- a bare bulb throws their half of the attic into half-light. The rest of the place falls off into spooky shadows. Huge, empty.

SERGEANT

(wry)

Hello? Any abused children up here?

Silence. The sergeant throws up his hands and looks at the Social worker with a "well?" look. She shrugs; they all head back down stairs.

SERGEANT (OS)

More room up here than shows downstairs -- funny how open space does that.

CAMERA DOLLYS BACK as the group exits, VCICES FADING. The door LOCKS and their FOOTSTEPS DISAPPEAR just as CAMERA MOVES PAST THE HOUSE'S HUGE CENTRAL CHIMNEY, REVEALING ALICE, suspended by her wrists from a bolt driven deep into its bricks. Gagged, and barely alive.

131 INT. KITCHEN -- NIGHT.

131

THE KITCHEN, LOOKING TOWARDS THE OPEN BACK DOOR -- The Sergeant, Social Worker, Man and Woman ENTER FRAME.

WOMAN

Night.

WOMAN

It's nothing.

SERGEANT

Sorry about the inconvenience.

(gives looks at
Social Worker)

SOCIAL WORKER

My apologies, dragging you up to the attic. Just had a feeling -- you'd be surprised what we find, sometimes.

WOMAN

'Sokay.

The police and social worker leave; instantly the man and woman's faces transform into deep malevolence.

MAN

(low)

Burn in hell.

WOMAN

Forever and ever in hell.

They bolt the door, which has been reinforced again. TURN OFF THE KITCHEN LIGHTS and EXIT.

MAN

Gotta get a new dog tomorrow.

WOMAN

Good big one.

They pass through the living room, turning off the lights, disappearing upstairs. The house falls into darkness. CAMERA PANS BACK TO THE KITCHEN. A beat, then a cabinet is pushed open from the inside. Fool eases himself out.

132 INT. LIVING ROOM, STAIRS TO UPPER HALLWAY -- NIGHT .132

Fool enters, alert. But this is no little Rambo -- he's clearly terrified. He goes to the fireplace, grabs the poker, moves on to pause at the bottom of the stairs, listening to the voices, faint but distinct.

MAN (OS)

Tomorrow I'm gonna go look for the Boy Scout.

WOMAN (OS)

Where would you look?

Fool starts up, one stair at a time.

MAN (OS)

The ghetto. I'll find him. Then I'll kill him.

Fool pauses, chest constricting so hard he can barely breathe. We HEAR the creak of bedsprings.

MAN (CONTD OS)

Night, mama.

WOMAN (OS)

Night, daddy.

Fool forces himself up again, step by step.

WOMAN (CONTD OS)
(closer now)
Say your prayers like a good boy?

MAN (OS)
Oh, I forgot.

Fool passes the upper landing, the place where LeRoy fell.
And the woman and man begin, she reminding him, he saying
the prayer.

WOMAN (OS)
Now I lay me down to sleep...

MAN (OS)
Now I lay me down to sleep...

133 INT. UPPER HALL -- NIGHT.

133

Fool creeps towards their room...

WOMAN/MAN (OS)
I pray the Lord my soul to keep.

Fool reaches their door, barely breathing, hefting the
poker. The prayer slides into a sing-song chant.

WOMAN/MAN (OS)
If I should kill before I wake...

Fool sneaks a peek into the bedroom, then jerks his head
back. Confusion crosses his face. For some reason he's
compelled to look again, this time more boldly.

WOMAN (OS)
I pray the Lord my soul to keep.

FOOL'S POV -- THE BEDROOM. The bed's neatly made,
unoccupied except for a tape deck and speakers on its
flowered bedspread.

MAN (RECORDER)
I pray the Lord my soul to keep.

Fool leans back into the hall, rattled -- and the man lunges
at Fool from the hallway closet!!

Before Fool can so much as scream the man has him -- lifts
him over his head -- the woman leaps from behind the corner
of the hall -- screaming --

WOMAN
Smash him!

Fool is a split second from death -- but moves in that split-second -- hand snapping down, fingers plunging into the man's eyes from above! The man screams, drops Fool and clutches his eyes -- blinded. Fool hits the floor running!

MAN

Mamaaaaaaaaaaaaaa!

The woman races at Fool -- screaming --

WOMAN

You hurt my baby!

In terror and self-defense Fool swings the poker to the woman's knee -- bringing her down hard. But she grabs Fool by the ankle and throws him even as she hits the floor. The poker goes flying -- Fool kicks at her bellowing face. The man, eyes streaming tears, stumbles and crashes down over the woman and Fool -- unable to see what the hell he's doing.

MAN

Mamaaaaaaaaaaaaaa!

Fool scrambles up, grabs the poker, whacks the guy over the head blindingly fast, then tears down the stairs! The big man, only enraged more, lurches up screaming --

134 INT. LIVING ROOM/KITCHEN -- NIGHT.

134

FOOL -- barrels through the living room and kitchen to the back door -- fighting to open the heavy security bolts!

135 INT. BEDROOM -- NIGHT.

135

The man wrenches his shotgun from its desk hiding place, tearing the desk apart in his frenzy.

136 INT. KITCHEN/LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT.

136

Fool throws open the door. Freedom is there before him. But he doesn't run through, he leaves it wide open and runs back into the living room! No sooner is he there than the door from the living room to the kitchen slams shut electrically -- the HARSH METALLIC CLANK of BOLTS FLYING HOME! Fool turns and faces the stairs, the poker his only defense.

137 INT. UPPER HALLWAY.

137

The man bursts from the bedroom with his combat shotgun -- eyes blazing with hate -- the woman lurches against the wall, knee buckling.

WOMAN

I want his balls!

The man gives a savage grunt and races down the stairs --

138 INT. LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT.

138

He surges into the living room -- aims, aims again, looking, kicking over furniture, pulling away the couch, the drapes. But Fool is not there.

WOMAN (OS)

You get him?!

MAN

He's fast! Open the kitchen!

The bolts shoot back -- the man kicks the kitchen door open, darts in, gun ready, sees the back door wide open.

MAN

Aw, shit!

ON THE STAIRS -- the woman limps down -- disgusted.

WOMAN

Burn in hell!

MAN

Burn in hell!

CAMERA PANS TO AND MOVES IN ON FIREPLACE. SOOT rains down gently from above...

139 INT. ATTIC -- NIGHT.

139

ON ALICE -- stretched up the massive chimney, wrists bound to the bolt. Her head barely moves, the girl deep in shock. Then there's a SCRAPING SOUND from somewhere. Alice stirs. Looks around, roused to consciousness now by the CHINK-CHINK-CHINKING -- from inside the chimney! Next moment a BRICK near her head is poked out from within -- and she glimpses first the tip of the poker -- then FOOL, peeking through.

FOOL

Alice!

ALICE

(weak,
unbelieving)

Fool?

The trusty Bic flicks on inside the chimney -- illuminating Fool's eyes.

FOOL

You okay? Alice? Can you get any more of the bricks out?

Alice gives a little laugh despite herself.

ALICE

I can't -- they've got me stuck.

FOOL

How?

ALICE

I'm tied to a bolt in the chimney.

Fool's eyes go up inside the chimney.

FOOL

You mean this one?

There's a LOUD CLANG, the bolt pops out in a shower of mortar and Alice falls unceremoniously to the floor!

ALICE

Yes!

She massages her aching arms in agony, -- then struggles up and looks into the little hole, eyes shining. Fool's fingers reach out, touching hers. She tears at the chimney with everything she's got, but the rest is solid as rock.

Next second the door to the downstairs unlocks and opens -- sinister FOOTSTEPS start up the stairs! Alice races back -- gives Fool a quick "shh" through the hole, then plasters herself over it, on tip-toe, arms over her head.

The man appears out of the stairwell. The girl, on the far side of the chimney, twists and peers around to him.

ALICE

Please, let me down.

The man leers, rearranges his crotch. Abruptly, the head of the woman appears behind him.

WOMAN

Daddy, come down from there -- help me into bed!

(jealously)

Daddy!

The man holds the girl's eye a long moment more, then goes back downstairs. THE DOOR CLOSES AND LOCKS AGAIN.

FOOL
 (low)
 Open the window.

Alice hears him climbing -- she races to the window, flings it open.

140 EXT. THE ROOF -- NIGHT.

140

Fool pops out of the chimney top, slides down the tiles to the dormer window -- Alice grabs him and pulls him inside.

141 INT. ATTIC -- NIGHT.

141

The girl and boy hold each other a moment, then draw apart. Grim veterans.

FOOL
 He mess with you?

ALICE
 I don't want to talk about that.
 What do we do now?

Fool takes a breath.

FOOL
 Feel up to a little jump? The
 water's straight below this window.
 Got three feet of mud in the bottom
 -- soft as a pillow.

ALICE
 Problem is, first thing he did when
 you escaped was drain it.

FOOL
 That's a problem.

ALICE
 Then he put rocks and broken glass
 in the bottom.

FOOL
 Ow.

ALICE
 (looks away,
 changes the
 subject)
 The door downstairs is locked from
 the other side. And the way we came
 up before --
 (indicates space
 between walls)
 -- he's got fixed now...

Fool goes to the edge of the floor and looks down between the walls. The whole space has been sealed with chain-link and, below that, crisscrossed with fish-line trip-wires and little bundles of dynamite.

FOOL

Got the place boobytrapped good now.
'Nuf dynamite in these walls to blow
us to bits.

(gives Alice the
once over)

Think you can climb up the roof?

ALICE

What's up there?

FOOL

The only way out.

142 INT. MASTER BEDROOM -- NIGHT.

142

The man paces through the darkened room like a wounded beast; the woman is sprawled on the bed, clutching her knee and moaning out hatred --

WOMAN

You find him, bring him back to me -
- I'll take him under the stairs and
do him like he deserves -- cut
his... things off -- how dare he
come into our happy home!

MAN

He came back to get Alice -- you
should've let me kill her!

The woman bridles --

WOMAN

You stay away from Alice!

MAN

She did it with him, I know it!

WOMAN

Not my little girl!

MAN

She's a whore!

The woman slaps him hard -- he grabs her by the throat -- then freezes. They both hear it -- a distinct SCRAPING above the wall of their bedroom.

WOMAN
(half throttled)
What is that?

The man looks -- SEES SOOT -- clouding down from the flue!

He grabs his gun -- flies to the hearth -- FIRES up the flu,
pumps and FIRES again! He hears FOOL'S AGONIZING SCREAM!
The man reacts in deep pleasure -- FIRES one last time --
FOOL SCREAMS AGAIN, then begins babbling --

FOOL (OS)
Oh god -- mama!

The man leans out, smiles in extreme satisfaction.

143 EXT. ROOF -- NIGHT. 143

Fool and Alice balance precariously at the roof's peak, fool
leaning over with his face into the chimney just long enough
to moan --

FOOL
Oh, god, I'm hurt so baaad!

He peers down --

144 INT. CHIMNEY. 144

IN FOOL'S POV -- STRAIGHT DOWN THE CHIMNEY TO THE SLOT OF
LIGHT FAR BELOW -- the Master Bedroom's hearth. The man
pokes his head and shotgun back into the chimney --

145 EXT. ROOF -- NIGHT. 145

Fool jerks back -- an instant later there's a muffled BLAST
and the chimney spouts shot, soot and brick shrapnel.
Instantly Fool claps his face back to the chimney and
SCREAMS A DEATH SCREAM. Jerks his head away. Listens.

Silence.

Fool looks.

146 INT. CHIMNEY. 146

The man withdraws the shot gun -- looks up.

147 INT. BEDROOM -- NIGHT. 147

The man's head and shoulders are stuck far up into the
fireplace's flu --

WOMAN
See 'em?

MAN
Can't see shit --

148 EXT. ROOF -- NIGHT.

148

Fool, face stuck to the chimney like a bombardier, sticks out a hand to Alice. Alice slaps the brick salvaged from the attic into Fool's hand. Fool pulls his face out of the chimney and drops the brick in.

FOOL
Bombs away.

149 INT. MASTER BEDROOM -- NIGHT.

149

The woman waits -- the man's hand makes a "hold it" gesture --

MAN
Think I heard something...

WHAM! The brick connects -- the man's body gives a tremendous jolt and he spills out of the fireplace, head streaming blood! The woman begins shrieking insanely --

WOMAN
You bastaaaaaard!!!

150 EXT. THE ROOF -- NIGHT.

150

Fool straightens.

FOOL
Musta been one a those smart bricks.

He climbs into the chimney -- drops to his shoulders and beckons to her --

FOOL
Just press against the sides -- you can do it!

He disappears inside. Alice starts climbing up --

151 INT. MASTER BEDROOM -- NIGHT.

151

The woman snatches up the shotgun -- races to the fireplace --

152 INT. CHIMNEY.

152

Fool, wedged under the struggling girl, looks down -- SEES --

THE WOMAN -- poked up through the flue -- struggling to aim the shotgun --

FOOL

Oh, shit -- hang on!

He lets go and rockets DOWN OUT OF FRAME -- Alice screaming down after him!

MOVING WITH THEM -- a sliding nightmare of blurring brick! Next instant they crash into the woman -- jamming in atop her -- Fool grabbing at the shotgun -- Alice's foot sticking in the woman's eye -- the gun squirts out of both of their hands and plunges down the chimney into the dark below. The woman grabs Fool by the throat -- Fool sticks his finger up her nose!

153 INT. MASTER BEDROOM -- NIGHT.

153

The woman crashes back out of the fireplace, slapping at her nostrils in horrified disgust.

WOMAN

Caa-caaaaaaaaaa!

154 INT. CHIMNEY.

154

MOVING AGAIN WITH FOOL AND ALICE -- sliding again -- this time a little more in control. They hit another, larger ledge -- again in light.

FOOL

This's the living room -- get out the back door --

Alice looks back at him -- terrified!

ALICE

I can't go outside!

FOOL

What -- you gotta!

ALICE

Come with me, then!

FOOL

I'm not through with him yet.

He lets go and plunges down OUT OF SIGHT INTO DARKNESS. Alice hears the SHOUTS OF THE CREATURES DOWN THERE -- a shudder shakes her body -- and she drops through the flue into --

155 INT. LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT.

155

Alice jumps out of the hearth just as the woman thumps down the stairs. The girl is terrified -- utterly unused to facing the woman --

WOMAN

Where is that little animal -- tell me!

The woman grabs the girl by the arm, shaking her --

WOMAN

Tell me -- we have to get him out of our house -- he's filthy -- bad -- awful!

The girl suddenly transforms at these words -- tears spring to her eyes -- but tears of rage -- and with lightning speed she stamps down on the woman's instep -- CRUNCH!

The astonished woman drops the girl, holds her foot and hobbles backwards a step. The girl gives her a shove and shouts as loudly as she can --

ALICE

GO TO HELL!

Alice turns and runs like hell for the kitchen -- the woman reacting in amazed shock --

WOMAN

Oh, my god -- he's turned my little girl against me!

The man storms into view -- .45 in his hands --

MAN

I told you -- those two!

WOMAN

(darkly)
Then she can burn in hell -- both of them!!

156 INT. KITCHEN -- NIGHT.

156

Alice slams up against the kitchen door, finding it with its bolts thrown and immovable!

157 INT. LIVING ROOM/KITCHEN -- NIGHT.

157

MOVING CAMERA -- the man and woman tear through the living room into the kitchen. They find it empty and immediately start tearing open the lower cabinets --

158 INT. CELLAR.

158

ANGLE AT THE BASE OF THE CHIMNEY -- the ash removal hatch kicks open and Fool squeezes out, pulling the shotgun after him. He pumps a new shell in the chamber and races for the stairs. And from his first moment there his movements raise a terrifying HUE AND CRY from the inhabitants of the cellar -- their FLASHLIGHTS CLICK ON AND CONVERGE -- SPOTLIGHTING FOOL in his race across the killing floor to the stairs.

159 INT. THE KITCHEN -- NIGHT.

159

The man wheels upright, hearing the sounds below --

MAN

She's in the cellar --

WOMAN

No way!

MAN

Then he is!

He races to the basement door and flings it open -- finds himself staring right down the barrel of the shotgun in Fool's hands.

FOOL

You know a prayer, say it.

INSERT ON THE MAN'S HAND -- out of Fool's line of vision -- throwing a switch near the cellar door.

ON FOOL -- as the stairs go flat! Fool falls on his face, the shotgun FIRES and goes flying. The man throws the .45 to the woman and leaps after Fool into the cellar!

160 INT. CELLAR.

160

Fool runs into darkness blindly, crashes over something -- and instantly the FLASHLIGHTS come on, SPOTLIGHTING HIM sprawled on the floor. He turns and sees the man coming through the gloom after him, the shotgun now in his hands.

The man reaches up, throws another switch, and the concrete lid jerks back, revealing the pit of bones and decaying flesh beneath -- and the two top bodies are Spenser and LeRoy.

The man wags the gun at Fool, indicating for him to stand up at the pit's brink. Fool, helpless to do anything else, does so.

The woman appears at the top of the stairs.

WOMAN

Get him?

MAN

Oh yeah...

He raises the shotgun. Then stops. Someone is KNOCKING LOUDLY. The man twists around --

WOMAN

Maybe police again... Hold on.

The man eyes Fool -- trigger finger itching.

161 INT. LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT.

161

THE KNOCKING is LOUD, INSISTENT -- the woman closes the cellar, straightens her hair and crosses to the living room's front door. Opens it.

Ruby stands there, dressed in her Sunday best, addressing the woman in a clear, official voice --

RUBY

My name is Ruby Williams and I represent the Association of People Unjustly Evicted, Exploited and Generally Fuckedover.

WOMAN

What?

RUBY

Just call it APU double EGF if y'want.

(pulls out
official looking
document)

You and your brother are landlords of fifty buildings in this city, all of which you allow to deteriorate to rat-infested hell-holes while you get rich on ridiculous rents and evict anyone the minute they can't pay.

(looks up, asks
sweetly)

Ain't that about right?

WOMAN

None of your goddam business!

She slams the door in Ruby's face. Storms back across the living room to the basement -- rattled --

WOMAN

Kill him!

162 INT. CELLAR.

162

The man chambers a new round --

MAN

Kiss your ass goodbye, boy.

He aims -- then reels back as suddenly all the FLASHLIGHTS behind the slated wall SWITCH FROM FOOL TO HIM -- SHINING DIRECTLY IN HIS FACE!!

MAN (CONTD)

Wha -- !

ON FOOL -- plunged into near darkness now -- he dives into total darkness as THE MAN FIRES -- FIRES AGAIN! But he can't see, and Fool is gone. In rage he turns and FIRES into the flashlights! BLAM!

SCREAMS from the creatures there -- FLASHLIGHTS BURST, SPIN, go out -- BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! Then CLICK.

Silence, then the woman reappears at the top of the stairs --

WOMAN

What the hell's going on?

MAN (OS IN DARK)

He's loose again -- damn it!

Suddenly there's NEW KNOCKING -- HAMMERING, really -- from the back door this time -- accompanied by an authoritative MAN'S VOICE --

VOICE (OS)

POLICE -- Open up!

The woman twists the other way -- caught off-guard.

VOICE (OS)

POLICE! WE HAVE REPORTS OF GUNFIRE
-- IF YOU DO NOT OPEN THE DOOR WE'LL
BREAK IT DOWN!

The woman looks back into the black of the cellar.

WOMAN

Shhh!

She shuts the door and locks it. PITCH DARK, instantly.

MAN (OS)

Hey!

163 INT. KITCHEN -- NIGHT.

163

The woman throws the bolts and opens the door for --

GRANDFATHER BOOKER

Just want to finish saying our
piece, Ma'am.

The woman reacts in fury, trying to slam the door -- but
Grandfather Booker's faster -- he pushes it open again. The
woman backs up, going pale, and Ruby walks into the doorway,
reading as if never interrupted --

RUBY

And not only are you bad landlords,
but -- ten times worse -- you've
stolen the children of our community
for your own sick needs!

The woman spits on the paper in Ruby's hands -- shows her
gun from behind her skirts.

WOMAN

There's no community -- all I see is
two --

She stops. Coming INTO SIGHT outside is a richly-varied
army of the poor -- MEN, WOMEN, even CHILDREN -- blacks,
whites, asians, hispanics -- all staring at the woman.

RUBY

(quietly)
Gonna shoot us all?

The woman lifts the pistol and points it at Ruby --

WOMAN

You'll do.

But she never gets the chance -- Alice bursts out of an
upper cupboard with an explosive shout and hits the woman
like a ragin tiger, knocking her flying!!

The GUN FIRES harmlessly -- and Ruby and Booker pinion the
woman before she anything more!

RUBY

Where's my little brother? .

WOMAN

BURN IN HELL!

Alice points to the cellar door.

ALICE

There!

Booker takes the gun and unlocks the door -- struck back by the terrible smell. Alice comes up behind him -- sticking her head in.

ALICE

Fool?

From far back in the dark comes Fool's weak voice --

FOOL (OS)

Alice. Careful...

Next second the man comes screaming out of the darkness and barrels up the stairs after Booker. A split second before he has the old man, though -- Alice knocks Booker out of the way and SLAMS the heavy door in the big man's face -- WHAM!

KA-BLAM-KA-RASH as the monster falls backwards back down the stairs into the cellar! He's back up and at the door -- smashing at it from the other side in a frighteningly short time -- the door jumping on its hinges.

RUBY

Sucker's tough!

Grandfather Booker races for the door outside --

164 EXT. STREET OUTSIDE HOUSE -- NIGHT.

164

The street is jammed with PEOPLE as Booker bolts out with an absolutely stentorian cry --

GRANDFATHER BOOKER

GET THE COPS -- THEY'RE KILLING
FOOL!!

The crowd is electrified by the call. Someone WHISTLES LOUDLY at a cop car already attracted by the crowd -- and the DOME LIGHTS come on immediately -- the car speeding for the house!

165 INT. CELLAR.

165

MOVING WITH THE INFURIATED MAN -- stumbling to an abandoned FLASHLIGHT, snatching it up, darting it around the cellar.

ON FOOL -- in hiding -- the LIGHT flicking past. The man moves away. Fool waits breathlessly. It seems for a moment he might be safe -- but then suddenly he's grabbed from behind through the wall by two bloody, grimy hands and pulled horizontally along the slated wall--

THE MAN -- spins around at the SOUND -- sees Fool pulled up and pinioned in front of the padlocked doorway leading to the inner pen. An evil smile flicks across the man's face.

MAN

Gotcha...

IN HIS POV -- RACKING FOCUS TO THE GUNSIGHT LINED UP ON FOOL'S HEAD. But a fraction of a second before the man fires, the hands holding Fool release -- Fool drops OUT OF FRAME, REVEALING the PADLOCK as the man FIRES. THE LOCK DISINTEGRATES! Instantly the door behind Fool bursts open -- SOMEONE dark and big jerks him back into the darkness!

MAN (CONTD)

SHIT!

ON FOOL -- pulled rapidly deep into the inner recesses of this dank place. Then a FLASHLIGHT BLINKS ON IN HIS FACE. Fool reacts in shock.

REVERSE IN HIS POV -- the flashlight SPILLING ONTO THE FACE of the hulking monster that came after him the first time he was in the cellar -- in reality a YOUNG MAN of perhaps 18, huge, filthy, with long, white hair, white, white skin, and most unbelievable of all, white eyes. His only color is the deep red pouring from his wound.

He puts his finger to his lips, in the "shhhh" gesture! Then the LIGHT BLINKS OUT and Fool is plunged into utter darkness again.

ON THE MAN -- shotgun ready -- entering through the door into the inner section -- his face starting to twitch -- shouting at the creatures --

MAN

You're here to guard my things --
nothing else -- now get out of my
way!

ON FOOL -- BARELY ILLUMINATED BY THE DISTANT PROBE OF THE MAN'S FLASHLIGHT. The creature with Fool is pulling him towards something -- then Fool sees a thick concrete doorway set into the wall.

FOOL

(low)
A way out?

The creature nods its head slowly.

CLOSER ON FOOL -- starting to open the door. Then he stops, seeing its burglar alarm contacts -- one on the door, one on the frame. Fool looks around, and as quietly as possible pulls down a section of electrical wire from the wall. It gives out a BLUISH SPARK and instantly the man FIRES --
BLAM! BLAM-BLAM-BLAM!

The shot screams off the walls and thuds into the beams. Fool rolls into deep shadows -- the creature with him simply vanishes.

The FLASHLIGHT PROBES THE AREA WHERE FOOL WAS. No one there.

WITH FOOL. Picking up a bone. Trying not to think of whose it might be, Fool throws it hard into the darkness. It hits a long way away, SKITTERING. Fool hears the MAN CHARGING in that direction -- THREE MORE SHOTS. Then silence again.

Fool strips the ends of the wire in his teeth -- eases up and wraps one end around the door contact, the second around the frame contact. Eases open the door. No alarm goes off. Fool snakes through the opening.

MOVING WITH FOOL -- crawling fast as he can --

FOOL
(to himself)
This lead outside or wha -- ?

CHINK. He runs smack into something. He listens. Looks over his shoulder. The man is CRASHING AROUND BACK AT THE OTHER END OF THE CELLAR. Fool takes a chance, fishes out his faithful Bic and lights it. Holds it over his head.

Fool's stunned to see a veritable mountain o' money -- heaps of bundled HUNDRED DOLLAR BILLS, and THOUSANDS AND THOUSANDS -- WHOLE RANGES AND HILLS OF GOLD AND SILVER COINS -- reaching up the ceiling!

FOOL
No wonder we ain't got no money!

And then he sees something else -- in an oily carton against one wall -- a half-box of dynamite, stored for safe keeping.

Fool moves towards it in fascination, slips on the hillside of slippery coins, falls amid a CLINKING of coins pushed onto concrete. Fool freezes, snaps off the lighter.

CUT TO THE MAN AT THE OTHER END OF THE CELLAR -- spinning around. Silence.

166 EXT. THE YARD AND DRIVE -- NIGHT.

166

POLICE -- are running down the drive -- drawing their guns as Ruby dances out onto the back porch.

RUBY
Halp -- murder -- police!

167 INT. KITCHEN -- NIGHT.

167

ALICE -- darts to the cellar door -- opens it again despite her terror -- calls down --

ALICE

Fool?

THE WOMAN -- unwatched for one moment -- backs against the kitchen counter. Her hands slip unseen into a drawer -- emerging with a huge BUTCHER KNIFE.

WIDER -- TO THE KITCHEN DOOR -- the Police enter at the same instant the woman charges Alice with the most god-awful SCREAM IMAGINABLE!

POLICE

FREEZE!

Alice spins at the SOUND, ducking instinctively -- and the woman pitches over her, falling heavily on the knife! Alice staggers up and away -- the woman looks up blazing with hatred -- ignoring the cops completely --

COPS

Hold it right there, now -- hey!

But the woman isn't listening -- she lurches to a crouch, jerks the knife out of her ribs and staggers up, eyes only on Alice.

WOMAN

I die, you die --

And she charges again. The Police FIRE -- emptying their guns into her -- and she dances and spins in the center of the kitchen, then twists to the desperately reloading cops -- eyes blazing --

WOMAN

BURN IN HELLLLLLLLLL!

She plunges backwards down into the cellar!

168 INT. CELLAR.

168

ON THE MAN -- staring at the woman's tumbling body. He lets out a CHILLING, TERRIFYING SCREAM OF TERROR!

MAN

Mommmeeeeeeee!!!

Then he HEARS the distant TINGLE and ROLL of a HEAVY COIN STRIKING CONCRETE, ROLLING. THEN ANOTHER.

The man jerks around. Eyes all murder.

169 INT. KITCHEN -- NIGHT.

169

THE COPS look down into the pitch black cellar -- hands over their noses, faces shocked.

COP #1

You got a flashlight?

COP #2

In the car -- damn -- what the hell's down there?!

170 INT. CELLAR.

170

MOVING WITH THE MAN -- staggering through the inner pen -- through the last of SEVERAL OTHER YOUNG MEN -- of several nationalities -- bloodied by his earlier barrage. They scramble into the darkness -- and their moving away reveals the vault wide open -- Fool face-down on the heap of money, unmoving.

THE MAN -- an evil smile coming over his face. He rushes in.

171 INT. VAULT.

171

The man aims fast and blasts Fool in the back --

Fool jumps, and a shower of hundred-dollar bills shoot from his back -- the stuffing for his clothes, really. The man stares down, incredulous. "Fool" is nothing more than his pants and shirt stuffed with paper money.

Then the man sees what's hanging above all his money -- a neat bundle of dynamite, connected to wires leading off behind him.

FOOL (OS)

Hey.

The man spins around. Fool stands in the doorway of the vault in his underwear -- the jump-wire to the dynamite held in his hand.

FOOL

Shoot me and you die too.

The man stares at the bundle of dynamite, inches from his head. Looks back to Fool. He snaps the gun up -- Fool dives and jerks the wire -- !!!

THE VAULT BLOWS IN A BLINDING EXPLOSION -- BLOWS THE MAN STRAIGHT OUT THE DOOR IN A FLAMING GOUT OF COIN AND BILLS -- THROUGH THE WALL OF THE INNER ENCLOSURE -- ACROSS THE FLOOR INTO THE PIT WITH LEROY AND SPENSER!

172 INT. KITCHEN -- NIGHT.

172

BLOWS MONEY UP FROM THE CELLAR IN A GIANT GREEN BLIZZARD!

173 EXT. THE HOUSE -- NIGHT.

173

BLOWS OUT WINDOWS AND DOORS AND A HUGE SECTION OF THE HOUSE'S FOUNDATION -- BLOWS OUT A CLOUD OF MONEY HIGH INTO THE NIGHT. EVERYONE dives for cover -- as the FIRE AND SMOKE billow up, turning night to day.

Then the money starts snowing down. And the people go from terrified to berserk in the space of two heartbeats! It's Christmas in the ghetto tonight!

174 INT. KITCHEN -- NIGHT.

174

Alice and Ruby stagger up -- get their bearings and tear down into the burning cellar.

175 INT. CELLAR.

175

Lots of light now -- half the place is on fire! Alice runs through the FIRE AND SMOKE and MONEY until she finds Fool -- just barely alive -- lying in shoals of gold and green. She lifts him as Ruby runs over --

ALICE

Fool -- you okay!?

Fool looks up, bloody, groggy, but alive.

FOOL

(smiles shakily)

Matter of fact, feel like a million dollars.

WIDE -- as they help him to his feet, daring to smile a little. Then A SCRAMBLING BEHIND makes them jump around, terrified.

What they SEE is the last of the people from under the stairs -- slipping out through the smoke and half-light, out through the blasted-open storm doors into the night. The last and largest -- Fool's guide to the treasure -- stops and looks back to Fool with a long, profound gaze. Half-frightening, half unspeakably sad. Then disappears. Fool looks at Alice.

She takes his hand -- AND THE MAN SPRINGS UP BEHIND THEM -- A GIANT BEAST OF DEATH -- LURCHES FOR THEM WITH A SPINE-SHATTERING SCREAM -- THEN, JUST AS SUDDENLY -- WITH A TREMENDOUS EAR-SHATTERING BLAST -- flies backwards into the pit!!!! Fool and Alice stagger back, wide-eyed. Turn and see -- Ruby -- with the shotgun. She tosses it down, rubbing her shoulder.

RUBY

Kicks like a mule.
(smiles)
That's for you two.

176 EXT. THE STREET -- NIGHT.

176

Fool, Alice, Ruby and Grandfather Booker walk among the happy people, Booker putting his arm around Fool.

GRANDFATHER BOOKER

Y'know, now that you're thirteen and a man, you should use your real name -- forget this Fool business.

FOOL

Real name? You mean Poindexter?

GRANDFATHER BOOKER

Poindexter's your middle name. Some uncle your daddy owed money to. Never liked him or his name.

FOOL

Then what's my real first name?

GRANDFATHER BOOKER

King.

FOOL

King?

GRANDFATHER BOOKER

After Martin Luther Jr. King. Good name, and you earned it.

He gives Fool a hug, rejoins Ruby.

RUBY

(low)
That true?

GRANDFATHER BOOKER

Is now.

ON FOOL AND ALICE -- Alice hiding behind him from the crowd nearly overwhelmed.

ALICE
So many people...
(brightens)
You think they'll be all right? The
ones from the cellar?

Fool looks around and laughs.

FOOL
Fit right in with the rest of us.

ROLL TITLES