

THE WHITE ROOM

T H E W H I T E R O O M

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Dear Reader,

Your humble director Rod here. Before you read our story I'd like to give you some context and the right lens to look through when reading. As you already know, this is a film I want to make - but I also want you to know *WHY THIS FILM* and *WHY RIGHT NOW*.

1. The world needs Liz, our main character, right now. She's a woman who finds herself in an elevated and terrifying situation; responding not with fear but with the resolve to fight back. She's resilient, resourceful and challenges everything – including preconceptions and stereotypes – that are thrown her way. Audiences deserve a character like Liz in a story like this. Let's give them a strong woman to cheer for.

2. Liz is an unfortunately rare role for an older actress. Too often women above a certain age are overlooked in our industry. Not here.

There are those who would be so quick to make a film like this starring a man of Liz's age. Let's make a statement and instead stand up for Liz and other characters like her. Let's make some noise and be the change we want in the world.

3. This film is an ode to Hitchcock; lean, mean, visually striking and evocative. This film is full of tension and fear. Misdirection. Uncanny coincidence. Jump scares. Subversion of expectations and conventions.

4. I'm a visual storyteller. And I love craft. This film is designed to be a visual feast, driven by cinematography, color, light, darkness, score and sound design. Let's bust a move and show some style.

As you read keep in mind the craft, tone and aesthetics of *PRISONERS*, *DON'T BREATHE* and *KILLING OF A SACRED DEER*.

5. This film, set in a blizzard, is prime Christmas time theatrical counter programming. We all know that people love genre films and that people go to the cinema in droves around the holidays. There is rarely a great horror thriller to counter all the family-friendly or blockbuster holiday fare.

Let's change that. Let's make a film that plays on the big screen and treat those horror thriller film fans as first class movie going citizens.

6. This story was inspired by my mother; herself a lifelong public school French teacher in the rural mountains of northern New York. One day last winter I found myself wondering how my mother would fare navigating the situation Liz finds herself in. And so this story was born.

Beyond that image of my mother, it's a film about all mothers and their strength of character, grace, and capability in the face of trauma.

So with that I'll leave you to read our dark and thrilling tale. Please join me afterwards for some final thoughts.

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**MRS. ELIZABETH "LIZ" KLEIN
FRENCH**

FADE IN FROM WHITE

Slowly the white becomes a barely perceptible image: a million falling particles over a bleached sky.

Franz Schubert's 'Impromptu No 2 in E-flat Major' plays.

A delicate piano melody that mirrors the flurry of snow dusting miles of wooded hills.

It's deep winter in upstate New York.

The terrain is harsh, seemingly uninhabited until we see --

EXT. REMOTE HOME - DAY

A large but simple TWO STORY HOUSE.

Nothing showy. A family home. Weathered wood siding, metal roof. It fits with the rustic surroundings.

A scraping sound draws us toward --

EXT. DRIVEWAY - FRONT OF HOUSE - EVENING

A woman shovels the walkway next to the garage.

She's dressed in a puffy winter coat, hat and gloves.

The snow banks are high around the path, the sign of an already long winter.

This is ELIZABETH 'LIZ' KLINE, 65.

EXT. WOODPILE - EVENING

WHOOOSH!

A tarp pulls back from a wood pile.

Liz bends carefully, carrying a heavy stack of logs, too heavy for someone her age, but she does not falter.

The logs STACK neatly onto the pile.

INT. LIZ'S HOME - EVENING

Liz bangs her boots off on the mat.

She pauses a moment, glancing to a stack of BOXES by the door. On top of the clothes and books, there's a pair of traditional wooden SNOW SHOES with rawhide lacings.

The sound of a TEA POT rises, growing to a shrill whistle --

INT. LIZ'S HOME - NIGHT

The whistle becomes wind.

Snowflakes float past two large PICTURE WINDOWS.

Faint outlines of trees reach out of the blackness.

Beyond, we see the far-flung glow of a township.

Liz sits, wrapped in a large blanket, drinking a cup of tea.

The song which has been playing since the opening image ends suddenly, scratching as the record skips.

Liz stares, lost in thought... presumably out the window...

But the camera pulls back to reveal she's not looking out the window, but at a --

Reclining chair.

The leather around the armrest is worn. You can see the imprint where someone sat for many years.

The chair is now empty.

RINNGGG!

Liz startles at the sound of a phone, spilling a little tea --

CLOSE ON:

She lifts a land-line phone into frame, checking the name on the screen: AMY.

She takes a breath and answers --

LIZ
(to phone)
Hello, love.

AMY (O.S.)
You alright?

Liz sighs, laughing at herself --

LIZ

The phone startled me.

AMY (O.S.)

I wish you had cell service up there. It worries me.

LIZ

If I had service, I might actually use my phone, start spending all my time picking up young men on Tinder-

AMY (O.S.)

--Mom! Stop it. How do you even know about that?

LIZ

I teach high school. There are many things I wish I didn't know.

AMY (O.S.)

Highschoolers? Jesus. I'm never sending Evy to school.

LIZ

How will she learn French?

AMY (O.S.)

You'll teach her. When you move down here.

A brief silence.

LIZ

I heard they could keep Language Arts one more year...

AMY (O.S.)

Yeah?

LIZ

They're talking about another trip to Provence.

AMY (O.S.)

But... you're retiring.

LIZ

No. I know.

AMY (O.S.)

And you listed the house.

LIZ
Yes. I told you.

AMY (O.S.)
You signed the paperwork.
Everything fine with Gary?

LIZ
Amy. Yes.

A beat. Amy sighs.

AMY (O.S.)
Mom, I know it's not easy. That's
your home. It was my home too. But
you'll have plenty time to travel,
and spend time with us and do...
anything you want.

As Amy talks, Liz moves along the mantle where old PHOTOS and
KNICKKNACKS are displayed --

A picture of a young Woman and Man holding a single can of
soup in the air. The meaning unknown to us.

A framed MAP with routes marked from New York to Arizona.

A PHOTO of Liz as a much younger woman standing with a class
full of her high school students on a trip to Europe.

AMY (O.S.)
Mom, what's wrong?

Liz catches her reflection in the glass of the framed photo.

LIZ
Just... don't let me be useless.

AMY (O.S.)
What do you mean?

LIZ
Without Mark here, I just...

She searches for the words.

LIZ
I don't want to be useless.

AMY (O.S.)
It's not possible. I'm more worried
about you not being able to relax.

Liz smiles. She knows there's truth in this.

A SCREAM jars the moment from the end of Amy's line. A little girls voice yells offscreen --

AMY (O.S.)
What are you wearing? I said
pajamas -- ahhh -- Sorry.

LIZ
(laughing)
Princess?

AMY
Always.

LIZ
You know feminists don't have to
wear pants.

AMY
Ha ha.

Liz smiles.

AMY
You survive one more Adirondack
winter, and I can think of plenty
of ways you could be useful here.

LIZ
When are you getting in?

AMY
Friday. Late. Long as the weather
cooperates.

LIZ
Give my princess a kiss for me...
Amy? Amy?

The call dropped. Liz looks at the phone. And sets it down.

INT. LIZ'S HOME - BEDROOM - NIGHT - LATER

Snow swirls against the bedroom window.

The glass quivers in the wind.

A crack of light from the hallway shines onto the wall above
the headboard where a piece of art hangs.

We PUSH over the bed toward it. As if to get a better look...

It's a painting of a quaint sunlit room. The window opens to blue skies. A large cactus plant. Nothing special about it really, the kind of still life you could find abandoned at any thrift store in Arizona. And yet, it draws us in...

Closer.

Closer still.

The hypnotizing movement is broken as --

A FACE sits into frame, eyes wide, mouth agape.

It's Liz, awoken from a nightmare, steadying her breathing...

There's a faint sound from another room.

A CREAK. Like the weight of someone's foot on a floorboard.

Liz looks through the open door into the hallway.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

She moves quietly toward the the living room.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

As Liz rounds the corner into the living room, she stops --

A MAN sits in the leather chair, facing the picture windows.

Liz moves slowly toward him...

It's an Old Man with a lined face and short grey beard. He stares out the window into the falling snow.

LIZ

Mark?

Liz watches him. But he doesn't look up.

She sits in the empty chair and wraps herself in a blanket.

For a moment she is quiet.

Then she begins speaking casually, as if to an old friend.

LIZ

Amy called today. I can tell she's
worried about me.

She pauses. Looking out the window.

LIZ

They're coming up on Friday. I hope they remember the chains. I need to call Carl and see if he'll plow the road before then.

Another pause. And Liz is suddenly overcome with emotion.

LIZ

We didn't grow old enough together.

She turns to look at her husband. But the chair is empty.

She wipes a hand under her eye, shaking off a wave of tears.

The blanket wraps around her shoulders as she looks away.

We PULL BACK through the picture windows... leaving the warm glow of the house for the howling dark.

INT. GAS STATION - MORNING

Steaming coffee pours into a paper cup.

FRONT COUNTER

A credit card swipes.

GAS STATION ATTENDANT

Sorry, Liz. They made us update to the *insert* kind. See?

LIZ

Sign of the times.

GAS STATION ATTENDANT

It's not even faster. I don't get it.

Liz inserts her card and waits. And waits. Her eyes drift to a pink flyer taped to the glass counter --

MISSING

"Can you help?"

Below in fading black ink, a photo of a TEENAGE GIRL. Nice looking but not pretty enough to make national news.

We catch the name "**KRISTA MILLINGTON**" but the other information is interrupted by --

GAS STATION ATTENDANT
 Hope she's not out there in this
 mess. Supposed to get twelve inches
 by tomorrow.

Liz looks out the window where a line of cars wait behind
 each filling station. Locals preparing for the storm.

The Gas Station Attendant leans in conspiratorially --

GAS STATION ATTENDANT
 If we run out, I've got a can in
 the back with your name on it.

LIZ
 Thank you, Mike. I should be okay.

Liz takes her coffee and walks toward the door where three
 blue collar men sit at formica booths with steaming mugs.

They look out the window at a vehicle in the parking lot --

GUY #1
 ... I saw the same truck driving
 ten under the speed limit last week
 on Dunwitty.

GUY #2
 What kind of idiot doesn't have
 chains, in the dead of winter?

A man with a blue toboggan and ruddy cheeks looks up, meeting
 Liz's eyes, he interrupts the man who is talking --

This is JOHN MILLINGTON (42).

JOHN MILLINGTON
 Hey there, Liz.

LIZ
 Hello, John. Any news?

JOHN MILLINGTON
 I was gonna ask you the same thing.

Guy #1 (50's) jumps in --

BALD MAN
 I keep telling him, she's with that
 dumbass boyfriend. Probably in the
 city somewhere. Maybe Long Island.

LIZ
 I'm sure they'll find her.

John focuses on Liz, desperate for affirmation --

JOHN MILLINGTON

Maybe she's not the brightest, but she's a good girl. I just don't know why she'd go and do something like that before graduating.

LIZ

I've seen good kids, even bright ones like Krista do some terribly stupid things. Not just kids either.

The men laugh a little. John gives a needed smile, tipping his mug, "I'll drink to that."

Guy #2 stuffs a chunk of Kodiak chew in his mouth --

GUY #2

That's why we'll miss ya, Mrs. Kline. Even a punk teenager like (he's about to say himself) -- John here --

The Men laugh.

GUY #2

-- Can get off on a bad foot and still turn things around.

JOHN MILLINGTON

(in French)

Mon nom est John.

GUY #1

Ou sont les toilettes?

The Men laugh again. Liz smiles, correcting him good-naturedly in fluent French --

LIZ

Ou sont les toilettes.

Ever the teacher. After all these years.

JOHN MILLINGTON

I know you only had Krista that one year, but if you hear anything at school, or remember anything...

He trails off, not knowing exactly what he's asking. Liz understands. She looks him square in the eyes --

LIZ
I will.

CUT TO:

INT. HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

An empty classroom.

Twenty five desks face a whiteboard, covered in Liz's neat, slanting handwriting.

She sits at her desk eating a salad. Staring out the window.

We hear the unmistakable hiss of a soda tab breaking. Liz lifts a diet Pepsi from under her desk and takes a sip.

KNOCK KNOCK

LIZ
Come in!

She slides the diet Pepsi under the desk, out of sight.

CUT TO:

A middle-aged SUPERINTENDENT, mid conversation with Liz --

SUPERINTENDENT
... it's not just you. All arts and music budgets are being reduced. And for any language beside Spanish...

He trails off, seeing Liz's face fall.

SUPERINTENDENT
I'm sorry. You could always stay on a volunteer basis, advise the French club?

Liz smiles kindly.

LIZ
I'm moving, remember? Amy's got her hands full, I'm going to help them out for a while.

He nods.

SUPERINTENDENT
You've been a great teacher, Mrs. Kline. You cannot be replaced.

LIZ

At least one other person agrees
with you.

She hands him a piece of paper from the desk --

SUPERINTENDENT

Still printing your e-mails?

He scans the paper, and smiles, reading aloud --

SUPERINTENDENT

(reading)

"As a girl growing up in rural
Schuyler, you were able to show me
a different world full of
possibilities that I had never
considered. I now have a seventeen
year old daughter who is studying
Spanish and Chinese and has applied
to study abroad for her freshman
year. For her, it is taken for
granted that language is a part of
her life. For me, I received that
gift from you. Thank you Mrs.
Kline."

Liz looks up with tears in her eyes -- REVERSE ON --

The classroom is empty again. The Superintendent gone.

Wind whips the falling snow outside.

RINNNNNNGG!

The period bell breaks Liz from her reverie. She looks up as
high school students enter the classroom.

She brightens, jumping to her feet --

LIZ

Bonjour!

INT. BREAK ROOM - DAY

Liz stands with a group of TEACHERS drinking coffee, gathered
around the window with their backs to the camera and to --

ENGLISH TEACHER

This has all the signs of the
monster queen Grendel.

One of the teachers rolls her eyes over her shoulder at the English Teacher sitting at a table.

TEACHER #1
Stop it, Carl.

TEACHER #2
The only monster here is Krista's boyfriend.

TEACHER #3
That's a little harsh.

TEACHER #2
You didn't have him in class.

TEACHER #1
He would have been a Sophomore when Krista was in Junior High?

TEACHER #2
No. He would have been a Senior when she was in Junior High.

THROUGH THE WINDOW

We now see what the teachers are looking at --

Two POLICE CARS. Visible on the far side of the parking lot.

TEACHER #3
Liz. Didn't he get into trouble breaking into the vacation homes and selling electronics?

LIZ
I think so. But that was years ago. Mark handled that arena.

TEACHER #3
Hmm.

TEACHER #1
I don't like you being the only full-time resident up there.

LIZ
It sounds worse than it is. I come home. I read --

Teacher #1 interjects --

TEACHER #1
-- James Patterson.

The other teachers laugh good-naturedly.

LIZ
Oui. I read *CHEAP DETECTIVE
STORIES*, listen to my music. I go
to bed. It's...

Lonely?

LIZ
Boring.

The doughy English teacher muses morbidly with a mouthful of
doughnut --

ENGLISH TEACHER
If there was an ancient nordic
monster taking our children, it'd
be hiding out in those hills...

TEACHER #1
Carl!

SHOUTS erupt from the hallway behind them --

The teachers turn in unison.

Kids run down the hall, yelling in celebration. The teachers
know exactly what that means --

TEACHER #1
Snow day.

Sure enough, a crackle comes over the intercom system --

VICE PRINCIPAL KELLY
Okay, your attention please, senior
class VP, Erica Milor has an
announcement --

Liz turns back to the window as the police cruisers make
tracks out of the snowy lot.

INT. GROCERY STORE - AFTERNOON

DING!

Liz enters a mom and pop grocery store.

BEEP. BEEP. BEEP.

She stands in line with a small basket of groceries behind a
man with short brown hair, wearing only a light jacket.

CASHIER

Do you have any smaller bills?

Liz looks up, noticing the crisp hundred dollar bill on the counter. There's a tall bottled water, instant coffee and a PAYDAY candy bar sticking out from his bag.

MAN IN LINE

I don't. I'm sorry.

CASHIER

Let me see if I can break that.

Liz looks out the window at the cube truck parked in the lot outside. Almost invisible against the falling snow.

MAN'S VOICE

Did you kill someone?

Liz startles, spinning to see GARY KANG (60's) a handsome Korean man with gold spectacles and a green parka.

GARY KANG

Did you kill someone? Are you on the run?

Liz settles, smiling embarrassedly.

LIZ

I'm sorry. I've been busy.

GARY KANG

I'm just trying to help. Talk to Amy about it.

LIZ

I know. I'll send the paperwork.

GARY KANG

Don't send it. Drop it off and then have lunch with me to celebrate.

Liz smiles, there's warmth, maybe even attraction but --

LIZ

I'll just send it. Promise.

Liz grabs the grocery bag off the counter, heading for the door. The parking lot is empty. The cube truck is gone.

INT. CAR - EVENING

A two-lane road winds along the Hudson River.

The headlights barely break the wall of falling snow.

A true crime podcast plays from Liz's iPhone.

PODCAST

...It's the same every time. You isolate the victim, break ties with family and friends, separate them from their money, and then you basically brainwash them into a state of child-like dependence --

Light from the small town shrink in the rearview mirror.

The road curves left and right. Rising into the hills.

It's only twelve miles from town but it feels like more.

A few houses along this 'main road' have their lights on but the further she goes, the less populated it becomes.

Liz turns left onto a road with a sign advertising '**Garnet Hill Association**' and '**The Lodge**' 7 miles.

Beyond these is a another sign: '**No Outlet.**'

PODCAST

...They prey on people who have no one to look out for them. Sex workers, runaways, widowers --

Liz presses pause on the screen.

We see a few driveways leading to large SUMMER VACATION HOMES set back off the road. But nobody is here during the winter.

All the lights are off.

Liz makes a final turn up a long and winding hill and continues up a quarter mile stretch of driveway...

The car triggers the motion detector light, which casts a beautiful blue halo in the turnaround in front of the garage.

Liz waits for the garage door to open and parks inside.

In the dark, she takes out her cell phone and opens a new text message from Amy --

"Sorry mom. I tried calling. Weather isn't cooperating."

"Call me back on the land line."

INT. LIZ'S HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Liz has the land-line phone to her ear, looking out the window --

AMY (O.S.)
We'll try for next weekend -- wait,
sorry Eve's recital. And Blake has
her the weekend after --

LIZ
It's okay. You're busy.

AMY (O.S.)
No, we'll figure it out.

LIZ
You have your life. I understand.

AMY (O.S.)
Mom. We wanted to be there. It's a
blizzard.

Liz sighs. She's being petty and she knows it.

LIZ
I'm sorry. I just miss you all.

AMY (O.S.)
We miss you too. Call if you need
anything. And if the power goes out
again, go to the Lodge, they'll
have rooms available mid-week.

LIZ
Okay.

AMY
Don't be too tough.

Liz smiles.

LIZ
I won't. Bye.

INT. LIZ'S HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Liz eats dinner alone on the couch. Chicken ragu and a glass of red wine.

She watches a cable re-run of MISS MARPLE when the screen glitches, going to the blue cable provider error.

Liz grabs the remote --

But the image returns.

We watch an elderly Miss Marple sneak through the alley outside a two-story brick house, watching the silhouette of a man move up the stairs toward a woman alone in her room --

The lights in the room DIM suddenly and come back on.

INT. LIZ'S HOME - CLOSET

Liz pulls a bulky FLASHLIGHT from the closet.

VRRRRRRRVRRRRR

A motor whines as she cranks the handle, powering the battery, the bulb glows to life.

She sets the flashlight on the kitchen counter.

Just in case.

Liz pours the remainder of her wine down the sink and sets her glass in the dishwasher.

We continue to look down the drain as the last of the red spirals away into the disposal.

DISSOLVE TO:

The camera pushes through a snowy VOID.

We hear CRUNCHING footsteps in an otherwise vacuous silence.

And then out of the void, something becomes visible --

Just a shock of color at first.

Red.

We move closer.

A shape.

A human body.

A red flannel shirt stands out like a nose bleed.

Liz sprints into frame, racing toward the body --

IT'S MARK. Her husband. Wearing his wooden SNOW SHOES.

He clenches his chest, muscles tight in pain.

His face is purple. Eyelashes dusted in snow flakes.

LIZ
Keep breathing. It's okay --

Liz looks around frantically, there's a house in the distance. A faded, yellow, two-story house on a hill --

LIZ
HELLLP!!!

She screams a jagged animal yell.

LIZ
HELLLLPP MEEEE!

No response. Her voice lost in the wind.

LIZ
HELLLL --

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Liz's eyes flick open, afraid --

LIZ
-- help.

The words still caught in her throat.

A nightmare. A memory.

She swallows a bad taste and rolls over on her side...

AND SHE SEES IT --

Right in front of her face.

A man in a red flannel shirt. His body turned away.

Mark.

She hesitates to indulge in these waking fantasies and yet...

They are precious to her.

She reaches a hand toward Mark's shoulder.

Nuzzling up against him, burying her head into his back.

His body shifts, turning toward her.

Liz opens her eyes --

The Old Man's face is purple and swollen. A TRICKLE OF BLOOD runs from the corner of his mouth.

Liz's eyes flick down --

There's a GAPING CAVITY in Mark's chest.

And in his outstretched hand, an unmoving HUMAN HEART.

MARK
(choked)
Why isn't it working?

Liz is frozen in horror.

Snowflakes fall lightly from above...

She looks up, confused, as --

An avalanche of SNOW DROPS HEAVY UPON THEM AND.

LIZ SITS UP. COVERED IN SNOW.

SHE LOOKS AT THE SNOW - WHERE MARK IS...

Or should be. But the snow is gone. And so is Mark.

Liz shivers. Alone again.

Catching her breath, when --

CREEEK

A noise draws her attention back to the dark hallway.

She reaches for a bedside lamp, pulling the cord, but nothing happens. The power is out.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

VRRRRRRRRRRR

Liz cranks the handle of the flashlight.

The bulb glows on, throwing a beam down the hall...

LIVING ROOM

She moves instinctively toward the chair by the window.

But this time, the chair is empty.

Liz shivers again, feeling a chill in the house.

She turns, noticing -- snow drifts across the wood floor...

Liz follows the snow with the flashlight --

The front door of the house is open by about two feet.

She pauses. And then moves toward the door.

She grabs the handle, ready to shut it when --

The motion detector light outside triggers on.

Liz looks through the partially open door --

The driveway is empty.

No one visible near the garage where the light is fixed.

Could be the falling snow that triggered it.

But it's eerie. And Liz is spooked.

She shuts the door, locks it.

In the silence, she hears a familiar hum.

The land-line phone sits face up on the kitchen counter.

The orange light from the screen of the phone glowing.

A dial tone comes from the phone.

Did she forget to hang it up? Or has someone been here?

OFF LIZ'S FRIGHTENED FACE we --

CUT TO:

EXT/INT. CAR - NIGHT

Liz ducks into the car and shuts the door. Locks it.

She's wearing a coat now. A hat and scarf. In case.

She blows into her fists.

She types a text to Amy: *"Headed to the Lodge. I'm fine. Call you tomorrow."* SEND. The text message fails.

INT. CAR - DRIVING - NIGHT

Liz navigates the hill carefully. Headlights barely punching through the blizzard.

The wipers struggle with the falling snow.

She stops the car, stepping outside to clear the window with her gloved hand.

BACK INSIDE

She shifts the car into drive but the tires spin. She puts the car in reverse. Hits the gas --

The car jerks and suddenly stops, losing traction.

Liz takes a beat inside the car. Looking out into the storm.

Stay calm.

She opens the door and steps out again --

Walks around to the trunk, pops it.

Pulls a shovel. Begins working at the snow around the tires.

But it only packs tighter, the ground nowhere in sight.

TRUNK

Liz rifles through the trunk, breath pluming in the tail lights.

She finds a blanket and pulls it out. There are two letters sewn into the corner of the fabric, "M+L."

She shoves the blanket between the snow and the tire's rubber.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Liz eases onto the gas...

And the car moves, slowly getting traction as it eats up the blanket under its tread. She pulls back onto the level road.

OUTSIDE CAR - CONTINUOUS

Liz gathers the torn blanket from the snow, folding it back into the trunk.

SLAM!

INT. CAR - DRIVING

The car moves at steady crawl into the storm.

Creeping through an endless wall of white.

Liz slows at a T intersection, a sign points to the right for
'The Lodge'.

She leans over the wheel, peering through the clouded windshield, the condensation makes it impossible to see.

She cranks the heat, and turns the knob to defrost. In no hurry. Better to be safe.

She reaches out, wiping a circle to clear the fog when, she sees something through the driver side window, barely visible out of the cast of the headlights --

It looks like a person standing in the middle of the road.

Liz squints, trying to see through the flurry --

There is someone there. A woman?

She seems to be looking back at Liz.

The image is obscured again by the condensation.

Liz leans in frantically, wiping the glass clean.

But the woman is gone.

We catch a flash of movement, disappearing off the road into the deep drift that leads to the forest.

Liz throws the car in park and gets out, peering through the snow falling in the headlights --

LIZ

Hello!

No answer.

LIZ

Hellllo! Are you okay!?

The storm swallows her call. A GUST hits Liz. She covers her face against the frigid bite.

INSIDE

Liz blows into her gloves again.

The woman was on the road to the left.

The opposite direction of The Lodge.

A moment of decision. *"You should go to the Lodge. Make a call from there."*

But whomever she saw may need help now.

Liz turns the wheel away from The Lodge.

She scans, looking left and right.

On one side of the road, a snowy bank of hills.

On the other, dense trees.

She continues further down the road...

It's not long before the windshield fogs again.

She wipes a circle clean, leaning in.

Road gets narrow ahead, only a few feet of visibility...

The glass fogs.

As she wipes the glass clear --

LIGHT FLOODS THE WINDOW!

A large TRUCK barrels at her --

Liz swerves to miss the truck!

Her tires lock up as she plows through a snow bank and down a large embankment, slamming into a cluster of trees!

Her head HITS the steering wheel hard.

The car rests, nose down, headlights buried in snow.

Red tail lights making a hell-scape of the deep drift.

DING DING DING

Liz feels her forehead -- blood trickles from a small cut near the hair line.

She forces the door open, peering out -- whiteness beyond whiteness, a daunting sight.

But Liz acts, knowing she can't stay with the car.

She reaches down, scooping up a handful of SNOW and presses it to the cut on her head. Red blossoms through the ice like a snow cone.

CLICK

A light comes on as she digs through the glove box.

SLAM!

CLOSE ON:

A NOTE tucked into the driver side window. We read Liz's neat, slanted hand writing:

'This is Elizabeth Kline's car. I'm okay. Please call 567 949 8235.'

We RACK FOCUS to the background behind the note to find Liz tromping up the hill into the snowy dark.

EXT. GARNET HILL - NIGHT

Liz scrambles to the top of a small rise, trying to get her bearings... she scans in a circle, breathing heavily.

Nothing but snowstorm screaming in the dark.

She shakes her head hopelessly when something catches her attention -- a LIGHT.

It looks like it's coming from a house to the west, further away from the Lodge.

She takes off toward it, moving down a sloping stretch of snowy road, covering her face against the wind.

EXT. YELLOW HOUSE - NIGHT

CLOSE ON

Eyes watering, eye-lashes frozen white.

Liz fights her way through the tempest... an old three story house rises out of the haze before her.

A few lights are on inside.

Liz slows, reaching the door, resting her hands on her knees.

She knocks.

And waits.

Nobody answers.

She knocks again.

She pauses, listening... above the wind, it sounds like music coming from inside. A classical piece --

LIZ
(under her breath)
Vivaldi.

She moves to the window, peering through the glass --

There's a speaker on the mantle where the music plays.

Two glasses on the coffee table.

But no one in sight.

And then -- movement in the reflection of the window glass.

Liz doesn't see it, but there's a man in the yard behind her.

MAN
Hello.

She spins, jumping back -- the man puts his hands up apologetically --

MAN
I'm sorry. Are you okay?

Liz exhales, regaining her composure --

LIZ
Yes, I crashed my car down the road, but I'm fine.

She looks over her shoulder --

LIZ
I saw someone out there, a woman, she might be lost --

The man frowns.

MAN

Please, come inside. We'll call.
And I'll take care of your head.

He extends a hand to Liz --

BOB

I'm Bob. Clofine.

BOB CLOFINE (40) a little nondescript. White, brown hair, fit, he only wears a light jacket despite the cold.

Liz shakes his hand, and gratefully follows him inside.

INT. CLOFINE HOME - CONTINUOUS

Boots stomp. Shedding snow on the heavy doormat.

BOB

What did she look like?

LIZ

I don't know. It was hard to see.
Young. Maybe twenties. Maybe older.

BOB

No one's going to get up here in this weather, but if you tell me where you saw her, when my brother gets back, I'll go look for her myself.

LIZ

She was on the main road, where it splits toward The Lodge. It looked like she was wearing a t-shirt. She must have been freezing.

BOB

Did you see where she went?

LIZ

She ran off the road into the forest.

BOB

East? Toward town.

LIZ

I think so.

He nods. Thinking.

BOB
I'll call my brother.

LIZ
I'll come with you.

BOB
You should sit down, warm up, I'll
look at that cut.

INT. CLOFINE HOME - LIVING ROOM

Liz sits on the couch, looking around as Bob returns to the living room ending a call on his cell phone --

LIZ
I'm surprised you get service.

BOB
Satellite phone. Never go anywhere
without them. Called the
authorities too.

Bob brings a mug of hot tea and a first aid kit --

Liz takes the tea. Setting it on the table.

LIZ
Thank you. I don't know what she
could have been doing out here.

BOB
It is strange. But we'll find her.

Bob opens a well-organized first aid kit and pulls out disinfectant wipes, a cotton ball, anti-bacterial ointment.

LIZ
You must have known my husband,
Mark.

Bob pauses a moment, pulling a cotton ball.

LIZ
He was the manager for Garnet Hill
properties. Did small contracting.

BOB
Of course. How is Mark?

LIZ
He, he passed away a few months
ago...

(MORE)

LIZ (CONT'D)

But he'd be happy to see someone up here in the off season. We're normally the only people here in the winter.

BOB

It's beautiful here in the snow. So peaceful, quiet.

LIZ

You and Mark probably got along.

Bob smiles --

BOB

Do you mind?

He lifts the cotton ball, gesturing to her forehead --

LIZ

Please.

Bob presses the cotton ball to the opening of the peroxide bottle and tips it. He dabs the wet cotton to her head.

She doesn't wince, but she closes her eyes momentarily.

LIZ

It's funny, I'm the one used to doing this.

BOB

Nurse?

LIZ

No. Just an accident prone kid and almost forty years of childhood education.

BOB

A teacher.

For some reason Bob perks up, interested. Liz notes it.

LIZ

Yes. At the high school in town. Are you in education?

BOB

No. I just admire anyone who dedicates their lives to helping children.

Liz nods. A brief silence as Bob deftly applies a dab of neosporine and fixes a butterfly bandage over the wound...

LIZ
I heard Vivaldi earlier.

Bob doesn't respond.

LIZ
Are you a fan of classical music?

He looks up, smiling like he wasn't listening --

BOB
Oh, not really, it must have been something on the radio.

Liz nods.

BOB
There we are. Not too bad actually.

BZZZZ, Bob checks his satellite phone.

BOB
My brother is here. We'll be back.

LIZ
Really, I'll come --

BOB
--Please. We'll find her. Try to.
You rest.

Liz relents, sitting back on the couch as Bob moves toward the door. She lifts her tea, taking a sip.

We momentarily hear a SECOND VOICE and the door shuts.

A vehicle rumbles away, leaving the house in silence.

TIME PASSES with a SERIES OF SHOTS

Snow falls outside the large picture windows.

A German clock ticks on the wall.

The dishwasher finishes it's cycle.

It's subtle, but we might notice with each consecutive shot, the sound pitches down, like a toy losing batteries.

And when we see Liz again, her eyes are closed.

The empty cup of tea on the coffee table.

Liz stirs.

Noticing with surprise that she's lying down on the couch.

She sits, the blanket falls from her shoulders.

She looks around, getting her bearings. Slightly confused.

The house is quiet.

LIZ

Hello?

She stands, looking back toward the hallway --

LIZ

Mr. Clofine?

No answer.

LIZ

Bob?

THE WINDOW

Liz looks out the window. The tire tracks are almost completely covered in snow.

CLICK.

Classical music suddenly begins playing. The multi-disc CD changer must have switched CDs.

Liz walks to the stereo.

She notices the music collection. Brahms. Vivaldi. Chopin. A large popular classical collection.

The sound of a ticking clock draws her attention --

It reads 2:15 am. She's been asleep for almost three hours.

This fact seems to disturb her. She feels her head gingerly.

Liz notices to the left of the clock --

Four discolored rectangles on the wall and four tiny nail holes, where framed photos once were.

Liz steps back into the living room, looking up --

There's a Christmas tree still up on the second story loft that casts a cozy umbrella of light over the living room.

The house is quite large - and most of the living takes place on the second and third floors.

KITCHEN

Liz moves into the kitchen.

An unopened PAYDAY bar on the counter.

She pulls a random drawer open and quickly closes it like she knows she shouldn't be snooping.

She looks outside at the detached three-car garage.

There's a light on. Maybe Bob is out there.

She puts on her coat and boots and moves out the side door, blasted by a wall of sideways snow --

INT. GARAGE - NIGHT

The door creaks open...

The garage is dark. This surprises her.

She saw a light from outside.

There are no cars inside the garage. It's sparsely filled with a couple sleds, some old bicycles, a shelf of tools, a kayak hangs from the ceiling.

Liz realizes that there are only two garage bays.

She pauses.

OUTSIDE

Liz walks in front of the garage, looking for something...

Curious. As she thought, there's a third garage bay where the faint light is coming from.

INSIDE

Back inside the garage, she looks for a connecting door to the third garage bay. Walking to the back wall.

There's no obvious door visible.

And then she sees something --

A large grey metal SHELVING CABINET.

Blue light leaks from behind one of the door panels.

Liz looks over her shoulder again and moves forward, reaching to open the door --

INSIDE THE CABINET

A large flat screen television sits behind the door.

The screen is dark, running a basic blue colored screen saver.

A second monitor sits next to it.

Liz looks over her shoulder and then pulls out a drawer underneath the monitor.

There's a mouse and keyboard. She jiggles the mouse.

The screen saver disappears, giving way to six black and white surveillance camera feeds:

The living room where Liz was sleeping.

The road/driveway.

A few bedrooms.

And the garage she's in at this very moment --

Liz sees herself in the corner. She turns around, scanning the ceiling of the room but can't find the hidden camera.

Strange.

ON THE MONITOR

Liz moves to the SECOND MONITOR, which is still black. She slides the mouse over it and, it too, comes alive --

4 boxes show camera angles of a sterile, and brightly lit WHITE SPACE. Empty and opaque.

Liz leans in, curious...

She notices that, while all the feeds on the first monitor have time stamps, the white space shows only 00:00.

The screens flicker, pulsing to a bright white.

Liz slides the mouse over the white room --

There appears to lines or tubes of some kind running from the walls to the center of the room. Though there is no one, or nothing there.

She startles suddenly as motion draws her attention to the first monitor --

HEADLIGHTS coming down the driveway.

Liz panics, shutting the cabinet doors as the high beams shine through the tiny windows of the garage.

She watches as Bob parks the car and walks toward the house --

LIZ
(under her breath)
Merde.

OUTSIDE

Liz quickly shuffles through the snow around the side of the house until she finds a back door --

INT. CLOFINE HOME - CONTINUOUS

She slips inside, hearing Bob call her name from the far side of the house --

BOB (O.S.)
Liz?

Liz opens a door she believes to be a bedroom --

But it's a CLOSET.

Stuffed inside there are linens and clothes and something else -- Liz kneels quickly pulling back a box --

The four framed photographs that have been taken off the wall. An unfamiliar family stares back from the dark.

BOB (O.S.)
Liz?

Liz spins, ducking into a bedroom on the other side of the hall. Pulls her jacket off and kicks her BOOTS to the floor.

We hear FOOTSTEPS approaching.

She lays in the bed, stretching the covers over her, right as Bob appears in the doorway, shinning his cell phone light --

BOB
There you are.

Liz stirs like she's just waking.

LIZ
I fell asleep. What time is it?

BOB
After three. Sorry we we're gone so-

Something stops him.

Liz notices Bob's eyes on the floor... where she threw her boots by the door.

And then she sees it:

MELTED SNOW drips onto the hardwood...

Liz freezes.

BOB
I thought I saw you outside. When I pulled up. Is everything okay?

Bob doesn't seem worried by this at all. Liz is relieved but embarrassed --

LIZ
I woke up and couldn't find you. I thought you might be in the garage.

BOB
Well, good news. Our search was not in vain. We found her.

LIZ
The woman?

BOB
Yes. We got her to safety. They think she's going to be okay.

Liz exhales deeply, closing her eyes...

BOB
They said any longer out here and hypothermia would have set in. She could have died if it wasn't for you.

LIZ
I'm relieved. What could she have
been doing out there on a night
like this?

Bob shakes his head, unsure. But he moves on.

BOB
How do you feel? I can take you
home now or you could stay here for
the night if you like?

LIZ
I would love a ride home if it's
not too much trouble.

BOB
Not at all. Nothing like your own
bed.

He smiles again and turns from the room. Liz waits a moment
in the dark.

EXT. BOB'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Liz follows Bob to a pickup truck, bundling up --

BOB
Seven inches since dark. Doesn't
look like it's stopping.

He opens the door for her --

INT. BOB'S TRUCK - NIGHT

The engine starts.

Classical music begins playing from the CD player.

He shuts it off.

Turns on the defrost, blasting hot air --

The truck takes off down the dark driveway.

Liz pulls the seat belt across her chest, but something keeps
her from latching it.

They drive into a white silence.

No one speaks for a stretch.

BOB

What age do you teach? I mean, what grade?

LIZ

High school. Language arts.

BOB

High school is such an impressionable age.

Liz nods.

BOB

The tissue of a child's brain is still forming until they are twenty five.

LIZ

Yes, and it's very obvious sometimes.

Bob doesn't laugh at the joke.

A beat.

BOB

It's a great responsibility.

Again Liz nods, not sure what to say.

Snow falls through the high beams...

Liz tries to get her bearings out the window --

LIZ

-- My turn will be on the right.
Hilltop Dr.

Bob drives on without an answer.

LIZ

Shouldn't be too much further.

Again, Bob is non-responsive.

Liz steals a glance at him -- his eyes never leave the road.

BOB

You're probably wondering what all those cameras we're for.

Liz twinges subtly, hiding it --

LIZ

I don't --

BOB

-- In the garage. When you went looking for me.

LIZ

I -- no, I understand. Can't be too careful. I live alone, I should probably invest in some myself.

He smiles without looking at her.

It's hot in the truck now.

Liz unzips her jacket, looking back out the window --

Dark, snow-covered trees and hills pass, she squints....

LIZ

I think we might have passed my turn.

The truck continues on without answer.

BOB

You were probably especially curious about the one room. The white room.

Liz is scared now and showing. She decides to engage him, maybe there's an explanation --

LIZ

Yes. I was. What's it for?

Bob looks suddenly serious. Heavy.

BOB

Unfortunately I can't tell you.

Liz feels her hand gripping the seat belt. Palms sweating.

BOB

The fact that you've seen it is a very serious problem. For us.

Bob adjusts his glasses. They continue into the darkness, further and further away from the lights of town --

BOB

Your children at school. You love them, don't you?

LIZ

Yes.

BOB

You would do anything to protect them.

Liz doesn't answer.

BOB

Sorry, that's a question for you.

LIZ

Yes. I do. I would do anything for them.

Bob nods along with her.

Liz realizes she hasn't been breathing.

LIZ

Where are we going?

She reaches along the side door, feeling for the handle.

BOB

Everyone does their part.

The trucks brakes, slowing to make another turn onto a smaller road -- Liz sees an opportunity.

Her fingers meet the door handle.

She squeezes the plastic and pulls back --

DING DING DING

A light comes on as the door opens.

Bob sees it. He hits the accelerator, speeding up --

Liz is thrown back against the seat by the force, struggling to push the door open --

But Bob reaches, grabbing her by the jacket!

She fights back wildly as he pulls her inside.

Snow whips into the car.

Liz kicks! Breaking his grip as she pushes backwards --

Right out of the moving truck.

She hits the ground with a heavy thud, rolling into the snow.

The truck slams on the brakes, only twenty feet ahead --

Liz GASPS, holding her ribs, doubled over.

She looks up at the sound of tires SPINNING.

Tail lights reverse toward her, kicking up a red cloud --

Liz pushes herself up, still winded and in pain as --

THE TRUCK SPEEDS AT HER

She scrambles, LIMPING into through a snowbank off the side of the road, tumbling down an embankment into deep drift --

Snow covers her face, making it almost impossible to see.

She checks the road in panic -- the truck has stopped on the embankment above her.

A DOOR SLAMS.

A flashlight appears, barely slashing through the flurry.

Liz gets up, takes off, plowing through the drift --

She limps, favoring her right hip, bruised from the fall.

A cluster of trees around her now, she cuts sideways trying to lose Bob in the heavy cover.

Branches lash past her face, barely visible in the dark.

Liz has a head start. But no idea where she is or where she is going. All she can do is run.

She throws a glance over her shoulder --

Bob's flashlight falls away, stopping to search the ground.

Liz looks down at her fresh tracks.

Easy to follow in the new snow.

She doubles back, doing a loop through the trees to confuse her path and buy some time --

And that's when she sees it --

Across an open field, there's the faint shape of a two story house.

She leaves the cover of the trees, breaking toward the house.

SNOWY FEILD

Liz trudges through the field, her energy sapped by the effort of fighting the high drift --

She looks over her shoulder again -- but sees nothing.

THE YELLOW HOUSE

Liz reaches the house, moving under a second story deck to the front door, breathing heavy.

She tries the handle. LOCKED.

She POUNDS the door, hoping in vain someone is there.

LIZ
Help me!

BANG. BANG.

LIZ
Is someone there!?

But there is no answer. The house is dark and empty.

She takes off, limping around the side of the house --

SIDE DOOR

She reaches a side door, a laundry room visible through a small vertical window --

The handle twists in her hand. Again. It's locked.

Liz scans, breathing a white cloud.

She notices a WOOD PILE by the side of the house. She moves toward it, lifting a heavy log and returning to the door --

THUCK!

She brings the log down hard on the door handle. It rattles.

THUCK!

The doorknob splinters from the door.

THUCK!

The handle SNAPS off, falling to the ground.

INT. YELLOW HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Liz steps inside, pausing to take in the new surroundings...

The house is eerily quiet, dark and freezing cold.

Clearly no one living here in the off season months.

She moves through the mud room, finding her way around the corner into the hallway --

HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Liz almost trips in the dark. She looks down --

There's a HATCH DOOR, presumably leading to a cellar, with a coiled nylon cord used to lift the door.

She keeps moving.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Liz enters the kitchen, scanning --

Like the other houses, this one has a land-line phone sitting on the kitchen bar counter.

She brings the phone to her ear, but there's no dial tone.

She flips a light switch on the wall -- power is out here too.

She checks the kitchen window, facing the open field --

No light. No movement. Maybe she's safe.

She exhales in a momentary relief when --

SOMETHING STOPS HER.

Like she heard something that we didn't.

She waits, letting the house fall to COMPLETE SILENCE.

And there it is again --

A faint CREAK from upstairs.

STAIRCASE

Liz stands at the bottom of the stairs, looking up --
The narrow wood flight ascends into the dark second floor.
Liz takes each step carefully, wincing in pain.

LIZ

Hello?

She pauses at the top of the stairs, squinting...
At the end of the shadowed hall, there's an OPEN DOOR.
She moves forward. Her icy breath making a path before her.

BEDROOM

She stops at the edge of the room, looking inside --
It's empty. But the blankets on the bed have been used.
The closet door is ajar.
Liz steps forward, noticing... SNOW on the hardwood floor.
She backs up, suddenly frightened, turning --
WISH!
A knife slices out of the dark --
Liz screams in pain as the blade cuts her shoulder.
She falls back, kicking against the wall to distance herself
from the attacker --
A SHAPE stands in the shadows, just out of sight.
Shaking, Liz tries to push herself to her feet --
But the figure steps forward...
A long KITCHEN KNIFE catches the moonlight from outside.
Naked white knees, thin legs...
Long matted hair and pale crowning forehead.
It's a woman in her underwear and T-shirt.
As soon as she's close enough to see Liz, she stops.

Liz's eyes open wide in recognition --

And though her appearance is gaunt, her gaze detached, we recognize her as the missing girl from the posters.

KRISTA MILLINGTON (18).

She stumbles, falling against the wall --

Liz stands, moving forward cautiously...

LIZ

Krista?

Krista looks wild - and frightened --

LIZ

It's Mrs. Kline.

Liz kneels, sliding the fallen knife out of Krista's reach.

LIZ

Are you hurt?

Krista's face is pale, lips purple from the cold. Her expression frozen in numb terror like a mask.

She holds her elbow, covering something.

Liz slowly pulls Krista's hand away from her arm...

There's a strange mark near the vein.

It's not infected but it's bruised like an IV has been left in for a long time.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM

Liz wraps Krista in the blanket from the bed --

LIZ

Can you walk?

Krista doesn't answer.

LIZ

I don't think we're safe here. Do you know where this house is?

Krista shakes her head, distant.

KRISTA
I ran until I found somewhere.

LIZ
That was you on the road. Where
were you before?

She's silent for a beat. Slipping between childlike
remembrances and frightened lucidity --

KRISTA
Kevin made us break into one of the
houses and we found something.
There were people staying there. I
don't know where they kept me.

Liz pauses, thinking...

LIZ
I saw a white room on a security
monitor in his garage. Was his name
Bob? Bob Clofine.

KRISTA
He never said his name.

LIZ
A man with brown hair, stalky?

Krista nods.

LIZ
Did he... hurt you?

Liz tries to make eye contact with Krista. Needs to know what
they're dealing with.

KRISTA
No. He never touched me.

LIZ
Where is Kevin? Your boyfriend.

But Krista doesn't know. Or can't remember. She cries.

KRISTA
They kept a needle in my arm, they
kept taking my blood until I would
almost pass out, and then they gave
me water and food so they
could...*drain me again* --

Krista is shaking now. Scared. Fighting back tears.

Liz touches her shoulder, looking to the two-pointed needle mark on the inside of her elbow.

KRISTA
How long?

LIZ
You've been missing for almost
three weeks.

KRISTA
Three weeks...

She seems startled by the amount of time, disbelieving.

KRISTA
Only three weeks...

LIZ
I talked to your dad. He never gave
up. He's going to be so happy to
see you.

Krista blinks, brow furrowed.

KRISTA
My dad.

LIZ
Your father, John. John Millington.

After a beat --

LIZ
You do remember your dad?

KRISTA
Yes. I think so.

Liz is confused, there's no way someone could forget that sort of thing.

LIZ
It's okay. You will.

Liz moves to the window, checking the field -- Still nothing.

LIZ
We need to go.

CUT TO:

Liz opens a closet -- just old blankets and linens.

Another closet -- some bulky SNOW-SUITS on hangers.

On the shelf above: BOARD GAMES, extra QUILTS, and a small, plastic, yellow flashlight.

Liz grabs it.

CUT TO:

Liz ZIPS Krista into a large, tan, winter jumpsuit.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Liz tries the kitchen faucet. A single DROP escapes.

LIZ
Pipes must be frozen. You need to
drink something.

INT. SIDE HOUSE DOOR - NIGHT

Liz cracks the side door -- nothing but darkness.

She kneels, scooping fresh snow into a large cup.

She unzips her jacket, lifting her sweater underneath and places the cup of snow against her skin. She shivers.

But her heat will melt the snow for Krista to drink.

She zips up her coat and stands --

But something stops her.

A FLASHLIGHT in the distance.

Coming through the field toward the house.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Liz hurries round the corner into the living room --

LIZ
(whispered)
Krista!

Across the room, Krista stands at the window. Staring.

LIZ
(whispered)
Krista, get down --

But it's too late.

The flashlight swings toward the house, landing right on her.

Liz runs forward, pulling Krista back from the glass.

They crouch.

Liz sticks her head up, stealing a glance --

The flashlight goes out. Leaving the field in darkness.

They have no idea where Bob is. But he knows where they are.

Krista's voice begins trembling.

KRISTA
He's going to find us.

LIZ
Shhh. No he's not.

A beat on Liz, realizing...

LIZ
He's not looking for us. He doesn't
know you're here.

HALLWAY - NIGHT

Liz guides Krista down the first floor hallway, searching the ground for something we can't see --

LIZ
There.

She kneels beside the HATCH DOOR, pulling the thin cord, and lifting the hatch to reveal --

DARK CONCRETE STAIRS

Descending into THE BASEMENT.

LIZ
We can hide here --

Liz momentarily clicks the small flashlight on, leading them down into the sub-ground level...

Krista hesitates, looking back over her shoulder as Liz gathers the cord, and closes the hatch with a heavy THUD.

It's darker now.

Liz let's the cord dangle on the basement side of the hatch, making it harder to open from above.

They descend the stairs into the --

BASEMENT

Liz scans the room with the dim flashlight...

Dusty snow gear, BOXES, SHELVES of canned food line the walls of a large concrete room.

Liz and Krista move back a little ways into the space, staying close, their faces barely visible in the darkness.

They wait. Listening.

SILENCE.

Wind howls against the old house.

SILENCE.

SMASH!

The faint sound of glass SHATTERS from the first floor above.

A beat.

Liz kills the flashlight and huddles in the dark, shifting behind a heavy support beam.

There's a low creak, like a door opening. Followed by --

FOOTSTEPS. ABOVE THEM.

Careful, methodical.

Liz COUGHS on the dust, covering her mouth.

SILENCE.

We hear other doors opening. Furniture scraping.

A thorough search.

Krista whimpers --

KRISTA

(low)
He's going to kill me.

LIZ

Shhh.

KRISTA

They won't stop until I'm dead. I
know what they're doing.

This stops Liz. What does she know?

LIZ

(whispered)
Krista. Look at me.

She comes face to face with Krista, trying to calm her.

LIZ

No one's going to hurt you.

A calm authority. Even here.

LIZ

I'm not going to let that happen.

Krista looks back at her old teacher. Desperate to believe.

SCRAAP!

Another sound from upstairs. Close by.

Liz looks up, and for all her words, you can see she's
scared.

CUT TO:

Liz quietly shoves aside a stack of BOXES, clearing a space
behind the clutter for them to hide.

LIZ

(whispered)
If someone comes down...

She picks a rusted SHOVEL from a shelving unit.

LIZ

(whispered)
I'll see him, before he sees us.

Krista nods.

LIZ

Help me.

Together, they shove a heavy box aside when Liz notices something -- on the back wall there's a faint outline.

Liz signals toward it silently, drawing Krista's attention --

They move forward, Liz runs her hand over the seam...

It's a door.

She feels for a handle but only finds a circular opening where a knob was.

Liz pulls. The door sticks at first and then releases --

CREAAAAK

Liz stares into the other side.

BEHIND THE BASEMENT

She shuts the door behind them. It seals perfectly.

The echo of their feet suggests a large, empty space.

It's quiet here.

They can no longer hear the howling wind from outside.

Liz scans with the light, finding linoleum floors.

The room is longer than you would expect. And narrow.

Against the wall, there's a blinking red light.

LIZ

That's strange. There was no power
upstairs.

Liz finds a light switch on the wall with her beam --

LIZ

Can you hold this?

She hands Krista the flashlight, FLIPPING the switch --

They startle as banks of florescent light shudder on above.

In the flickering glow, Liz notices something --

She moves toward it carefully...

Hundreds of PLASTIC CONTAINERS line the walls. Filled with red liquid.

Each of them with a sticker marking the date.

PLASTIC TUBES run from these containers, snaking down the length of the room... Toward the far end.

KRISTA
Do you smell that?

Liz pauses, smelling a distinct, almost chemical smell.

LIZ
We should go.

She turns to leave, but Krista isn't beside her.

Krista moves further into the room... the direction of the plastic tubes. Her eyes fixed on something at the far side...

LIZ
Krista.

Liz sees what's she's walking toward --

AT THE END OF THE ROOM

A TRANSLUCENT SHEET is stretched from wall to wall.

Liz squints to the other side...

Behind the plastic sheet, there is something hanging.

A DARK SHAPE.

LIZ
(whispered)
What is that?

Krista keeps moving toward it, transfixed...

KRISTA
(under her breath)
...It's real.

Liz peers into the dim light, focusing on the shape.

It bears a grotesque likeness to a human, but it's much larger and oddly disproportionate.

Liz is breathless now --

LIZ
Let's go. Now!

And while it could be the shape of an old tarp playing tricks on their eyes, if you look close enough, you can see a bony sternum rise and fall, rise and fall, rise and fall...

Whatever it is. It's breathing.

LIZ
Oh my god...

Liz reacts the way anyone would, faced with an impossible horror colliding with the reality she's trusted for so long.

She back-peddles in fear... terrified. But stops herself.

She runs toward Krista, grabbing her by the arm, pulling her back until they reach the door where they entered --

Liz looks back once last time at the nightmarish image.

BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

The door SHUTS behind them. They're both pale and reeling.

LIZ
What? What... was that?

Krista stares into the darkness. Muttering under her breath.

KRISTA
I thought they were lying.

THUM THUM THUM

Footsteps in the hallway above.

Liz and Krista freeze.

The steps appear to move past them until --

CLINK

A small metallic sound. Like something scratching a latch.

Krista gasps.

THE FOOTSTEPS STOP.

They wait in complete silence.

Never taking their eyes from the hatch door, where the cord dangles toward the concrete stairs...

SILENCE.

Again, the slightest scratching noise.

Liz searches for the source of the sound.

Finds nothing.

And then she sees it --

The cord dangling from the hatch is moving.

Pulled slowly through the crack from above...

LIZ
(whispered)
Stay. Here.

Krista shakes her head in panic.

KRISTA
No, no, no --

LIZ
Shhh.

WREAAAAAAKK

The hatch door pulls open.

Liz leaves Krista, shuffling behind a metal shelving unit.

A BRIGHT FLASHLIGHT BEAM punches into the basement from the stairs... We hear footsteps on cold concrete.

Liz crouches low, retreating behind a couple cardboard boxes, only a few yards from the bottom of the stairs --

She watches as BOB'S FEET appears, HIS LEGS, HIS BODY...

He swings the light in Liz's direction -- she pushes flat to the wall... the flashlight keeps moving past her...

...Scanning the room.

A faint whimper.

Bob pauses, listening.

Liz spots Krista, shaking in fear, crouched behind the boxes -

BOB
Mrs. Kline?

Bob moves toward the source of the sound... toward Krista.

Liz reaches for the shovel resting against the wall...

Her fingers meet the wood when -- WHOOSH!

It tips out of her reach and falls toward the ground --

SHTICK!

She catches it silently an inch before it hits the floor.

Bob pauses for only an instant and moves on...

BOB
Were you hurt in the fall?

There's another audible BREATH -- Bob turns toward it...
Scanning his flashlight across the cluttered boxes.

He's only a few feet from Krista now.

Liz grabs the shovel and pulls it toward her.

Several things happen at once --

Krista SCREAMS! Bolting from her hiding place --

There's a flash of movement! A shelf CLATTERS to the ground!

Krista scrambles toward the stairs -- but Bob is right behind her, flashlight swinging!

She makes it to the first step, when she is YANKED back by her hair -- she shrieks in pain!

Bob subdues her easily to the ground but is immediately surprised to see it's Krista, and not Liz in his clutch --

That's when he hears a distinct sound at his back.

The sound a hands gripping old wood.

Bob turns in time to see the shovel FLASH out of the darkness--

Liz swings the blade with all her force - SHUNK!

The spade cleaves into his neck.

Krista screams!

Bob drops, bleeding freely onto the basement floor.

Liz stares in horror at the man dying at her feet.

She has never killed someone. She has probably never physically hurt anyone her entire life. No matter that she had to, it shakes her deeply.

It takes Krista pulling Liz by the arm to break her from the trance. They step over Bob's body, moving up the stairs --

Krista pushes the hatch wide at the top of the staircase, moving through the opening --

HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

As they emerge from the floor, they are stopped by a sound...

A faint RUMBLE from outside.

LIZ
Do you hear that?

Like an engine idling...

They move through the dark, turning a corner by the staircase--
THEY BOTH STOP.

Liz puts a hand out protectively in front of Krista...

There's someone standing in the living room.

Another man. Between them and the exit.

And while we know Bob is on the basement floor, the person poised before them -- LOOKS ALMOST IDENTICAL TO BOB.

It's eerie and uncanny.

A nondescript, white man with brown hair and glasses.

BOB'S BROTHER.

Liz backs away in terror --

Bob's Brother moves toward them slowly, like a hunter trying not to spook his prey...

Liz grabs Krista by the arm, they turn --

UP THE STAIRS

Pounding two at a time, Liz winces in pain, almost tripping --

2ND FLOOR HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Heavy footsteps hammer behind them as they sprint down the hall toward an open bedroom door --

BEDROOM

BAM!

Krista bangs the door shut, twisting the lock on the handle. Plaster snows onto the floor.

Knowing it won't hold, Liz crosses to the dresser --

She shoves her shoulder against it, trying to slide it across the floor -- but as capable as she is, she's an old woman and the furniture is solid oak.

She shuffles to the window instead -- Outside, a BOX TRUCK idles in the driveway.

LIZ
Look -- there.

Liz digs under the frame, prying it open with brittle fingers--
The window sticks in the cold, barely budging.

BANG!

Liz spins -- The bedroom door shakes. The lock rattles. Almost breaking in one kick.

LIZ
Help me!

Krista runs to the window, they both lift at the same time!

BANG!

The window slides up a couple feet as the door busts open --

LIZ
Go, go --

Krista slides sideways through the open window, onto the snow-packed roof --

Liz scrambles after her, as Bob 2 crosses the room --

She throws her leg over the seal, pushing away from the window when -- ARMS REACH THROUGH! Grabbing her.

Liz KICKS, but the hands tighten around the cloth of her pants, holding fast --

She squirms desperately trying to free herself --

Two arms grab her!

Krista's arms.

She pulls Liz back, heaving with all her strength!

It breaks Bob's grip.

The two women fall backward, sliding across the slanted roof and off the side of the house --

OOOOF!

They hit a deep snow drift and tumble sideways into the driveway -- Liz coughs. Winded but unharmed.

Krista stands gingerly, helping Liz to her feet.

ABOVE THEM

Bob's Brother turns from the open window, disappearing --

KRISTA

Hurry!

Krista sprints towards the truck.

Liz limps behind her, struggling to keep up, she covers her eyes against the HIGH BEAMS --

KRISTA

Get in!

Liz rounds the side of the truck, pulling the door open and lifting herself onto the step-up --

The truck rumbles forward as Liz heaves herself inside --

INT. CUBE TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Krista drives into the blizzard, clenched in focus --

IN THE SIDE MIRROR

Liz sees Bob's Brother run through the front door and slow as the truck pulls away...

She CLICKS her seat belt on --

LIZ
When you get to the road, take a
right.

Headlights barely cut into the whipping snow.

It's impossible to see more than fifteen feet ahead.

Liz checks the side mirror again -- The man and the outline of the house are swallowed in white.

SCREEECH!

Krista brings the truck skidding to a stop as they near the end of the driveway.

LIZ
What's wrong?

She looks through the windshield --

IN THE HEADLIGHTS

A third figure stands in the main road to the left.

Shinning a flashlight directly at them.

This time a WOMAN, in her 40's. They must all be together.

LIZ
Go go! To the right!

Krista slams the gas, in a detached concentration.

But she doesn't go right, she veers left --

Directly toward The Woman.

LIZ
What are you doing?

Krista is somewhere else, beyond the car, outside herself. She speaks under her breath, like she's asleep --

KRISTA
(whispered)
We all do our part.

The Woman keeps coming toward them, close now, feet away --

LIZ

Stop!

Liz grabs the wheel from Krista, trying to turn but --

CRUNCH! The sickening sound of a body breaking.

The truck SKIDS SIDEWAYS.

And tips --

The windshield shatters! Spraying glass!

The truck PLOUGHS on it's side in a cloud of white.

And comes to a stop.

We watch the wreckage in a long, continuous WIDE SHOT.

In real time.

No movement.

The storm obscuring our view.

And then the side door pushes open and someone crawls out.

It's Liz.

She pulls herself through the door and onto the ground, dazed, she stumbles, scanning in a circle --

LIZ

Krista?

Wind and snow whip over the top-sided truck.

LIZ

Krista!

The storm eats her yell.

On the ground, in the headlights, she sees -- a fallen body.

Liz runs toward it, sliding to her knees --

LIZ

Are you okay? Krista --

Krista's body is limp. Chunks of glass jut from her face and forehead, trickling blood. Her neck is turned at a angle.

Liz's breath catches in her throat.

LIZ

Can you hear me? Can you hear me!?

She feels for a pulse on her neck... can't find it. Pulls back the jacket to make better contact when --

Something catches Liz's eye --

A FLASHLIGHT. Swinging down the driveway toward her.

Bob's Brother running from the house.

Still a ways back, but approaching quickly.

Liz panics, trying to move Krista. She slips.

She bends again, listening for a heartbeat.

The light slashes through the snow behind her.

Liz looks up, eyes red and frozen.

The Man is almost to the truck.

Liz stands, leaving Krista on the ground as she lunges across the road into the dark.

INT. FOREST - NIGHT

The flashlight disappears to a pinprick behind Liz.

She struggles through a patch of trees in the deep white.

Every step requires a strength she no longer has.

Disoriented, she STUMBLES - but instead of hitting the ground, she keeps FALLING, rolling down an embankment --

White and black spin past --

THUD.

She hits a tree at the bottom, flailing face down.

She doesn't move for a long beat.

Hardly has it in her to lift her head from the snow, sucking in a frozen breath.

Her face is barely recognizable.

Cheeks rubbed raw. Ice covering her eyebrows and lashes.

She lets her head fall again and all becomes BLACK.

But only for a second.

Liz gasps, pulling her head back. When she opens her eyes --

There's a two inch layer of snow covering her jacket. How long was she out? She notices something else...

She's not alone.

Mark lays beside her in the snow, face to face, like they're sharing a bed.

He looks peacefully into her face.

MARK
(whispered)
Stay.

It would be the easiest thing in the world to do.

MARK
Stay with me, Lizzy.

She'd cry. If she could only make tears.

Liz looks down. The snow covering her motionless body looks like a blanket. A beautiful white blanket...

Beautiful.

White.

Beautiful.

Beautiful...

LIZ
I can't. I can't --

Liz glances back to her husband, but isn't there.

There is only snow.

LIZ
Help...

Her voice is swallowed by the howling wind.

LIZ
HELPPP ME!

And then, almost like an answer to her call, she sees something through the trees --

A blinking light.

Liz lifts herself, joint by joint, first on her elbows, then onto her knees, then to her feet.

She staggers toward the light.

If it even exists at all.

But it gets brighter. Flashing on and off, on and off...

Liz slides on all fours down a ditch to the source of the light, a CAR. Hazard lights. A smashed tree.

It's her car.

Somehow she has come full circle.

She reaches the door, prying at the handle. It sticks, frozen shut. She tries the back door and it gives with icy crack --

INT. LIZ'S CAR - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Liz climbs in the backseat and locks the doors. Shivering.

The windows are covered in ice and snow.

She crawls over the divider trying the engine.

It won't even turn over.

She reaches into the trunk, grabbing the tattered blanket with the initials in the corner. M+L.

She wraps herself inside, covering her head.

THROUGH A SMALL CRACK IN THE FABRIC

She sees the note tucked into the driver's side window --

'This is Elizabeth Kline's car. I'm okay. Please call 567 949 8235.'

Liz curls into herself, bringing her knees to her chest. How long can she survive here without help?

In this cold.

This beautiful

Beautiful.

White.

Blanket --

LIZ
(under her breath)
-- NO.

Liz shakes off a wave of exhaustion.

She finds her eyes drawn to the words of the note pinned in the window --

LIZ
(whispered)
This is Elizabeth Kline's car. I'm
okay...

She reads the words like chattering mantra under her breath. Something to keep her awake to keep her brain moving, her blood flowing --

LIZ
This is Elizabeth Kline's car. I'm
okay. Please call 567 949 8235.

How long until the morning? Beautiful. Blanket --

LIZ
This is Elizabeth Kline's car. I'm
okay. Please call 567 949 8235.

She repeats the words again and again and again as we --

FADE TO BLACK.

OVER BLACK

A sound rises.

At first indistinguishable from the wind, it becomes clear...

Liz's eyes crack. And we see her mouth is still moving --

LIZ
...Elizabeth... Kline...I'm okay...
please call...

It takes a second to realize she's awake. Her eyes focus --

The windows are completely covered but it's no longer night outside. Dim light fights through the packed layer.

Liz hears the noise again; scrapping.

She tries to see through the window but it's impossible.

She grabs the door handle with a frozen claw, pulling it open, but the door is stuck, pressed with a deep snow pack --

Liz forces her body to function. Fighting off a cramping stiffness that leaves her almost paralyzed.

She heaves against the door, again and again, freeing enough space to slide through --

OUTSIDE THE CAR

Daylight blasts her.

She blinks struggling to focus in the flat white daylight.

She scrambles to the top of the embankment on the main road --

A city SNOW PLOW passes slowly down the road, not more than fifty feet away --

LIZ
He--! He--p me!

She screams, but her voice is too raw to create real sound. She limps after the snow plow, falling within a few feet.

LIZ
Plea--!

She forces herself up again, keeps running on frozen legs.

LIZ

HELP!

The voice cracks from her mouth.

The SNOW PLOW's brake lights come on.

Liz sways, trying to stand as the vehicle backs toward her --

CUT TO:

EXT. UPSTATE NEW YORK - HILLS

A pristine layer of white covers every surface.

Roads without a single tire track.

Cars are smooth mounds in the snow.

The hills have become one flowing entity.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Liz sits in the white sheets of a hospital bed.

She wears a flowered gown, her arm hooked to an IV.

A muted TV plays coverage of Krista's face. A house surrounded by police tape and glowing cherries.

DEPUTY

Mrs. Kline. How are you feeling?

Liz startles, but she wasn't watching the TV. She was staring at the IV taped to the inside of her arm.

She looks up, managing a smile --

LIZ

Better. I get to keep all my
appendages. I'm supposed to get out
in a couple days. So...

She waits for them to cut to the chase. They hesitate.

LIZ

...So?

DEPUTY

We lost valuable time in the storm.
Tracks gone. Combed the houses. The
truck. No fingerprints. DNA.

(MORE)

DEPUTY (CONT'D)
To be honest we have more questions
than answers.

LIZ
Like?

The Officers exchange a glance.

DEPUTY
We're conducting a full search of
all the houses in the community.
When you're up to it, I think it
would be helpful for you to come
with us.

Liz nods.

LIZ
Of course. What about Krista?

A pause.

DEPUTY
We don't have to talk about this
now.

LIZ
Tell me.

DEPUTY
... the coroner says she passed
sometime early that morning.
Hypothermia.

LIZ
Hypothermia?

Liz shakes her head in confusion --

LIZ
No, she was -- when I left her. The
impact must have...

The cops are silent.

LIZ
She was dead. She was thrown from a
truck. She wasn't moving.

Liz is shaken to point of tears. The Deputy sees it.

DEPUTY
Liz. You did everything you could.
Nobody blames you...

He trails off awkwardly.

They stand. Leaving her in silence.

DEPUTY

You get better. We'll come back
around when you're ready.

Off Liz's devastated look we --

FADE TO:

EXT. YELLOW HOUSE - DAY

Foot traffic and tire tracks have trampled the snowy ground.

Police tape everywhere. News vans. Police cruisers.

The Deputy helps Liz from the cruiser --

Someone SNAPS a photo.

She looks frail. Her head bandaged. She uses a cane to
support a prominent limp from her fractured hip.

INT. YELLOW HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

The Deputy stands back in the hallway, signaling the other
officers to give Liz her space --

DEPUTY

Now, don't worry about anything
else you've told us. You're here
now. Walk us through it.

Liz takes a breath, nodding...

CUT TO:

An officer opens the HATCH leading to the basement --

She pauses, visibly anxious.

LIZ

We hid down here. I pulled the cord
to the other side to make it harder
to find the latch.

Liz stares down the concrete stairs, her face pale...

INT. BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

Liz leads the officers to the bottom of the stairs... Someone helps her with the last step.

LIZ
This is where...

She trails off.

LIZ
This is where we left him.

DEPUTY
Right here?

He points to the spot she's standing above.

LIZ
Isn't that where you found the
body?

The Deputy exchanges a glance with another Officer.

DEPUTY
We didn't find a body.

Liz looks down, confused --

FLASH CUT: Bob. Spilling blood onto the floor.

BACK TO --

DEPUTY
It's okay. Keep going. You
mentioned another room.

LIZ
Yes.

She scans across the basement -- Forensic floodlights are set up in the corners, but they are turned off presently.

The Deputy hands Liz a flashlight.

LIZ
We were looking for a place to
hide, we moved those boxes --

She shines her light onto a cluttered back wall.

The Deputy signals. Officers moves in, sliding the boxes aside... Liz watches carefully.

LIZ

There was a shelving unit...

Sure enough, as the last box is cleared, we see the corner of the metal shelving unit where Liz hid.

She moves toward the wall, scanning with her light...

LIZ

Beside the shelf. There was a seam,
the outline of a door.

The Officers slide the shelf off the wall, leaving it completely empty to be searched.

Liz meets the wall, moving the beam along flat surface.

DEPUTY

There?

LIZ

Yes.

CLICK!

Flood lights pop on, making the space clearly visible.

Liz blinks, eyes adjusting.

The wall in front of her is completely flat. White. No seams. No outline. No door.

She looks back to the stairs --

LIZ

It was here. At the left of the
stairs. Behind the boxes.

Liz puts her hand against the wall - which is strangely dusty - feeling along the surface --

LIZ

It opened into another room,
larger, narrow, linoleum floors,
and kind of a chemical smell, and a
white plastic tarp stretched across
the far wall and... it was here.

DEPUTY

Are you sure this was the house? A
lot of these houses look alike.

LIZ

Yes, I'm, maybe there's another two story yellow house. I don't know. But the hatch, the cord, this has to be it, it has to be --

DEPUTY

-- It's okay, Mrs. Kline. Let's get some fresh air.

Liz faces the flat white surface of the wall.

EXT. YELLOW HOUSE - DAY

Liz stands outside, staring into the fading light of day.

A distant, disturbed expression on her face.

A YOUNG OFFICER approaches with a hot cup of coffee --

YOUNG OFFICER

Mrs. Kline.

Liz startles a little, looking up.

LIZ

Thank you.

She takes the coffee. But the Young Officer lingers.

YOUNG OFFICER

I don't know if you remember me, Mrs. Kline. It's Trevor.

She looks at him, taking in his uniform, he's handsome, tall.

LIZ

Trevor Lick?

YOUNG OFFICER

Trevor Ramirez now. Took my wife's name. Got tired of the Lick jokes.

Liz smiles.

LIZ

You were always a good sport.

She looks back to the house, her smile short lived.

YOUNG OFFICER

How'd it go in there?

LIZ

I don't understand it. I know this is the house. I just don't know how anyone...they...could move it so fast...

The Officer watches her. He hesitates, speaking delicately...

YOUNG OFFICER

Just give it some time. We'll know more.

But he doesn't go anywhere. Liz glances back at him, hands in his coat pockets, fidgeting nervously.

LIZ

Yes, Trevor?

She waits patiently, knowing there's more.

YOUNG OFFICER

I want you to know, I believe you.

LIZ

But you wouldn't say that if there weren't others who didn't.

YOUNG OFFICER

People don't want to believe that a girl could be taken in our town, let alone... some of the other stuff you described.

LIZ

I didn't make any conclusions, I told them I didn't KNOW what I saw--

YOUNG OFFICER

-- Yes ma'am. But there's so many missing pieces. They found the truck, but it was stripped clean, dent in the bumper but no blood, no body, no DNA, no second body in the house, no hidden rooms, no surveillance footage.

Liz's heart sinks, it's daunting when he says it out loud.

YOUNG OFFICER

They have to go off what they have. Check traffic cams and gas stations for the truck. Cross off eyewitnesses for your description of the men.

(MORE)

YOUNG OFFICER (CONT'D)
They're even bringing in the
architect who designed these homes
to check for secret rooms. But
these things take time.

Liz nods, upset and quiet.

YOUNG OFFICER
I'm just afraid it's going to take
more time, if they're looking
for... something that's harder to
understand.

Liz's eyes narrow.

YOUNG OFFICER
If they don't believe you, you
won't be able to help them.

LIZ
You're saying, lie? Don't tell them
what I saw.

YOUNG OFFICER
Are you sure you know what you saw?

She doesn't answer. A few days ago she should have sworn up
and down but now...

INT. PATROL JEEP - DAY

The police jeep pulls down the driveway.

YOUNG OFFICER (O.S.)
Maybe get some distance, let them
find what they're going to find.

Liz stares out the back window as the house shrinks.

INT. MILLINGTON HOUSE - DAY

Mourners in black shuffle through a chain link fence and up
the snowy lawn, carrying dishes covered in tin foil.

INT. LIZ'S CAR - DAY

Liz watches from the window of her car. Dressed in black for
the occasion, but she can't make herself go in.

Her eyes are dark and sleepless. The cut on her forehead has
turned a bad shade of yellow.

She hesitates another moment, watching... and then puts the car in REVERSE, looking back to see --

A large man in a black suit behind the car. She brakes!

It's John Millington. Krista's father.

EXT. LIZ'S CAR - DAY

John stands awkwardly beside Liz. Looks worse than she does.

JOHN MILLINGTON
I saw you parked out here. Didn't
know if you were gonna come in so --

LIZ
I'm sorry --

JOHN MILLINGTON
-- Don't.

He stops her with forceful sympathy.

JOHN MILLINGTON
You tried to help her. Thank you.

They're both raw, emotional. John barely holds it together.

JOHN MILLINGTON
I just... no one knows anything, or
they're not telling me. Liz, please--

He turns to her with a kind of sorrowful intensity that is truly, truly frightening.

JOHN MILLINGTON
I don't want to go around for the
rest of my life not knowing what
happened to my baby.

His bloodshot eyes brim with tears.

JOHN MILLINGTON
If you know something they're not
telling me... please, please --

Liz looks back at him, her head shaking, mirroring his tears.

LIZ
I'm so sorry, John. I've told them
every thing I remember.

She wants to tell him everything, but...

LIZ
I just don't understand either.

CUT TO:

Dust swirls around an arid sun bleached back yard.

Rocks, desert foliage, a wood post fence.

SUPER TITLE: Phoenix. 5 years later.

INT. NEW HOME - BACKROOM - DAY

Liz looks out the window absently, the five years have shown her age a little but her eyes are still sharp and alive.

She watches the swirling dust while eating her breakfast.

An ornate tea cup meets her lip.

INT/EXT. LIZ'S CAR - DRIVING - DAY

Liz's car moves through an endless subdivision of cookie-cutter condos, duplexes and single-family homes.

INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

She pushes a cart through a large, rather empty, modern grocery store. The lighting stark and aggressive.

A benign pop song guides us through aisle after glossy aisle.

Liz grabs a box of bow tie pasta. Staring for a moment, like she's remembering something, a faint smile crosses her lips.

She shakes it off. Keeps moving. When something draws her attention --

We see a Young Woman, blond. Her haircut and shape look familiar, but it could be anyone.

Still, Liz finds herself moving toward the girl...

At first subtly. Trying to catch the side of her face.

But she gets closer and closer without drawing attention.

The Young Woman disappears around the end of the aisle.

Liz hurries after her --

Quickly rounding the corner -- right into the Young Woman.

Her bag spills onto the floor.

LIZ
I'm so sorry!

YOUNG WOMAN
It's okay.

The Young Woman smiles. Liz looks at her -- An unfamiliar face. Of course. Liz shakes her head, embarrassed.

She pushes the cart away.

EXT. DEVON PARK MIDDLE SCHOOL - AFTERNOON

Liz stands by her car in the school parking lot. On the phone--

LIZ
-- Sorry I didn't call earlier.
Busy day.

AMY (O.S.)
You're volunteering today right?

LIZ
Yes. Oh, and I forgot to tell you,
I have a date tonight.

AMY (O.S.)
A date? With who?

LIZ
I met him at the library. His name
is Roger. He likes classical music.

AMY
How did you not tell me this until
now?

LIZ
I didn't know if... I don't know. I
still miss your dad.

AMY (O.S.)
Mom. Of course I know that. I'm
happy for you. I want you to be
happy.

Liz smiles.

LIZ
I am happy. Really. I have the two
of you.

After a brief beat.

AMY
It's been good, right?

LIZ
I'm not in a nursing home yet.

AMY
Ha ha.

A line of SUV'S gather in front of the school building.

LIZ
I have to go. Goodbye, love.

CUT TO:

Franz Schubert's 'Impromptu No 2 in E-flat major, D 899'
plays over the following images in poetic slow motion:

Liz puts on a bright orange, school crossing guard vest.

She grabs a plastic stop sign from the trunk.

SCHOOL LINE

Liz opens door after door of SUVs and mini-vans.

Kids hop out, pulling their backpacks tight, forgetting their
lunch boxes. Two six year old girls jump out, talking with
Liz. Whatever she says makes the girls laugh.

Another car wipes past frame --

CAR - DRIVING

A beautiful orange sunset lingers over the hills as Liz's car
moves through the endless tract housing.

OUT THE WINDOW:

A TEENAGE GIRL on a bicycle rides past, staring toward the
street ahead.

Liz watches her disappear in the rearview mirror --

INT. LIZ'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

A key jangles in the lock. The bolt turns --

Liz steps inside, lugging a bag of groceries.

But the house is not empty as we might have suspected.

A young girl runs up to Liz, showing her palms, covered in red paint. It's EVE (7), Liz's granddaughter.

LIZ

What did you do??

AMY walks in from the kitchen --

AMY

Eve. Do you want to tell Nana?

Eve looks down sheepishly, mumbling --

EVE

I painted your room red. It really
does look better.

AMY

Eve!

EVE

I said I'm sorry.

Amy rolls her eyes.

AMY

Go! Go wash off. Scoot!

Liz tries to look stern, but she cracks a smile, winking at Eve. She winks back, giggling as she runs off --

LIZ

Do you know how many times you
tried to decorate the walls? And we
were lucky if it was paint.

AMY

Oh God mom! Gross!

INT. KITCHEN - EVENING

Amy breaks a handful of spaghetti, dropping it into a pot of boiling water, Liz follows behind her, adding salt --

LIZ
It happened again today.

Amy looks up, but keeps working, prepping a salad --

AMY
When?

LIZ
In the grocery store. I followed a young lady down the cheese aisle. I felt so silly.

AMY
It's okay. Remember, you might keep having that feeling, but it's about how you understand it. Right?

LIZ
I know.

AMY
Are you still having the nightmares?

Liz chops tomatoes with a big knife.

LIZ
No.

AMY
You can tell me.

Liz sighs, keeps her eyes on the blade, dicing quickly.

LIZ
I just want to make sure that you're safe.

CHOP-CHOP-CHOP.

LIZ
You think things aren't going to happen, things that you know, seem impossible, but you just don't know. I want to be sure you and Eve are taken care of. I'm getting old.

Liz stops cutting, she looks up at Amy. And in that moment, she looks old. It makes Amy sad.

AMY

You may be getting old but you
still scare the shit out of me with
that knife.

Liz laughs gratefully. Mainly at herself.

INT. LIZ'S HOME - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Liz looks at her reflection in the mirror. Done up with
rouge, a little lipstick, eye-shadow. After a beat --

She takes a cloth and wipes the makeup from her face.

And walks from the room --

LIZ'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

She moves into the bedroom and stops.

Eve's bold strokes of red paint and hand prints smear the
wall. It looks like something was murdered here.

Liz faces it in her black dress like someone at a museum.

LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Amy walks Liz to the front door. Leaning against Amy's leg
Eve yawns --

AMY

Don't be out too late.

LIZ

Okay.

Liz kisses her granddaughter on the nose.

AMY

And get an Uber if you need to.

LIZ

Okay.

AMY

Make sure he's nice to you. Tell
him I have a gun.

Liz grabs her purse, half way out the door --

LIZ
You don't have a gun.

AMY
I know, but tell him I do.

INT. VILANI'S ITALIAN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Liz waits at a candle-lit table, on her iPhone.

PHONE SCREEN:

She swipes through photos of her and Amy and Eve at a red rock garden in Sedona. Three generations of woman.

She smiles.

Liz types a reply e-mail to her book club.

And then, she opens the web browser.

Hesitates, and types "Krista Millington." Searches.

She thumbs through the search results...

The most recent post was years ago.

Nothing new.

ROGER (O.S.)
Am I late?

Liz looks up to see -- ROGER (70's) a fluff of white hair, round glasses, Boston U sweater. She smiles --

LIZ
You're early. I'm just, very early.
Too much time on my hands.

She laughs nervously --

ROGER
The way I see it, we finally have
enough time on our hands.

He sits, taking a sip of water. He reacts, souring his face dramatically like he drank piss --

ROGER
Ooow. Too healthy. Should we get
wine?

LIZ
I already ordered a glass.

ROGER
You devil. Let's make it a bottle.

He looks at the menu and puts it down --

ROGER
I bought a video game system.

Liz looks up, surprised --

ROGER
I went in to Best Buy to get a new pair of headphones and I came out with a video game system. Virtual reality. You have to try it --

LIZ
(laughing)
Oh, no --

He leans in, excited --

ROGER
It's incredible, you put the head set on and it's like being in another world. Like being inside a painting. You can sky dive or fight aliens or walk with elephant seals--

LIZ
-- Don't you get sick?

ROGER
Oh, it's nauseating. I'll probably never use it. But you have to try it!

LIZ
Invite me over, and I'll consider....

ROGER
I think I just did. To be honest the whole purchase was motivated by this very moment where you decide to come over and get dreadfully ill playing video games with me.

Liz smiles. Taking a sip of water coyly.

He smiles back.

We like them together.

The waiter arrives as we PULL BACK through the restaurant watching their warm laughter --

LIZ CAR - NIGHT - DRIVING

Liz drives home in the dark. Windows down, wind ruffles her hair. She looks a little flushed from the wine but drives slowly through the near-deserted neighborhood.

Her HEADLIGHTS swing across a row of manicured lawns as she turns down a side street.

She flips on the radio -- Something romantic and stirring, Bach's cello suites. Liz sighs happily.

When she looks up -- a BICYCLE streaks in front of her!

Liz GASPS, SLAMMING the brakes!

The bike skids sideways in her periphery, going over the curb--

The car brakes hard. Jerking to a stop.

Liz gets out, looking past the headlights --

She sees a TEENAGE GIRL stand up from the grass on the side of the road, her bike sprawled on the street.

Liz runs toward her --

LIZ
Are you okay!

The Teenage Girl nods.

TEENAGE GIRL
I'm sorry. I wasn't wearing a
light. I didn't see you coming.

Liz is relieved but still shaken as she approaches the girl.

LIZ
Your leg.

She points to the girl's blue-jean shorts -- there's a grass stain and a strawberry on her knee.

TEENAGE GIRL
It's fine. I shouldn't have been
out here without a light.

The Girl picks up the fallen bike, it looks like one of the tires is flat, the rim slightly bent.

She begins pushing it away and that's when Liz sees it -- A blue BAND-AID on the inside of the girl's arm.

It could literally be from anything, but Liz fixates --

LIZ

At least let me take you home. Do you live around here?

TEENAGE GIRL

Yes. On Symphony. But I'm really fine.

LIZ

Please. I insist.

CUT TO:

Liz lifts the bike into the hatchback of her Subaru wagon.

The Teenage Girl watches from a short distance back.

INT. LIZ CAR - DRIVING - NIGHT

They drive in silence. Liz steals a glance at the Young Girl.

LIZ

Did you let your parents know?

TEENAGE GIRL

I don't have a cell phone.

LIZ

You are a rare bird. I'm certainly more than addicted to mine.

She smiles but the girl doesn't offer more than a slight nod.

LIZ

Do you go to school around here? I volunteer at Devon Park.

TEENAGE GIRL

No, actually. I'm home schooled.

LIZ

That's wonderful. What's your favorite subject?

The Girl looks up, pointing ahead through the wind shield --

TEENAGE GIRL
-- Sorry. We're on the left at the
end of the cul-de-sac.

Liz turns down the street, slowing beside an average, one story home, like so many others around it.

EXT. CAR - NIGHT

Liz helps pull the bike from the back of the car, she looks toward the darkened house.

LIZ
Are your parents home?

TEENAGE GIRL
Yes. Thanks for the ride.

Liz nods as the girl pushes the bike up the lawn. She notes the street address on the mailbox -- 221 Symphony Ave.

LIZ
Maybe I'll see you around.

The girl doesn't look back as she wheels the bike across the lawn toward the side of the house. Liz watches her go.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Liz puts the car in drive. But something stops her. Pulls back. Puts the car in park.

She stares across the street at the dark house. What is she waiting for? A LIGHT clicks on inside.

A MAN'S silhouette crosses the window. Her father. Just like she said. *"Stop it, Liz. Calm down."*

She drives off.

INT. LIZ'S HOME - NIGHT

We wait inside the dark living room as the keys jingle. Liz enters, LOCKING the door behind her.

As she turns -- TWANG!

She startles, eyes snap to -- a pink Ukulele under her foot.

Eve's toys scatter the dark floor.

Liz kneels and begins picking them up.

INT. LIZ'S HOME - BATHROOM

Liz brushes her teeth. Spitting into the sink.

INT. LIZ'S HOME - BEDROOM - NIGHT

She sits in bed. It's late. She drinks from a glass of water.

On her phone, she types an address into the browser -- 221, Symphony Ave, Phoenix, AZ

She shakes her head suddenly, feeling foolish.

She closes the tab, revealing the last open page -- a search for Krista Millington. Liz pauses --

She clicks one of the images. Krista's smiling face fills the screen. NEXT. Another photo. Krista in a volleyball jersey.

NEXT. Krista as a young girl, only a little older than Eve. Photo after photo passes.

Liz is cast in soft digital light from the phone.

Blue tears streak the lines in her face.

CUT TO BLACK

OVER BLACK

Soft breathing. The ruffle of skin against covers. And something else, something almost inaudible...

Liz stirs, sitting up in the dark.

She looks down at her arm. The flesh is raised in goosebumps.

HALLWAY

Liz moves through the dark hallway into the living room.

Is that a breeze from outside? She half-expects...

But, no --

The front door is shut. She moves toward it. Checks it.

Still locked.

She let's out a sigh. Again, skittish and feeling foolish.

EVE'S ROOM

Liz stops outside Eve's room, pushes the door open a crack. A revolving night light sprays the walls with stars.

Eve sleeps peacefully, her leg thrown over the blanket. Her mouth is open. It is everything for Liz to know she's safe.

Projected stars float across Liz's watchful eyes.

INT. LIZ'S CAR - DRIVING - NIGHT

Liz drives through the night. Soft music playing from the car radio. Sleepy homes and street signs pass.

At first, the course seems aimless, the habit of a sleepless woman, but something in her eyes tells another story.

She takes a right. Another right. She's going somewhere.

EXT. SUBURB - NIGHT

CHICKA-CHICKA-CHICKA

Sprinklers mist the dark lawns of so many suburban homes.

All the lights are out on the block.

INT. LIZ'S CAR - NIGHT

Liz sits in her shadowed car, looking out the side window.

Across the street, we see numbers on a mailbox -- 221
Symphony blvd.

The house where she dropped the Teenage Girl off earlier.

What is she doing here?

Right now, she's just watching. Probably asking herself the same question. And then --

A LIGHT turns on from behind the fenced in backyard.

Liz checks the time on the dash -- 2:16 am. Late.

She swallows. She pulls out her cell phone, opening the dial pad, she types in three numbers. 9 - 1 - 1

But she doesn't hit send. She keeps it ready. In case...

EXT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Liz gets out, a little unsure, watching the house across the street before locking the car.

EXT. YARD - CONTINUOUS

Liz crosses the spongy lawn, wet from a recent watering.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

She follows the light, past the front door --

The blinds are pulled shut in the front window.

She moves toward the wooden fence gate in the side yard.

Liz peers through a thin gap in the wooden slats --

THROUGH THE GATE

She sees the light more clearly now. It's coming from the window of a GUEST HOUSE in the backyard.

Liz hesitates.

Then presses onto her tip toes and reaches over the top of the gate, feeling for a latch on the other side --

CLICK!

The gate swings open.

BACKYARD

Liz steps through the gate and pauses...

The backyard is quite large. Larger than her own. A bird bath trickles nearby, filling the silence.

She grabs a decorative stone and places it in front of the gate, propping it open.

She moves forward --

Instead of grass, the yard is landscaped with pebbles, so every footstep CRUNCHES.

Liz shoots a glance over her shoulder --

The dark main house.

The open gate leading to the street.

She continues forward, approaching the guest house...

The soft light grows brighter as she nears.

Liz pauses, listening. There's a faint sound from inside.

She follows along the side of the house, nearing the window.
She peers inside --

The room is decorated with plain furniture.

The light comes from a large TV setup on top of a desk. The screen faced away, so you can't see what it's playing but everything else looks normal.

And yet...

Liz's brow is furrowed. Eyes scanning the space.

She digs her finger under edge of the window sill. Trying to lift up. She struggles but it won't budge.

She tries again, forcing her finger in the gap, when --

BARK! BARK!

Liz jumps as a dog barks from the house next door.

She quickly turns away from the guest house, hurrying through the backyard and exiting the open gate --

INT. LIZ'S CAR - NIGHT

Liz shuts the door behind her as she sits into the car, taking a breath, adrenaline pumping.

She shakes her head, feeling foolish. What was she thinking?

She pulls out her phone, seeing 9-1-1 still up. She closes the tab and puts the phone to sleep on the seat beside her.

LIZ
(under her breath)
Stupid. So stupid.

She puts the key in the ignition, and starts the car.

As the headlights pop on we see -- SOMEONE IS STANDING THERE.

Liz peers into the light.

A shape moves across the street toward her. And we recognize it. The Teenage Girl from earlier.

She puts her hands up, approaching the car.

But Liz hesitates, something about this doesn't feel right.

She puts the car in reverse, looking to the rear view to see--

The outline of a MAN sitting in the backseat.

Before Liz can scream. Something comes out of the darkness, covering her head --

EXT. LIZ'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

We pull back from the car into a wide shot. Through the window we see a silhouetted struggle and then --

MATCH CUT TO:

Morning. The same exact frame.

Except Liz's car is gone.

CUT TO BLACK

We hold in black.

A long beat.

Like it's the end of the movie.

And then...

BREATHING.

In.

Out.

In.

FADE IN FROM BLACK

Slowly the dark becomes a barely perceptible image:

Black eyelids rise --

Letting in light.

The light becomes shape.

INT. THE WHITE ROOM

Liz wakes in a simple white room. No doors or windows.

She sits in a comfortable chair which appears to be bolted to the ground. Her wrists strapped to the armrests.

Forearms facing up.

She blinks, taking in her surroundings.

There's a sound. A thin sucking sound. *What is that?*

Liz looks down, locating the source...

Her left arm is hooked to an IV, drawing BLOOD through a two pronged needle, the same mark she saw on Krista.

Liz's vision swims. She's dizzy. Losing blood fast.

She follows the plastic tube with her eyes, it disappears seamlessly through an opening in the ceiling of the room.

Liz begins breathing heavily, starting to gain clarity. Adrenaline kicking in, she glances around...

There's a SECURITY CAMERA in an upper corner.

Someone must be watching.

Think, Liz.

Do something.

LIZ
I know why I'm here.

She looks directly into the camera. Keeps her voice steady, there's authority when she speaks --

LIZ
I know what you're doing!

She swallows, forming her thoughts...

LIZ
I told the police what happened in New York. And now you've found me.

She waits but there's no response.

LIZ
You asked me about the kids in my
classroom.

Liz takes a long blink. Everything is too slow.

She glances down again -- the blood leaving her body.

LIZ
I'm not going to die here. I
refuse. Do you hear me!? DO YOU
HEAR ME!!!

Her anger, her confidence slips. Head dipping. She breaks down, wetting her dry mouth, speaking in a whisper --

LIZ
...Please, please, I have a
family... my daughter... I have
Eve. I have to travel. I have..
Krista. I have to save...

Her words slur, losing motor function. The room dims...

LIZ
...I have to... I have to save
her... I have to save her...

CLOSE ON: The plastic tube, sucking the life from Liz.

Dark red liquid keeps moving, as her vision swims...

LIZ
...please.

Her eyelids sink.

As a haze closes in, we see Liz's husband, Mark, standing in the room. Waiting for her.

And then suddenly, the blood slows... and stops.

The sucking sound dies to silence.

Liz's eyes flutter open.

Her breath returns as she looks up --

Two HUMAN SHAPES stand on the other side of the translucent white wall. An opening UNZIPS.

CUT TO:

DARKNESS.

Lot's of it.

INT. THE OTHER ROOM

A door opens before us.

We enter a dark, nondescript space. Linoleum floors.

Liz is led by a MAN (50's) and a WOMAN (30's). Different ages, different ethnicities. They wear plain clothes. Nothing cult-like or creepy. They could be anyone.

Liz notices her left arm is bandaged where the IV was. A blue band-aid. Like the one the Teenage Girl had.

She's still disoriented. Piecing things together slowly.

A light flips on. Banks of green fluorescents flicker above.

The room expands before us, deep and narrow.

And along the walls --

Hundreds of PLASTIC TUBES pump dark red liquid toward --

THE FAR END OF THE ROOM

The same translucent plastic sheet is stretched from wall to wall. And behind the sheet, Liz's eyes widen in recognition.

A large, inhuman SHAPE is suspended.

She stammers --

LIZ
I was here, before.

The Man shakes his head, assuring her --

MAN
No.

He nods to The Woman by the wall.

CLICK -- She flips another switch.

Another row of lights ignite above the far side of the room -- revealing not one, but FOUR OTHER shapes behind plastic.

The details of their bodies are obscured but each of them have almost human-like proportions. Except the heads are too large and their arms hang well below the knees.

Liz swallows back a bad taste, feeling like she could wake up in bed any second. A nightmare. That's what this is.

A fucking nightmare.

LIZ
What -- what...

But she can't even finish.

MAN
What are they?

He guides Liz forward... but she is not quick to follow.

MAN
It's okay. You're safe.

The Man walks her closer. Closer than she's ever been --

MAN
I don't know what they are.

With each step we see a little more...

Liz stares in horror.

MAN
None of us really do. But we know
what they need. Blood.

Through the sheet, we make out thin, chalk-colored skin.

Liz watches in a sickened hypnosis --

The creature's tight bellies crawl with gargling digestive fluid. Their cave-like chests rise and fall, rise and fall...

A satiated slumber.

She breaks from a nauseated trance --

LIZ
You kidnap people. You use them.

The Man nods. Calm but heavy.

LIZ
You sacrifice them! You took
Krista. She was a child.

MAN

I don't know who Krista is. I'm sorry.

LIZ

I don't believe you. I don't believe any of this.

MAN

I was like you. Like your friend, Krista. Wrong place at the wrong time. Twenty five years old. Just out of med school, doing my residency at a burn unit in Memphis. And I saw someone drawing blood from one of the patients. I was brought in. Someone showed me the same thing you're seeing, told me what I'm going to tell you. And I was given the choice.

He lifts his hands, like the rest is history.

LIZ

What choice? Death or -- this? You're the monsters --

MAN

-- None of us do this for fun. Believe me.

There's anger in his voice. Resentment. Liz goes silent.

He walks to the wall where the tubes feed into the room.

MAN

The people we take, we keep as long as possible so that we don't need as many. And we treat them with dignity. Kindness. But some have to die so the rest of you can live in peace and safety.

The Man pushes down on a lever, changing the pressure in the plastic tubes -- The blood stops moving.

Red tubes becomes clear.

MAN

Watch.

Liz follows the empty tubes toward The Things at the far end.

At first they are motionless.

But as the time without blood increases...

MAN

This is what happens if we're not here.

One of the THINGS twitches it's head. A bony, protruding skull, gouged with unknowing pits for eyes.

The others begins stirring as well. Awakened.

A gaping jowl parts, letting out a maddening shriek.

Bent fangs snap at the plastic, slicing it open.

Liz gasps, stepping back in fright.

The Man lifts the lever to its previous position. The Blood begins flowing again. And eventually, the shrieks subside.

Bringing the room to a sucking silence.

The ancient monsters returned to a dormant stasis.

The Man turns back to Liz, no matter how many times he's done this, Liz can see that he's still scared.

BOB

If we stopped, they would kill so many more. The way they used to. Ravenous. Feeding at night. Killing by the thousands.

Liz reels, trying to process the ramifications.

BOB

Nobody knows what we do. Nobody will ever thank us.

A sentiment Liz understands. He pauses. Meeting her eyes.

BOB

But we do what we have to. You will too.

On Liz's face we --

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SOUTHERN FRANCE - DAY

A small town in the provincial south of France. Sun shining.

A group of children bike past in the street.

Liz steps from a boulangerie --

LIZ
Merci, a la prochaine fois.

She's older, her hair dyed dark, cut short.

INT/EXT. CAR - DAY

Liz drives a tiny French car down a shaded country road.

Out the window --

Children play bocce ball in the grass of an abandoned cottage. Liz slows... watching them with a smile.

They wave! But as she passes, her smile is gone.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - DAY

Liz parks in front of a hundred year old farmhouse on a rolling estate. Fields of sunflowers. Trees beyond that.

INT. FARMHOUSE - KITCHEN

Liz sets a bag of groceries on the stone counter, nodding to a YOUNGER MAN in the kitchen --

LIZ
Bonsoir.

HALLWAY

Liz opens a closet, throwing a towel in a hamper and pulling a thick plastic bag from the shelf.

INNER ROOM

We don't see the full room. The camera is tight on Liz.

LIZ
(subtitled)
How are you feeling today?

She works at a small cart against a white wall. Connecting the empty plastic bag to a clear tube running off screen.

In a wide shot, we see Liz is not alone in the room. An OLD MAN sits in a hospital bed, connected to the IV.

A short French woman works close by, keeping an eye on Liz.

INT. HALLWAY

Liz carries the bag down the hallway.

She stops at an old wooden door on the left. Opens it --

A stone staircase leads down into a CELLAR.

YOUNG MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
(subtitled)
Dinners almost ready! We're setting
the table outside.

Liz moves down the stairs into the dark.

INT. CELLAR SPACE

She stops at the bottom of the stairs. It's cold here.

She pulls the sweater over her shoulders.

She hangs the swollen blood bag, alongside many others.

A machine takes the tube, pulling dark liquid.

She pauses at the bottom of the stairs. The light from above cuts a diagonal line across her face.

She stares into the shadows, toward the far side of the room.

If you listen, you can hear it, breathing slowly in the dark.

Liz turns toward the stairs, it looks like she's leaving but--

She turns back toward the room, and begins walking forward..

We stay tight on her face as she approaches the far wall.

Closer.

Closer.

The sound of breathing rises.

Liz shivers as she stops right in front of the ancient thing.

We barely make out it's hulking shape in the dark.

Liz takes it in with her eyes. Almost curious.

She reaches out a hand, running her fingers along the plastic separation, feeling the contours of it's face.

And then she unzips the plastic -- ZIIIIPP.

Her breathing rises. What is she doing?

Then we see it --

The long, KITCHEN KNIFE gripped at her side.

She lifts it.

And then with all the considerable strength left in this old woman's body, she STABS the blade into the creature!

SHINK! SHINK! SHINK! SHINK! SHINK!

But Liz doesn't stop. She keeps hacking like a madwoman. The only noise coming from the blade entering ancient flesh.

Again and again and again and again. It is horrific.

A bloody catharsis.

Until she literally cannot lift the blade.

She stops. Breathless. Stepping back...

For a moment, the cellar is SILENT.

But then we hear it. The deep rise and fall fills the silence. The Thing is still breathing. Unharmd.

YOUNG MAN (O.S.)
(subtitled)
Liz! Everything okay?

Without taking her eyes off of it, she answers --

LIZ
(subtitled)
Coming right up!

Liz wipes the blade off on her shirt.

Her arms, chest and face are completely covered in gore.

But her eyes shine through the crimson viscera.

CUT TO BLACK

Now that you, constant reader, have arrived here, at the end of our story, I'd like to give you a few more important details to keep in mind.

7. Sissy Spacek as Liz. Academy Award Winner. Movie star. The original Queen of Horror. Legend.

8. The ending of THE WHITE ROOM may divide audiences. Genre film fans will love it. Audiences who came for something else, not expecting the full genre film twist and sedated monsters – they might be confused.

But let's be honest – audiences don't want formulaic and expected. Plenty of movies already do that. People want the unexpected. Nobody will know where this film is headed when they see any of the marketing materials or conversations being had about the film.

We'll have the element of surprise – and more importantly a character, Liz, that audiences will fall in love with and follow into the depths of any darkness. Because the thrill ride works and the themes connect – those not expecting the genre ending will still be excitedly caught up in the conclusion. *Hitchcock meets Lovecraft*.

9. The trailer for this film will be *very important*. I'd propose that almost nothing from Act 3 and absolutely nothing from the Coda appear in the trailer. Nobody should understand that a '5 Years Later' jump to Phoenix is coming, even if they saw flashes of the hot and dusty desert in the trailer. In this way, nobody will sniff out the twist or the ending – because we won't spoil it ahead of time.

Let's position expectations going into the film. Audiences going to see M. Night's THE VISIT thought they were going to see a film about two kids going to visit their grandparents. That simple setup was a lie – those weren't their grandparents. We control the lens through which people will see and think they understand THE WHITE ROOM. And nobody will know what they're in for.

As a filmmaker I believe that it's my responsibility to know my audience and to understand how to make a film that finds them – especially given the myriad choices that people have today. I also believe that part of my creative responsibility as a director is in knowing how to position and deliver a story all the way through the marketing and release process. Having done that successfully with my other films, I'm ready to do it again.

10. Finally, this is the film I want to make - the way that I want to make it. This is the type of movie I want to see – and nobody else is making them like this.

Let's do something original. And let's make something that takes risks and scares the hell out of people.

Are you with me? Good.

Love,

Rod Blackhurst
March 21, 2018

