

FROM A BLOOD RED SKY

Written by

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FADE IN

EXT. SKY - NIGHT

The great expanse. The Milky Way a smear in the inky dark. A SHOOTING STAR streaks. Then another. Finally another, this one ON FIRE.

Spitting a trail of loose sparks behind it. The sky is bleeding, blood red.

Entering Earth's atmosphere.

It dims...

AN OLD FAMILY PHOTO

A shot by a lake, MOTHER and 4 pre-teen KIDS posing, majestic New York mountains jutting up beyond them.

Their faces, though. Stolid. No one is happy, except for the youngest BOY. DAVEY.

CLOSE on Mother's face. Something about it. Real. But not real. Contorting.

Transforming.

INT. BEAR LODGE MOTEL - NIGHT

An arm. VEINS popping. A band of rubber tightly taut. Fingers slap the veins.

A NEEDLE enters the flesh. The liquid enters.

DAVEY (24), plump youngish face, ragged and exhausted, breathes deeply of it. The release. His red, swollen eyes glaze over in the shabby room that reeks of stale smoke and mildew.

He glances over at the table, where the OLD FAMILY PHOTO rests. Mother and her kids.

His eyes lock onto it. His MOTHER'S face. Contorting. Surreal. Becoming something like a MONSTER.

Davey WAILS. Trembling. Something inside of him breaking. Broken now.

He lifts a razor to his wrist and SLICES through the skin.

DEEPLY. As blood pours forth...

INT. APARTMENT BEDROOM - NIGHT

Young. Cozy. A cell phone RINGS. A tired hand grabs it.

This is KARLY (22), raven-haired and too thin, eyes that betray a rebel streak. She's half asleep.

KARLY

Yeah.

MARJORIE (V.O.)

Hey. It's me. Wake up.

Perks up. Instantly on alert.

KARLY

What's wrong?

MARJORIE

It's Davey. He's in the hospital.

KARLY

Fuck. Is he okay?

MARJORIE

Dunno. Mother wants us all to come home.

Karly flops her head back to the pillow.

KARLY

Fuck.

MARJORIE

Yeah. I'll call Mick.

Marjorie disconnects. Karly sits up. She's visibly shaken.

KARLY

Fuck, Davey.

She pulls away the blanket and begins to strap a brace to her right leg.

INT. AIRPORT - DAY

Karly rising up an escalator, phone propped in her ear.

KARLY
Yes, I'm at the airport now.
Heading to my gate.

As she comes to the top, she slips her right arm into an elbow crutch and works her way forward.

Hobbling with her leg crutch.

KARLY (CONT'D)
Just...I'll be there soon, okay?
Going as fast as I can.

She disconnects, stops, rests along the wall for a second.
Already tired.

INT. AIRPORT - SECURITY

Karly moves through the full-body scanner. BEEP BEEP. She rolls her eyes as the TSA AGENT waves her over.

Wandering her up and down. Up and down.

INT. AIRPLANE

Karly settling into her seat. So uncomfortable. Great, some HUGE GUY crams into the seat next to her. With a creepy smile.

Definitely not her day.

INT. CAB - DAY

Karly stares through the back seat window as the cab trundles down a dirt road, toward a mansion buried in the wooded Adirondack mountains.

Her expression is overtaken by a mixture of emotions.
Despair. Regret. Uncertainty.

EXT. SAMSA MANSION - DAY

Huge but old, circa 1900s. Log sided. Fading green rooftop. Sawdust trails lead away from the house.

EXT. FRONT YARD - DAY

Karly hoists her bag to her shoulder as the cab drives off. MARJORIE (30s), fast paced and high strung, exits the front door, down the porch.

Offers Karly a genuine smile, and they embrace.

KARLY
Been here long?

MARJORIE
Couple hours. Let me get your bag.
Good trip for you? Mine was crazy,
engine trouble on the first plane,
everyone had to get off, find a new
gate, frickin' ridiculous...

She talks so damn fast, on and on. Marjorie leads Karly inside the SAMSA MANSION in a trail of banter.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Musty. Old. As if it hasn't been updated since the 1900s. All carved wood and, noticeably, TAXIDERMISTRY everywhere.

Karly eyeballs a stuffed raccoon on a table.

KARLY
Hasn't changed a thing.

Marjorie shakes her head. NOPE.

KARLY (CONT'D)
Where is she?

MARJORIE
In her work room. She'll be out.

Karly nods knowingly. Smirking.

MARJORIE (CONT'D)
Let's go see Davey.

INT. DAVEY'S ROOM - DAY

Davey convalesces on the twin bed, wrapped in blankets. His wrists are heavily bandaged.

He smiles easily when Karly enters.

DAVEY

Is this what I gotta do to get you
to visit?

Karly goes to him. Caresses his bandages.

KARLY

Jesus, Davey.

DAVEY

I know. It's not as bad as it
looks, though. You should see the
razor.

KARLY

Not even close to funny.

DAVEY

Maybe a little.

KARLY

Good to see you.

A tear escapes through Davey's joking demeanor.

DAVEY

Sorry 'bout this.

Off Karly's disapproving expression.

KARLY

Don't be sorry. Just don't do
anything like this again.

DAVEY

It's silly, you know? In the end,
though, it's good to see you. Mom's
been planning dinner. She's
catering. Giuseppe's. Hope you're
hungry.

KARLY

Pulling out all the stops, huh?

DAVEY

As only Mother can do.

Karly sits beside him. Regards his bandages.

KARLY

You're such an asshole.

DAVEY

I know. But you love me anyway.

Yeah. She does. But there's something about Karly. So reserved. Always watching.

INT. KARLY'S ROOM - DAY

Karly finishes unpacking her suitcase in her old room. The room is completely bare save for the finished bed.

MOTHER (O.S.)

Did he say anything about why he did it?

Karly stiffens. Turns to her MOTHER (50s), an overly formal woman of poise and stiff control, wearing a gray smock.

There is a clear and obvious chill between them.

KARLY

I've only had time to say hello to him.

Mother considers.

MOTHER

He doesn't speak to me about such things. You were always his confidante.

Karly offers no response. Bitterness between them. Mother looks about the room.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

You might have left a poster or two, give the room some character.

KARLY

I didn't plan on coming back.

MOTHER

Of course.

Karly gives a little.

KARLY

I'll talk with him.

Mother straightens her impeccable self.

MOTHER

See you at dinner?

KARLY

6 sharp?

Mother nods. Always so stern and reserved.

MOTHER

It'll be nice to eat as a family again.

She gives Karly a once over.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

You're looking thin.

Karly gives no reaction. Mother leaves. Karly rolls her eyes.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Ornate, yet similar to the rest of the house with old carved wood, outdated chandelier and light fixtures, and more taxidermy that give the place a mausoleum vibe.

Mother and Marjorie set out plates of the catered Italian dinner.

Karly and Davey sit, waiting. A seat is noticeably empty. Mother glances at it with disdain.

Karly checks the time on her phone.

6:15.

KARLY

He said he'd be on time. His flight wasn't delayed.

Mother's jaw CREASES. She isn't pleased.

MOTHER

Well, there's no reason for us to let everything get cold. Please.

It's all so oddly formal. Controlled, as Mother likes it.

Davey and Karly exchange a look. Marjorie joins in. They reluctantly start to eat the salad.

The DOOR BELL RINGS and soon enough, MICK (30s) enters the room. Mick is tall and wide, all teeth and confidence, the eldest, the successful son.

MICK

Hello!

Karly hurries to him and Mick embraces her in a huge hug. He practically dwarfs her.

MICK (CONT'D)
Karly bear!

He glances down at her leg brace.

MICK (CONT'D)
Everything good with you?

Karly just nods. Happy.

Marjorie is up, then Davey limping along. Mother noticeably doesn't leave her seat at the table.

Mick embraces everyone. Finally sets on Mother. Grows more serious.

MICK (CONT'D)
Sorry, Mother. Got an important
call on the way here. Had to take
it.

Mother nods. Of course. Does her best to smile.

MOTHER
It's so good to see you. How about
a kiss?

Mick goes to her. She lifts her cheek for him to kiss it,
which he does, a gentle peck.

MOTHER (CONT'D)
Dinner then?

Mick offers Davey a salute and takes his seat at the table.
They all dig into their meals.

Still so weirdly formal, like dining in a crypt.

Davey looks to Mick.

DAVEY
Been busy, huh? Greece, was it? Saw
your posts.

MICK
It wasn't all fun, believe me.
Working on some new suppliers for
the Dominic line. Crazy times. Get
that shot of me at the Parthenon,
though?

MARJORIE
I'm sure Greece was such a
hardship.

Just the right touch of snark. It rolls off Mick. He offers her his most winning grin.

MICK

Someone's gotta do it, right? Might as well be me. How's the, eh, proceedings?

Marjorie stiffens.

MARJORIE

Gregory's being a total asshat. Now he says he wants Bryleigh. Full custody. I don't know if I want to shoot him or slit his throat. Or both. Watch the bastard bleed out.

DAVEY

You can't take a kid from her mother like that. She's only, like, eight, right?

MARJORIE

Twelve. His lawyer is such a tool and the argument is ridiculous.

MICK

If you're fishing for a loan again...

MARJORIE

I don't need your money.

DAVEY

What're they saying? You can't just take a kid from her mother like that. Right, Mother?

Mother's jaw creases. She hasn't eaten a thing.

Karly sips her drink, not saying a word. Watching it all unfold.

MARJORIE

They say I'm emotionally unfit.

DAVEY

Well, that's just ridiculous.

MICK

Of course, it is. You got emotions that fit all sorts of different spectrums.

DAVEY
Jesus, Mick.

MARJORIE
Fuck off, Mick.

Mother SLAMS her hand to the table. Everyone goes still.
Karly sips quietly from her drink.

MOTHER
Would everyone stop the bickering!
And watch the language. Please. I'd
like to enjoy our dinner, like we
always did.

Mick softly raises a glass in the new, awkward silence.

MICK
Of course, Mother. Like we always
did.

He offers Karly a subtle wink. And they dig quietly into
their meals.

EXT. PORCH - NIGHT

Bathed in moonlight. Karly pushes the front door open,
carrying two cups of coffee. It's a balancing act with her
brace and crutch.

The porch is huge, faded green paint, spanning the entire
width of the house. But like the rest of the place, needs
work.

Mick and Davey lean on the railing, backs to Karly, with
Mick's arm around Davey's shoulder. Saying something.

Karly clears her throat.

The men turn. They go to her.

DAVEY
Let me help.

KARLY
No, I just didn't want to
interrupt.

Karly works her own way to the railing, sets the coffee down
for them. They sip.

MICK
None for you?

KARLY
Tastes like battery acid.

MICK
You've tasted battery acid?

KARLY
Yes, I've had coffee. Same thing.
Marjorie's bringing me wine.

MICK
Even better.

Mick reaches into a pocket, produces a flask. Pours some whisky into his coffee. With a secretive wink.

Marjorie carries out a bottle of red with two wine glasses.

She pours, and they sip. Marjorie lights up a smoke and relishes a drag.

It's fairly relaxed, the siblings together again. For a short time.

Davey takes a breath.

DAVEY
Can we stop with the b.s.?

A pause.

MICK
Sure, Davey. It's why we're here,
right?

He visually polls the others.

MARJORIE
Yeah. Third time, right? Or fourth?
Middle of all our shit? We gotta
drop everything. Why do you keep
doing this, Davey?

Davey closes in on himself.

KARLY
Give it a rest. Let him talk.

DAVEY
There's some fucked up shit. Okay?

MARJORIE
We're all fucked up, Davey!

Karly tries to reign it in.

KARLY
Marjorie.

Marjorie takes a breath.

DAVEY
I know I'm fucked up, okay? The big
family loser.

MICK
Stop.

DAVEY
It's... there's something going on.
With Mother.

A pause. Um, yeah.

KARLY
You mean, like, outside of the
obvious stuff?

MARJORIE
Mrs. Ice Queen hasn't changed a
bit.

Davey searches their faces.

DAVEY
You don't see it?

They look to each other.

DAVEY (CONT'D)
You really don't see it.

Nothing but shrugs.

DAVEY (CONT'D)
Nothin'?

MARJORIE
No.

DAVEY
Just wait. You'll see.

Davey's grown fidgety. Marjorie lights up another smoke.
She's a chain smoker, apparently. Then slugs half her wine.

MARJORIE

See what? Why don't you just tell us?

A dramatic pause from Davey, not for the sake of drama, but because he knows this is going to sound freaking crazy.

DAVEY

There's no other way to say it. She's not our mother.

Mick is dumfounded. Karly concerned. Marjorie rolls her eyes, annoyed.

MARJORIE

Like, she's an imposter or something?

Davey doesn't give. Karly approaches him.

KARLY

What type of drugs were you on this time? Bath salts? Not meth...

Davey pulls away.

DAVEY

I knew you'd say that.

MICK

Damn, bro.

MARJORIE

It's really out there.

Davey sets himself.

DAVEY

Look. You all moved away. I'm the one who still lives around here. I see her all the time. I'm telling you, she's not herself at all. It's almost like she's some other person or, like, another version of her. Or maybe...

Davey chokes up.

DAVEY (CONT'D)

Some other thing.

Karly goes to him again, but Davey stops her.

DAVEY (CONT'D)

Karly. Don't. Just watch her. All of you. You'll see. I'm not crazy. You start to feel it, the longer you're around her.

He searches their faces. Imploring. But no one is giving anything away.

DAVEY (CONT'D)

Oh, God. I knew this would be pointless. I need to rest.

Davey goes back inside in a huff. After he's gone -

MICK

Here we go again. He's crazy.

MARJORIE

Certified. Do you remember when he thought the vice president was sending him messages on Twitter?

KARLY

Guys, listen.

MARJORIE

Don't start defending him, please.

KARLY

I'm not. It's the drugs, obviously. It's bad this time. We should talk about getting him back into the hospital. That one program...

MARJORIE

Did jack for him. And cost us, what?

MICK

Cost me!

Marjorie rolls her eyes.

KARLY

We can't just give up on him.

MARJORIE

We can't keep throwing money at him, either. He needs to figure out his shit on his own. Like we all did.

KARLY

Did we?

Silence to that. Karly stews. Mick tries to soften the mood.

MICK

Think the old tree house is still there?

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Mick, Marjorie and Karly work their way along a leaf cluttered path. The woods are thick and wiry.

Mick holds a flashlight in the twilight.

They come upon a decrepit tree house ten feet up a sugar maple tree. The bottom has fallen out.

They regard it with melancholy.

MICK

So much for that.

KARLY

Hunting stand's still there.

Nearby, a hunting stand sits. 4 by 6 feet, about 8 feet off the ground. Ladder protruding from beneath.

MICK

Spent some good times in there.

Something RUSTLES in the brush.

MARJORIE

What was that?

KARLY

Just a deer. Rabbit maybe.

MARJORIE

Or a frickin' bear.

MICK

There's no bears around here.

MARJORIE

Are you joking?

MICK

I never had to shoot one.

Karly's eyes wander off down a different path. Mick and Marjorie exchange a look of concern.

MARJORIE
We should go back.

KARLY
I want to see it.

MICK
Probably not smart...

Karly heads off down the path without them. They reluctantly follow her.

EXT. CHASM - NIGHT

Cut into the earth, a gully that looks sliced by the blade of a deity. It's a good football field long and a dozen feet across.

Karly, Mick and Marjorie lurch through a clearing. Karly pokes her head over the edge.

It's a long way down.

KARLY
Damn.

Karly sits, feet dangling over the edge. Contemplating.

MEMORY FLASH

YOUNG KARLY (8) sprawled at the bottom of the gully, unconscious, legs bent unnaturally.

BACK TO SCENE

Mick and Marjorie sit with Karly.

Karly rubs her braced leg as she dwells on something.

No one speaks. Mick and Marjorie exchange the same look of concern.

MARJORIE
Does it hurt bad still?

KARLY
Some days are worse than others.

No one wants to say anything. It's Karly's moment.

Alone.

KARLY (CONT'D)

We should go.

Yeah. AGREED. They help Karly up.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Karly follows Mick and Marjorie toward the house.

MARJORIE

I can't believe Mother slapped the table. It's so unlike her.

KARLY

Getting feisty in her old age, maybe.

MICK

Maybe it's not her. It's her evil twin!

MARJORIE

Stop.

Karly tries not to, but she can't help but laugh.

INT. DAVEY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Davey rests in bed. Karly sits beside him, going over his pill bottles.

KARLY

What's this one for?

DAVEY

Anxiety.

She holds up another.

DAVEY (CONT'D)

Blood pressure.

KARLY

What? You're too young for that.

DAVEY

Not what the doctor said.

She holds up another.

DAVEY (CONT'D)
Pain, but I'm trying not to take
those. Makes the cravings worse.

KARLY
This is it? You're not on any other
drugs?

Davey shakes his head.

DAVEY
How about you? Still using?

Karly shakes her head back.

KARLY
Nah. I didn't like how they made me
feel.

She touches Davey's bandaged wrists.

Davey glances at Karly's brace.

DAVEY
Do they still hurt?

KARLY
All the time.

Davey touches her hand.

KARLY (CONT'D)
What you said. Don't you think
that's the drugs talking? Like
before?

DAVEY
I get how it sounds. I probably
wouldn't trust me either. Just do
me a solid, though. Watch her.
There's something different. You'll
start to see.

Karly searches his face. He really believes this.

DAVEY (CONT'D)
Will you?

After a pause, considering, giving in.

KARLY
Okay.

EXT. GARDEN - DAY

Mother's extensive flower and vegetable garden. It is meticulously kept with an array of colorful flowers and neatly planted veggie rows, mostly peppers.

One particular area looks less healthy than the others.

Mother works from a garden stool, pulling weeds in that spot. Wearing a shawl, despite the nice weather. Marjorie assists in the corner, on her knees, sweating, not loving this.

Karly picks at the weeds with a poker, not very effectively.

MOTHER

Thank you for helping me with the garden.

MARJORIE

It's fine. I can use the distraction.

KARLY

You said you've been meaning to get to it. We're here. So...

Mother nods to her. She rubs her temples, headache coming on. Scratches at her long sleeve.

MARJORIE

You okay?

MOTHER

I've just been so tired lately. Chilly, headaches. I feel like I'm coming down with something.

MARJORIE

Maybe something going around.

Mother leans toward Karly. Matter-of-fact.

MOTHER

Has he said anything to you?

KARLY

Not very much.

A mild look of disappointment from Mother. As she starts digging.

MOTHER

Hmm. There's only so much a mother
can do. Some birds don't fly far
from the nest.

KARLY

Give him time. I'll keep trying.

MOTHER

Would you hand me a shovel,
Malorie?

MARJORIE

Excuse me?

MOTHER

The hand shovel, please.

MARJORIE

Did you just call me 'Malorie'?

Mother pauses. Seemingly confused for a brief moment. Tries
to sluff it off.

MOTHER

Don't be silly.

Marjorie faces her, studies her. Holding the hand shovel.
Karly watches.

Mother reaches for the shovel, but Marjorie holds it. Eyeing
Mother, waiting.

Mother seems oddly confused.

MARJORIE

You sure you're okay?

Mother glares at her. Expecting...

MARJORIE (CONT'D)

Mother.

MOTHER

Of course, I am. Marjorie. May I
have the shovel, please?

Marjorie hands it to her. Mother takes it, lingers on
Marjorie's face a bit too long, then rubs her temples. She
proceeds to dig.

Marjorie and Karly exchange a look. Odd.

Suddenly, Mother STRIKES at the ground. Comes up with something BLOODY in her hand.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

Vermin.

Her voice is oddly dark, almost cruel, almost gleeful. Almost.

It shocks both Marjorie and Karly.

Mother notices their stares.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

Voles. They eat the roots. They can't be tolerated.

She tosses the bloody vole carcass out of the garden and easily wipes her hands of it.

Marjorie and Karly exchange another look, this one with more concern.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Series of shots. All the taxidermy. Everywhere in the house. So deathly quiet. So creepy.

INT. KARLY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Karly awake on her bed. Can't sleep. So aggravating. She rises.

EXT. DAVEY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Karly peeks in. Davey is sleeping. She closes the door. SNICK.

Slips away through the darkness.

EXT. PORCH - NIGHT

Cricket song pervades the dark. Karly sits in an Adirondack chair, wrapped in a thick hoodie. Deep in thought.

The door opens.

Mother exits. Lurching weirdly. Very odd.

Karly sits forward.

KARLY

Mother?

Mother doesn't respond. Her eyes half closed. Wanders out further onto the porch. Toward the stairs. Standing there. Absorbing the night.

Karly rises. Approaches with concern.

Standing next to Mother now. Searching her face.

She's sleepwalking.

Karly tousles Mother's shoulder. Gently.

KARLY (CONT'D)

Mother?

Mother turns her head to Karly and her slack face twists with a weird sort of RAGE. So unlike her controlled self.

Karly reacts, steps back. She's seen this expression before.

MEMORY FLASH

Near the CHASM. The same expression on Mother's face. RAGING.

BACK TO SCENE

Mother snaps out of it. The wild slipping from her face. Awareness creeping back in. Control.

MOTHER

Karly? What...

KARLY

You were sleepwalking, I think.

On Mother, shaking it off. Karly's concern grows.

KARLY (CONT'D)

Are you alright?

MOTHER

Oh. I... I haven't been sleeping very well lately.

KARLY

Do you want me to help you back to bed?

MOTHER

No. I'm fine. Good night.

Mother shuffles back inside. Leaving Karly dumfounded. And more than a bit freaked.

INT. DINING ROOM - DAY

The adult siblings sit at the table, waiting. There is toast and jam and biscuits but no one yet eats. Formality forbids it.

Mother shuffles in with a pan full of scrambled eggs. She wears a thick sweater. Serving them one by one.

Karly notices a trickle of sweat running down her forehead. Shoots a look at Davey.

Davey shoots a look back. SEE? Karly rolls her eyes.

DAVEY

Let me help you.

MOTHER

The least I can do is make you all breakfast.

No one dares move as Mother continues to serve them.

Except Karly.

KARLY

You don't seem well.

MOTHER

Stop. I'm fine.

KARLY

You're sweating.

Mother is growing flustered. Bit by bit.

MOTHER

I said I'm fine.

Marjorie is getting it now. Karly rises. Approaches Mother. Marjorie does the same.

Mother is taken aback, doesn't seem to know how to handle the situation.

Especially as Marjorie sets her hand to Mother's forehead.

MARJORIE

You're running a fever. You're really hot.

MOTHER

Stop this.

KARLY

Mom, you...

Off Mother's chastising look, shooting daggers. Do NOT call her "Mom".

KARLY (CONT'D)

Mother. Maybe we should take you to the doctor.

Mother drops the pan of scrambled eggs to the table. Some of them splatter out.

MOTHER

Enough of this. I'm fine. I have work to do today. I'll be in my work room.

She straightens herself. Starts to leave. Regards the table. Her gaze falls upon Davey.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

Clean this up.

She leaves. Davey looks to them all. Gauging them. Yeah, there's something really OFF about Mother.

SLAM. A door somewhere from the innards of the mansion.

INT. WORK ROOM - DAY

Mother immediately turns off the light, scratches at her sleeve with annoyance. We see nothing but her vague shadow, pacing, and the clear scowl on her face.

She takes a series of deep breaths, calming herself.

MOTHER

Nothing wrong. Nothing wrong.

Pacing. Breathing. Calming.

Finally calm and completely collected per her usual self, she opens another door on the far wall and disappears inside another back room.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

The adult siblings standing in a huddle.

DAVEY

See?

Marjorie rolls her eyes.

MARJORIE

It doesn't prove anything. She's always been like this.

DAVEY

Not exactly like this.

Mick, snarky.

MICK

You can't mess with her rules, you know.

DAVEY

You saw her. It isn't her.

MICK

Come on, man. We didn't come all the way here for this shit. We came here for you, and this is what we get?

DAVEY

Sorry to once again not live up to your expectations.

Mick scoffs.

MICK

Dude, really?

MARJORIE

We should knock on her door.

DAVEY

Are you kidding me?

Collective eyes fall on Karly's messed up legs. Karly tenses.

MARJORIE

Check on her. I think she's ill.

Davey throws up his arms. The hell!

MICK
We're not kids anymore.

KARLY
We sure act like it.

This silences them. Karly starts off down the hall toward Mother's Work Room.

EXT. WORK ROOM - DAY

The adult siblings huddling outside the door. Motioning to one another. Who's going to knock?

You? You? They're all scared of disturbing Mother, like when they were kids.

MEMORY FLASH

The cowering YOUNG SIBLINGS being scolded by Mother, in her overly stern and formal way.

MOTHER
You will never, ever go into my work room, do you understand? And when I am working, I am not to be disturbed. Tell me you understand. Speak.

One by one they tell her - I UNDERSTAND, MOTHER.

BACK TO SCENE

Karly raises her hand to knock. Davey stops her.

DAVEY
Don't.

KARLY
This is really old.

She raises her hand again to knock...

MARJORIE
Listen.

Karly pauses. Listens. They all do.

What is that?

Some sort of WHIMPERING.

Mick's face twists up.

MICK
The hell is that?

Confused shrugs.

DAVEY
I've been telling you.

As they contemplate the door, and the strange whimpering from within.

MICK
I'm not dealing with this.

Mick pulls a flask from his pocket, downs a shot, marches back down the hall. Davey follows.

DAVEY
I just want to lie down a while.

Marjorie and Karly remain. Exchange a look. Marjorie shakes her head. Follows the men. But pauses at the end of the hall.

Waiting to see what Karly will do.

Karly regards the door with disdain. Anger almost. Raises her hand to knock. Will she?

No. Disgusted with herself.

She joins Marjorie down the hall.

INT. DAVEY'S ROOM - DAY

Davey climbs under his covers in bed. He shivers slightly. Karly tucks him in.

DAVEY
How'd we get so messed up?

KARLY
There's no one way to explain it.
Dad had his issues, then he died,
Mother's just out there, and here
we are. I guess it was inevitable.

Davey shivers. Sweat beads up on his forehead. Karly wipes it away.

KARLY (CONT'D)
Is the withdrawal bad?

Davey shrugs. Yeah.

DAVEY

I don't like staying here. It's depressing.

KARLY

Someone's gotta take care of you. You can't go home like this.

DAVEY

But you'll leave and I'll be left with her. She doesn't like anyone here anymore.

KARLY

You'll be fine.

She leaves. More sweat beads up. Davey wipes it away.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Karly is tucked into the nook of a couch, sipping a glass of wine. Waiting.

Finally, a door creaks open, clamps closed. Mother comes walking down the hall.

Karly leans forward as Mother enters, eyes falling on her daughter.

MOTHER

I didn't realize anyone was still up.

Karly climbs to her uneven feet.

KARLY

I thought I'd check on you.

MOTHER

Everything is fine. As I said. Just a bit of work to do. How about you? Are you alright?

Karly sets herself.

KARLY

Do you want us here, Mother?

Mother cocks her head, though her expression gives nothing away.

MOTHER
Of course. You're always welcome
here.

Emotionless. Karly mimics the head cock.

KARLY
Are we?

Mother smiles, though it feels empty.

MOTHER
Don't be silly. I said of course.
Davey is glad you're here, too.

An awkward pause.

MOTHER (CONT'D)
Has he said anything else to you?

Karly deflates.

KARLY
Not really.

Mother, matter of fact...

MOTHER
It's your fault, you know. You were
closest to him. Always. You just
left and never came back. Tore him
up inside.

Karly bites back a hard retort. Controls the clear and
obvious anger.

KARLY
Is that how you see it?

Mother shrugs. YES.

KARLY (CONT'D)
Good night, Mother.

MOTHER
Good night.

Mother disappears up the stairs. Karly steams within.

EXT. WORK ROOM - DAY

On THE DOOR.

Looming. Imposing.

A force of its own.

EXT. CHASM - DAY

Karly and Davey have gathered beside the precipice. Davey is visually uncomfortable here.

DAVEY

Where's Mick and Marjorie?

KARLY

Mick's sleeping it off and Marjorie was on the phone screaming at someone.

DAVEY

Why we gotta come out here?

KARLY

Privacy.

DAVEY

There's like a thousand other places around here for that.

He shoots a queasy look over the edge, then glances down at Karly's legs.

KARLY

Cut it. Tell me more about Mother.

Davey searches her face.

DAVEY

So you believe me?

KARLY

There's something wrong with her.

DAVEY

I told you...

KARLY

Stop. Nobody thinks she's been replaced by a robot or anything. There's something obviously off, though.

DAVEY

What have you seen?

KARLY

I want to know what YOU'VE seen.

Davey smirks with disappointment, but at least he's gotten somewhere.

DAVEY

It started maybe a month ago. I called her and she just sounded really off.

KARLY

What do you mean, off?

DAVEY

Off, like weak, like her voice was tired, and shaking sort of.

KARLY

So?

DAVEY

So then I ask her about our lunch date, we still do that every week just about, I know, don't start the "Mama's Boy" thing, and she acted all confused about it.

Karly nods. It's making some sense.

DAVEY (CONT'D)

I reminded her and anyway we met at Giuseppe's and I did my best to stay sober. I usually do, for the most part, I only had a small hit to hide the jitters, so I was pretty much with it, but I'm telling you, the woman sitting across from me that day wasn't our mother.

He reacts to Karly's impassive face. His current jitters are showing.

DAVEY (CONT'D)

It sounds nuts, I know! But I swear I wasn't high, and you guys don't see her as much as I do. I see her every week!

KARLY

Calm down.

DAVEY

I'm calm. But I'm freaking, okay? I mean, its HER but not her. It's little things. She used to have that tick, where she bites her lip when she's listening. That's gone. And her eyes. They're not right. Have you looked at them?

He's losing Karly, he can tell.

KARLY

You're totally exaggerating.

DAVEY

I'm not. Maybe. Look at her eyes, more like look at the way she looks at you, at everyone. Like she's fucking hungry, or pissed off, I don't know, it's just not her. How the hell can you not see this?

KARLY

I said calm down. I'm trying to get to the bottom of this.

Davey's grown more agitated.

DAVEY

I am, but...

MARJORIE (O.S.)

There you are.

Marjorie comes through the brush. Davey pulls back, calming himself.

MARJORIE (CONT'D)

Talking about Mother?

Nods.

MARJORIE (CONT'D)

I think we need to get into her work room. Without her around.

The others stiffen.

DAVEY

Do you value your life? Do you know how much she would freak?

MARJORIE

We need to find out what's happening. That room is like her brain.

KARLY

She could just be sick. Christ, she's getting old. It happens.

MARJORIE

Maybe. She wouldn't tell us, though. We should go in there. Demand it, maybe.

DAVEY

Fuck that.

MARJORIE

She'll listen. We're adults now.

DAVEY

No, really. Double fuck that. Only one of us has been inside that room.

He glances down at Karly's mangled legs.

DAVEY (CONT'D)

And I mean this in all seriousness. Triple fuck that.

KARLY

I wasn't all the way inside.

Davey and Marjorie stop all thought. All eyes to Karly.

KARLY (CONT'D)

I just got inside that first room. There was another door in the back I didn't get to open it.

Davey cringes. He doesn't want to hear it, his jitters getting worse.

Marjorie is intrigued.

MARJORIE

Yeah?

KARLY

It was weird, creepy weird. Stuffed animals like she has all over the house, only on steroids, lining the walls.

(MORE)

KARLY (CONT'D)
 So many of them weren't even
 finished. Dead animals hanging open
 with their skin...

DAVEY
 Stop! It's disgusting.

MARJORIE
 If we could just see...

DAVEY
 I can't believe we're still talking
 about this. Do you want another one
 of us permanently disabled?

That hits Karly. She turns and hurries off, upset. Marjorie
 shoots him a look. Dumbass.

DAVEY (CONT'D)
 Aww, shit. Karly, I'm sorry.

He and Marjorie follow her.

INT. KARLY'S ROOM - DAY

Karly dials a number on her phone.

KARLY
 Hey.

TODD (V.O.)
 Hey. Comin' home already?

KARLY
 No, just needed to talk to someone
 sane.

Chuckles.

TODD (V.O.)
 That bad?

KARLY
 My family is nuts. Be glad you're
 not here.

TODD (V.O.)
 You wouldn't let me. Your brother
 okay?

A pause from Karly.

KARLY

I don't know. There's...something else going on here, it's hard to explain. I want to go into it. It's just nice to hear your voice.

TODD

Nice to hear yours, too. I'm sure you'll figure things out. Love ya, boo.

KARLY

Back at ya. I should be home in a few days. If I survive.

EXT. PORCH - DAY

Karly and Davey sit in a swing in the yard, watching Mick and Marjorie pace frantically back and forth on the porch, each in the middle of some angry phone call.

From this vantage point, the many animal traps along the sides of the house are more apparent.

MICK

This is bullshit, Jay! You can't let them walk all over you.

MARJORIE

You tell that son-of-a-bitch to kiss off! I'm not laying down for this!

Karly and Davey exchange a sad look.

DAVEY

Sucks to be them.

Karly can only shake her head.

MICK

I left you in charge of the deal and you told me they were fully on with the switch. And now you're telling me they've suddenly changed their minds?

Mick takes a shot from his flask. Marjorie puffs frantically on a cigarette.

MARJORIE

She's my fucking daughter, too.
Hell, more than his. God, that son-
of-a-bitch!

Karly quivers with a chill. Davey puts his arm around her.

DAVEY

Kind of makes you want to snort
some coke.

KARLY

Ha ha.

MICK

Stop. Jay, just tell them I'll deal
with them directly. Understood?
It's clear you can't negotiate your
way out of a wet paper bag.

MARJORIE

Tell him if he wants full custody,
he better get used to life without
a functioning penis.

Both Mick and Marjorie end their calls. Marjorie fumes, looks
out to Davey and Karly.

MARJORIE (CONT'D)

Enjoying the show?

KARLY

Not really.

Marjorie stamps out her smoke. Lights up another.

MARJORIE

I can't stay here.

MICK

Me either.

Karly sinks into the swing. Davey leans forward.

DAVEY

You can't just leave. Not now.

MICK

My whole business is falling apart.
I left an inept dung jockey in
charge of a simple task.

MARJORIE

My colossal prick of a soon-to-be
dickless ex-husband is filing
paperwork for full custody. I can't
sit here singing kumbaya in the
middle of the fucking woods!

Davey deflates. He rises, stomps inside.

Karly approaches them.

KARLY

I don't give a shit what's going on
in your lives right now. You can't
just leave me here. No way.

It's clear Mick and Marjorie feel bad. But they're pissed.

KARLY (CONT'D)

He needs you. Hell, I need you.
Don't leave me alone in this. Not
again.

They look at her. Sort of a low blow. Karly knows it, and
doesn't care.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Mother and her children eat in silence. No one speaking. Not
even looking at each other. Miserable.

It doesn't seem to bother Mother in the slightest. In fact,
she seems to be enjoying the silence.

FLASHBACK

Happy Mother and her YOUNG CHILDREN sitting in the exact same
seats. Same glum expressions.

Nothing has changed. At all.

BACK TO SCENE

After a while, Mother sets down her napkin.

MOTHER

I think I'll call it an early
night.

They all watch her go with cautious interest.

EXT. WORK ROOM - NIGHT

Karly, Marjorie and Mick contemplating the door. TENSE. There are three locks on it.

FLASHBACK

Young Karly picking the door lock. Only a single lock back then. She looks down the hall, where her young siblings watch from afar.

Making Karly do all the scary work.

CLICK. Young Karly beats the lock. Turns the handle. Lets the door creak open.

One more glance to her siblings. They're astonished. Young Mick gives Young Karly a big thumbs up.

Young Karly enters.

RETURN TO SCENE

MARJORIE
Where is she?

MICK
Sleeping.

Karly steels herself, grabs the handle, gives it a twist. NO GO.

KARLY
Of course it wouldn't be that easy.

MARJORIE
You know she keeps it, like, triple locked now for a reason.

KARLY
I won't do this alone again.

MICK
Of course not.

MARJORIE
I swear.

KARLY
So we need a plan.

Marjorie fumes, channeling her anger.

MARJORIE

Hell, yeah.

Mick's looking queasy.

MICK

I need to get out here. Let's grab Davey.

MARJORIE

For what?

MICK

Road trip.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Mick cruises down a windy, solitary road. His headlights are swallowed up in the dark.

MARJORIE

Jesus, it's freakin' black out here.

DAVEY

Dude, you should slow down...

MICK

I'm fine...

DAVEY

You don't get it, the deer just jump...

A STARK WHITE FLASH! BUUMPP!

A DEER has jumped in front of them. Mick slams the brakes just as he clips the animal's leg.

They all stare out the window at the deer as it stares back, bathed in shadow on the side of the road.

Though there's something ODD about the deer.

MICK

Do you see...?

Is it the shadows? Or does that deer have a second HEAD?

Before they can tell, it darts into the night.

Incredulous...

MICK (CONT'D)
Holy fuck.

EXT. LITTLE BROWN JUG BAR - NIGHT

Mick checks his headlight.

MICK
Cracked it.

KARLY
Could'a been worse.

MICK
Gonna cost me a grand, easy.

MARJORIE
Could've been two.

Just the right amount of snark for Mick. Mick shakes his head at her. Typical Marjorie.

INT. LITTLE BROWN JUG BAR - NIGHT

Small town joint. The place is dead. Biker bar decor.

The siblings snag a table. Davey's rather fidgety.

MICK
Can't believe I used to love this place.

MARJORIE
I still do. Nothing like this where dickless made me move.

She runs her hand along a Harley neon sign. Beside it is a poster with a photo of a brown haired girl (19) with the words: TARA BROWN. MISSING.

MICK
You've always appreciated the finer things.

She offers him the finger.

Davey notices the poster.

DAVEY
Whoa.

The lanky BARTENDER in a bandana comes around the bar.

BARTENDER
Can I getcha?

MICK
Gentleman Jack. Double.

MARJORIE
Chardonnay. Double.

KARLY
Light beer, please. Single.

DAVEY
Hey, is that Tara? From here?

BARTENDER
Yeah. Got a fund-raiser going. Help
with the search. Wanna kick in?

She reaches behind her, snags a cheap jar with a printed photo of Tara taped to it. It has a few bills inside.

Mick fishes out a few singles. Stuffs them in.

MARJORIE
Big spender.

MICK
Bite me.

DAVEY
Damn.

BARTENDER
Yeah. Went off on her hiking thing.
Poof. Gone. Still lookin'.

She gives Davey a look. What you wanna order?

DAVEY
Sorry, just water. Thanks.

BARTENDER
The hell you been?

The Bartender's eyes drop to Davey's wrist bandages, linger there a moment.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)
Oh.

Awkward. She hurries off.

Davey hides his arms under the table, uncomfortable.

DAVEY
Why'd you make me come here?

MICK
I needed a drink. And some fresh
air.

KARLY
We're planning.

DAVEY
Planning what?

MARJORIE
I swear I'm gonna just smash it
open.

MICK
With what? A Mack truck?

MARJORIE
A friggin' rock. I don't care.

Davey sighs.

DAVEY
You guys are ridiculous.

MICK
You're the one who thinks our
mother was replaced with an evil
twin.

DAVEY
That's not what I said. At all.
I'll say this again anyway. If you
go into her work room, shit's gonna
hit the fan. Hard. She's only
gotten worse over the years. If you
think she was bad when we were
kids, just look at her now.

MICK
She has been going in there a lot.
I mean, a LOT.

MARJORIE
All the more reason to get in
there.

DAVEY
Sounds like you have a death wish.

Drinks arrive. They're left to contemplate.

MICK
Three locks.

KARLY
I'm not worried about the locks.

EXT. PORCH - NIGHT

The siblings wander up the path from Mick's car, Mick and Marjorie half drunk. Karly leans on Davey for support.

MARJORIE
Shh. Shhh!

KARLY
No one's making any noise.

MARJORIE
I don't want Mother to hear.

MICK
What's she gonna do? Ground you?

Marjorie shoots him a look. Not worth fighting.

MARJORIE
'Nother round?

MICK
Sure.

She disappears into the house, returns with a full glass of wine and a glass of dark rum for Mick.

They settle into themselves.

MICK (CONT'D)
I gotta say, some things I miss
about this place.

MARJORIE
I don't miss this place at all.

Davey rolls his eyes.

KARLY
I miss it sometimes.

All eyes on her. Really? No one believes it.

KARLY (CONT'D)

I do. I mean, aside from the obvious, there were some good memories here. Especially with you guys.

Everyone softens. Until an eerie WHINE echoes through the dark.

MARJORIE

The hell is that?

All on alert. Mick is up, almost spilling his drink.

The WHINE. Grotesque, like a sick, mad dog howling through the trees.

Karly shivers. Davey along with her.

Mick spots something in the dark. A shadow. But moving. Squints his eyes at it. Steps down the porch stairs to get a better look.

KARLY

Mick...

The SHADOW exits the trees. Watching them. Some sort of dog. No, a COYOTE. But misshapen, fur gone wild in spots, fallen completely off in others, leaving streaky bare patches.

Its legs have twisted unnaturally, and its eyes have grown abnormally large. Freaky. Surreal.

Is it a trick of the light?

Davey steps up behind Mick, with Marjorie and Karly in tow. This CAN'T be real. Can it?

Off their dumfounded looks.

KARLY (CONT'D)

What's wrong with that thing? Is it sick?

MARJORIE

Must be something in the air around here. Screw this. I'm going in.

They all head inside, but Mick, who seems to have found some form of fascination. And determination.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

So early. Mother has just made coffee. Karly wanders in. Looking a bit like a morning zombie.

MOTHER
Rough night?

Disapproving. Karly scoffs.

KARLY
Just a few beers down at the Jug.

MOTHER
I know, I heard you sneaking back in. I figured I should make some coffee.

KARLY
We weren't... thank you, Mother. I appreciate it.

She pours herself a cup.

Marjorie wanders in, moaning, clearly hung over. One side of her hair is matted to her head.

MARJORIE
Thank GOD! Coffee. Wine is the juice of the devil.

Mother shoots Karly a look. "Told you so." Karly pours Marjorie a cup.

EXT. PORCH - DAY

Karly and Marjorie sipping coffee. Mick exits the house, alert and perky. Dressed in jogging clothes. His phone is strapped to a special belt.

MARJORIE
Are you serious right now?

MICK
What?

The guy is ready to go. Marjorie scoffs. LOUDLY.

KARLY
Have a great run.

He offers a happy salute. Starts up a running app.

PHONE (V.O.)
Begin workout.

And he's off.

EXT. MOUNTAIN TRAILS

Mick jogs over dirt trails. Passed a gnarled tree.

PHONE (V.O.)
Total distance. One mile.

Mick checks his watch. Smirks with disappointment. Puts a bit more into it.

He rounds a turn in the trail.

Spots SOMETHING moving up in the thick trees ahead.

SLOWS. STOPS. What the?

It's a deer. But another misshapen one. It's difficult to see through the trees, but this is the third time for Mick and it's bugging him.

He approaches the trail quietly, carefully. Steps off into the thicker tree line.

Not wanting to scare away the deer.

He produces his phone. Launches the camera. Moves in for a closer shot. Closer.

Closer.

Does this deer have EXTRA LEGS growing from it's abdomen? An elongated, unnatural eye? An antler growing from beneath its chin?

Mick readies to snap a shot when he steps on a twig. SNAP!

The deer is OFF in a rush!

MICK
No!

Mick chases after it, trying to snap photos as he goes, but the deer is just too fast.

He takes a chance, thinking quickly, pivots off to the left. Maybe he can head it off if it turns.

Sprinting as fast as he can through the dense trees. He looks off.

YES! The deer turns his way. Heading toward him.

He gets his phone ready to snap a shot, close, closer...

SLAM! Mick runs into a tree and he's down. The deer bounds away.

Mick rises. Wipes dirt and leaves from his pristine workout gear.

MICK (CONT'D)
Dammit!

INT. DINING ROOM - DAY

Mother, Marjorie and Karly sipping coffee in silence. Mother shivers in a thick shawl. Marjorie watching her closely.

The porch door CLACK-BANGS.

MICK (O.S.)
Mother? Mother...

Mick finds them. He's sweaty, panting.

MICK (CONT'D)
Do you mind if I borrow one of your traps?

Mother raises an eyebrow.

EXT. YARD - DAY

Mick sets up an animal trap at the edge of the yard, just along the tree line. It's a large box with a door that swings only one way.

INWARD.

He opens a can of tuna, sets it inside for bait. Stands back. Observes his handy work. Peers out into the mysterious woods.

Karly approaches.

KARLY
What are you looking for?

Mick is agitated.

MICK
There's something going on out
there.

Karly eyes him with concern.

KARLY
What?

MICK
I'm not sure what it is. At first I
thought I was crazy. Or drunk. But
you know what?

His gaze falls upon her. Serious. Ominous.

MICK (CONT'D)
I don't think it's me.

EXT. SHED - DAY

In the yard, near the house. Mick flings the door open.

INT. SHED - DAY

Mick finds a long box. Opens it. A HUNTING RIFLE. He pulls it
out. Inspects it.

Cleans it up.

LOADS it. Takes extra ammo.

EXT. HUNTING STAND - DAY

Mick climbs up with the rifle.

INT. HUNTING STAND - DAY

Mick cleans the place up a little. It's been empty a long
time. He peers through the slats. Watching over the woods.
Waiting with intent.

INT. HUNTING STAND - LATER

As the sun begins to fall.

Mick stores the gun away in a small gun locker. Climbs down.

EXT. PORCH - NIGHT

As the sun dips below the horizon. Last light spills through the trees. An eerie silence falls over the world.

INT. WORK ROOM - NIGHT

So dark. Mother stands beside a cluttered wall, though we can only see vague shapes, except for a bright light at Mother's back. It illuminates something at her waist level, out of view.

She picks something up and turns toward the light. A SCALPEL. Peers down at SOMETHING. Her lips QUIVER, betraying her stolid exterior for once. So unlike her.

The expression on her face, as if fighting some inner turmoil. She loses.

She grips the blade and bends down toward the light with intent...

INT. DAVEY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Davey paces. He doesn't look too comfortable. Wipes a bead of sweat from his temple.

His eyes wander, fixate on the side of his bed. Lingers a bit too long. Something CALLING TO HIM. Finally, forces his eyes away.

NO.

He notices a small red rash on the inside of his forearm. It's bumpy, a bit raw. He rubs it gently.

INT. KARLY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Leaning back on a pillow on the bed, massaging her sore leg. Cell phone settled into the crook of her neck.

Giggling.

KARLY
(into phone)
Stop. You know you miss this.

TODD (V.O.)
Heh, heh, you know it, boo.
Wouldn't mind a bit of tickle right
now. Get my plane ticket right now.
Boom.

KARLY
Hush. I'll be home soon. I'll save
some extra for ya.

TODD (V.O.)
Yeah, babe. Listen, I gotta run.
Meetin' Jay out for a bachelor
night cocktail.

Karly considers, confused.

KARLY
Isn't Jay in Texas for that
wedding?

PAUSE.

TODD (V.O.)
Meant Steve. S'posed to be both of
them, but yeah, he's down there
tryin' to be a cowboy.

KARLY
Have fun. Not too much.

TODD (V.O.)
Impossible.

Disconnect. Karly shakes it off. But not completely.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Mick parts the curtain ever so slightly, peeking out at the
animal trap at the edge of the yard. Waiting for activity.

Nothing yet.

INT. MARJORIE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Marjorie on her laptop, chatting with someone. A chat window
open. She's chewing nails, glass of wine beside her.

TYPING.

"I'm sorry your father is such a dickless wonder."

There comes a strange THUMPING NOISE. Subtle, but noticeable. Marjorie notices. Looks around the room.

INT. DAVEY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Davey hears the THUMPING. LOUDER now. He looks up. From the rooftop.

As he paces. The noise getting to him. His eyes lock back on the side of the bed.

INT. KARLY'S ROOM - NIGHT

THUMP. THUMP.

Karly climbs out of bed. Leans on her brace. Peers up at the ceiling with interest. THUMP.

THUMP.

She moves to the window to peek out..

EXT. WORK ROOM - NIGHT

Just outside the door. Marjorie approaches. Cautious. Silent. Listening. She doesn't hear the thumping. No, something else.

WHIMPERING. Muffled, but distinctive.

SHUFFLING approaches. Marjorie hurries away. The door opens. Mother exits.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Marjorie on the couch, acting casual. Mother ambles in. Marjorie turns to her, as if surprised to see her.

MARJORIE

Oh, hi, Mother.

MOTHER

I'm going to bed. So tired.

MARJORIE

Okay, have a good night sleep.

Mother climbs the stairs. So weary. Marjorie watches her go with concern.

INT. KITCHEN

THUMP. THUMP!

Mick darts back to the window, listening. Scanning the ceiling. He's incensed, waiting for this, for something to happen.

THUMP. THUMP. From above. On the roof.

Mick dashes out the door.

EXT. PORCH - NIGHT

Mick sprints into the yard, searching, at the ready.

EXT. YARD - NIGHT

Mick circles the house, searching. THERE! He spots it on the roof, a SHADOW of sorts, an animal.

Is it a dog? Coyote? Hard to tell what it is. Just the head, poking over the top, moving in and out, darting about.

Odd looking. Strange. Surreal. Misshapen head, elongated ears. Trick of the moonlight?

As Mick follows it around the perimeter.

Mick snatches up a well-placed AXE. Ready for whatever. Body tensing.

MICK

Come here, you little shit!

The shadowy animal suddenly LEAPS from the top roof, onto a lower section, then bounds into the grass.

Mick is there, not far behind, axe ready.

The animal pauses halfway through the yard, bathed in shadow, yet moonlight flashing from its eyes back at Mick. Taunting him. Unafraid.

Mick motions toward it, but pauses. Fear and uncertainty holding him at bay.

He threatens with the axe.

MICK (CONT'D)

Come get some of this, you little bastard.

The animal peers back. Fearless. With interest. Then finally, bored, it turns and lopes back through darkness.

INT. DAVEY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Davey can't take it anymore. He drops to the side of his bed. Shoves up the mattress. Yanks something out from beneath.

A PLASTIC BAGGY. Filled with something.

DRUGS.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Marjorie paces. Karly heads down the stairs. Mick marches in through the front door, face taut with determination.

He peers about the room.

MICK
Where's Mother?

MARJORIE
In bed. I just checked on her.

KARLY
She's been sleeping a lot lately.

MARJORIE
She's acting so strange.

Mick sets himself.

MICK
We're getting in that room. Right now.

Marjorie clenches her fist. YES. Karly sets herself for something bad.

MARJORIE
What about Davey?

KARLY
I'll get him.

EXT. DAVEY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Karly knocks. Hears a SCUFFLE inside. The door swings open in a HUFF.

KARLY

You okay?

Davey hides a guarded nervousness. He's still slightly HIGH.

DAVEY

Fine, what's up?

Karly searches his eyes. Can't tell whether or not he's high. Can't deal with this right now.

KARLY

We're breaking in.

Takes a moment for Davey to register it.

DAVEY

Aw, shit.

EXT. WORK ROOM - NIGHT

The siblings approach the door with a mixture of determination and jangled nerves.

Mick is psyching himself up. Motions like he's going to bash the door down.

KARLY

Relax yourself. I got this.

Karly reaches into her leg brace. Produces a thin piece of metal. She angles it into the first of three locks and starts to work it.

Davey is impressed. Marjorie and Mick register shock.

MARJORIE

You learned to do this, how?

KARLY

Always had the knack. Besides, I've had to get real good with my hands. Like so.

CLICK.

KARLY (CONT'D)

One down.

She goes to work on the second.

MICK

Sign of a misspent youth.

DAVEY
You're like friggin' Houdini.

CLICK. Second one down. Goes to work on the third.

KARLY
Been thinking about this a long
time.

MARJORIE
Remind me to hide the shit in my
bedroom better.

MICK
Second.

KARLY
Shhh.

CLICK. Third lock done. Karly turns the door handle.

OPENS THE DOOR.

As it swings open, the siblings peer within. Nervous. This is uncharted territory.

They enter.

INT. WORK ROOM - NIGHT

Darkness. Karly flicks on the light.

A small room filled with half-finished taxidermy on shelves and a small table. Many are covered in sheets, or half exposed.

On the far wall, another locked door.

Marjorie grimaces at the unfinished dead things.

MARJORIE
Gross.

Davey turns to Karly.

DAVEY
Is this what you remember?

KARLY
Yeah. Pretty much. Just, freaky.

They absorb the grotesquerie of the place.

DAVEY
Can we go now?

MICK
We gotta see the back room.

DAVEY
Why?

MARJORIE
Because we're already in here. K?
In for a penny and however that
stupid saying goes.

DAVEY
What's that even supposed to mean?

As Karly starts to pick that final door lock.

KARLY
It means quit talking and more
hurrying.

WHIMPERING. Soft, but more distinctive than before. Everyone
pauses.

MARJORIE
I know you heard that.

NODS.

MARJORIE (CONT'D)
I thought I heard something before.

KARLY
So did I.

Davey is ready to bolt for the front door. Away.

CLICK. Karly beats the lock. Turns the handle. Swings the
door inward. SLOWLY.

INT. WORK ROOM - INNER

A SMELL hits them first. Unpleasant. Wafting through the
darkness.

Karly searches for a light. Finds it. CLICK.

A new world illuminates. This room, even more bizarre than
the first. Dank. Dark. Filled with taxidermy in various
stages, but that is not all.

MARJORIE

Look at this?

Marjorie grabs something from a shelf. It's a STUFFED SQUIRREL, but on closer inspection, it's off. WAY OFF.

MICK

What the?

It is oddly malformed. Misshapen eyes. Extra arm protruding from it's abdomen. Elongated body. And some sort of odd growth protruding from its spine, through the skin.

DAVEY

Some kind of a squirrel-thing? Did she make that?

MICK

Or found it that way.

DAVEY

Come on.

WHIMPER.

Front and center is a table. On the table is something covered in a sheet dotted with blood stains.

Karly reaches for it.

DAVEY (CONT'D)

Oh my god. Don't...

Karly removes it. WHOA.

On the table is something that resembles a RACCOON, but it is disfigured. It is not possible to tell if the disfigurement is a result from birth, or from the grotesque surgical procedures that have been performed on it.

It is tied to a block and has received dozens of amputations and slices that have been stitched closed and tended to.

The siblings look upon this horrid animal with a collective GASP.

And then it MOVES. Its eyes open and its head swivels ever so slightly to them, and it WHIMPERS.

As if imploring. KILL ME.

MICK

Jesus, damn.

MARJORIE

The hell has she been doing in here?

Davey fights back his gag reflex. He almost pukes all over the floor.

Marjorie catches him.

MARJORIE (CONT'D)

Don't.

Davey holds it back.

Karly's face is impassive. Off her look - she isn't so much surprised, as enlightened.

KARLY

Let's get the hell out of here.

DAVEY

Should we kill that thing? Put it out of its misery?

MARJORIE

We can't. Mother'll know we were here.

DAVEY

Aw, hell. This is insane.

They cover the little monster with the bloody sheet. Slip out the way they came, locking the first door behind them.

As they pass through the second door, Marjorie doesn't notice that she bumps a shelf. A tiny STUFFED MOUSE staring into the room wobbles. Does a half spin. It's ready to fall.

As the door closes and locks, the stuffed mouse comes to rest.

Now staring at the door.

EXT. CHASM - NIGHT

In the dark, with flashlights.

DAVEY

What the hell are we supposed to do?

Stammering. Stunned. Mick rips his flask from his pocket. Takes a healthy swig.

MARJORIE
Gimmee some of that.

Marjorie snatches it away. Takes an even healthier swig.

Davey paces.

DAVEY
Jesus-Jesus. Jesus.

Karly takes the flask. Downs a gulp.

DAVEY (CONT'D)
Told you it wasn't her. There's no
way in hell...

KARLY
Davey. Stop! You're not helping.

Davey clenches his fist in protest, but shuts up. They gather closer.

MICK
Look. The big question is... how
long has she been doing this?

DAVEY
Torturing fucking animals?

After an awkward pause.

MICK
Yes!

MARJORIE
Since we were kids. Don't you
think?

Utter shock and dismay.

MARJORIE (CONT'D)
Think about it. After Dad died. She
just locked herself away in that
room. Like, all the time.

DAVEY
No way. This is a recent thing.

MICK
We would have noticed. It isn't
possible...

KARLY
Yes, it's entirely possible.

All eyes on Karly. Looking for some direction here. She motions to her legs.

KARLY (CONT'D)
The look in her eyes that day.

MEMORY FLASH

Young Karly standing at the edge of the chasm. Desperately afraid. Staring at...

MOTHER. Younger, psychotic rage in her eyes. Ready to bear down on her daughter. For an instant, that rage transforms to something else.

More like... HUNGER.

Young Karly sees it vividly.

BACK TO SCENE

Karly takes in a sharp breath.

KARLY
I've watched her ever since. She got even more controlling, and more withdrawn. Got new locks on her work room, went hiding in there more and more. Closed herself off from everyone. There's an urge inside of her. Something she needs to satisfy. I can see it.

DAVEY
Yeah, but, how do you know?

A short pause.

KARLY
Because sometimes I feel it, too.

Stunner. Everyone backing off.

DAVEY
Stop it.

KARLY
Just because you have an urge doesn't mean you have to follow it. You've seen it in her too, Davey. Admit it. It's why we're all here, isn't it?

Davey cowers back. Mick and Marjorie consider.

KARLY (CONT'D)

Maybe what you saw in her, made you think it wasn't her. Truth is, though, maybe it is her. There's just something coming out. Something she can't hide so much anymore.

Davey is shaking his head because he doesn't want to believe it. But he can't deny it.

MICK

Okay, so what do we do about this? We can't talk to her about it.

MARJORIE

Why not?

MICK

What, just casually bring it up? Hey, Mother. We just happened to notice you were torturing small animals in the room you protect with your life. What gives?

MARJORIE

It's wrong. We can't just pretend it isn't happening.

KARLY

I agree.

Davey finally asserts himself.

DAVEY

No. We don't say anything. I can't deal with this right now. I'm telling you, I can't handle it.

Karly and Marjorie exchange a look.

KARLY

Fine. But there's plenty of other weird shit we can ask her about. And I intend to.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

The family eating their formal dinner around the table, everyone stiff and uncomfortable.

Karly leads the way.

KARLY

A lot's changed around here, hasn't it, Mother?

MOTHER

How so?

Davey fidgets, uncomfortable.

KARLY

The animals, mostly. Have you noticed them?

MOTHER

Can't say that I have.

MARJORIE

A taxidermist who doesn't notice animals?

Mother raises a curious eyebrow.

KARLY

Strange things. Like some of them are sick.

MOTHER

Oh, well, I haven't noticed, as I said. I haven't been outside quite as much lately.

MARJORIE

Just locked in your work room.

A hush falls over the room as Mother's stern gaze rises to Marjorie, fixing on her.

MOTHER

My work room is my work.

KARLY

We know it is. You've reminded us of it since we were kids.

Davey is looking even more uncomfortable, as is everyone else. As Mother scans their faces.

MOTHER

Everyone needs a private place. I've always encouraged this. A place where you can relax. Be alone.

MICK

Why can't you relax around us,
Mother? I've always wondered.

MOTHER

I can relax around you. Stop with
this nonsense.

DAVEY

Mother's always relaxed, guys. Come
on. I think maybe you've been a
little more on edge lately, though,
Mother. You think?

Mother is growing more agitated.

MOTHER

I have not been agitated. Just
tired. Can we stop talking about my
work room?

MICK

You mean your safe zone? Hiding
spot from us?

MOTHER

This is getting ridiculous.

MICK

Is it?

Mother drops her napkin on the table. Rises.

MOTHER

We're not discussing this anymore.
Stay away from my work room. Do you
understand?

KARLY

Relax, Mother. We're just curious.

MOTHER

Tell me you understand! Speak.

Mick rises, hardening. Standing beside her.

MICK

We're not kids anymore, you know.
You can't just beat us with a belt
like you used to.

Mother's hand shoots to him. Grips his arm. Nails digging
into the skin.

MOTHER
Do not disrespect me.

Mick peers down at Mother's nails, digging in further and further.

MEMORY FLASH

Mother digging her nails into Young Mick's skin. Blood draws forth as Young Mick CRIES OUT in agony, trying to writhe away from her grip.

Mother is expressionless and cold.

BACK TO SCENE

Mick refuses to pull away.

MICK
You always did this to me. I still
have scars.

Yes, there are old scars there. Mother's fingernails digging further. Blood is drawn.

Mick finally grimaces in pain. Yanks his arm away. Only Mother doesn't let go.

Mick shakes her off harder. HARDER. Can't release the grip. Mother is STRONG. Off his look, how is she doing this?

KARLY
What are you going to do now,
Mother? Push him off a cliff?

MEMORY FLASH

Young Karly falling to the bottom of the ravine. Mother rushing to the edge, peering down after her, rage and shock in her eyes.

BACK TO SCENE

Mother releases Mick from her grip. Focuses on Karly. Her angry, controlling expression giving way.

MOTHER
You jumped off that cliff. I would
have never hurt you.

KARLY

Are you sure?

MOTHER

Oh, stop with the drama. Always with the drama.

KARLY

You should have seen the look in your eyes. You were going to kill me that day, weren't you? What is wrong with you?

Davey is hugely uncomfortable now. Mother is beyond agitated, eyes bouncing between her children.

Yet she calms herself. Takes back control. Changing the subject.

MOTHER

You were asking about the animals. Now that I think about it, I have seen some odd things.

Mick sits. All eyes on Mother.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

A few on the property, but mostly out in the woods. Especially near Black Bear.

KARLY

Black Bear Cave? You've been going out there?

MOTHER

Yes. It isn't very far. I still get my exercise hiking.

MARJORIE

We've been there over a hundred times as kids. I've never seen anything strange out there.

MICK

We've never seen anything strange here before either.

KARLY

Let's go out there. Tomorrow.

MOTHER

I'll go with you.

KARLY

You don't have to. If you're tired.

MOTHER

I want to. I'm tired of feeling down. I could use the pick-me-up.

Off Karly, uncertain. Mother looks straight at her, a wonderful snark in her expression.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

Don't worry. I won't try to kill you.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Morning. Mother and her children hike over wide trails. Mother moves slowly, stiffly. Karly is making her way fine enough with her crutches, but slowly.

She nudges her Mother.

KARLY

Aren't we a pair?

As they work their way further into the woods. Everyone uncomfortable and wary of Mother.

EXT. WOODS - LATER

The trail narrows. Harder to make their way. Moving single file. Karly is proving somewhat dexterous now with her crutches.

Marjorie and Davey concern themselves over Mother, but she isn't moving as slowly as before.

MOTHER

Leave me be. I'm not an old lady.

MARJORIE

We don't think you're old, Mother.

Moving onward.

Something up ahead. An animal. DEAD.

Mick at the lead. He stops, inspects it. A BIRD of some sort, a robin, but with a strange protrusion from the top of its head.

DAVEY

There's something further up.

Down the trail. A BODY. As they approach. Looks like a DEER, only the antlers are much too large for it. A fifth leg of sorts protrudes from its abdomen.

DAVEY (CONT'D)

How could it live like this?

MICK

It didn't.

Moving on.

MOTHER

The cave isn't far. Just up ahead.

Something SHUFFLES through the trees. Startling them. Another DEER. They get a solid view of this one.

It clearly has TWO HEADS, the second one a smaller, mutated version of the other.

MARJORIE

Holy whack job.

They can't help but stare at the oddity of the thing.

MOTHER

Beautiful, isn't it?

MARJORIE

Are you kidding?

MOTHER

Mother Nature is infinitely creative, wouldn't you say?

MARJORIE

Infinitely psycho.

Mother shakes her head. Looks ahead. She's perking up somehow.

MOTHER

Just about there.

Mother suddenly sprints forward. Clearly not ill at all, moving with the speed and dexterity of a woman half her age.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

Let's go, slow pokes!

The siblings exchange looks of concern. What is going on with her?

They follow.

EXT. BLACK BEAR CAVE - DAY

Near the cave entrance. Rocks dotting the valley-like opening. The cave mouth is agape, ominous, as if ready to swallow them all whole.

Surrounding the entrance are at least a dozen other dead, mutated animals in various states of decomposition.

Something feeds on one of the corpses. A coyote with no eyes and weirdly elongated legs. It lopes away as they approach.

Mother bounds ahead of them, toward the cave mouth. But stops half way there. As if mesmerized by it.

Staring stupidly within.

The others take note. With concern.

MARJORIE

Mother? You alright?

Mother offers no reply.

They approach, slowly, but the closer they get to the cave mouth, the more their faces contort with queasiness. Davey worst of all.

Really. Bad. Vibes.

Marjorie puffs on a cigarette. It makes her ill. She crushes it out. Gross.

MARJORIE (CONT'D)

I don't think we should go in there. Doesn't feel safe. At all.

MICK

I don't either.

Mick takes a slug from his flask. Doesn't help. Yuck. Puts it away.

KARLY

Agreed.

They turn back. Karly has to nudge Mother away. Reluctantly, she follows them.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

As they trudge back home in utter silence. Morose.

EXT. YARD - DAY

They return to something caught in the animal trap. It jumps and rustles. Mick alights, rushes to it. Gripping a pitchfork just in case.

It seems to excite Mick more than it should. Karly notices.

He bends down to inspect the thing through the cage.

It looks like some sort of small dog, though most of its fur is missing, revealing a pinkish flesh not unlike that of a pig.

Its most astonishing feature, however, is its human-like face. Smoothed snout, wide mouth, and sad, gaping eyes filled with wet tears.

DAVEY

My god...

Davey peers from behind Mick. His body shaking. Shocked and disgusted as much as, perhaps more than, the others.

DAVEY (CONT'D)

What the hell is that thing?

Mother simply cocks her head at it.

MOTHER

How... interesting.

MARJORIE

That is beyond disgusting.

Mick snaps a few photos with his phone.

Karly has nothing to add. Instead, she searches the tree line. Not even sure what she could be looking for.

She turns to Davey, who has begun to sweat and tremble.

KARLY

You okay?

DAVEY

Yeah. Not really. I just need to lie down a while. Feeling sorta queasy.

He scratches at his forearm. Karly watches him go.

MARJORIE

What do we do with that thing?

MICK

Damn. Just leave it.

INT. DAVEY'S ROOM - DAY

Davey inspects the rash on the inside of his forearm. It's spread. Notices another rash on his abdomen. He covers it up.

Collapses to the bed. Spent. His hands find his drug stash. Does the set up. Takes himself an injection.

Then another for good measure. He has the wherewithal to put it back into its hidey-hole before spilling back and falling into his high.

As the world goes away...

EXT. YARD - DAY

Mother heads inside. Karly, Mick and Marjorie huddle up.

MARJORIE

Maybe we need to get out of here.
Take Mother and go.

KARLY

She'll never leave. She's stubborn
as a mule.

MICK

We can force her. Get a doctor's
order.

KARLY

Yeah, right. With her? No way.

MARJORIE

I'm telling you, we should just
leave.

KARLY

I think we should go back.

MARJORIE

Where?

KARLY

The cave.

Mick quivers.

MARJORIE

You're out of your frickin' mind.
We just left there.

KARLY

There's something in there. Didn't
you feel it?

Mick quivers again. Marjorie does the same.

MARJORIE

Sick-to-my-stomach feeling.

Mick nods. Same.

KARLY

We need to see.

MICK

What I need is a drink. I'm going
to lie down in my room.

He heads off. Marjorie follows.

MARJORIE

Great idea.

Karly watches them go. Frustrated. She climbs the stairs.

INT. KARLY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Twilight. Sun going down. Karly paces in her room. Chewing on
the situation. Thinking about Mother.

Whips out her cell phone. Stabs some numbers. Waits for an
answer. It picks up.

CHICK (V.O.)

Todd's phone.

Bitchy voice. Karly's grip tightens on her cell.

KARLY

Where's Todd?

Karly notices bangin' MUSIC in the background.

CHICK (V.O.)
He's in the bathroom. And I'm the
one holding his phone right now.

KARLY
Denise?

CHICK (V.O.)
You know it.

Karly disconnects. Off her look, this girl could chew nails
and spit them out.

Out the window, she notices the porch light turn on. Hears
the door clack open.

Puts her phone away.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Karly works her way down the stairs. Toward the front door.
She pauses there, peeking out.

Mother stands on the porch, gazing quietly out into the yard.
Karly cocks her head. Contemplating her. What is she doing?

Karly readies to call to her, when Mother suddenly bounds
into the yard, half way into it. Then stops.

KARLY
The hell?

MARJORIE (O.S.)
She sleepwalking again?

Karly jumps! Mick and Marjorie are suddenly behind her.

MARJORIE (CONT'D)
Sorry.

KARLY
No idea.

Mother suddenly bolts again. To the animal trap. She yanks it
open, reaches inside. There's a small tousel.

Finally, she bolts into the woods, the warped animal tucked
into her bosom.

KARLY (CONT'D)
Get Davey.

EXT. YARD - NIGHT

Karly, Davey, Mick and Marjorie exit the house. Davey is sleepy from the drugs. They move to the edge of the yard, following Mother's trail.

Into the woods.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

They see her. Through the trees. Hidden behind thick bushes. They approach. So quiet. Odd sounds coming from Mother. What is she doing?

Peeking through the thick leaves.

To find...

Mother holding the mutated creature. Staring at it, like a baby. Caressing it's head.

MOTHER

Shhh. Shhh.

The tiny creature cowers in her hands. Fearful.

As Mother leans into it. So close.

And she TAKES A BITE into it's shoulder. Karly spots the thing's face, twisted with horror.

It SQUEALS!!!

Marjorie nearly vomits. Davey goes white, aghast. He may be finally broken this time.

They collectively slip away. Unnoticed.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Far enough away. Headed back to the house. Marjorie pauses to vomit.

MARJORIE

We're leaving.

KARLY

We have to go back to the cave.

MARJORIE

You saw what I saw. Holy fuck!

Karly turns to Mick.

KARLY

Well?

Mick can barely speak.

KARLY (CONT'D)

Don't make me do this alone.

MICK

Stop pulling that one.

Davey is starting to seriously lose it.

DAVEY

This is crazy, Karly. How can anyone handle this?

Karly grips him. Pulls him close.

KARLY

Hold it together. We need to figure this out. Go back to the cave.

MOTHER (V.O.)

Cave?

The air is sucked from everyone. All turn to Mother, who is suddenly there. Watching them.

MARJORIE

What are you doing out here, Mother?

Mother wipes the corner of her mouth with her sleeve.

MOTHER

Having a little "me" time. Nothing wrong with that, is there? At least I'm out of my work room. No room to complain.

No one can muster a reply. All of them so afraid, so freaked.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

Were you thinking of going back to Black Bear? I think that's a wonderful idea.

KARLY

There's something there. Inside, isn't there? That wasn't before?

Mother's lips crack a mischievous grin. So unlike her.

MOTHER

There is.

Karly surveys the others.

KARLY

We'd like to see it. Is that alright?

MOTHER

Of course! It won't bite you.

MARJORIE

Are you sure?

Mother chuckles. Follow me.

EXT. BLACK BEAR CAVE - NIGHT

Getting darker now. Mother leads them all to the cave mouth. Past all the bizarre corpses.

Like before, they grow more and more queasy as they approach. Except for Mother. Her face has taken on a sort of reverence.

MOTHER

Come on in. The water's warm.

INT. BLACK BEAR CAVE - NIGHT

Swallowed up in dark. With only a patch of moonlight. Yet not far in, something faintly GLOWS.

Mother alights. The others, on their faces, the grimaces of sickness. Of all of them, Davey looks the worst. Ashen face, combo of this and all the drugs.

MARJORIE

The hell is that?

MOTHER

Come on.

She leads them inward. To the OBJECT.

It is a SHARD of quartz-like material, jagged, the shape of an elongated football. Size of a small boulder. Bluish-green in color. Faintly glowing.

Rocks all around it. Karly's gaze goes to the ceiling, where a small hole allows a modicum of moonlight in.

KARLY

It came from the sky.

She cringes. Clutches her stomach. Getting to her.

MICK

You found this before?

Mother moves in closer to it.

MOTHER

I did. On one of my walks. The sun was making me sick, so I came into the cave for shade. It was horrible.

She reaches her hand to the Shard. Touches it. With reverence.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

I felt so much better in here. And I found this. So interesting, isn't it?

MICK

Don't touch it!

MOTHER

It's harmless.

MARJORIE

Leaking something all over the place.

Karly looks more closely. She's right. A pale liquid continuously oozes from the base into a small runoff of water, being carried out of the cave.

She follows the liquid.

EXT. BLACK BEAR CAVE - NIGHT

The liquid continues to run and leads to a small stream. And is carried away.

Her siblings join her.

KARLY

It's poisoning everything around here.

MARJORIE
What the hell is it?

KARLY
I have no idea.

Mother follows them out.

MOTHER
I wanted to take it home, but I
couldn't move it.

Exchanges of concern, horror.

MOTHER (CONT'D)
Lucky I found the other one.

KARLY
Other one?

MOTHER
Yes. Smaller one. Much easier to
carry.

KARLY
Where is it?

MOTHER
Back at the house. In my work room.

Off the expressions of the siblings.

FUCK!

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Getting darker. Hurrying home.

MOTHER
Why are we going so fast? We're
finally having some enjoyable
family time.

She is practically skipping. Easily moving more quickly and
nimble than the others. Agile. Energetic.

This isn't normal.

MOTHER (CONT'D)
Davey, how are you? Are you feeling
better?

Davey picks up his step. Hurrying away from her.

DAVEY

Fine, Mother.

MOTHER

Don't look so glum. Karly, how's your leg doing?

KARLY

It's fine. Let's just get back to the house.

Mother pouts.

MOTHER

Always such a morose group.

Mick and Marjorie pass the flask back and forth between them.

As they near the house, they come across something else. Even more disturbing. Another animal.

This one ambles toward them through the trees, toward the path. It's the shape of a thick-legged deer, though its belly is distended. A pair of appendages have begun to sprout from the front of its chest.

Most grotesque, however, is the face, which looks more human than animal. Its lips twisted into a foul grimace. Opening, as if to speak.

MOAN! A human-like sound. Suffering.

All of them cringe, save for Mother, who cocks her head with interest.

Marjorie SHRIEKS! Mick staggers to a tree to hold himself up. Karly's hand flies to her mouth.

It's Davey, though, affected the most deeply. His entire body begins to quiver and tremble. His hands clasp over his ears as the beast once again MOANS with an eerily human-like sound, and he falls to his knees, something inside of him finally SHATTERING.

EXT. YARD - NIGHT

Mother and the siblings reach the yard. Mick notes the empty animal trap with disgust.

They head to the porch.

EXT. PORCH - NIGHT

Gathering near the door.

MOTHER
How about a late dinner?

Marjorie, horrified.

MARJORIE
How could you be hungry?

Off Mother's quizzical look. Karly kicks Marjorie's foot.

MARJORIE (CONT'D)
I mean, good idea. I'm famished.

Mother heads inside to cook. Davey is looking horrible.

DAVEY
I have to go upstairs.

Karly blocks him. Inspecting his eyes. Her concern is deep and obvious.

KARLY
Will you make it to dinner?

With a half-hearted nod.

DAVEY
Yeah. Dinner.

KARLY
This ends tonight.

He brushes past her. Karly goes after him.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Davey hurries up the stairs. Karly follows, slowed by her crutches.

Mother calls to her from the kitchen.

MOTHER
Karly? Can you help me with these
steaks?

Karly pauses. Wants to help Davey. Yet... it's Mother.

KARLY
I'll be right there.

Reluctantly, she makes her choice and heads to the kitchen.

INT. DAVEY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Davey goes right for his drug stash. Sets it all up. Rubber band around the arm. Tapping for the vein.

Injects himself with his heinous concoction. Eyes going slack.

On his forearm - the red rash there has spread further.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Karly thawing steaks in the microwave.

KARLY

This is seriously disrespecting steaks, Mother.

MOTHER

I know. But I had a sudden urge for steak tonight.

Karly side glances her. YUCK.

INT. DAVEY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Davey. Drugs working their way in. So good. He injects himself again.

KILLING THE PAIN.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

With the steaks spread out on plates. Raw. Mother preps a grill pan.

Karly sprinkles salt and pepper onto the steaks. Mother snatches one from the plate. Brings it to her nose. Takes a DEEP WHIFF of it.

MOTHER

Mmmm. I've been so hungry today. So strange.

KARLY

Do you mind if we cook it first?

MOTHER
Don't be silly.

Mother sets it back. As she does, her sweater sleeve slides up. Karly notices a red rash peeking from beneath.

KARLY
What is that?

MOTHER
It's nothing.

INT. DAVEY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Davey slumps on the bed. Face and eyes slack. Yet still enough juice in him to take one more injection.

He raises the needle. Plunges it into his flesh. Presses it down. As the drugs enter his veins. Davey's eyes deaden. The world is going away.

FINALLY.

He almost gets it all in, all the drugs. He falls back on the bed. Needle dangling from his arm.

Life bleeds away from Davey. What he wanted all along.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Karly finishes sizzling up the steaks. Her eyes continuously draw away, toward the stairs.

She doesn't like this. She knows she should be up with Davey.

Her eyes wander back to Mother's red rash. Curious.

INT. DAVEY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Life slipping away from Davey in the mundanity of this room. Breathing stops. And just like that...

DAVEY IS DEAD.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Everyone at the dining table. With steaks. Except for Davey. Tension is thick and dark.

MOTHER
Where's Davey?

KARLY
He said he'd be down.

Impatient. Mother doesn't look happy.

MICK
It isn't six o'clock. Maybe give
him a minute?

True. A caveat.

MOTHER
Fine. But the steaks are getting
cold.

KARLY
What about the cave, Mother? The
thing you found? The one you
brought home?

Mother grows slightly flustered. Staring at her steak.
Wanting to consume it.

MOTHER
It's in my work room.

The siblings exchange looks. Did you see it? Did you see it?
No!

KARLY
Could we see it?

MOTHER
Right now?

MARJORIE
The other one, it was so beautiful.
We're just curious about it.

This registers with her. Fine.

MOTHER
I'll be right back. Don't let
dinner get cold. Where is Davey?

Muttering as she wanders away.

INT. WORK ROOM - NIGHT

Mother enters. Swivels the door shut quietly behind her. Takes a deep breath of the room. This is her place. Her sanctuary.

She enters the second room.

INT. WORK ROOM - INNER

Mother works her way through. She glances at the covered animal on the table as she retrieves an object from the shelf.

It is covered with a cloth. She removes the cloth to reveal a small version of the shard, about the size of a hand grenade.

It glows in her hand. Pulsating. She quivers at the touch.

As she works her way back, she glances again at the animal covered on the table. The blood seeping through the veil.

Does she notice something?

She moves on.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

The siblings. WHISPERING. Frantic.

MARJORIE

What's that thing doing to her?

KARLY

I have no idea.

MICK

We don't even know what that thing is?

KARLY

Whatever the other one did to the animals, it's doing it to her.

MARJORIE

Holy shit balls.

MICK

We need to get her out of here. We're taking her whether she likes it or not.

MARJORIE
I'm thinking "not".

INT. WORK ROOM - NIGHT

Mother heads for the door. Disturbed. Something's got her spooked.

On her back, through her sweater, something FLUTTERS. Beneath. Unnatural. It seems to pain her a moment, until she shakes it off.

Reaches for the door handle. Then notices...

The stuffed mouse. OUT OF PLACE.

She knows it. Instantly. And her RAGE is released.

EXT. WORK ROOM - NIGHT

Mother marching down the hall. Something RIPPLING on her back through her clothing. Worse now.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Mother marches in to the surprise of her children. Gripping the shard in her fist.

She motions to SCREAM at them, but stops herself. Mother is a woman of control, after all. Speaks with a caged fury.

MOTHER
Who. Invaded. My. Work. Room?

Dumb looks on the siblings' faces. OH SHIT.

MOTHER (CONT'D)
I said! Who was in my work room?
You? You?

Directed from Marjorie to Mick. Then to Karly.

MOTHER (CONT'D)
I know it wasn't you. You know better.

No one is saying anything. A realization washes over Mother's expression. With horror.

MOTHER (CONT'D)
What did you see in there?

Gripping the shard. Her back RIPPLING. The children notice it. What the hell?

Mother snatches her plate from the table. Slams it against the wall. Steak flies.

Marjorie is up.

MARJORIE

Mother, we need to get you out of here. Now!

KARLY

That thing is doing something to you!

Mother stops. Contemplates the shard in her hand. Stretches her neck. She begins to change slightly. Her eyes stretch, become more animal-like. A bit of blood oozes from her gums.

Mick is freaking.

MOTHER

I will not repeat myself. What did you see in my work room?

Mick and Marjorie cower back.

MICK

Mother, please.

It's Karly who won't back down.

KARLY

You want to know what we saw in there? We saw everything, Mother. We saw what a sick and twisted person you are.

Mother's expression warps with horror. Karly presses.

KARLY (CONT'D)

How long? Since we were kids? Is it the blood that excites you? The tiny little screams?

MOTHER

Stop!

KARLY

Do you make it last? Savor every little whimper?

MARJORIE

Karly, please...

Mother is shaking. Pulling back.

KARLY

Davey saw it. He knew something was happening to you.

This hits Mother. Hard. Karly presses.

KARLY (CONT'D)

You're the reason he tried to kill himself. Not me.

Off Mother. Her attention shifting. Losing her control...

MOTHER

Davey. I need to see my baby boy.

Mother pushes past them. Marjorie calls to Mick.

MARJORIE

Stop her!

Mick forces his way in front of her. Gripping her shoulders. Mother shoves him aside with ease with superhuman strength. Hurrying up the stairs.

They rush after her.

INT. DAVEY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Mother slams open the door. Her kids behind her. They discover Davey there. DEAD. On the bed.

They take in the gravity of the scene. Reality shifts. Trying to get their footing.

They never will.

KARLY

Davey...

MOTHER

Don't say his name!

Mother's back ripples as she goes to Davey. Beneath her clothing. So much more noticeable now. Odd hairs poke through.

She rips off her outer sweater, revealing a deep red rash that has pocked her arms. Much worse than Davey's rash.

To the horror of her children.

MARJORIE
What's happening to you?

Desperate. Imploring.

Mother cradles her dead son there. Weeping. Gripping him close. No one can move.

Mother lets out a MOAN. It's animalistic. Bestial. This snaps them out of their shock.

Mick stumbles backward. Grips Marjorie's shoulder. Pulling her back.

MICK
We need to get the hell out of here.

Mother's eyes turn to them. Rage in them. Marjorie shoves back toward the door as Mother rises.

MICK (CONT'D)
Now!

Karly stands her ground.

KARLY
Mother? What are you doing?

Karly tries to stand strong as Mother approaches, but can't help but waver. Mother's body heaving. Fearsome.

At that moment, Karly notices the same RED RASH on her own wrist. What is this?

Mick and Marjorie hurry through the door.

MARJORIE
Karly, run!

KARLY
Mother...

Mother swipes her arm once at Karly and everything goes dark.

FADE TO BLACK

FADE IN

Dark. Dank. Light slowly bleeds in.

INT. CELLAR - NIGHT

Karly opens her eyes. She's lying on the concrete floor. Barely able to see. Her face is all scratched up. Bloody.

Around her. Wooden shelves with glass jars filled with pickled vegetables. A root cellar. She stirs. Head throbbing.

BANGING. What the?

Mick emerges from the darkened stairwell.

MICK

She locked us in. I can't break that door.

Marjorie stirs from the floor. A long gash trails from her forehead to her chin. Blood seeping.

MARJORIE

Worse than a hangover.

MICK

Did you hear me? We're locked in.

MARJORIE

Yeah, yeah. Smells like the root cellar. I hate this place.

KARLY

At least she didn't kill us.

MICK

I thought she was going to. You don't look so good.

Karly touches her face. Blood. Notices again the red rash on her wrist.

KARLY

I don't feel so good. Where's my crutch?

MARJORIE

Here.

Marjorie hands it to her. Karly rises, works her way toward the stairs. Produces her makeshift lock pick.

MICK

Isn't going to work. Door's barred from the outside.

KARLY
Worth a try.

She climbs the stairs. At the door. Moonlight peeking through.

She works the piece through the doorjamb. Jimmying. Something is moving. But not enough. Getting nowhere.

From down in the cellar...

MARJORIE (O.S.)
What the hell is this?

Commotion. Marjorie stumbling.

MARJORIE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Oh my god!

MICK
What is it?

Karly hurries down the stairs. Marjorie has fallen to the floor, staring into the abyss of the back wall.

She scrambles away from it.

KARLY
What's back there?

Mick approaches the back with caution.

KARLY (CONT'D)
Marjorie?

Karly roots around the shelves in the dark. Comes up with something. A MATCH alights. Karly lights a kerosene lantern.

The room brightens. She follows Mick with it.

Against the back wall. A FIGURE. Standing. Covered in a sheet. It looks like a person.

MARJORIE
What is that?

Mick reaches for the sheet. Yanks it off. OH NO!

It's a YOUNG WOMAN. She's been STUFFED and MOUNTED. Her skin is leathery, her face eyeless. There are mutations, with odd growths protruding from her cheeks and arms.

Grotesque beyond grotesque.

Mick grows ill. Staggers back. Karly approaches with the lantern. Fascinated.

KARLY
It's that girl. From the bar. Tara Brown.

MARJORIE
Holy fuck me.

KARLY
Now we know what happened to her.

MICK
Yeah. Our psychotic Mother happened to her.

Off Karly's expression. A realization.

KARLY
Oh my god.

MICK
What?

KARLY
Davey.

The horror of it. Marjorie breaks down in tears. Mick is aghast.

MICK
Look around. Gotta be something to get the door open.

SHUFFLING. Outside.

Karly climbs the stairs. Ear to the door. LISTENING.

KARLY
Mother?

The door CREAKS.

KARLY (CONT'D)
What are you going to do with Davey?

EXT. CELLAR - NIGHT

Dark. The doorway opening to the yard. Mother leaning against it on the other side.

INT. CELLAR - NIGHT

Karly listens.

MOTHER (O.S.)

I'm going to preserve him. Stuff him. He'll be with me forever.

Her voice is now gravelly.

KARLY

You realize how wrong that is, don't you? That thing is rotting your brain.

MOTHER (O.S.)

No. I had the idea long before. It was only a matter of time before Davey killed himself. You know it. Such a fragile soul.

KARLY

Like the girl? You killed her.

MOTHER (O.S.)

No. I found her dead in the cave. She was a test. I'd never mounted a person before. It was... rather easy.

Marjorie, breaking down.

MARJORIE

You're sick! You can't do that to Davey!

KARLY

What about us, Mother? Are you going to stuff us, too?

After a pause.

MOTHER (O.S.)

Yes.

Marjorie CRIES OUT. Karly leans into the door.

KARLY

Mother. Tell me. It isn't just that thing, is it? You've always been this way. So many secrets hidden behind all the doors. Sick in the mind.

Mother sighs.

MOTHER (O.S.)
 You tell me. You're the one most
 like me. Cold. Closed off.
 Something dead inside you.

KARLY
 I am nothing like you.

MOTHER (O.S.)
 Oh yes, you are.

Karly can't completely deny it.

Mick is still frantically searching for something to bash the door out. Crashing jars all over the ground.

MICK
 Mother! Just let us out of here!

MARJORIE
 This is ridiculous! We're your
 children! You have to let us go!

CLICK. CLACK.

The cellar door opens. Mother is there, gripping the glowing shard. Her mutations have worsened. Her skin sprouts patches of long, coarse hairs. Her teeth elongated. Her face flecked with growths.

MOTHER
 Or maybe you'll just kill
 yourselves.

She tosses the shard into the cellar and slams the door closed.

INT. CELLAR - NIGHT

CLICK. LOCK!

The siblings scatter away from the shard like it might explode.

MARJORIE
 Get that thing away!

Karly eyeballs it.

MICK
 Fuck! There's nothing here!

KARLY
Gimmee your shirt.

MICK
What?

KARLY
Shirt. Now.

Mick peels off his outer shirt. Hands it to her. Karly wraps it around her fist and reaches for the shard.

MARJORIE
You can't touch that thing! Look
what it did to her?

Karly regards the red rash on her wrist.

KARLY
I think it's already doing it. We
gotta get out of here.

MICK
You're insane.

KARLY
Apparently so.

She grips it. Grows instantly queasy. Ready to vomit, but holds herself together.

She carries the shard to the cellar door. Starts to bash the rusted hinges with it.

MICK
That's gonna take forever.

KARLY
You wanna do it?

Mick backs off. Shaking his head.

With each strike, the intensity of the shard's glow increases.

Several blows. Karly starting to sweat. The glow increasing. Her eyes are drawn to it more and more.

She slows. Staring at the shard with intensity.

MARJORIE
Karly!

Karly snaps out of it. DAMN. Shaking it off. Resumes bashing the hinge.

With more and more force. Fierceness. RAGE.

KARLY
Come on. Come on! COME ON!!

CLANK. The rusted hinge snaps off. YES!

KARLY (CONT'D)
Help me.

Together they push upward. Backs into it. Shoving the door up and out.

EXT. CELLAR - NIGHT

They climb out of the cellar. Into the yard. Breathless. Searching.

Mother is nowhere to be found.

MARJORIE
You gonna drop that thing?

On Karly. Death grip on the shard. Considers. Doesn't want to let it go.

MARJORIE (CONT'D)
That addictive?

KARLY
Yeah. I think it is.

MICK
We need to go.

MARJORIE
Where's the car keys?

MICK
In the house.

MARJORIE
No way I'm going in there.

Mick makes a realization. He sprints toward the woods.

MARJORIE (CONT'D)
Where are you going? Shit.

Marjorie hurries after, with Karly moving as fast as she can.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Mother drags Davey's body through. Toward her work room.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Karly's phone sits on the table, with the cold, uneaten steaks. It RINGS. Lights up.

It's TODD.

It stops. Rings again.

Mother pauses, looks at the phone. Notices something. Drops Davey. She spots the siblings sprinting through the yard.

SNARL!

EXT. PORCH - NIGHT

Mother bashes through the door. Giving chase.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Karly falling behind. Marjorie isn't waiting. Mick is way ahead.

Karly trips. Falls. Still gripping the shard. The glowing intensifies. Climbs to her feet. Looks back.

Mother! Rushing toward her! Karly double times it.

INT. HUNTING STAND - NIGHT

Mick yanks the gun from the storage locker. Loads it.

EXT. CHASM - NIGHT

Karly breaks through the clearing. Hears Mother's footfalls behind her. She moves to the chasm edge. So far down. Just like when she was a child.

Mother breaks through. Panting. Bestial.

FLASHBACK

Young Karly standing in this very place. On Mother, raging. Ready to kill her.

Mother takes a step toward Karly. Defiant, Young Karly steps back. Into the chasm.

Falling...

BACK TO SCENE

Marjorie rushes through the clearing. Screaming at Mother.

MARJORIE
Leave her alone!

Mother's hand snatches up. Like lightning. Grips Marjorie by the throat. Shoves her to her knees. Holding her easily.

Karly, gripping the shard. Back to the chasm. Facing Mother. Locks eyes with Marjorie. Still breathing. For now.

Then, to Mother.

KARLY
Here we are again.

Off Mother's raging intensity.

KARLY (CONT'D)
Why don't you let her go?

MOTHER
Going to jump again?

KARLY
Not this time.

Mick steps through, rifle pointed at Mother. Gives her a wide berth as he circles her.

MICK
Let her go, Mother! Don't make me do this!

Mother's grip tightens. Marjorie is choking out.

KARLY
Drop the gun. Just let her go, Mother.

MICK
Mother!

He's so torn. Can he even do this?

KARLY

I said drop the gun! This is
between me and her now.

Reluctantly, Mick lowers the gun. Frantic. Mother tosses
Marjorie aside. Marjorie gasps to breathe.

To Mick-

KARLY (CONT'D)

Get her out of here.

MICK

I'm not going to...

KARLY

Now! I need a word. Alone.

Mick pulls Marjorie to her feet. Together they limp out
through the clearing.

Leaving Karly alone with Mother.

MOTHER

You were supposed to help him.

KARLY

Davey was broken inside. Because of
you. I'm sorry he didn't have the
strength to leave you. I guess this
was the only way he could.

Mother's nostrils flare. Her eyes lock onto the shard.

MOTHER

You really are like me now. Aren't
you? Always have been. That
darkness inside of you.

KARLY

Maybe. But I never let it take me.

Mother chuckles.

MOTHER

Just wait. One day you won't have a
choice.

KARLY

Yes, I will.

Karly tosses the shard into the chasm behind her. Mother's
eyes follow it with longing.

KARLY (CONT'D)

You wanna kill me. I know. Just like when I was a little girl.

MOTHER

I didn't want to kill you!

KARLY

Liar! You have the same look in your eye. Why don't you just do it? Kill me, Mother! Like one of your helpless animals! Get it over with! I'm not jumping anywhere this time!

Mother's rage building to a climax. Flaring! Panting! Yet within her, CONFLICT.

She drops to her knees.

MOTHER

I didn't want to be this way, Karly. Living with this...monster inside of me. This ridiculous hunger. After your father died...

Mother shakes violently, as if fighting herself.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

I just, couldn't hold it back any more.

Mother's expression shifts. Glaring at Karly. Hungry. A losing battle, it seems, to the monster side.

On her face, becoming even more beast-like.

Karly sees it.

KARLY

Go on. Prove to everyone what you really are!

MOTHER RUSHES HER!

Karly closes her eyes. Awaiting the inevitable. For a brief moment, in Mother's eyes. The rage transforming. To something else. Grief? Fear?

Regret?

Mother LEAPS! But instead of crashing into Karly, she leaps over her head. Unable to kill her daughter.

Falling. Headlong into the chasm.

Karly drops to her knees. Watches as Mother crashes into the rocks below.

DEAD.

Karly finally weeps.

Something CLAPS the ground beside her. A tiny pebble, glowing blue-green, like the shard.

She peers up to the sky. Among the stars. BRIGHT LIGHTS approaching. En masse. Squinting. What is it?

METEOR SHOWER.

As the sky turns blood red.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Karly walking back toward the house. Catching up to Mick and Marjorie. As glowing shards fall around them.

EXT. YARD - NIGHT

Karly, Mick and Marjorie emerge from the woods. The yard is dotted with GLOWING SHARDS that have impacted the ground.

MARJORIE

They're everywhere. The whole sky is lit up.

MICK

Jesus, it's like an invasion.

Karly regards her hand, the one that was gripping the shard. Odd growths there, distorted skin.

Mick looks into the sky with a deep and foreboding fear. On his forehead, a blood red rash has formed.

MICK (CONT'D)

What does this mean?

From the house. Karly's phone RINGS. She starts for it.

KARLY

It means the monsters are coming.
Only the monsters are us.

Karly regards her crutch. Tosses it away. She doesn't need it anymore.

On her expression. Going dark, very much like Mother.

Mick, stunned, watches her go. Marjorie slips away from him. Her eyes drawn inexorably toward one of the shards in the ground.

She plucks one from the earth. Gripping it. Relishing it. The tell-tale red rash actively forming on her fingers and hand.

To Mick's great horror.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

On Karly's phone. TODD. Karly answers.

TODD (V.O.)

Boo, I'm so sorry. The other night,
nothing happened. I swear...

KARLY

It's okay, Bae. I'm coming home
now. I have a gift for you.

On Karly's face. A cruel grin forms there. So much like her Mother.

She raises her hand. In her fist, a GLOWING SHARD.

FADE OUT