

THE NIGHT HOUSE

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. RURAL LANDSCAPE - SUNSET

Trees and fields. A lovely, haunting emptiness. Wind blows through the tall grass.

AN OLD WOODEN FENCE

Frames a house.

EXT. HOUSE - SUNSET

A stoic building of Welsh design. The front is nondescript, asymmetrical, but

THE BACK OF THE HOUSE

Sports an odd, ornate flourish: a large picture window on the second floor.

Beyond the house lies

A LAKE

The still water reflects the setting sun.

INT. HOUSE - SUNSET

The interior is unique, odd angles, rounded walls. But it isn't off-putting. It's cozy.

The decor helps. There's clutter here and there. An inviting, lived-in warmth.

But there's nobody home.

INT. HOME OFFICE - SUNSET

Blueprints and books.

INT. BEDROOM - SUNSET

A massive king-sized bed. Dresses in the open closet, hanging next to shirts and ties.

INT. BATHROOM - SUNSET

This is the room with the distinct window we saw from outside. It's positioned directly across from

THE MIRROR

The exact same shape and size.

The window looks out over the lake and to the woods beyond.

On the counter sit toiletries for a man and a woman. We linger on his things. Shaving cream, a razor, a stick of deodorant.

*He'll never use them again.*

INT. LIVING ROOM - SUNSET

Framed photographs. A couple in various stages of their life together.

THROUGH THE FRONT WINDOW

We see a car pull up. Two WOMEN step out, both dressed in black.

Footsteps. Muffled weeping from the porch. The women are in somber discussion. We can't quite make out the words. We're stuck staring at

THE MAN IN THE PHOTOGRAPHS

His handsome, unmoving face. His piercing eyes. This is OWEN.

He is dead.

Talk continues outside, a little louder.

WOMAN (O.S.)

Are you sure you'll be alright?

BETH (O.S.)

I'm fine.

WOMAN (O.S.)

I fly back to Detroit tonight. I'll get in late, but call me if you need to, any time.

BETH (O  
I'll be okay.

WOMAN (O.S.)  
I know you will. Take care,  
sweetheart.

And the front door opens. In walks BETH: the woman from the photographs, in funerary attire, a simple black dress. There's a foil-covered casserole dish under one arm. Leftovers forced upon her. She's not crying now but it's clear she has been.

She waves to the woman on the porch. A friend, a relative. It doesn't matter. Beth watches her climb back into her car and drive away.

And now she is alone in the empty house. She stands there a moment, not sure what to do with herself.

She heads to the kitchen and dumps the entire casserole dish into the trash.

THE PHOTOGRAPHS OF OWEN

Seem to watch her.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Crickets, loud as hell. Frogs too. It's dark out here. No streetlights. No street. Just a winding gravel driveway. A single lit window. The kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Beth sits at the table, dressed for bed, a glass of wine in one hand, a folded letter in the other. She's looking at it, trying to make sense of it.

AN OPEN ENVELOPE

Sits nearby. Her name, "**Beth**", handwritten on the front. A smear on the corner.

A rust-red smear of blood.

She folds the letter and slips it back into the envelope. Downs the last of the wine in her glass and glances at

THE BOTTLE

On the table. Empty. That won't do. She stands.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

The same shot, the same night sounds.

The kitchen light goes out. The title comes up:

THE NIGHT HOUSE

INT. OWEN'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Beth steps inside, hesitant, almost reverent. She takes a deep breath. *This place smells like him.*

But she's only here for the booze. There's

A BOX

In the corner, red and green bow on the top, a present from last Christmas.

She pulls back the cardboard flap. Brandy imported from some distant country. The box once held a dozen bottles. There are seven left.

Six after she takes one.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

Beth sits in the glow of the television, a stack of old VHS tapes on the table. **"Christmas '09"** **"Badlands Ntnl Park"** One is just labeled **"X"**

Next to the videos sits a now half empty bottle of brandy.

The casserole dish is beside her on the sofa, rescued from the garbage can. She picks at it periodically with a fork.

ON TV

She's dancing with Owen. Their wedding day.

We catch a verse from their wedding song. Something romantic but also a bit melancholy. ("Goodbye, Yellow Brick Road" by Elton John or "Calvary Cross" by Richard and Linda Thompson).

They put their heads together. They gaze into each others eyes. A hungry look. Passionate. It's enough to make

BETH

Shift uncomfortably on the sofa. A voyeur to her younger self.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Beth's sprawled out on the bed, hand beneath the sheet. Half asleep but breathing heavily, working towards release.

The curtains billow. The windows are open.

THE WIND CHIMES

Clang softly outside.

Beth rolls over onto her stomach but keeps her hand between her legs. Her hips have just begun to move when-

BANG BANG BANG BANG

Someone's POUNDING on the door downstairs!

Beth sits up, fully awake. She looks down at herself, slightly confused. *What was I doing?*

She doesn't remember. Doesn't even know what woke her so suddenly. Until it happens again.

BANG BANG BANG

She freezes. Looks around the room. *Oh shit! Oh fuck! Is this really happening?*

She grabs her cell phone from the bedside table. It's still plugged into the wall to charge.

YANK! The cord goes taut as she hustles forward, jerking the phone out of her hand, sending it clattering to the floor.

She stoops to grab it on her way out.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

She moves through the shadows, down the stairs, trying to stay as quiet as she can.

BANG BANG BANG. Again.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Beth arrives downstairs. Warily, she looks at the front door. The porch light is on, giving the foyer an eerie glow.

At least the banging has stopped. She hits the lights and hesitates a beat, waiting for the banging to return.

It doesn't. So she creeps forward. Peers out.

Nobody there.

She stands, uncertain. The room

BEHIND HER

Is out of focus, a blur of cream colored curtains and wallpaper. But wait. There's SOMEONE there! Out of focus as well but unmistakable, a smudge of black in the shape of a man.

And it moves. Turns its head to look at her!

Beth senses that she's being watched. She spins, alarmed.

The room behind her snaps into focus. ...The shape wasn't a man at all. Just the darkness outside the window, the negative space created by the looping way the curtains are hung.

Out of focus, it took on the basic outline of a person, that's all. But then... *How did it move?*

Beth double checks the locks and hustles back upstairs.

CUT TO:

INT. OWEN'S OFFICE - MORNING

Beth is asleep on the floor, curled up in a quilt. Sunlight offers a better look at the room. Diagrams of buildings and floor plans are pinned to the walls surrounding an impressive desk.

She opens her eyes, looks around, initially confused by her surroundings. *Did I fall asleep here?*

## PHOTOGRAPHS

Line the walls. They're on the desk. The shelves. Photos of her... but also of Owen.

An army of Owens surrounding her. Staring down at her.

She looks at her phone and sees that she has a missed call, but before she can do anything she notices the time: 7:17.

She groans.

## INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Beth pours fresh coffee into a big thermos mug, grabs her bag and heads for the door, dressed for work. She steps out onto

## THE PORCH

And stops. This is where she heard the banging last night, unless that was just some vivid dream. She looks for anything out of the ordinary. Sure enough, there are

## FOOTPRINTS

Mud tracked all over. Messy and indistinct but yes, those are bare male footprints.

She follows their progress across the porch with her eyes, leading from the door to the window next to it, then around the porch and back down.

## BETH

Pauses to take this in. Then follows the footprints down the porch steps and into the

## GRASS

Where they become less evident, harder to see. But she continues walking the straight line suggested by the path of the prints directly toward

## THE LAKE

As she gets closer to the water, the ground becomes softer and footsteps are once again visible. Their path has not altered. A straight line from the porch to the lake.

And from here she can see that

## THE FOOTPRINTS

Stop at the edge of the water. Suggesting that whoever made them should either still be standing there or they continued walking into the lake itself...

## BETH

Chews her finger, contemplating the meaning of this. It makes no sense, but there clearly was someone at her house last night...

We hold on her. The sounds of insects and birds fill the morning air. And then, one loud

## CRACK

Echoes across the lake. A GUNSHOT!

Startled, Beth looks around. A group of equally startled birds takes flight from a nearby tree. They heard it too.

She takes one more wary look at the footprints in the mud and hurries toward her car.

## EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

The parking lot is mostly empty. The sign out front reads: HAVE A GREAT SUMMER!

Paper streamers hang from the trees. The school colors: black and a bright, angry red. Countless plastic forks are jutting from the lawn. There's spray paint on the concrete out front. **"CLASS OF 2020!"**

Beth's car pulls into a spot and she hurries inside.

## INT. HIGH SCHOOL - CONTINUOUS

The hallways are large and eerily empty. No hustle and bustle. The kids are gone. Just the teachers left to handle post-planning.

## INT. CAFETERIA - CONTINUOUS

Finally, some more live bodies. The place is full of TEACHERS in the middle of a staff meeting.

PRINCIPAL

So what we're looking at here is the end of course test scores for math. I'm gonna pick on the math department because you can see the biggest difference here. That little yellow line, that sorta mustardy one? That's two years ago. Blue's last year. And the pink is this year-

The door creaks open. BANGS shut. So much for Beth trying to sneak in.

EVERYONE

Turns to face her. She gives an embarrassed wave and tries to find a seat.

The Principal resumes speaking but people keep craning their necks for a better look at Beth. They whisper among themselves. She's the focal point of all gossip. Wide eyes and sympathetic nods.

She flinches, feeling like a lab rat.

BETH

Sorry.

She shuffles through the crowd, looking for someone. CLAIRE, 30s. She waves Beth over.

PRINCIPAL

Pink is this year. So. WHAT HAPPENED?!

TEACHER

Common core.

PRINCIPAL

I know! I know, common core. But we can't blame it all on common core. We are pulling up the rear in the county again. I'm not one to gossip, but people are talkin, y'all! People. Are. Talkin.

Beth feigns interest, more aware of the eyes on her than anything that's being said.

PRINCIPAL (cont'd)

Mr. Mills overheard a couple of parents at church the other day, saying how happy they were that the bus routes were changing and their kids wouldn't have to come to Sandy Creek next year! We don't want to be that school, I don't want to be that principal and I know y'all don't want to be those teachers.

Claire leans over to her.

CLAIRE

(whispering)

I don't think you had to come, no one would blame you.

BETH

(whispering back)

I still have grades to enter.

CLAIRE

I'd have done that for you. All you had to do was ask.

BETH

That's alright. It's something to do. For a couple of days anyway.

CLAIRE

You holding up?

BETH

I'm fine, just didn't really sleep well last night.

CLAIRE

No shit. I can't believe you slept at all. Especially there.

The principal's reached a stopping point.

PRINCIPAL

Okay, it's now 8:30, I promised I'd give you a ten minute break, so we'll go ahead and take that. Go potty, stretch your legs. There are more donuts in the back courtesy of Mountville Baptist Church, get you some, please, don't be shy. Be back by 8:40, though, on the dot-ish.

(MORE)

PRINCIPAL (cont'd)

I want to get you in your rooms,  
posting grades before lunchtime and  
we still got a bit to get through.

Chairs are scraping across the floor. Bodies milling around.

Beth notices

A CROWD

Forming around her. Hesitant co-workers, hovering, waiting to offer their condolences. Beth stands, having to accept them. Hug after hug. Comment after comment. The grind of grief. Gotta play the game.

TEACHER

I'm so sorry.

Ad infinitum.

CUT TO:

INT. CLASSROOM - LATER

Empty desks. Empty bookshelves. The clock on the wall reads 2:17. Beth sits alone in the dark, blinking at

THE COMPUTER SCREEN

She's looking at houses for sale. But she keeps glancing over at the framed

PHOTOGRAPH OF OWEN

On her desk. Eventually, she holds its gaze. Growing mesmerized. Hypnotized. Her face slackens.

She stares.

PARENT

Mrs. Parkins?

Beth sits up. *Huh?* The woman talking to her seems to have come out of nowhere, the PARENT of one of her students. The clock on the wall now reads 3:05.

*Has she been sitting there, staring, for almost an hour?*

BETH

...Hi. Sorry, I was just...

She looks at

## THE COMPUTER SCREEN

No more real estate listings pulled up. It's a website selling GUNS instead. *What the fuck?* She quickly turns the monitor off.

PARENT

Excuse me. I tried to knock, but...  
We met before. I'm Hunter's mom.

Beth shakes the woman's hand, trying to recall.

BETH

I'm sorry. Hunter...

PARENT

McLaughlin. He has your second period.  
I'm Becky McLaughlin. It was a few months ago.

BETH

Mrs. McLaughlin, of course. Right. I have so many Hunters this year.

PARENT

How many?

BETH

Hm?

PARENT

Students named Hunter do you have?

BETH

Oh. Three. Please, have a seat.

She pulls up one of the student chairs and sits opposite Beth's desk.

PARENT

I'm sure you know why I'm here.

Beth has no idea.

PARENT (cont'd)

I just looked at the website. Hunter got a C in Speech?

BETH

Uhm. I think so. I can check.

She turns the monitor back on and closes the web-browser, pulls up her grade book.

PARENT  
That's what it said.

Beth points to the screen.

BETH  
Yeah. Looks like he didn't do his  
last presentation.

PARENT  
He said you told him he could make  
that up.

BETH  
Right. I did. He, uhm. Didn't.

PARENT  
He said he came in last Thursday.

BETH  
That was the last day of school-

PARENT  
He said you weren't here.

BETH  
I was out, yes. I've been out for a  
few days. It's a personal matter.

PARENT  
Well, he told me he was out the day  
you presented those projects. We all  
have personal matters to deal with  
sometimes.

Beth has no patience for this right now.

BETH  
Okay. You know what? Let's just  
excuse him from that assignment,  
then. There. B.

PARENT  
That's not what I wanted-

BETH  
What did you want?

PARENT  
Excuse me?

BETH  
When you came in here, what-

PARENT  
I wanted to know why my son--

BETH  
My husband shot himself in the head  
last Thursday.

*Oh.* That changes the parent's attitude.

PARENT  
...I hadn't heard.

BETH  
Because it's a *personal* matter. But,  
yes, if you want to know: He took the  
boat out on the lake, took a handgun  
I didn't even know we owned and pow,  
right in the mouth. So, your volleys  
of passive aggression pale in  
comparison to his and which Hunter  
got what grade on what high school  
elective speech class assignment  
really doesn't matter to me right  
now. You want a B? You got a B.

PARENT  
I apologize.

BETH  
What? You want an A? Let's do an A!  
Let's see. Duh-duhduh.

Beth clicks her tongue as she looks through the gradebook.

PARENT  
B is fine.

BETH  
B it is. Anything else I can do for  
you?

Beth gives her a bank teller smile.

PARENT  
No. Thank you. I'm sorry for your  
loss.

The woman hurries out of the room.

Beth calms herself and looks over at

## THE PHOTOGRAPH OF OWEN

She grabs it and stuffs it in her drawer and turns back to the computer, pulling up houses for sale once more.

## EXT. HOUSE - AFTERNOON

A riding lawnmower is ROARING. Sudden and loud.

An OLDER MAN is guiding it around Beth's front yard when she pulls up. He gives her a friendly wave, shuts off the mower and dismounts when he sees her.

This is MEL, 65.

MEL

Hey there, miss Beth. I apologize for the state of my clothes, but I'm gonna hug you anyway.

He smiles and moves in to fold her in a warm, fatherly embrace.

BETH

It's okay.

MEL

Had to warn you at least.

She looks out over the freshly cut grass.

BETH

You didn't have to do this, Mel.

MEL

That's a goddamn lie if I ever heard one.

She laughs. He's happy for that.

BETH

Much obliged.

MEL

Your Owen did the same for me when Shelly passed. It's the least I can do. I can do a lot more if you need me to. Any help around the house, that kind of thing. Just say the word.

BETH  
Could you help me with these boxes?

MEL  
You bet your life.

She opens her trunk. It's full of collapsed cardboard boxes. They each grab a stack and head toward the house.

MEL (cont'd)  
Packing up?

BETH  
Thinking of moving.

MEL  
That's good.

BETH  
Yeah? You trying to get rid of me?

MEL  
Lord, no! But it does get lonely out here.

BETH  
It's where things were good. He built this place, I hate to leave it but-

MEL  
But you can't stay. That's alright. Trust me, time's like this, it doesn't do to dwell.

INT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

They set the boxes down.

BETH  
Oh, by the way, I wanted to ask: were you shooting this morning, around 7:30 or so?

MEL  
I believe I was doing the word jumble in the paper around that time.

BETH  
You didn't hear anything? There was a shot, I figured with the weather heating up and snakes and all.

MEL

I see a cottonmouth near the house I'll sure shoot it, but I didn't today. Must be one of the other neighbors, off across the lake, or some a-hole come out to hunt off season. You hear it again, you give me a shout.

BETH

I will.

She sees him back to the porch and looks around again for the footprints.

There's no sign of them.

EXT. HALF-BUILT HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Cement floors. Exposed beams. The wooden frame. This will one day be Beth and Owen's house. For now it's just a skeleton.

CAMCORDER POV

Beth moves through the space, giving a tour, her voice behind the camera. She sounds different. Younger. Lighter.

She's happy.

BETH (O.S.)

And this will be the downstairs bathroom. Hallway here. I think we'll probably put some walls in, eventually. Living room. Built in bookshelves if I get my way.

She's guiding the camera from place to place, moving through the unfinished walls. A sort of ghost herself.

BETH (O.S.) (cont'd)

Then this is the kitchen. And over here we have...

She turns the camera outside where

OWEN

is hard at work. Shirtless. Sawing a plank of wood.

BETH (O.S.) (cont'd)  
 ...biceps. Lots of biceps. Hard at  
 work on the weekend.

Owen turns to look at her, immediately embarrassed. He stops what he's doing and stands up straight. Beth LAUGHS behind the camera. But keeps it trained on him.

BETH  
 So that's the husband.

He goes to grab his shirt.

BETH (cont'd)  
 What are you doing? Getting some work  
 done?

He shakes his head.

BETH (cont'd)  
 I'm not filming, I promise!

Still laughing, tickled by the way he's blushing.

BETH (cont'd)  
 You know we're paying people to do  
 that.

OWEN  
 Mm-hmm.

BETH  
 "Mm-hmm." I'm not filming. I swear.  
 (beat)  
 Unless you want me to.

He steps closer. Closing the distance between them.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Beth hits eject on the VCR. She snags the cassette and tosses it back into the box with the others. Then tapes the box up.

Enough wallowing. Time to get to work.

INT. OWEN'S OFFICE - LATER

Beth enters with several collapsed boxes under her arm, a glass of brandy in her free hand and a piece of toast hanging out of her mouth.

She clears off shelves, cleans out drawers. Some things she tosses into a garbage bag, others she packs up.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Overwhelming NIGHT SOUNDS. Crickets and frogs. Beth passing by the window, crossing the room as she works.

INT. OWEN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

She's made a lot of progress. The walls are bare. Her sleeves are rolled up. She's working on a drawer now, part of his large desk. She pulls things out.

An old discman CD player, a puzzle, a Christmas ornament.

A SKETCHBOOK

There are layouts of buildings in its pages. Notes, ideas. Sketches of rooms and houses. Most labeled. **"2 bed, 1 bath cabin" "family home" "two family version (optional attic?)**

Beth flips through the pages, smiling a little at the inner workings of her husband's mind.

But as she gets further into the book, the designs become more abstract; maze-like. Rooms turning in on themselves. Doors to nowhere.

His scrawled notes take on a more enigmatic quality as well. **"Power in circles" "Repeating patterns? Familiar space, new space" "Reverse it, trap it"**

Soon, the structures aren't houses at all. They're labyrinths. Still labeled, but strangely. **"Troy Town" "City of Walls" "Caerdroia"**

Then the pages are blank. That seems to be it.

But she keeps flipping nonetheless. And is rewarded with a two page spread toward the end of the sketchbook.

## MIRRORED FLOOR PLANS

On the left: A rough, scaled down blueprint of the very house she's in right now. The curved wall, the bathroom picture window.

On the right: the exact same floor plan. But backwards. And this one has something else sketched in the center. A sort of figure...

## A WOMAN

*In the fetal position?* Hard to be certain, it's not overly detailed. But it's enough to weird her out.

She sets the book aside, turns back to the drawer and freezes.

## A GUN

Is sitting there, waiting for her. *That wasn't there before, was it?*

That's enough for tonight. She closes the drawer.

## EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

The moon reflects off the lake. All is quiet.

## INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Beth lies in the bed, asleep. Her hand absently runs over the empty expanse of

## BEDSHEETS

Beside her. The space Owen used to occupy.

Suddenly, there's MUSIC. Muffled. In the distance. But loud. In the house. Downstairs.

It's their wedding song.

For a moment, Beth is unaware. Then she stirs. And opens

## HER EYES

She sits up. The music grows louder. It's unnerving.

She gets to her feet and runs to the door, opens it slightly. The music is definitely coming from the living room...

She shuts the door and locks it. It's some kind of safety at least.

She scrambles back onto the bed and huddles in the sheets, thinking.

She reaches to the nightstand for

HER CELLPHONE

But just as her hand gets close enough it BUZZES. She grabs it, brings it to her face and sees

ON THE SCREEN

A text message from Owen: **COME DOWN**

This is impossible, Owen is dead. She's confused. Frightened. *Is this real?* But she manages to type back: **who is this?**

She waits for what feels like an eternity. A new message appears, from "Owen": **DON'T BE AFRAID**

And just like that, the music stops. The room becomes deadly silent.

BETH

Looks around frantically. The silence is worse than the mysterious music was.

She grabs her phone and dials Owen's number, breathing deeply as she holds it to her ear.

The call RINGS and RINGS. And finally connects.

Beth is in disbelief, she looks down at

THE PHONE SCREEN

Confirms it: she is connected with Owen. The seconds tick by, marking the time of this impossible call.

She puts the phone back to her ear and listens.

No voice. No speaking.

BETH

Hello?

No response. Just the sounds of wind-noise, the call peaking and cutting out. Someone seems to be there, but all she can hear is faint BREATHING on the other end of the line.

BETH (cont'd)

Who is this?! ...Owen?

She feels silly for even saying it, but she listens intently, hoping for something, anything...

And then, she can almost hear a VOICE. It's distant, barely there.

She begins to tear up at the sound of it, the possibility of connection.

BETH (cont'd)

I can't hear you...

The sound of the call is so erratic, but she can make out one clear word:

VOICE

...window...

And just like that, the call drops.

She sits clutching her phone, the only evidence of the call from her dead husband, scared to go to the window and look.

*What will she see? What is waiting for her on the other side of the curtains?*

After a few deep breaths, she sets the phone aside and rises, walking across the floor to look through

THE WINDOW

There's nothing. She squints. Leans close. Just trees.

Then it dawns on her.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Beth enters and moves to the large window directly across from the mirror. This one offers a view of

## THE LAKE

Lit by the moonlight. Beth holds her breath.

There's A MAN, standing on the surface of the water. *Only Christ himself could do this.*

What's more, he's nude, his skin bathed in the light of the moon. His back is to her, but ever so slowly he turns and faces her.

CUT TO:

## INT. BATHROOM - MORNING

Beth is huddled on the ground, buried in blankets. She sits up nervously. *Not again.* Waking up outside of the bed.

She stands up and walks to the sink, washes her face and looks at herself in

## THE MIRROR

She looks okay, normal, despite how weird she feels. She goes to open the door.

It's locked.

*Did she lock it last night?* She shakes her head, trying to remember.

## INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

She exits the bathroom to see

## HER PHONE

Lying on the bed. She picks it up and looks at the text message history. There are no messages from "Owen". *Did that really happen?*

She thinks a moment. *Hold on...*

## EXT. DRIVEWAY - MORNING

Beth opens the passenger side door of her car and scans the seat. *Where is it?*

She reaches under the seat and pulls out a large manila envelope. **"O. Parkins"** written in black marker on the side.

She removes a plastic bag of personal effects. A watch. A wedding ring. A cell phone.

She plugs the phone into her car charger and waits for it to turn on.

A LOCK SCREEN

Greets her. Much to her dismay. She taps a number in. No luck. She looks over at the mailbox. Their house number: **1162**. Nothing. She thinks a moment and, on a whim, tries the reverse: **2611**.

Success!

She sits alone in the car, in the middle of the driveway, the door wide open, scrolling through his phone. She checks the outgoing calls. They've been cleared.

*What about outgoing texts?* The ones he sent to her are still there. She eagerly pulls them up. *Here's one!* **"Miss you."** She checks the date. Not from last night. It's from nine days ago.

She sits in his chair and reads the rest of their exchange:

**"Owen: want me to take chicken out of the freezer for dinner?"**

**"Beth: Hell no"**

**"Owen: wow OK"**

**"Beth: Haha I'm picking up tacos"**

**"Owen: <crazy emoji face>**

**"Beth: I wanted tacos"**

**"Owen: Guess so Hurry home"**

**"Beth: Driving"**

**"Owen: OK Miss you"**

Pretty mundane but emotionally overwhelming given the circumstances. She sighs, missing him.

She switches to his PICTURES FOLDER, cycling through.

## IMAGES OF HER

Him as well. Better days. Sunsets on the lake. Buildings he was working on.

## BETH

Is heartbroken. She has to catch her breath. Those days are gone forever. She keeps cycling through. More images of her.

## CANDID PICTURES

Ones she didn't even know he took. She's not looking at the camera in them. Her face can't clearly be seen, it's hidden behind her long, brown hair.

*That's strange.* Beth squints at the photos. There are more. Several similar photos. *Wait a second...*

She speeds up. Then swipes back. *Is that even her?*

She stares in disbelief. She can't be certain... not 100%... but it looks like some OTHER WOMAN. Someone who happens to look remarkably like her.

*What the fuck?*

She sits back, heartbroken for an entirely different reason.

She's reached the last photo in the album.

## OWEN'S SMILING FACE

## EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - MORNING

The streamers are still hanging from the trees. The breeze moves the thin tendrils hypnotically.

## INT. HIGH SCHOOL - MORNING

Empty hallways. A TATTERED BULLETIN BOARD with the text "HERE COMES TOMORROW!" written over a large cartoon graduation hat and diploma.

## INT. CLASSROOM - MORNING

Claire is holding Owen's phone, swiping her way through the pictures.

CLAIRE  
What am I looking at?

BETH  
Keep going. Wait. There!

CLAIRE  
Nice blouse.

BETH  
Look closer.

CLAIRE  
What? Yeah, I see. There you are.

BETH  
Is that me?

CLAIRE  
What?

BETH  
*Is that me?*

Claire looks again.

CLAIRE  
Yeah, I think so. Who else would it be?

BETH  
That's what I want to know.

Beth takes the phone back and looks again for herself. Claire continues taking textbooks from the shelves and loading them onto a handcart.

CLAIRE  
It's either you or a woman who looks, like, a lot like you. On your husband's phone. Sweetie, I think that's you.

BETH  
Nice blouse, right? I don't have one like that.

CLAIRE  
No, I'm pretty sure I've seen you in something like that. The white one with the black buttony things?

BETH  
That's different.

CLAIRE  
You can't even tell from the- Oh God, Beth, don't do this to yourself. It's you! And if it's not, believe me, there are worse things to find on your husband's phone than fully clothed candid snaps of chicks who look just like you.

BETH  
Yeah, at least I was his type.

CLAIRE  
Is that what this is? Please. He loved you, Beth. You. And from the stories you've told me, you didn't give him any reason to roam. I mean, Bob won't even *hold my hand* in an Uber, let alone... you know.

Beth blushes a little. Laughs softly.

CLAIRE (cont'd)  
And how are you so sure he even took those pictures, anyway? Someone else might have been using his phone, or sent them to him. He's not here to defend himself or explain.-

BETH  
Well, maybe...

CLAIRE  
What?

*Maybe he is here... somehow...*

BETH  
Never mind.

Claire watches her. *What was she going to say?* Beth gazes back.

BETH (cont'd)  
Never mind! It's nothing.

CLAIRE  
Uh-huh. We're going out tonight. Drinking. The whole department.  
(MORE)

CLAIRE (cont'd)  
Well, not Clark, but... You should  
come. Get your mind off things.

But Beth's absorbed in the pictures on the phone once more.

BETH  
We'll see.

CLAIRE  
Why were you going through his phone  
in the first place?

That clearly makes Beth uncomfortable.

CLAIRE (cont'd)  
That was a stupid, insensitive  
question. I'm sorry.

BETH  
I just didn't think we had secrets.

CLAIRE  
Everybody has secrets. Don't let it  
weigh on you. Just remember *your*  
Owen. Who he was with you. Who you  
fell in love with. Because whatever  
else he was, he was that too. But  
seriously and all: that picture is  
you. Be right back.

Claire wheels her cart of textbooks out into the hallway.

Alone, Beth sits and stares at the photo.

Suddenly, STATIC crackles on the intercom overhead. A  
STARTLING noise.

*It sounds like the phone call from last night.* Peaking and  
cutting out.

Beth glances up, afraid. But then a voice comes on. The  
Principal.

PRINCIPAL (O.S.)  
Ladies and gentlemen, all grades have  
been turned in and verified. All  
textbooks have been inventoried. Have  
a great summer!

Music blares, a boombox held up to the intercom mic.  
"School's Out" by Alice Cooper.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Beth is seated with several other teachers. They're laughing, drinking, celebrating. Claire is there. But also a gregarious guy named GARY, and a younger woman named HEATHER.

Beth has clearly had her share to drink.

HEATHER  
Is that really what she said to you?

GARY  
Yep!

CLAIRE  
Jesus Christ.

HEATHER  
Hey, are you gonna read that book she gave us?

GARY  
Fuck no! I don't need three hundred pages to tell me how to handle ex-ed kids. Claire knows. What's the secret, Claire?

CLAIRE  
Oh.

GARY  
You told me yesterday.

CLAIRE  
Tallllllk. Sloooooow.

Heather is *scandalized* but they all laugh. Except Beth.

CLAIRE (cont'd)  
You okay, B?

BETH  
I'm fine.

GARY  
What's on your mind? And what are you drinking? I think I'm ready for another round.

HEATHER  
(too enthusiastic)  
YEAH!

Beth fidgets, working herself up to asking what she wants to ask. The liquor helps.

BETH  
Do you guys believe in ghosts?

The others all pause to look at her, then at one another. This seems like a loaded question. No one wants to be the first to answer.

HEATHER  
Like, "ghosts" how?

It's awkward now. Claire to the rescue. Sort of.

CLAIRE  
I believe!

HEATHER  
Really?

Beth is watching her closely. To see if she truly does. Claire shrugs.

CLAIRE  
I mean I don't *not* believe.

BETH  
I think there's something in my house. Like a presence.

Claire doesn't like the sound of this.

HEATHER  
No way!

BETH  
I don't know. I just feel like there's something... Like I'm being watched. All this weird stuff. I'm having these dreams. I guess they're dreams. It feels real, though, when it's happening.

GARY  
What, like sleep paralysis?

BETH  
No.

GARY  
Do you know what sleep paralysis is?

BETH  
Yes, I know what sleep paralysis is,  
Gary.

HEATHER  
I don't.

CLAIRE  
When your mind is awake but your  
body's not, right? Did you see that  
thing on Netflix-

GARY  
I had a buddy in school who had it. I  
guess it's pretty common to feel like  
there's someone else in the room when  
you're having an episode. A hostile  
presence. They call it "The  
Intruder."

BETH  
What about the opposite?

GARY  
A friendly presence?

BETH  
When your body's awake but your mind  
isn't.

HEATHER  
Wouldn't that be sleepwalking?

BETH  
Sure. Sleepwalking. Could something  
like that be contagious?

Gary laughs. But Beth isn't joking.

GARY  
No. Sleep disorders aren't  
contagious. Why?

BETH  
Owen used to sleepwalk.

CLAIRE  
I remember that.

BETH  
All of the sudden, five years ago or  
so, it just started. I'd wake up and  
he'd be out of bed.

(MORE)

BETH (cont'd)  
Eventually, I stopped looking for him. I'd trip over him in the hallway the next morning.

CLAIRE  
Didn't you find him in the yard one time?

Beth smiles and nods.

HEATHER  
And now you're doing it? That is weird.

BETH  
Last night our wedding song came on.

CLAIRE  
On the radio?

BETH  
No. I don't know, maybe. But I didn't turn it on, not that I remember. It was just on, downstairs, really loud, in the middle of the night and I...

She grows self-conscious. Looks at her phone sitting in front of her. *Should she tell them the rest?*

GARY  
How long were you married?

BETH  
Shit. Let me do the math.

They all laugh.

BETH (cont'd)  
13 years? 14? No, 14. Cause this next one would have been fifteen.

HEATHER  
Wow, you married young.

BETH  
Little bit.

GARY  
It makes sense. You spend so much time in the same space with someone, it's gonna feel like they're there. Even when they're not.

Beth nods, a little disappointed. *He's probably right.*

CLAIRE

But who knows, right? Who's to say what happens once we "shuffle off this mortal coil"? "What dreams may come"?

Gary throws a napkin at her.

GARY

No Shakespeare till next fall, please.

Beth smiles drunkenly.

BETH

Are you really trying to cheer me up with the suicide soliloquy?

CLAIRE

Oh my God. Beth, I didn't--

BETH

I'm joking.

HEATHER

I don't think you should joke about that!

CLAIRE

(chastising)

Heather.

GARY

Did you seriously not know? That anything was wrong?

CLAIRE

Gary! Jesus, you guys.

BETH

I don't mind. And no, I didn't know. I was the one who struggled with that stuff. Depression. "Dark thoughts." He's the one who kept them at bay. I don't know, maybe it got to him. Maybe I infected him with my bullshit.

GARY

Nah, it doesn't work like that.

HEATHER  
 ...Did he leave a note?

CLAIRE  
 (stepping in)  
 Okay.

HEATHER  
 Sorry!

GARY  
 What? She wants to talk about it!

CLAIRE  
 We are *done* with this topic!

Beth looks at Claire. "*It's fine.*"

BETH  
 He did.

CLAIRE  
 Beth...

Beth digs in her purse and pulls

THE NOTE

Right out. The envelope with her name on it. The smear of blood on the corner.

She sets it in the middle of the table.

HEATHER  
 You keep it in your purse?

Nobody moves. Shit just got weird. Too weird. Beth looks around at them and laughs. *Fine. If they won't read it...*

She makes a big show of opening it up, unfolding the paper and clearing her throat.

She's going to do a dramatic reading.

BETH  
 (reading)  
 "You were right."

She looks around the table, raising an eyebrow. She proceeds.

BETH (cont'd)  
 (reading)  
 "There is nothing. Nothing is after  
 you."

This is making everyone uncomfortable. Beth is oblivious.

BETH (cont'd)  
 "You're safe now."

Owen's words from her mouth. They linger in the air. Beth process them. It's the first time she's heard them spoken aloud...

GARY  
 That's it?

BETH  
 That's it. No "XOXO." No "Your loving  
 husband", nothing.

HEATHER  
 ...What does that mean?

BETH  
 Not a clue! Not a fucking clue. Other  
 than I was living with a crazy person  
 and didn't know it. Makes you wonder,  
 right? What else didn't I know?

She looks pointedly at Claire. *"Like those pictures."*

BETH (cont'd)  
 ...I want to know.

CLAIRE  
 Maybe we should get you home.

BETH  
 Mm. Don't want to keep him waiting.

That clearly unnerves Heather. She's supremely creeped out.

HEATHER  
 You really think it's your husband?

Beth takes one last swallow of her drink and winks at her.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

The door opens. Beth is stumbling but Claire helps her inside.

BETH

Want a brandy?

CLAIRE

No, Beth, I don't want a brandy. I don't want you to have one, either.

BETH

M'kay. I don't even like the stuff anyway. I haven't acquired the taste yet.

CLAIRE

Come on, upstairs with you.

BETH

No.

Claire looks at her. Beth is serious. She doesn't want to go upstairs.

BETH (cont'd)

I'll sleep down here.

CLAIRE

Okay.

She sits with Beth. Helps her take off her boots.

CLAIRE (cont'd)

You want me to stay?

BETH

No, you got kids.

CLAIRE

I already told Bob I'd be out late. I can call him.-

BETH

No, no.

CLAIRE

Well, why don't you come over some time. I'll have him cook for you. I don't think you should be out here all by yourself.

Beth is looking at her with drunken affection. She holds the gaze a little too long, though. Claire looks away.

Beth doesn't.

BETH

I lied.

*Uh oh.*

BETH (cont'd)

About the letter.

Claire swats her playfully.

CLAIRE

You asshole! You had everyone going. I thought that was real! Did you see Gary's face?-

BETH

It is real. I lied when I said I had no idea what it meant.

*Oh.* Claire takes a deep breath.

BETH (cont'd)

You know I died back in Tennessee? Did I tell you that story?

Claire shakes her head, not sure she wants to hear it.

BETH (cont'd)

I was seventeen. High school. A friend was driving and we flipped. Down the side of a mountain.

She slaps her hands together.

BETH (cont'd)

Pancaked. My lungs were crushed, they had to life flight me out. My heart stopped, the whole deal. Four minutes.

CLAIRE

Oh my God.

BETH

And afterward, everybody would ask, whenever they found out: 'What was it like? What did you see?' I didn't want to disappoint them so I would say 'Oh, I dunno. I don't remember.'

Claire listens. Nervous.

BETH (cont'd)  
But I remember. Owen's the only person I ever really told: There was nothing.

CLAIRE  
...What do you mean 'nothing'?

Beth smiles a vacant smile. Slightly mocking.

BETH  
'Oh, I dunno. I don't remember.'

Claire blushes, realizing she's giving the exact same response as everyone else.

CLAIRE  
Sorry.

BETH  
Me too. I wish I had something to tell you. The light at the end of the tunnel, but. It's just tunnel.

She lays her head in Claire's lap. Claire runs her fingers through Beth's hair, looking slightly uncomfortable. The conversation is getting to her.

BETH (cont'd)  
If it's any consolation, Owen was never convinced. We agreed on most things but not on what comes next. He wanted to believe in a better place. I'd tell him, look around. When the sun was setting on the lake... when it was just me and him... What better place could there be?

Beth starts looking around the house. Almost as if she's expecting to see someone.

BETH (cont'd)  
"You were right. There's nothing. Nothing is after you. You're safe now." He said I was right. But now I'm not sure.

CLAIRE  
He said you were safe. Safe from what?

BETH

I guess we'll never know. Claire...  
Do you really believe in ghosts?

CLAIRE

I was just being nice.

BETH

You are. Very, very nice.

CLAIRE

Sure you don't want me to stay?

BETH

Maybe just till I fall asleep.

It's serene for a moment. Soft light. Night sounds. Claire stroking Beth's hair.

Beth closes her eyes.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

Overwhelming, jarring, terrifying SOUND.

Hours have passed but to us (and to Beth) it feels instantaneous. We are thrown from the peace and quiet of the previous scene into a nightmare world of horrific, bludgeoning NOISE.

Most of the lights are out. Just a dim little lamp by the door is glowing.

STATIC is blaring on the radio! SCREAMS buried beneath it. The screams of women, fading in and out.

The POUNDING is back at the door!

The wind is HOWLING outside!

Beth sits up, terrified. Nowhere to run. No clue what's even happening. She grabs a fireplace poker and stands in the corner.

There's a VOICE winding through the screams and the static. The voice she heard from her phone. *Owen's voice?*

VOICE (O.S.)

OPEN THE DOOR.

With that, it stops. The silence is oppressive in the wake of all that racket.

Still a little drunk, now incredibly furious, Beth yanks open a kitchen drawer and retrieves

A FLASHLIGHT

She throws open the front door!

NOBODY THERE

BETH

You got something to say?! Talk to me!

She shines the flashlight beam onto the lawn. It only goes so far. It can only show so much. *What's out there?*

Beth grits her teeth and steps out.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

The night is claustrophobic. Hot and wet and dark. The chorus of bugs and frogs has returned.

Beth makes her way around back. The flashlight beam punches a hole in the darkness but it can only reveal one small patch at a time.

Something could pop out at any moment.

BEHIND THE HOUSE

The grass is still tall. Closer to the lake. Cat tails and willow trees. They sway in the warm night breeze. And...

SOMETHING RUNS BY

A feminine figure in white dashes past Beth, right at the edge of the flashlight beam.

Like a deer darting across a dark and rural road, it's there and gone in a second.

BETH

Hey! Stay the fuck off my property!

She gives chase. Running now, full out. We are running with her. Flashlight beam bobbing.

ANOTHER FIGURE RUNS BY

There and gone.

Beth's still running. But there are

OTHER WOMEN

Running with her! Bolting past her, in and out of the light. Never staying long enough for us to see much. Only glimpses.

But we can tell they look like her. The same brown hair trails behind them as they run, before the darkness beyond the flashlight beam swallows them back up.

And we can hear them. The RUSHING SOUND of several sets of running feet.

Beth surges forward with this spectral stampede until she reaches the lake.

FOUR WOMEN ARE AT THE WATER'S EDGE

Wading into the lake. Disappearing into the water.

*What is this? Some sick ritual?*

A VOICE abruptly speaks, directly behind Beth. Loud in the mix.

VOICE

BETH.

She turns, flashlight playing over nothing but grass.

She aims it back at the lake... Nothing there now, either. The women are gone. Beth steps onto

THE DOCK

She shouts toward the water.

BETH

What do you want??

Her voice echoes back to her. A dog BARKS. But that's it.

Until...

A BOAT

Slides silently into her flashlight beam. It BUMPS into the dock in front of her. *Where did it come from?*

She glances behind her. The house seems so far away. *Maybe coming out here was a bad idea.* The adrenaline is wearing off...

BETH (cont'd)  
Where are you?

She bites her lip, clutches the fire poker and steps into the boat.

She pushes off, leaving the dock behind.

EXT. LAKE - NIGHT

The boat bobs on the surface. Gentle waves lap at its sides. *But where is the shore?* She's so far out now and it's so dark... She might as well be in the middle of the ocean.

It's cold. Beth hugs herself. The wind blows and she shivers against it, lies back to shield herself from it and to look up at

THE MOON

Her view is shifting and undulating with the subtle rocking of the boat.

BETH  
Where did you go?  
Why did you leave?

She places a hand on her stomach.

BETH (cont'd)  
Are you trying to scare me?

Her other hand hangs outside of the boat, fingers trailing through the

DARK WATER

She's dipping them into the blackness of the lake. We half expect something to reach out and grab her.

But nothing does.

She closes her eyes.

BETH (cont'd)  
I'm not sure you can anymore.

It's true, she doesn't look scared. She looks serene as she starts to drift off.

To sleep? Into a trance? Either way

HER FACE

Grows still. And gradually

HER HANDS

Begin to move. Across her body. One goes up, across her chest and lips.

The other goes down, pulling her skirt aside, slipping under her waistband, applying gentle pressure.

She seems almost unaware of her actions. It's sensual, but eerie. Out here, alone on the lake, in the boat.

The place her husband died.

HER MOUTH

Is open, gasping. Her BREATH is visible. It must be freezing.

Aroused, she clutches her own throat, almost choking herself, passion escalating. And then

HER OTHER HAND

Comes into view! It runs through her hair.

Both hands are up now, yet her heavy breathing continues. The stimulation continues. In fact, it's grown more intense. Her whole body is writhing now. Thrusting.

It's as though she's making love to someone unseen.

THE LAKE

We can see Beth in the rocking boat, her MOANS echoing through the night, yet she's still the only person in sight, her arching body bathed in sweat and moonglow.

Her pleasure audibly builds to a CLIMAX. It's real and undeniable. And it ends when

THE BOAT

Bumps into the shoreline.

Beth's still in a daze. Looking drugged. Looking dead.

A SINGLE TEAR

Falls from her emotionless face. And then

SHE GASPS! Coming up for air as if she'd been drowning. She yanks up her underwear, yanks down her skirt, frantically taking in her surroundings.

It's okay. She's alone. No one's here, no one saw her.

But there is

A LIGHT

Beyond the trees. A window. A house. Like something out of a fairy tale, a warm glow in the middle of the cold, dark woods.

Beth blinks and glances back across the lake, to the opposite side.

HER HOUSE

Is there. She must have drifted all the way across. She narrows her eyes and looks back at the house in the woods. *That's not supposed to be here.*

*So. What should she do?*

After a beat, she grips the fire poker, grabs her flashlight and steps out of the boat.

EXT. NIGHT HOUSE - NIGHT

Beth approaches cautiously. The place looks eerily like her own house... In fact, as she gets closer it becomes clear that it's identical.

But it's reversed, just like the sketch she saw in Owen's office. The same unmistakable, asymmetrical architecture, just flipped. Right is left and left is right.

And back is front.

THE BATHROOM PICTURE WINDOW

Is the one casting the glow. It faces out at the lake. She looks back at her own house. The glow in her own bathroom window.

It's a straight shot.

But in the window of the night house, there's a WOMAN now looking out. Long dark hair. Like Beth. Like the women by the lake. Like the woman in the picture on Owen's phone.

Beth gasps, staying low. *Will she be seen?*

But no. The Woman inside is preoccupied. Because she isn't alone. There's a MAN with her.

The window's on the second floor, too far away to see clearly. Beth can't tell for certain who the man is but it could be, it must be...

BETH

Owen?

Both Man and Woman are nude. Standing close to one another.

VOICE

IT'S A DREAM.

Beth jumps. That same voice, coming from everywhere and nowhere at once. Sudden and loud on the heels of all this quiet. She looks around, trying to find the source. There isn't one.

VOICE (cont'd)

YOU'RE DREAMING.

*Yeah, right. Doesn't feel like a dream.*

The Man and Woman in the window kiss. They embrace.

And he wraps his hands around her throat.

BETH

OWEN!

Beth is shocked, horrified. The Woman begins to struggle. To slam her hand against the glass.

*Fuck!* Panicked, Beth races around the side of the house. She reaches

THE FRONT DOOR

Only to find it locked! She pounds on it. Looks for something, anything, to help her get in. Her eyes fall on

A ROW OF POTTED PLANTS

The same plants she has on her own porch. She moves one of them aside.

A KEY

Right where she knew it would be! She returns to the door, jams the key into the lock, steadies herself and throws the door open onto...

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Beth is standing in the doorway of her own house. It's the middle of the day now. *What happened?* It was night a second ago, now the sun is shining.

She looks at the couch. And sees

HERSELF

Asleep there, just as Claire left her! *WHAT THE FUCK!?*

The Beth on the couch

OPENS HER EYES

And looks over at

THE DOOR

It's open, but there's no one there. No other Beth. Just the one on the couch, waking up from the strangest of dreams.

Frightened, she runs over to SLAM the door shut.

From here she can see the whole living room. The sunlight does it no favors. The empty brandy bottles. The bare walls, discolored where pictures once hung. The growing number of boxes.

She chews her finger, lost in thought, staring at the couch. The place she saw herself in the dream.

*Fuck this place.*

CUT TO:

EXT. LAKE - DAY

Mel is walking his dog, a big friendly hound, around the perimeter of the lake. There's a little path there. Woods beyond.

He stops for a moment when something catches his eye. There. In the trees.

BETH

Is cursing, freeing her foot from a sinkhole. She succeeds and presses on, deeper into the woods.

MEL

Beth?

She freezes.

MEL (cont'd)

That you? What are you doing out there, girl? Taking a hike?

No ignoring him now. She brushes herself off and approaches the path. The dog sniffs her lovingly.

BETH

Uh, no. I was just looking for something.

MEL

Let me give you a hand.

BETH

That's okay.

He senses her anxiety... and it bothers him.

MEL

Well, what'd you lose?

She tries to smile and put on a pleasant demeanor.

BETH

Nothing, I was... I thought I saw something out here last night.

MEL

Bear?

BETH

House.

She laughs awkwardly. He smiles.

MEL

A house?! Only houses out here are yours, mine and the Millimans.

BETH

I know that. I'm being silly. Superstitious. I saw some lights, like a window. It was right here.

MEL

A house?

BETH

Mm-hm.

Mel nods, trying to understand.

MEL

It was a dream. You were dreaming.

BETH

Probably. It gave me a funny feeling, that's all. This is your land, isn't it? Sorry, I should have asked. Do you mind if I...?

She points behind her. To the woods.

MEL

Matter of fact, I do.

She wasn't expecting that answer.

BETH

I'm sorry?

MEL

You're not well, Beth. You've been through a lot, more than you deserve. For my own peace of mind if nothing else, I'd rather not have you tromping around back there in the woods on your own. You should be at home.-

BETH

I don't want to be at home.

He smiles, trying to be helpful.

MEL

Well, where do you want to be?

BETH

Doesn't have an answer. There's nowhere she wants to be right now.

He understands her despair. He treads softly.

MEL (cont'd)

There's no house back there.  
Especially not one you'd be able to see from shore.

BETH

Yeah, but what's true at night...  
it's not always true in the day.

He nods.

MEL

Night's are toughest. Going to sleep,  
waking up, or god forbid that weird  
space in between when you're tossing  
and turning. It gets better. It  
doesn't ever go away but it gets  
better.

BETH

Good to know.

MEL

I knew Shelly 42 years. Lived with  
her for 38.

He takes Beth's hand.

MEL (cont'd)

You lost a part of yourself, Bethy.  
You've never been closer to death  
than you are now.

She smirks a little.

BETH

That's not actually true.

But Mel's not amused.

MEL

It *is* true. You've locked eyes with  
it.

(MORE)

MEL (cont'd)  
It makes you vulnerable, I know the feeling. There's darkness at your door.

She pulls her hand away, unnerved by his choice of words.

BETH  
Why would you say that?

MEL  
Don't let it in. That's all I'm saying. ...And now I've said my piece.

He throws his hands up and takes a step back. He won't interfere with her further.

She nods. He smiles. Hopeful. *Maybe he got through to her.*

MEL (cont'd)  
Come on back with me. I'll make sandwiches.

Beth lowers her head. *No. He didn't get through.*

BETH  
Maybe later.

She turns away and ventures deeper into the woods, leaving him alone by the lake.

EXT. WOODS - LATER

Beth walks. Trees in every direction. It's hard for her to keep her bearings.

She presses on. Deeper and deeper.

A CROW caws.

Suddenly, Beth stops. There's

A SPIDER

Hanging right in front of her. She almost walked blindly into its web.

She stares at it a beat before grabbing a stick and knocking the web down.

That business done, she looks up. There's

## A BUILDING

Behind a small cluster of trees. She hurries forward. Sure enough, it's

## A HOUSE

Sitting in the middle of the forest. Not a prime place to build. No road leading up to it, but here it stands nonetheless.

*What the fuck?*

## EXT. ABANDONED HOUSE - AFTERNOON

In the daylight, it looks run down. Dirty. Weather-beaten.

But it didn't look that way last night. And it wasn't this deep in the woods, either. Still, it must be the same house. It's the same shape. A flip-flopped version of her home.

She circles around to the

## THE FRONT PORCH

The potted plants are there but they're all dead. Rotten.

She knocks on the door. No answer. So she pushes it open.

## INT. ABANDONED HOUSE - AFTERNOON

She examines the space. It's bare, unfinished. No furniture or decorations. But like the exterior, the inside is a mirror image of her house. She touches the rounded wall on the right, looking to the left, highlighting the difference.

She walks through the various

## ROOMS

Making her way

## UPSTAIRS

And down the hall to

## THE BEDROOM

Not much to see. Bare floor. Dead leaves.

## INT. ABANDONED HOUSE - BATHROOM

This is where it happened. Where the man and woman were standing in her dream.

Nothing here except...

## A VASE

Sitting below the window. *What's this?* Beth stoops to pick it up. Inspects it. Clay. Handmade. There's an uneven pattern. Wavy lines and

## A SPIDER!

It crawls over the back of her hand. The little fucker from the woods must have hitched a ride. She SCREAMS and drops the vase.

## CRASH.

She slaps at her hand. Checks her jacket, her hair. The spider's gone.

Beth catches her breath. Squints at the floor.

*What's this?* Something from inside the vase. Free now, sitting in a nest of broken pottery. She's seen a version of it before, as a simple sketch in Owen's notebook. Now here it is, fully realized in sculpture.

## A CLAY FIGURE

The creepiest statue she's ever seen. A crude 6 inch rendering of a woman. Her hands and feet bound behind her back. The fetal position... but in reverse.

Then there are the pins. Thirteen copper pins pierce the body. One sticks down into her head. Others jut out of her eyes, ears, mouth. Her vagina. Her anus. Her heart.

Beth is disgusted. *What the hell is this thing? Did Owen put it here?*

CUT TO:

INT. MEL'S HOUSE - DAY

Mel is sitting in an easy chair, spectacles on, attempting the word jumble in the morning paper.

There's a sudden, vicious POUNDING on his door. The dog starts barking. It takes him a moment to motivate his old bones and stand up.

MEL  
Be right there!

As soon as he opens the door Beth barges in, the disturbing clay figure in her hand.

BETH  
What the fuck is this?

MEL  
Beth, what-?

BETH  
WHAT THE FUCK IS THIS?

She holds up the clay doll. He stares at it, confused and alarmed.

MEL  
Now, hold on a minute.-

BETH  
There's a house out there. My house, the same house he built for me! For us! I saw it! Now, what the hell is going on?! What else aren't you telling me?

MEL  
I don't know--

BETH  
What the fuck was he doing in those woods?! Is that where he took them? Huh? Those women.

MEL  
What women?

BETH  
TELL ME!

MEL  
I'm trying! I don't know what-

BETH

You said that was your land.

MEL

It is. It was. Some of it.

BETH

Some?

He takes a breath, treading carefully.

MEL

I wasn't using all that. Okay? He asked and I sold him a plot.

BETH

Why the fuck didn't I know about it?

Mel is embarrassed. She has a point.

MEL

Well, it wasn't my place to say, was it? He told me he'd come into some money, a relative of his having passed, something like that. Said he was building something for you. I didn't think twice.

BETH

Something for me?

MEL

That's right. I'd hear him building from time to time, during the day while you were at work. When it stopped, I figured... the plan never came together.

She stares at the clay figure in her hand, running her thumb over one of the pins.

BETH

Yeah, what sort of plan do you think that was?

She locks eyes with him, almost challenging.

MEL

I swear on my life, Bethy. On Shelly's grave. I wouldn't know.

BETH

Then I guess it's on me to find out.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOUSE - SUNSET

Lighted windows. Music blaring from within. The same sort of music as Beth and Owen's wedding song. Probably the same album.

The landscape is undeniably beautiful. But by now, it should fill us with a sense of dread.

These empty spaces.

INT. OWEN'S OFFICE - SUNSET

Only

TWO BOTTLES

Of brandy left in Owen's stash.

Half packed boxes here and there. Any progress Beth was making on her move has been halted.

She's given up on packing and is hunched over Owen's computer, wearing one of his shirts, polishing off another bottle as she scrolls through a search engine.

ONSCREEN

Is the CLAY FIGURE. An ancient version of it. The TEXT beneath identifies it as the "**Louvre Doll.**"

She keeps reading, the physical doll sitting on the desk beside her. One phrase stands out. She jots it down: "**... binding spell...**"

The mellow music continues to fill the room but now Beth's mind is racing. The book she's taking notes in is Owen's old sketchbook, open on her lap. She flips through the pages, searches for those strange words she stumbled upon earlier: "**Troy Town**" "**Caerdroia**"

She checks the spelling and enters the latter into the search engine. Images of MAZES immediately pop up. Labyrinths. She scrolls through the Wikipedia entry. Takes down a few more notes. Phrases. "**...to entrap evil spirits...**"

*What the hell was he up to?* She closes the browser and searches Owen's files, cutting and pasting "**caerdroia**" into the computer's search box.

A jpg file pops up.

BLUEPRINTS

For the backwards house! Beth sits up. She's onto something, here.

The music stops as the record reaches its end. Beth ignores it. In the fresh silence, she pours herself another brandy and simply searches for "**jpg**".

Every .jpg file on Owen's computer pops up, every picture. Plenty of innocuous shots. Happy memories. She clicks past them, on a mission.

MORE BLUEPRINTS too but not the kind she's looking for. But then...

THAT WOMAN

The picture from Owen's phone. The one that looks so much like her.

That gives her pause. She wipes her mouth, shaking slightly. The photo's in a folder marked "**phone**". She clicks it.

*Oh. Shit.*

DOZENS OF PHOTOS

Different women, all quasi-doppelgangers.

Most of them are candid. Voyeuristic, though there's nothing sexual about them. The women are fully clothed. But they were completely unaware that they were being photographed.

Beth is shocked. She stops on the image of

A YOUNG WOMAN

Seen through the glass of a storefront window. She zooms in on the image. It appears to be a book store. A sign on the window confirms this: **AM's Books**

*Fuck this.* It's too much. Too strange. Beth's hand darts out to switch off the monitor. Afraid to see any more.

CLICK. The image fades out. A black screen. And...

## A REFLECTION

In it. The room behind her. It's not a clean image but the lights and darks are there. Enough for us to see

SOMEONE

Standing in the window over her shoulder. Someone outside, looking in.

Beth doesn't notice. She rubs her temples and the bridge of her nose, fighting a headache. She doesn't see the indistinct shape begin to lift the window. To open it. To climb inside.

But when she looks up... it looks right at her.

The body is dark, a silhouette, but the eyes... that's where the light is. Two gaping holes in its head. Beth can see right through them.

The brandy bottle CRASHES to the floor as she turns.

There is no shape, no man. No Owen.

But the window is open.

Beth stands to close it. To lock it. To gaze out into the night for any sign of the intruder. And to ask it...

BETH  
...who were they?

No answer. But behind her, on the desk, sits

THE LOUVRE DOLL

A woman full of pins.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

The front door opens. A determined Beth stomps out and moves quickly to the car. The tires kick up dust as she swings around, heading for the road. For town.

EXT. AM'S BOOKS - DAY

Beth is standing outside of the bookstore from the photo she found on Owen's computer last night.

In fact, she has that very photo pulled up on her phone. She's holding it, looking at the screen and past it. The angle's the same. The sign, the window.

She's standing right where Owen stood the day he took this picture.

She pockets the phone, takes a breath. And walks inside.

INT. AM'S BOOKS - CONTINUOUS

Beth acts casual, pretending to browse but keeping an eye out for her true goal...

She reaches the back of the store and sees what she came here for.

THE YOUNG WOMAN

The one from the photograph. She's sitting at a desk, writing prices in a stack of used books.

BETH

Catches her breath. *It's her.* She watches the Young Woman laugh at a CO-WORKER's joke, watches her twist her finger in her hair.

There's something predatory about Beth's gaze. She waits for her moment, then moves in, stalking toward the desk.

But ANOTHER CUSTOMER beats her to the punch, asking the Young Woman for assistance.

*Abort.* Beth stops. Changes direction.

CO-WORKER  
Can I help you?

It's the woman's male Co-Worker. *Screw this guy. Get rid of him.*

BETH  
Oh. No. Just looking.

CO-WORKER  
Let me know if you need anything.

Beth turns to face a wall of pulp paperbacks. Now that she has a moment to think, she realizes how crazy this is.

She sighs. Lays her head against the shelf. Whispers.

BETH  
 ...what the fuck are you doing...

That's when the Young Woman steps up beside her.

Beth blinks and looks over. *She's right there*, shelving something.

YOUNG WOMAN  
 Hello.

BETH  
 ...Hi.

This is her chance. And she's losing it! She lets the Young Woman walk away.

*Fuck it. No. She's come this far.* Beth follows her down the aisle.

BETH (cont'd)  
 Excuse me... what's your name?

The Young Woman pauses, affably uncertain.

YOUNG WOMAN  
 Me? I'm Madison.

BETH  
 Beth. Parkins.

The Young Woman, Madison, shifts the stack of books she's holding under her arm so she that she can extend a hand.

Beth takes it, gripping it. Not letting go.

BETH (cont'd)  
 I think you knew my husband.

Madison's expression changes. *Oh shit.* This is not the conversation she thought it was going to be.

She tries to pull away. Beth holds fast a moment, briefly enjoying the other woman's fear before releasing her.

MADISON  
 No, I don't- I don't think so.

BETH  
 Owen. Owen Parkins. Your picture's on his phone.

Madison looks around nervously. Her eyes fall on her Co-Worker. She calls out to him but he doesn't hear.

MADISON

Jonah-

BETH

You don't have to call for help. I'm not here to cause a scene. The matter's been resolved, I guess.

MADISON

Oh.

BETH

Suicide.

Madison is genuinely shocked. And saddened.

MADISON

Oh my God. He-

BETH

So if you had any other... dates lined up or whatever.

MADISON

It wasn't like that.

BETH

Really?

Beth drops her gaze. Now that she's in it, she's losing steam. Moments ago she was completely in charge of this exchange... now her voice is suddenly weak. Almost pleading.

BETH (cont'd)

Tell me what it was like...

MADISON

He... He came in a lot, looking for books.

BETH

What books?

Madison doesn't want to answer.

MADISON

You know. Whatever.

BETH

Occult books?

Yep. No sense denying it.

MADISON

I guess so. Some stuff like that,  
yeah. Religious texts, mythology. --  
Look, we flirted some, had drinks a  
few times. That's it!

Beth looks at her. Hard.

BETH

Could you put your hair down?

MADISON

What?

BETH

Lose the ponytail. Put your hair  
down.

Madison doesn't know what to make of this but she doesn't  
like it.

MADISON

...Why?

BETH

Because you slept with my husband.  
And I asked nicely.

MADISON

I didn't-

But Beth's expression brooks no argument. Nervously, almost  
ashamed, Madison obeys. She's intimidated. Her hair falls.  
The same length, color and style as Beth's.

The two women stare at one another. Not identical. But  
similar. Similar enough for it to be strange for both of  
them.

BETH

Thank you.

MADISON

...I didn't sleep with him. Honestly,  
I... I barely knew him.

CUT TO:

INT. CLAIRE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

Beth is LAUGHING hysterically. Claire is trying to see the humor herself, trying to be supportive. But it's not all that funny to her.

CLAIRE  
What did you say?

BETH  
"Same!" I said "same here, kid."

Beth's standing beside a Keurig coffee maker, while Claire digs through the fridge for creamer.

CLAIRE  
Do you believe her?

BETH  
What, about them not fucking?  
(beat)  
I do.

Claire looks for the silver lining as she puts a pod into the machine, a mug underneath.

CLAIRE  
Well, that's something.

BETH  
Nothing good.

Claire squints. *What do you mean by that?*

Beth catches her look and elaborates as she stirs her coffee.

BETH (cont'd)  
Fucking I get. Fucking makes sense.  
...But it's not just her. I looked on his computer. Tons of pictures, dozens of women, all a little like me but not quite. So. If he wasn't fucking them... what the hell was he doing?

A subtle expression of horror creeps across Claire's face.

BETH (cont'd)  
I had a dream last night. Our house but not our house, he was with someone. And I watched him-

CLAIRE

Stop.

Beth pauses. Takes her friend in. Claire's look of horror is directed at her. The coffee machine RATTLES.

CLAIRE (cont'd)

Stop going through his stuff. Nothing you find is going to help you right now.

BETH

(darkly amused)

Depends what I need help with.

CLAIRE

I mean it. You wouldn't have gone through his stuff when he was alive, right? Why would you do it now that he's dead?

Beth is affronted.

BETH

He was leading a secret life, Claire. And you choose to lecture me on his posthumous right to privacy?

CLAIRE

I choose to lecture you on your right to move on! *That's* what he would want. He wouldn't-

BETH

I don't know what he wants, that's the point. That's the problem. He won't talk to me.

Claire notes the present tense. Uncomfortable. They head outside.

BETH (cont'd)

There's so much I didn't know. He built this house-

She sees Claire looking at her. Looking at her like she's crazy.

CLAIRE

What house?

Beth recants, not liking the scrutiny, not feeling safe.

BETH

Never mind.

EXT. CLAIRE'S PORCH - CONTINUOUS

Claire's husband, BOB, is chasing their two KIDS around the lawn, scooping them up and hauling them back to the swing set "prison."

Beth and Claire step out. Take seats on the porch. Claire sizes her friend up, not sure how she's going to take this...

CLAIRE

Don't go back there. Get away from the lake for awhile. Stay here tonight, stay here as long as you want. Get a hotel if you need the privacy. I can call some movers, get your shit out. Just. Don't go back.

BETH

It's not finished.

CLAIRE

That's life, B. Not everything gets finished.

BETH

Oh, it all gets finished. One way or another.

Her eyes are on

BOB AND THE KIDS

Screaming, laughing, having the time of their lives on the lawn.

Claire notices.

CLAIRE

It's not too late. I know it's hard to see that now, but-

BETH

It's too late for him. What about Owen? He can't move on.

CLAIRE

Not to be uncouth but that was his choice.

BETH  
 He's *there*. I felt him, Claire. I  
 felt my husband.  
 (soft)  
 He touched me.

Her mind is drifting. She bites her lip. Runs her hand  
 subtly up her thigh. The WIND CHIMES move musically in the  
 breeze.

Claire reaches over and places her hand over Beth's. A  
 gesture of solidarity that shakes Beth out of it.

She breaks a little.

BETH (cont'd)  
 "You were right. There's nothing."  
 Why would he say that? That there's  
 nothing? He didn't believe that.

CLAIRE  
 Hey, beliefs change. Look at you.  
 You're the most skeptical person I  
 know and you're telling me... your  
 house is haunted?

Beth blinks.

BETH  
 Well, when you put it like that it  
 sounds silly.

CLAIRE  
 Beth.

BETH  
 Okay. You win.

Claire sits back. That was a little too easy.

BETH (cont'd)  
 Let me pack up a few more things.  
 I'll get a bag, book a room for a  
 couple nights. See how I feel.

Beth stands. She seems to be sincere. Claire relaxes. Tries  
 to make sure everything's cool.

CLAIRE  
 I'm not trying to tell you how to  
 live your life or anything.

BETH

It's fine. Someone needs to. You made some excellent points, really.

She kisses Claire on the head and heads down the steps to her car.

CLAIRE

I can't tell if you're being serious.

BETH

I am. Dead serious.

*Another joke? Another deflection?* Claire cuts through it.

CLAIRE

I love you.

Beth blushes. She wasn't expecting that and doesn't know how to take it.

Claire presses on, sparing her the embarrassment of an awkward silence.

CLAIRE (cont'd)

Call me later.

BETH

I will.

She climbs in and pulls out.

After a beat, Bob runs up beside Claire, sweaty and out of breath.

BOB

Everything alright?

Claire watches Beth crest the hill and disappear from sight.

CLAIRE

I hope so.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Beth is packing an overnight bag. The room is a bit of a mess. So is she.

BETH

I'm leaving. Tonight, I guess. If you want something you better tell me now.

She downs the glass of brandy sitting on top of her dresser.

BETH (cont'd)  
Motherfucker.

Right on cue

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK

Someone's at the door. She waits. *Will it come again?*

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Beth comes bounding down the stairs, racing to the door. She grabs the knob, throws it open just in time to see

A FIGURE

Hurrying into the night. A woman dressed in white. Long dark hair. An image from her dream.

BETH  
HEY!

To her surprise, the figure turns. It's not a ghost. Not a hallucination. It's Madison. The woman from the book store.

MADISON  
I'm sorry. I didn't think you were home.

BETH  
I'm home.

Madison is sheepish now. Having second thoughts.

MADISON  
I feel a little weird coming here.

BETH  
How did you know where to go?

MADISON  
I've actually... I've been here before.

Beth takes that in. She just found her reason to stay.

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Madison sits nervously as Beth pours each of them a glass of brandy.

MADISON  
I probably should have told you earlier, at the book store, but honestly you freaked me out a little.

BETH  
Sorry about that.

She doesn't seem sorry.

MADISON  
Hey, no, I get it. Totally. I would have done the same thing. It's funny really, I... I laid down for a minute after work. At home. And I had this dream.

She locks eyes with Beth across the table. So much like her.

MADISON (cont'd)  
I dreamed I was you. Like I was me but I was you too and you were being chased by something. It was all around you. Us.

BETH  
What was it like?

MADISON  
Oh. I dunno. I can't remember.

This strikes Beth. The same words she used to describe the absence of an afterlife to Claire...

BETH  
Did it get us?

MADISON  
I'm not sure. That's when I woke up. Afterwards, I couldn't stop thinking about you and I just... I figured, there's something you should know. Stuff that happened.

Beth waits.

MADISON (cont'd)  
I told you I didn't sleep with your husband.

BETH  
You can say his name. He wasn't my husband to you.

MADISON  
Right. Well, I meant it. I didn't sleep with him- with *Owen*. But I would have. I mean I wanted to, I thought we would. He came by this one afternoon when I was getting off. Invited me over here. I wouldn't have gone normally but... he was sweet and smart and I, I don't know, I felt *safe* with him. You know?

Beth nods. It pains her to admit it but she knows exactly what this other woman is talking about.

BETH  
...I know...

Madison senses how strange this is, how hard it must be for Beth to hear. Suddenly self-conscious, she tries to pull out.

MADISON  
I'm sorry. This is weird. I shouldn't-

BETH  
Go on.

MADISON  
Are you sure?

Beth is sure.

Madison takes a breath.

MADISON (cont'd)  
Okay. So, yeah. He took me here. We had a drink.

She gestures to the brandy on the table.

MADISON (cont'd)  
He showed me the lake.  
(beat)  
And the other house.

Beth sits up, alert. Vindicated. *Someone else has been to that strange, backwards building?*

BETH  
You've seen it?

MADISON  
Not much to see. He was proud of it, though. Giddy, I guess you'd say. Like a kid, running from room to room.

She pauses. It's getting harder. They've reached the part of the story she doesn't know quite how to tell.

MADISON (cont'd)  
Then we got to the bathroom. And he held me.

BETH  
Picked you up?

MADISON  
No, like a hug. He put his chin on my shoulder. It sounds weird when I say it out loud but at the time it felt really nice. Just being close to somebody. But then I felt... he started shaking. So I sort of pulled back a little and I could see he was looking in the mirror. Looking at us. Us together and he was crying.

Beth listens.

MADISON (cont'd)  
So I kissed him. He kissed me back. It was sweet at first.  
(beat)  
And then I felt him put his hands on my neck. I tried to push him away but he... pressed harder.

Beth is mortified. Madison notices and goes into spin control mode. Almost trying to defend him.

MADISON (cont'd)  
I probably misread him. You know? I mean, everybody's got a different barometer for that stuff.

BETH  
Did he hurt you?

MADISON

No! I told him to stop and he stopped.

BETH

Do you think he would have?

The length and depth of Madison's pause serves as affirmation.

MADISON

But he didn't. He drove me home.

BETH

Did he say anything about it?

MADISON

A little. He apologized and said, "I can't do this anymore."

(ashamed)

I'd noticed his ring, obviously. I didn't ask about it. I figured he probably meant cheating. He couldn't cheat anymore.

(beat)

That isn't what he meant, is it?

BETH

...I don't know. Did he say anything else?

Madison nods.

MADISON

He said... "I know what I have to do. Lock it up and throw away the key."

BETH

When was this?

MADISON

Maybe a week ago.

BETH

The date.

Madison thinks.

MADISON

The 18th, probably. Why?

BETH

He shot himself on the 19th.

Madison stares into her brandy glass.

CUT TO:

EXT. LAKE - NIGHT

The flat black expanse of water. The reflection of the moon on the surface.

The image is shaken. Ripples. Rain. Just a few drops at first. Then a downpour.

INT. MEL'S HOUSE - NIGHT - RAIN

Mel has passed out in his easy chair. Asleep.

HIS EYES

Open slowly as the rain begins to pound his roof.

Empty house, same as always. Doilies. Ceramic angels. His wife's decor. But no wife.

He closes his eyes and goes back to sleep.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT - RAIN

Beth stands in the doorway, in the rain, watching Madison run to her car.

From the driver's seat she gives Beth a small, sad wave.

Beth returns it. Waits for her to go. And then retreats inside.

INT. CLAIRE'S HOUSE - NIGHT - RAIN

Her husband is watching TV in the background. Claire is making her way through the living room, cleaning up toys, tossing stray blocks into a plastic bucket.

HER PHONE

Is charging on an end table.

CLAIRE  
I'm going up to bed.

BOB  
I'll be up in a minute.

She disappears upstairs. He keeps on talking to her, oblivious.

BOB (cont'd)  
It's really coming down now.

CUT TO:

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT - RAIN

Beth is tromping alone through the mud and the trees. It's hard going but she remains undaunted.

Mud sucks at her shoes. Water runs into her face. She presses on to her destination.

EXT. ABANDONED HOUSE - NIGHT - RAIN

At last her flashlight beam falls upon it: the massive shape of the unfinished house. So much more forbidding in the night, in the rain.

But Beth marches right up to the front door. And THROWS IT OPEN.

INT. ABANDONED HOUSE - NIGHT - RAIN

Beth lingers at the threshold. Then steps inside, catching her breath.

She looks around. Empty as ever.

BETH  
We need to talk. I'm not leaving  
until we do. You called.

She slips out of her raincoat. It SLOPS onto the wooden floor in a puddle of its own making.

BETH (cont'd)  
I came.

She runs her fingers along the wall as she did before. Drunkenly this time, making her way toward the staircase.

She places her flashlight on one of the steps. Leans against the wall, clothes wet, leaving temporary stains.

She glances toward

THE DARKNESS AT THE TOP OF THE STAIRS

Closes her eyes. Not afraid.

She whispers.

BETH (cont'd)  
Are you coming?

Her fingers begin to trace aimless patterns over the wall.  
Soft slow circles.

She sighs. Willing that old detachment to come over her. To  
take her away once more.

BETH (cont'd)  
Don't you want to talk me?

She stays on the ground floor but moves over to the railing.  
The banister.

BETH (cont'd)  
You talked to her.

Lays her head on the slanted wood. Her voice is weak,  
cracked but she SINGS a few lines of their wedding song.  
Pleading. Haunting.

The sound of RAIN outside.

Her fingers wrap around the balusters. Her breath grows  
heavy with expectation.

BETH (cont'd)  
I'm here. I'm still here. Wherever  
you are. Come and get me.

She tightens her grip. Pulls on the balusters, raising her  
voice in a sudden, aggressive shout.

BETH (cont'd)  
COME GET ME!

She jerks on the staircase. A criminal rattling the bars of  
a jail cell.

CLUNK! The flashlight is shaken from its perch. It rolls  
down the stairs, casting wild shadows all over the room as  
it goes. CLUNK CLUNK CLUNK.

It stops when it reaches the ground floor.

Beth snaps out of it. *What the fuck am I doing here? What the fuck is wrong with me?*

She laughs derisively at herself. There's nothing to find in this place. Nothing waiting for her.

The moment is over. She drops the sensual pretense and goes to scoop up the flashlight.

But. The beam is shining directly on something.

A FLOORBOARD

Shorter than the others. Too short to fit correctly. She touches it.

Loose.

Loose enough to pry up. So she does.

Then scrambles for the flashlight with renewed vigor. *There's something under here!*

One board doesn't offer space enough to see anything. But with it gone, it's easy enough to get her fingers under another. And another.

She clears a decent gap and shines the flashlight down into the space beneath the floorboards, revealing

PLASTIC

A plastic tarp, dotted with moisture inside and out. She leans in.

The plastic is clear. It's what beneath it that counts.

Fingers. Hands. Feet. Bound together with rope.

A BODY

A woman's body. Positioned like the clay figure she found in this very same house. A human Louvre Doll. No pins, thank God, but the position is unmistakable.

Beth gasps, sits back, shines the light around.

There's more than one. Several bodies hidden here. Her worst fears confirmed, Beth gets to her feet.

EXT. ABANDONED HOUSE - NIGHT - RAIN

She bursts through the front door, hauling ass.

The ground is slick. She goes down. Hard. Into the mud. The wind knocked out of her, flashlight flying from her hand.

Wheezing, she stands. Keeps running.

She doesn't dare look back.

BETH (O.S.)

There's a house in the woods. Like ours, but not. And there's...God, there's something horrible under the floor. Some kind of ritual, I guess. I don't know.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Muddy footprints lead from the foyer to the stairs. Beth is sitting in the hallway, drenched and muddy, leaving a message on Claire's voicemail. The more she confesses, the more her voice wavers.

BETH

He wouldn't come, Claire. I went to see him but he wouldn't come and now I don't know what to do. I should go, I know that, but I don't want to. I want to be brave but what's brave here? Really? Facing him or turning my back?

INT. SHOWER

Beth is rinsing the mud from her body. Her hair. Drunk. In shock. Nothing left to give.

BETH (O.S.)

I'm scaring you. I'm sorry... I'll go.

\*  
\*

She ends it there. Hangs up. The only sound now is the rush of the water, falling like rain.

\*  
\*

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

\*

Silence.

THE LOUVRE DOLL

Is sitting on the table.

Part of Owen's "binding spell." Here in her home. Where she brought it.

A beat. And then. Behind it, out of focus, the light changes. The stereo has just turned on.

A SONG begins to play. A familiar song. Their wedding song.

INT. SHOWER

Beth freezes. She hears it. Music from downstairs, just like before.

She turns off the water. Listens closer. There's no mistake.

He's here. Calling for her.

BETH  
...there you are...

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Beth reaches out, grabs her robe before exiting the shower stall. She's nervous, not knowing what exactly to expect. Then her eyes fall on

THE MIRROR

Fogged with condensation.

A MESSAGE

Written on it. **"Stay"**

Beth laughs, soft and bitter.

BETH  
Give me a reason. That's all I need.

But a reason for what? That can mean so many things. A reason he killed those women? A reason he killed himself? ...Or a reason for her to follow in his footsteps and be done with all of this doubt?

She's in a dark place now. Standing on a precipice.

She places her hand upon the mirror, like she's visiting an incarcerated lover, seeking connection through the glass. Then, decisively, she wipes the message away, clearing the condensation.

THE WINDOW

Behind her becomes clear in the reflection. It's open. The curtains billow in the breeze.

The SONG continues to blare downstairs.

BETH (cont'd)  
...give me a reason...

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

She stands between the mirror and the window in nothing but her bathrobe.

INT. BATHROOM

Head hanging over the sink, a tear making its way down her cheek, she shivers. From fear or the chill?

A scented candle is knocked from the windowsill. The curtains move again. But this time not with the breeze.

BETH  
Who were you?

Footsteps.

Beth bites her lip. She doesn't turn around.

BETH (cont'd)  
I can't even tell anymore. What's real.

We can hear it, now. BREATHING.

HER HAIR

Is lifted away from her neck. Pulled back... But by nothing we can see.

He's come for her. This is what she asked for in the abandoned house. But is it still what she wants?

BETH (cont'd)  
Is this real?

Her robe falls to the floor.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Far away. Beth is naked and alone in the soft glow of the window. Her back to the vast and hungry dark.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Beth tightens her fist. She lifts her head, stares into her own eyes in the mirror. Defiant.

BETH  
Don't be scared.

She smirks. She's not talking to herself. She's talking to him.

SHE GASPS

As cold, unseen hands run up her body.

He breath comes out in a cloud of condensation.

HER WRIST

Jerks. Something has grabbed her hand.

She sighs in pleasure. Rolls her head to the side. He must be kissing her. Touching her.

HER RIGHT FOOT

Slides across the wet tile. Her left stays in place. Her eyes stay on the mirror. There doesn't appear to be anyone behind her but he's there.

She can feel him. She starts to move, desperate to lose herself in the moment, to shut out everything else.

The toothbrush holder falls to the floor. She presses her face against

THE MIRROR

The room has grown cold. Her breath hot. The glass fogs up. She's panting now. And she whispers...

BETH (cont'd)  
Is this real? Are you here? ...Do you  
love me?

That's when she notices

A NEW MESSAGE

In the fog on the mirror, in the condensation from her breath as they make love.

**"YES"**

She closes her eyes. She needed that. She needed to know it. And to know one more thing...

BETH (cont'd)

Owen?

She adjusts herself and looks back at the mirror.

A NEW MESSAGE

**"NO"**

Her breathing stops. Her movement stops. *Oh no. NOT OWEN.*

Beth jerks away, stumbling to the floor. She scrambles into her robe and stands in the corner, heart racing.

*What the fuck was she thinking? What the fuck was she doing?* Her head is clear now. If this presence isn't Owen, then there's no reason to stay.

*But is it still here?* The door across the room is open. She could make a break for it...

She does! But before she can reach it, it SLAMS shut in her face. So hard the door frame CRACKS. Splinters.

She grabs for the knob, rattling it, pounding on the door, trying to escape.

To no avail. It won't budge. She's beginning to panic. But then...

CREAK. The sound of a door opening.

It's not her door, though... *Then what...?* She takes a few tentative steps back.

Until she's standing in front of the mirror. She examines

THE REFLECTION

There she is. Hollow-eyed and shaky. And there's the bathroom around her. But. *Something's different.*

THE DOOR

The door in the reflection is open! But hers isn't. How can that be?

Before she has time to think, **A MAN BURSTS INTO THE ROOM!**

Beth jumps and turns in horror to the door beside her. But the Man is only in the reflection.

What's playing out on the other side of the mirror isn't playing out here.

But what's playing out is horrible. And she can only watch.

On the other side of the mirror, the Man grabs Beth's reflection. The Reflection Beth fights back, flailing, struggling as the Man wraps his hands around her throat.

That's when Beth notices, the woman in the mirror... it isn't her. Not quite. It's the face of the woman from her dream. Another look-alike.

Beth stumbles away as the Man forces her Reflection up onto the sink. We can't see his face. Her back blocks our view.

BETH (cont'd)

Stop!

He SLAMS the Reflection's head against the glass. It spiderwebs. Cracking *from the "inside."*

SLAM. Beth's Reflection gags. SLAM. She throws a hand up, onto her assailant's face. Covering it. Except for

HIS EYE

One eye stares out from between her splayed fingers. It looks up. Into the mirror. At Beth. The real Beth. He can see her.

SLAM! The glass of the mirror shatters. And falls inward, taking the gruesome reflections with it.

No more Man. No more other woman. Just the room they were standing in. Somehow, that remains.

Madly, impossibly, the mirror has broken open like a window, revealing

AN IDENTICAL BATHROOM

On the other side. The same room in reverse.

Beth stands before it in awe. Everything's the same on both sides. It's like looking into a mirror but casting no reflection yourself.

Panicked, she tries the door again. Nothing.

So she hurries to the window, looks out. Looks down.

She could jump. It's far, too far to jump safely. But maybe- Before she gets a chance to do anything...

SOMETHING GRABS HER. The presence. She screams, fighting it off, repulsed by its touch, now. But it's pulling her, trying to drag her out into the night.

The curtains billow. Beth stumbles forward.

The presence falls on top of her, yanking the curtains with it. Sheer white fabric. She can see through it but there's nothing to see. Just the shape of the thing. The shape of a man.

Beth tries to crawl away. It pins her down.

She grabs a shard of broken glass, a piece of the mirror. Without hesitation, she brings it up and drives it through the curtain.

THUNK! Blood. Dripping on her face. Her hands. The floor. *Coming from where?* She can't tell. Too chaotic.

She throws the curtain aside, empty now, and climbs onto the sink. Goes for the mirror.

She's halfway through when it grabs her again. By the ankle.

HER SHIN

Falls onto the base of the broken glass. It carves a nasty GASH into her leg as the presence yanks her back.

Beth wails, kicks out frantically. Connects with something.

It releases her. She rolls back, through the broken mirror, off the sink and onto the floor of

THE REVERSED ROOM

She slips in the blood on the floor. Hobbles back up and throws open the door.

It works! She's out of the bathroom.

And in the Night House.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Beth stands in a mirrored version of her own familiar bedroom. This is not the backwards house Owen built in the woods. Nor is it her own.

It's something in between. A supernatural space. Completely finished. Fully furnished. But backwards. Everything's backwards.

Beth slams the bathroom door shut and backs away, waiting for whatever is inside to come barging out.

It doesn't. All is still. It seems to be over. For now.

Behind her, she can hear the WIND. The sound of gentle WAVES. *The ocean?*

She approaches her bedroom window and GASPS.

BEYOND THE WINDOW

There's nothing but water. The lake is endless, stretching off into the distance as far as the eye can see. It reaches the base of the house as well, lapping against it.

Beth places her head against the window. It's hopeless. There's nothing out there. And nowhere to go. A quiet moment of utter despair.

A CLICK from across the room makes her jump.

THE CLOSET DOOR

Is open. Just a crack.

AN EYE

Is peering out. The eye of a terrified woman.

Beth approaches.

BETH

Wait.

The door SLAMS shut.

BETH (cont'd)

Please. I won't hurt you. What is this? Where are we?

The answer comes softly, through the door.

WOMAN (O.S.)  
You know where. The Caerdroia.

Beth leans back against the wall, piecing it together.

BETH  
The maze.

WOMAN (O.S.)  
The trap.

BETH  
He bound you here-

A new VOICE startles her. ANOTHER WOMAN, hiding under the bed.

WOMAN UNDER THE BED  
No. We were just bait.

A chill runs down Beth's spine.

BETH  
Bait for what?

WOMAN UNDER THE BED  
For what's after you.

BANG! The bedroom door slams open. A COUPLE stumbles in. Drunk. Giggling.

They move right past Beth, not seeing her, headed straight for the bed. His face is turned away... but Beth recognizes her own.

It's her. It's Owen. Some sort of memory.

She remains huddled in the corner. Watches as her younger self peels her husband's shirt off. Tosses it aside. As he playfully shoves her onto the bed. As he climbs on top of her.

Beth looks away. Over at

THE WINDOW

Where the moonlight streams in. Strangely bright, the only source of illumination. Dust motes dance in its glow... Everywhere but the center of the window. Because something invisible is standing in front of it.

An outline, a shape. An emptiness. NOTHING. It's watching the Younger Beth and Owen on the bed.

Then it turns toward the Beth huddled in the corner.

And it stalks toward her.

Beth SCREAMS. Flails. But the invisible presence grabs her by the leg.

ON THE BED

Young Beth and Owen make love. Oblivious as Beth is hauled away. The presence is dragging her into the hallway.

Her fingers find the door frame and grip it for all she's worth.

BETH

No. Please!

She loses her grip.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The presence drags Beth kicking and screaming down the darkened hall.

All the doors are open. Light pours out of every room. And within them... people. A couple. Beth and Owen. We can't always see their faces but we know it's them.

Beth knows it's them, as she's pulled inexorably toward the stairs.

IN THE GUEST BATHROOM

There's Beth leaning over the toilet in a party dress. Owen kneeling beside her. His hand on her shoulder. Her hand on top of his.

IN THE OFFICE

There's Owen sitting at his desk, Beth sneaking up behind him, embracing him, kissing his head.

IN THE GUEST ROOM

There they are, jeans rolled up, paint rollers in hand, painting the walls together.

But these scenes are just memories. Fleeting sources of light in the long, dark hallway.

Too long. They should have reached the stairs by now. But there's more rooms. Impossible rooms. One door opens on

THE KITCHEN

Where they cook together. Another onto

THE MASTER BATHROOM

Where they soak together in the tub.

Beth claws at the carpet, trying to arrest her momentum. But there's no stopping it. This long, slow journey through the endless tunnel. No light at the end.

At last, they reach the stairs. Beth writhes in the grip of her assailant.

BETH

You're not him! Let me go!

Suddenly, it hoists her up. She's lifted bodily into the air.

SLAM! SLAM SLAM SLAMSLAMSLAM! The doors in the hallway all close.

Beth stares defiantly into the darkness.

BETH (cont'd)

You're not him. You're not Owen.  
You're nothing.

A beat. And then. A voice. A whisper. From nowhere.

VOICE (O.S.)

Yes.

She jerks herself free from its grasp and tumbles down the steps. Brutally. Painfully.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT HOUSE

Beth lands in a heap at the bottom of the stairs. In the soft glow of firelight. There's

## A SPACE

In the floorboards beside her. A missing board, she gazes down into the dark space beneath the floor and catches a glimpse of

## A PALE FOOT

Just as it slides out of sight. *Bodies beneath the floor.*

Beth rolls over, wiping blood from a busted lip. *Where is she now?*

There's a Christmas tree in the corner. A familiar

## BOX

On the table. The brandy case, back when it was new. Full. Topped with that telltale red bow.

There's a fire ROARING in the fireplace. And

## A COUPLE

On the couch in front of her. The man is sitting up. The woman's asleep, her head in his lap.

Beth is behind them. But she can see his silhouette. The outline, the back of his head. The shape of him. Owen.

Like the rooms upstairs, this is just a memory.

Beth winces as she sits up. Her ankle is horribly twisted.

She watches the memory for a moment, savoring it.

But then. "Owen" speaks. A human voice but deep and distant. A voice from the dark at the bottom of a well.

OWEN (O.S.)

Why did you leave?

She leans against the wall.

BETH

I didn't leave anyone.

OWEN

You did.

He keeps his back to her. He's looking down at the woman in his lap. Beth herself. Much younger. Serene in sleep. He strokes her hair.

OWEN

The night we met. You ran away.

Beth laughs bitterly. She knows who she's really talking to. And it isn't her husband.

BETH

The night I died. You're what I saw...

He turns slightly. His face in profile in the firelight, features obscured by shadow.

OWEN

I'm what everyone sees.

BETH

Death.

He shakes his head. *No, not Death.*

OWEN

What comes next.

He reaches down. Caresses the face of the Beth in his lap. The Beth on the couch.

OWEN (cont'd)

I tried to get you back. Did you hear me, calling for you?

Beth is shellshocked, casting her mind back on her life. Yes, she heard it calling to her. Many times. The emptiness. The Void.

BETH

...yes.

OWEN

I held you. In the hotel room in Memphis, do you remember?

BETH

Stop.

VOICE (O.S.)

The tug of the blade on your skin-

BETH

STOP!

He stops. The fire crackles. Beth swallows.

BETH (cont'd)  
 What did you do to my husband?

OWEN  
 I whispered in his ear. I told him,  
 over and over again, to send you to  
 me.

Owen's hand lingers on the sleeping Beth's throat. His fingers tighten. Here on the couch, years ago on a quiet Christmas Eve, he contemplated killing her.

But he stops. Runs his thumb over her lips instead. She parts her them.

OWEN  
 But he wouldn't. He couldn't. He sent  
 me them instead.

Beth stares at the hole in the floorboards. The empty space beneath them. Where the bodies were kept.

BETH  
 But he trapped you here.

She lays her head back and closes her eyes, smiling with subtle satisfaction.

When she opens them again, she's

ON THE COUCH

She's taken the place of the Beth in her memory. Lying there in his lap.

When he speaks again, that distant voice is louder. Closer. Everywhere.

OWEN  
 And I trapped you.

Beth looks up. It isn't Owen. It's

THE SILHOUETTE

She saw in the reflection on her computer monitor. This "Owen" isn't hidden in shadow... he is a shadow. Featureless and dark. A black void in the shape of a man. With two massive hollows in its head. Eyes.

Behind them, through them, she can see the fireplace. The flickering flames.

Its hands are on her throat.

Beth screams. Fights back in a panic. Extracting herself from its grasp, rolling onto the floor.

It comes for her, this presence. It grabs her and drags her across the room, grabs her by the throat once more and presses her against the wall.

Beth struggles. Gagging. The shadow leans in close.

Behind it, the room *dims*. All the light is seeping out, the space surrounding the entity becoming as dark as it is.

Beth grits her teeth, struggles against it. Tries to force the darkness back.

It slides her further up the wall, tightening its grip on her neck.

Soon, the shadow is lost to sight. Beth is all the we can see. Everything else is darkness. The shadow, the void, the presence... it's everywhere.

BETH

...no...no, god dammit...

She's finding something within herself. The very last vestiges of strength. It can't end like this. She won't let it.

The room begins to lighten up. The presence is still there but it's invisible once more. All we can see is the pressure it's exerting on the soft flesh of Beth's throat.

With a groan that becomes a shout, she grabs the unseen wrist, forces her way to freedom.

She collapses, GASPING, and races for the door.

The presence is all over her, knocking her legs out from under her, trying desperately to keep her in the house.

But Beth struggles forward. Reaches the doorknob. Throws the door open.

Flees.

EXT. NIGHT HOUSE

But there's nowhere to flee to. As soon as she's outside, she PLUNGES into

WATER

The endless lake. No shore in sight.

But she runs. Out. Where the water grows deeper.

She gazes up at

THE MOON

Bright and full, glowing white in the sky.

But next to it...

A SMALLER MOON

This one pale and RED.

BETH

Has no time to fully register the oddity of it. All she can do is swim forward. Leaving the Night House behind.

EXT. HOUSE - MORNING

The sun is up and shining. The landscape is serene.

A CAR

Pulls into the driveway.

CLAIRE

Hurries out and approaches the house.

THE FRONT DOOR

Is open. She doesn't like the look of that. She hurries inside.

INT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Claire slips in and looks around nervously.

CLAIRE

Hello? Beth? I got your message.  
Where are you??

There are

## BOXES

Everywhere. The entire house is packed up. Beth was busy last night. It looks like she really is ready to move out. To move on.

Claire ignores the boxes as she moves deeper into the house. It's dead silent. She heads

## UPSTAIRS

Throwing open the door to each room. All packed up.

Still a few photographs hanging in the hallway, though.

## ONE OF OWEN

Stares at her. Frozen in an endless smile. \*

## EXT. NIGHT LAKE \*

Beth is losing steam. The lights of the Night House are a distant speck behind her. \*

She's doing her best to keep going, to keep her head above water. But she can't. She's too weak. Too tired. \*

She's so damn tired. \*

Her ears dip beneath the surface. The sound of her own ragged breathing is lost. \*

She pops back up. Swallowing air. Swallowing water. \*

She closes her eyes. Gives up. \*

*So fucking be it.* \*

But before she can sink \*

## HANDS \*

Grabs hold of her. And haul her up. Someone is pulling her, lifting her into \*

## A BOAT \*

Her boat. Hers and Owen's. She gags, spits. \*

Plastic CRINKLES beneath her. There's a plastic tarp lining the inside of the boat. To make clean up easier. \*

On the floor of the boat in front of her \*

BARE FEET \*

Bare legs. A man. Naked. Cold. \*

At last, her eyes find his face. At last, we see him  
clearly. Not a photo, not a video. Not obscured by hands or  
shadows. Clear and clean and loving. \*

OWEN \*

The face from the pictures. Alive. And staring. \*

A gun in his hand. A note beside him. \*

A SEALED ENVELOPE \*

Beth's name on the front. This is the moment he shot  
himself. \*

She puts her hand on top of his. On top of the gun. \*

He smiles at her. \*

The sight of him is overwhelming. But as much as she'd like  
to believe it, she has to speak the truth. \*

BETH \*

You're not him. \*

He looks into her eyes. His voice a whisper. But his lips  
don't move. \*

OWEN \*

No. He's gone. Where all things go. \*

She nods. It's not her husband. \*

She just doesn't care anymore. \*

INT. BATHROOM - DAY \*

Claire is staring at the broken mirror. She fears the worst. \*

CLAIRE \*

Beth! \*

She runs back into the hall. Shouting. \*

CLAIRE (cont'd) \*

BETH! \*

CUT TO:

EXT. NIGHT LAKE

Beth turns. *Did she hear something?*

BETH

Claire?

But Owen places a hand on her shoulder. Draws her attention back.

OWEN

Shh.

He's standing on the surface of the water, just like in her dream. She takes his hand. Steps out onto the surface to join him.

His lips finally move as he speaks one last time.

OWEN (cont'd)

You're safe now.

He kisses her. She wraps her arms around him. And gives in.

Slowly, they begin to sink into the lake, the water overtaking their ankles, their knees...

Above them, in the night sky

THE TWO MOONS

Have overlapped, almost an eclipse. The smaller red moon positioned over the white one. Like a giant EYE peering down upon them.

Beth tenses in Owen's arms. Her fingers tighten on his shoulder.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

Claire is in the kitchen, distress mounting until... BLAM!

A GUNSHOT

Echoes out across the lake.

CLAIRE

No. Beth, no no no.

She races outside. \*

EXT. HOUSE - MORNING \*

Claire rounds the side, looking this way and that, trying to determine the source of the sound. \*

MEL \*

Must have heard it too. He's come running out of his house. He catches Claire's eye. They understand one another instantly. \*

MEL \*

Came from the lake! \*

Together, they take off in that direction. \*

EXT. LAKE - MORNING \*

They reach the water's edge and look out. \*

THE BOAT \*

Is there, drifting on the surface. \*

BETH'S BODY \*

Sits within, slumped over. Unmoving. \*

Dead. She must be. Dead in that same boat, having followed in her husband's footsteps. \*

CLAIRE \*

NO! \*

Claire and Mel rush forward, leaping, splashing, not wanting to believe it. Not until they see for themselves. Then- \*

BLAM! Another GUNSHOT rings out, taking them by surprise. Jarring and unexpected. The previous one came from a distance. This time it's up close. Ear-shattering. \*

The sound ignites something in Claire. Not dead? *Does that mean...?* She speeds up, trudging through the hip deep water, swimming when she has to, leaving a fatigued Mel behind. \*

INSIDE THE BOAT

Beth sits, alive but eyes vacant, in a sort of trance, repeatedly pulling the trigger on the handgun that rests by her side.

BLAM! A third hole appears in the bottom of the boat. Water is leaking in. Flooding it. Sinking it.

CLAIRE (cont'd)

BETH!

MEL (O.S.)

Is she there?!

CLAIRE

She's here!

Claire frantically inspects Beth, trying to get her attention.

Slowly, stiffly, Beth raises the gun. But Claire is there to gently take hold of her wrist.

CLAIRE (cont'd)

Beth! Beth, look at me, put the gun down.

Beth blinks. Looks down at her hand. At the gun in it. *What's that doing there?*

BETH

That's... that's not mine.

CLAIRE

No. It's really not. That's not yours, kiddo.

Beth drops it. Weak. Claire is hauling the boat to more shallow terrain. She reaches for Beth, letting her know that she's there.

BETH

(distant)

...this isn't real... none of this...

CLAIRE

It's real, Beth. I'm here. It's all real.

At last, Beth turns to her. Taking a dark and subtle pleasure in sharing a hard truth.

BETH

For now.

Mel has arrived, soaking wet, out of breath, terrified.

MEL

Is she okay? My God, Beth.

BETH

...it wasn't him...

MEL

What wasn't?

BETH

...tried to get me...

MEL

Who?

CLAIRE

Beth, talk to us! What happened? Who tried to get you?

But Beth ignores them. She's focused on the woods across the lake. The place where the Night House should be. There's nothing there now. Just the WIND in the trees. Soothing. Lonely.

Her voice blends with the rustle of the leaves. Barely a whisper. Matter of fact.

BETH

...nothing...

FADE TO:

BLACK

FADE IN:

EXT. RURAL LANDSCAPE - EVENING

A bookend sequence. The same landscape that opened the film. Tall grass. An old wooden fence. The lake. The house. But darker now. Night has fallen.

INT. HOUSE - EVENING

The same rooms, same angles, but empty. Not even boxes.

Nothing. \*

The mantle is bare. No more photos. \*

But, as before, there are VOICES, muffled, coming from the front porch. Shapes through the window. Two women. \*

CLAIRE (O.S.)  
Did you finish your last pass? \*

BETH (O.S.)  
Yep. All clear. \*

CLAIRE (O.S.)  
Awesome. That was Bob, he's gonna go ahead and take the U-haul back since it's due at seven. You and I can get the last of this, start unpacking small stuff, whatever you need for tonight. \*

BETH (O.S.)  
Cool. \*

EXT. FRONT PORCH - EVENING \*

Beth and Claire, standing beside a heavy cardboard box. Claire's pickup truck and Beth's car in the driveway. \*

Some time has passed. Beth's hair is short. She doesn't look like the women in the photographs anymore. \*

CLAIRE  
Let's get this one. \*

Together they haul the box over to Claire's pickup and load it in alongside a dozen other boxes and some random pieces of furniture. \*

Clair bungee cords it all down. \*

CLAIRE (cont'd)  
You excited?!

BETH  
...I am. I will be. I think. \*

CLAIRE  
The place is awesome. Seriously. \*

Beth nods. \*

BETH

Yeah.

An awkward beat.

CLAIRE

Yeah. Okay, I'll see you there.

They climb into their vehicles. The back of Beth's car is crammed with boxes. A vacuum. A record player.

She turns the key, hears the engine rumble. Watches Claire pull out and start down the driveway.

And then... Beth hesitates. She glances over at the house. Their house.

She turns the key. The car's engine cuts off. She opens the door. Steps out onto the gravel.

And stands in front of the empty building. Alone. Taking a moment.

She closes her eyes. The wind moves through her shorter hair. Between her legs, billowing her pale dress. Like the curtains in her former bedroom. It makes her look like a ghost.

What is she doing? Waiting for someone?

BETH

...I know you're there...

No response. Just crickets. Wind over water.

So she opens her eyes. Stares down the house.

And then, almost defiant, she adds...

BETH (cont'd)

I'm here.

The house fills the frame. The moon above it. Beth before it.

And is there a shape there? In the upper window? The silhouette of someone waiting inside? There's an undeniable hint of movement but then things...

CUT TO:

BLACK