

HIDDEN

Written by
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INT. DARKNESS - UNKNOWN LOCATION

Silence.

After a long beat, a YOUNG GIRL begins to call out into the darkness. Her voice is hushed and timorous and scared.

YOUNG GIRL (O.S.)
...Mom? Are you awake?
(no answer)
Mom? Mom? Mom?!

We hear rustling bedsheets. And then finally a YOUNG WOMAN answers the Young Girl. She sounds groggy and half-asleep.

YOUNG WOMAN (O.S.)
...ZoZo? Wh-what are you doing up?
It's still early. Go back to sleep.

YOUNG GIRL (O.S.)
Olive won't let me. She's scared.

The Young Woman sighs. She has clearly heard this before.

We hear more rustling bedsheets.

The flick of a flint wheel.

And then...

FWOOM! A KEROSENE LANTERN ignites. Its fluttering flame throws an amber light across the darkness, revealing...

A SMALL WINDOWLESS BEDROOM.

Clutching tight to the lantern:

CLAIRE HEWITT. AKA MOM. EARLY-30s.

She lies on the top mattress of a ragged ARMY-STYLE BUNK BED. Her cheeks are gaunt from lack of nutrition. Her hair greasy from lack of bathing. Her skin pale from lack of sunlight.

She rubs the sleep from her eyes. Clears her throat.

CLAIRE
I'm coming, sweetie. Just...hold
on.

She throws off her tattered covers.

Climbs down a rusted ladder.

And drops onto...

THE CONCRETE FLOOR BELOW.

Her face falls in surprise.

The lower bunk bed is empty. Sheets flung aside.

She starts to say something, but she silences when she spots a tiny dirt-smudged foot sticking out from beneath the bed.

Claire kneels down and peers...

UNDER THE BUNK BED.

And at last she finds her daughter:

ZOE HEWITT. AKA ZOZO. SEVEN YEARS OLD.

She wears a tattered purple jacket with a patch reading "Kingsville Swim Club." Her knobby knees are drawn up to her chin, and her tangled brown hair tumbles across her pale face like a mop. Like Claire, she is malnourished and dirty.

But mostly she just looks scared.

CLAIRE

ZoZo? What are you doing under here?

ZOE

Mom, I told you, I don't like that stupid baby name anymore. My name's Zoe.

Zoe motions to her jacket. Her name is stitched on the pocket: "ZOE."

ZOE (CONT'D)

And I'm under here because I'm *hiding*. Olive said we had to hide.
(lowers voice)
She dreamed they found us.

CLAIRE

Who did?

ZOE

The Breathers.

CLAIRE

Hey, what did we talk about? Our new rule, remember? *Rule number four*. You're not allowed to say that word anymore.

ZOE
I *didn't* say it. Olive did.

CLAIRE
Well, tell Olive my rules apply to her too. And tell her *no one* found us. Dad's been keeping watch all night, just like always. We're safe here. Hidden.

ZOE
You hear that Olive?

Zoe reaches behind her back and retrieves...

"OLIVE." A SMILING AND FRECKLED 1950S DOLL.

Zoe yanks a pullstring on Olive's back. It stretches out, then retracts. Olive shrieks in an unnerving robotic tenor:

OLIVE
MYYY SMMIIIIILLLE ISSS STUUUCCK!

Zoe looks knowingly at Claire. Whispers.

ZOE
Her "smile is stuck." That means she doesn't want to be smiling anymore. That means she's still scared.

Claire sighs.

CLAIRE
If we checked with Dad, would that make Olive feel better?

Zoe makes Olive nod. A definite "yes."

INT. MAIN ROOM - A FEW MOMENTS LATER

FWOOSH! Claire shoves aside a BEDSHEET DOOR.

The "door" leads out into the MAIN ROOM. This is a concrete space significantly larger than the bedroom, roughly thirty feet by fifty feet, but just as drab and dark and windowless.

All in all, it looks more like a prison than a home.

CLAIRE
Stay close...

As Claire leads Zoe across the main room, she kindles two more kerosene lanterns and a row of candles held by wall sconces. The growing light lifts the shadows, revealing:

A RUSTED HAND-CRANK WATER PUMP that feeds into the ground.

A LARGE WOODEN CABINET with its heavy doors swung shut.

A DINING TABLE fashioned from old wood planks.

A CHEMICAL TOILET stained dark brown.

And lastly...

A SECOND BEDSHEET DOOR HANGING OVER A NARROW DOORWAY.

A SILHOUETTED FIGURE looms behind the bedsheet. The shadow undulates and stretches in the light. Menacing. Monstrous.

Zoe hugs Olive. Her eyes wide. Her voice hushed.

ZOE

Mom, look.

CLAIRE

That's just Dad.

ZOE

It doesn't l-look like Dad.

CLAIRE

It's Dad, I promise. The light's just playing tricks on you. See.

Claire flings aside the bedsheet door to reveal...

A SMALL ROUND VESTIBULE.

There is a small fold-out table at the end of the vestibule.

A deck of faded playing cards and a dwindling candle sit atop the table. Behind it, a RUSTED STEEL LADDER slithers up into darkness.

But there is no one at the table. The figure is gone.

Claire looks concerned.

CLAIRE

...Ray?

WHOOSH! A LARGE FIGURE SUDDENLY DROPS OFF THE LADDER.

The figure snatches Zoe up into his arms and swings her around like a merry-go-round, growling monstrously.

Zoe gasps. But her fear drops when she realizes it's only...

RAY HEWITT. AKA DAD. MID-30s.

Unlike his stretched shadow, he appears neither giant nor monstrous. In fact, he is just as emaciated as Claire and Zoe, his only substantial weight coming from a thick beard.

He lowers Zoe back down onto the floor. Grinning.

Zoe is not so amused.

ZOE

Dad! You-you scared me!

RAY

You scared *me*! It's early! What are you monsters doing up already?

CLAIRE

Why don't you ask Olive that?

Ray shifts his gaze to Olive, who is still clutched tightly in Zoe's arms. He furrows his brow with exaggerated concern.

RAY

Uh oh. Olive had another nightmare, huh? How does she even sleep with her eyes open all the time?

ZOE

Don't be mean, Dad. She's scared.
(gravely serious)
She wants a report.

Ray considers.

RAY

...I better consult my notes.

INT. VESTIBULE - A FEW MOMENTS LATER

Ray leads Zoe over to the fold-out table.

He picks up a handful of faded playing cards and pretends to read them. His "notes." He tosses a ten down onto the table.

RAY

...My watch started at ten.

He tosses down a two.

RAY (CONT'D)

At two, I played seven games of solitaire. Lost four, won three.

And then a five.

RAY (CONT'D)

At five, a couple of deer ran overhead.

A six.

RAY (CONT'D)

At six, my family scared me half-to-death.

He throws down the remaining cards. Smiles reassuringly.

RAY (CONT'D)

But other than that, not a creature was stirring, not even a --

ZOE

Breather?

CLAIRE

ZoZo.

RAY

Nope. Not even a...you know.

Zoe looks behind Ray at the steel ladder. Her eyes follow it up, but it vanishes into darkness. The top rungs out of view.

ZOE

And the locks? Are they still..."hold fast"?

RAY

Still hold fast. You can check yourself if you don't believe me.

CLAIRE

No she *can't*, Ray. I told you, I don't want her climbing up there anymore.

RAY

Come on, this little monkey? She can handle it.

ZOE

Yeah, I can handle it. I know the rules. *One*, never be loud --

CLAIRE

That's not the point --

ZOE

*Two, never lose control, three,
never open the door, four, never
call them Breathers.*

Zoe looks up at Claire.

Her eyes pleading.

And...

INT. VESTIBULE - A FEW MOMENTS LATER

Tap. Tap. Tap. Zoe scales the ladder.

Claire and Ray watch. Ray is calm. Claire is anxious.

Zoe climbs higher and higher, carefully taking one rusted rung at a time. *One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine.* Until at last she comes face to face with...

A STEEL DOOR ON THE CEILING.

If it was not apparent before, it is now: we are in an UNDERGROUND BOMB SHELTER.

The shelter door has a vault-like wheel handle and a row of heavy chain locks bolting it to the ceiling. It has clearly been modified to keep someone out. Or, rather, *something* out.

Zoe gives the chains a tug. They hold firm.

She looks down at Ray.

ZOE

...Hold fast.

RAY

Told ya. Another day safe and sound. And you know what that means, don't you?

ZOE

The calendar?

(Ray nods)

Can I mark it today?

RAY

Ask your mother.

CLAIRE

It's too early to be playing with knives. We should go back to bed.

ZOE
But I'm not tired anymore. Please,
Mom? *Please?*

Zoe stares at her mom.

Her eyes pleading again.

And...

INT. MAIN ROOM - A FEW MINUTES LATER

THUNK! A Swiss Army knife stabs into a concrete wall.

Zoe wields the knife. She saws its blade up and down along the concrete, slowly carving a HATCH MARK into the wall.

Claire and Ray supervise. Ray beams; Claire is anxious again.

CLAIRE
Not too hard, ZoZo. You don't want
it to slip and cut your hand.

ZOE
I told you, stop calling me ZoZo.

Zoe bites her lower lip in concentration and continues to saw at the cement until the hatch mark is about two inches long.

She steps back and looks up the face of the wall.

Hundreds more HATCH MARKS just like it tattoo the whole wall, stretching nearly all the way to the ceiling. They look like the marks a prison inmate makes to keep track of days.

Zoe scrutinizes the hatch marks.

ZOE (CONT'D)
How many days is that now?

CLAIRE
Why don't you tell us?

ZOE
I don't know.

CLAIRE
Count them then.

ZOE
There're too many.

CLAIRE
No, there aren't. They're lined up
in rows of ten, remember?
(MORE)

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

And there are thirty rows all together. So thirty times ten makes...?

ZOE

Three hundred. Plus the one I just marked. So...three hundred and one?

CLAIRE

That's it! See! Those math lessons are really paying off!

Zoe does not share Claire's enthusiasm about math. She holds up Olive and yanks her pullstring. It stretches, retracts.

Olive shrieks:

OLIVE

GIIIVEE MEEE A KISSSSSS!

Zoe looks knowingly at Claire.

ZOE

That means she's hungry.

INT. MAIN ROOM - A LITTLE LATER

Claire swings open the wood cabinet.

The shelves teem with ROW UPON ROW OF TIN FOOD CANS. Every kind of preserved food imaginable. Many have already been eaten, their tin tops cut open, their wrappers removed.

But the bottom shelf brims with still unopened cans.

Claire sorts through the options.

CLAIRE

Let's see what we have here. We've still got some hominy...corn... potatoes...beans...peaches --

ZOE

Peaches!

CLAIRE

We just had peaches yesterday. We can have them again tomorrow, but I think today we should try something with protein. Maybe beans for once --

ZOE

No, beans are the worst. Dad.

Zoe looks at Ray for help. He considers.

RAY
You know...peaches sound pretty
good to me too --

CLAIRE
Ray.

RAY
How about we take a vote?

CLAIRE
Ray!

RAY
All those in favor of beans, raise
your hands.

Claire raises her hand. The sole voice of reason.

RAY (CONT'D)
That's one vote for beans. Now...
all in favor of sweet, juicy
peaches, raise your hands.

Ray and Zoe raise their hands. Zoe stretches her hand as high
as she can into the air. As if that will count for double.

Ray looks at Claire. Shrugs.

RAY (CONT'D)
Sorry, hon. Two against one.

Zoe raises Olive's hand.

ZOE
Three.

INT. MAIN ROOM - DINING AREA - LATER

A knife stabs into tin.

Claire is using the Swiss Army knife to cut open the can of
peaches. She pries off its top, but she does not scoop out
any peaches. She just stares down into the can. Confused.

Zoe sits at the dining table. Legs rocking. Anxious.

ZOE
Mom, *hurry*, I'm starving.

CLAIRE
There's nothing in here.

ZOE
Mom.

CLAIRE
I'm *serious*. The peaches are gone.

RAY
What? That's impossible.

Ray strides over and takes the can from Claire. Sure enough, he finds no peaches inside, only a small puddle of juice.

But the juice spills out. Dribbling onto the floor.

RAY (CONT'D)
The hell?

Ray flips the can around.

There is a GAPING HOLE in the side of the can.

INT. MAIN ROOM - A LITTLE LATER

DINK-DINK! An empty food can scatters across the floor.

The Hewitts are removing all of the remaining unopened food cans from the cabinet. They inspect the cans one by one.

A dozen other cans have holes in them as well.

Claire stares in disbelief.

CLAIRE
Twelve. That's almost a sixth of our rations.

ZOE
There are no more peaches?

CLAIRE
No more peaches.

RAY
Well, at least something got to enjoy them. Something with teeth.

Ray holds up a can to the light of the kerosene lantern. Sure enough, the tin around the hole is grooved with TEETH MARKS.

Zoe stares at the marks. Her little eyes gaping wide.

ZOE
What has teeth like that?

RAY
A rat probably.

ZOE

A rat? A rat couldn't get in here!
I just checked the door, it's *hold*
fast.

CLAIRE

The door's not the only way in.

INT. MAIN ROOM - A FEW MOMENTS LATER

The Hewitts stand in the corner of the room.

They stare up at...

A VENTILATION GRATE ON THE CEILING.

It is circular in shape, roughly three feet in diameter, and capped with a rusted metal grate. A howling *GUST OF WIND* from the unseen surface echoes menacingly down its hollow shaft.

Zoe stares up at the vent. Uneasy.

ZOE

Can the Breathers get in there too?

CLAIRE

ZoZo.

ZOE

Can they?

RAY

No, don't worry, they're too big to fit in there. But a rat definitely could. Let's just hope it had its fill and left.

CLAIRE

I doubt it. Not with this much food still around. It's here. Somewhere.

Claire looks around the main room. It is dark and shadowed. Difficult to see. No sign of a rat.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

We need to keep an eye out. Find it before it steals any more food. In the meantime, we'll have to cut down on our rations.

ZOE

B-but...they're already so small.

CLAIRE

We don't have a choice. I'm sorry.
I really am.

Zoe looks crushed.

INT. MAIN ROOM - LATER

THUNK! Claire slices open a can of beans.

She dishes the beans out onto three plates fashioned from tin cans. The portions are tiny. More of a snack than a meal.

INT. MAIN ROOM - DINING AREA - A LITTLE LATER

The Hewitts eat their "meal" at the dining table.

For utensils, they use bent tin. For napkins, torn wrappers.

Claire and Ray eat their beans with satisfaction, savoring every bite, but Zoe just stares at her plate. Not eating.

Claire flashes her a disapproving look.

CLAIRE

I'm not going to ask you again.
Eat.

ZOE

I told you, Mom, I don't want
stupid beans.

CLAIRE

Hey, ZoZo, rule number two: never
lose control, never let anger take
over --

ZOE

Rule number *five*, never call me
ZoZo. And I just wanted some
peaches.

CLAIRE

Well, a thief stole them. And now
we're all just gonna have to give
some things up.

ZOE

I already have *nothing*. I'm stuck in
here, I can't even go outside, I
don't have any friends 'cept Olive
and she can only say five things --

RAY

What about us?

Zoe turns to her dad. Taken aback.

ZOE
...What?

RAY
You said you don't have any
"friends." Mom and I aren't your
friends?

ZOE
You know what I mean.

RAY
No, actually, I don't. I think it's
real silly to think you don't have
anything when you have everything.

ZOE
Yeah, right.

RAY
Yeah. *Right*. The proof's there.

Ray motions across the room to the "calendar." The hatch
marks stretch up to the ceiling.

RAY (CONT'D)
How many days did you say that was?

ZOE
Three hundred and one.

RAY
Three hundred and one. We shouldn't
have been around for any one of
those days. But just when we needed
it, we found this shelter, and it's
given us food, a home, a life.
Everything. For all we know, we're
the only ones left, the only ones
still alive. So you see...every one
of those marks is really a miracle.

Zoe looks at her dad. Incredulous.

ZOE
...A miracle?

RAY
That's right. *A miracle.* And this
food, it's gonna allow you to live
another day. And that means another
hatch can be drawn, right?

ZOE
Yeah. I guess so.

RAY
So you see...those nasty cold mushy
beans on your plate? They're really
their own kind of miracle too.

Zoe looks down at her plate of beans. Still hesitant.

RAY (CONT'D)
Hey, fine, if you're not gonna eat
your mushy miracles, *I will*.

Ray reaches out with his fork and tries to steal away a bite
of her beans, but Zoe slaps his hand, knocking it away.

And then she picks up her tin fork.

Scoops up a heap of beans.

And begins to eat.

INT. MAIN ROOM - DINING AREA - LATER

Breakfast is over.

Zoe gathers up the empty plates. Stacking them.

INT. MAIN ROOM - WASH AREA - LATER

SQUEAK! Zoe pumps water from the hand crank pipe.

The crank is swollen with rust, but with enough force it
jerks down. Dime-sized drops of MURKY WATER dribble out of
the faucet onto a DISHRAG. She uses it to clean the plates.

As she works, her gaze wanders to the food cabinet.

She longs for more. But forces herself to look away.

She scrubs faster.

INT. BEDROOM - SAME

Ray drops down on the bottom bunk bed.

He undresses for bed. First his pants. Then his shirt.

Claire folds his clothes as he removes them, but she pauses
at the sight of his bare chest. It is so gaunt that she can
count his ribs. Her face tenses with concern.

Ray notices. Takes her hand. Squeezes.

RAY
Hey, *relax*.

CLAIRE
I didn't say anything.

RAY
Your face did. I know that face like the back of my hand. You're worrying again.

CLAIRE
You're not? We were barely making it as it was. We've lost a lot of weight already, all of us, and now --

RAY
And now we're just gonna have to find a way to get more food. I'll go to the damn surface if I have to.

CLAIRE
That's suicide.

RAY
We'll figure it out somehow. We always do. The important thing is that we still haven't been found.

CLAIRE
...Except by a rat.

RAY
Or *only* by a rat. Try changing your point of view for once, Claire. This shelter can be a prison, or it can be a home. Beans can be beans, or they can be --

CLAIRE
(incredulous)
Miracle beans?

RAY
Why not?

CLAIRE
Because I'm not seven years old, Ray. I get what you're doing for ZoZo, I *get it*, but I don't believe in miracles. Not anymore.

RAY

You should. This is our life now,
and we have to live it the best we
can. Or else what's the point?

CLAIRE

The point is to stay alive.

RAY

We can do that and still live.

Ray leans in and kisses Claire. Once, twice, thrice.

She shrinks away.

CLAIRE

Ray, come on, what are you doing?

RAY

Living.

Ray shoves Claire back onto the mattress. He kisses her
mouth. Her cheek. Her neck. And then he slowly makes his way
down her body. Kissing as he goes.

Claire tries to resist. Finally gives in.

She has only one condition:

CLAIRE

...We have to be quiet.

RAY

Relax.

Ray moves down below her waist.

Claire relaxes.

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

Ray is now sprawled on the bunk bed.

He is naked except for the bedsheet, which tumbles loosely
around his gaunt body.

His chest heaves slowly. Fast asleep.

INT. MAIN ROOM - LATER

A kerosene lantern flickers dimly on the dining table.

The main room appears to be empty, but we can hear the voices
of Zoe and Claire. They are talking somewhere very close by.

ZOE (O.S.)
Thirteen divided by six is...two.

CLAIRE (O.S.)
With a remainder of...?

ZOE (O.S.)
...Two?

CLAIRE (O.S.)
No, ZoZo! A remainder of one! *One!*

The camera drops down to...

THE FLOOR BELOW.

Claire and Zoe sit cross-legged under the table.

A row of EMPTY TIN CANS and a mound of CORN KERNELS are laid out on the ground before them. Claire uses these as props to teach Zoe division. She beams with the thrill of teaching.

But Zoe is getting antsy.

CLAIRE
Come on, you can do this. Let's try another one.

ZOE
MoOOoom. Olive is getting bored.

CLAIRE
How about...if you get this next one right, we can stop for the day.

ZOE
(perks up)
And eat dinner?

CLAIRE
And eat dinner, sure. But it's gonna be a doozy. You ready?

ZOE
Ready.

CLAIRE
Divide *twenty-three* by...*four*.

Zoe takes a deep breath. And begins.

She counts out a handful of twenty-three kernels and evenly distributes them into four empty cans. *Plunk. Plunk. Plunk. Plunk.* Once she is finished, she peers down into the bottom of the cans and counts up the number of kernels in each one.

She squints. Concentrating.

ZOE

There are five kernels in each can.
So that means twenty-three divided
by four equals...five. With a
remainder of...

Zoe opens her hand. Finds three kernels.

ZOE (CONT'D)

Three!

CLAIRE

Three! Exactly! I knew you could do
it!

Claire ruffles Zoe's tangled hair. Zoe beams, but her mood
gradually darkens as she continues to gaze upon the three
kernels in her hand. Three remaining. Just like their family.

She looks up at Claire. Sad.

ZOE

...Mom? Do you think Dad's right?

CLAIRE

Right? About what?

ZOE

You know...about the three of us
being the only ones left in the
world?

Claire hesitates.

INT. MAIN ROOM - A FEW MOMENTS LATER

Claire strides over to the food cabinet.

She stands on her tiptoes and grabs something off the top of
the cabinet. It is an odd hand-made contraption: an old,
cracked MAKE-UP COMPACT MIRROR wedged into the prongs of a
fork. This is...

THE "PERISCOPE."

Zoe looks surprised.

ZOE

...The "periscope"?

CLAIRE

That's right. Take it.

Zoe does. But she looks hesitant.

ZOE

...What do want me to do with it?

CLAIRE

What do you think? I want you to look up there.

ZOE

On the...the surface?

(Claire nods)

But I thought you said I wasn't allowed to do that, never, ever, ever, or I'd be *dead meat*.

CLAIRE

Yeah, well...I'm trying something new today.

ZOE

What?

CLAIRE

Relaxing.

INT. MAIN ROOM - A FEW MOMENTS LATER

Zoe drags a chair across the main room.

She positions it under the ventilation shaft. But the chair alone will not provide enough height. So she grabs an EMPTY BUCKET from beneath the water pump, sets it upside down on the chair, and climbs on top. A makeshift ladder.

Claire supports her legs.

CLAIRE

Can you reach it?

ZOE

I, I think so...

Zoe stretches up her free hand and curls her fingers around the grate. Only one screw holds it in place, allowing Zoe to slide the grate aside to uncover the hollow shaft behind it.

She raises the "periscope" up the shaft, squeezes it through the slats in a second grate at the top, and thrusts the cracked mirror up onto the unseen surface above.

She rotates the mirror thirty degrees.

And then her eyes shoot wide.

She can now see...

A REFLECTION OF THE SURFACE (ZOE POV).

Or, at least, what still remains of it.

We are level with the BURNT SHELL OF A RUINED CHURCH. Charred pews, crumbled headstones, and a fallen cross litter the ground, all cast in the orange blush of a setting sun.

The neighboring environment appears likewise post-apocalyptic. Among other things, we see a faded water tower that reads KINGSVILLE, N.C., POP 9,624; shattered street lamps; fallen power lines; and a parking lot with scorched cars.

Untamed nature has begun to reclaim most of this land, slowly swallowing up the devastation. The new foliage emerges from a CHARRED FOREST, which looms just past an old graveyard.

But most striking of all, there is no activity.

No cars. No planes. No people.

Only emptiness.

IN THE MAIN ROOM BELOW,

Zoe continues to survey the surface.

Claire looks up expectantly.

CLAIRE

So...what do you see?

ZOE

Nothing. The old church. The graveyard. *Nothing*. Dad's right. It's just us left. Us and Olive.

CLAIRE

But do you see "us and Olive"?

ZOE

No, Mom.

CLAIRE

Do you even see the shelter door?

Zoe hesitates. Uncertain.

She re-angles the mirror and looks back up at...

THE REFLECTION OF THE SURFACE (ZOE POV).

Where the shelter door should be, we see only a clutter of rubble, foliage, and splintered wood from a burnt pew.

IN THE MAIN ROOM BELOW,

Zoe lowers the "periscope" back down into the shelter.

She looks down at Claire. Shakes her head.

ZOE

The door's covered. I can't see it.

CLAIRE

Exactly, it's hidden. The whole shelter is. We are.

ZOE

So?

CLAIRE

So just because you can't see something doesn't mean it's not there. Sometimes the truth's hidden from us.

Claire takes Zoe's hand and helps her back down onto...

THE FLOOR BELOW.

Zoe concentrates. Trying hard to figure out the moral.

ZOE

You're saying...if there are others still alive...they'd be hidden too?

CLAIRE

They'd have to be.

ZOE

You mean, because they'd be hunted like us too? By the Breathers?

CLAIRE

Zoe, what did I —

(stops herself)

Yes. That's right. Because the *Breathers* would be hunting them.

ZOE

They hate us a lot, don't they? To keep hunting us like that?

CLAIRE

I don't know if it's hate. It's just...they're different than we are now. And that makes them as scared of us as we are of them.

ZOE

Because of what happened that day?

CLAIRE

Yeah. Because of what happened that day.

Zoe suddenly realizes something.

ZOE

You said Breathers.

CLAIRE

I know.

Claire smiles softly. Zoe smiles back.

Zoe hands the "periscope" back to Claire. But just as Claire starts to take it, Zoe tightens her grip on the handle.

She has spotted something in...

THE REFLECTION OF THE MIRROR (ZOE POV).

A CAN OF SPAGHETTI is wobbling on the cabinet.

There is something moving inside the can. It pokes its head out of a hole in the can. It is...

A FAT BLACK RAT. AKA "THE THIEF."

Zoe lowers her voice to whisper.

ZOE

The *thief*. He's back.

Claire looks up and follows Zoe's gaze to the top shelf of the cabinet. Her face falls at the sight of the rat.

CLAIRE

...God, he's huge.

ZOE

I'll go wake Dad.

CLAIRE

No. Dad'll just set it free.

ZOE

You're not gonna set it free?

Claire does not answer. Does not have to. She simply shifts her gaze to the dining table. Her eyes harden.

Glinting on the tabletop...

THE SWISS ARMY KNIFE.

INT. MAIN ROOM - A FEW MOMENTS LATER

Tap. Tap. Tap. Claire tiptoes toward the cabinet.

Her hand grips tight to the Swiss Army knife. Her eyes lock on the rat. It has once again buried itself inside the tin can, but we can see its bald tail writhing out the open hole.

Zoe watches from across the room. Squeezes Olive.

ZOE

Don't let it get away, Mom.

CLAIRE

I won't.

Tap. Tap. Tap. Claire draws within five feet.

Tap. Tap. Two feet.

Tap. One.

Claire raises the knife to strike.

But as her shadow falls over the cabinet shelf, the rat senses danger and begins to backpedal out of the can.

ZOE

Now, Mom!

Claire swings the knife at the rat and --

DINK! The blade caroms off the shelf. A *miss*. The rat scampers away. Weaving through a maze of tin cans.

Claire chases after the rat. Swinging again.

But the rat leaps to safety onto --

THE DINING TABLE.

WHOOM! Its fat body careens into --

THE KEROSENE LANTERN. IT KNOCKS OVER, FLAMES HISSING.

Claire is too focused on killing the rat to notice. She swings the knife again, but the rat jumps away onto --

THE FLOOR BELOW.

The rat darts for a SMALL CRACK IN THE CEMENT WALL up ahead.

The opening is just large enough for the rat to fit.

This is where it has been living. *Hiding.*

ZOE

It's gonna escape, Mom! Hurry!

Claire dives after the rat...

It darts for the hole...

Squeezes its head in...

Almost through...

And...

FWOOM-THUNK! THE BLADE STABS THROUGH ITS FLESH.

THE CAMERA TILTS UP TO REVEAL

Claire. Towering above the rat.

She watches as the rat writhes under the blade. Trying but failing to free itself. A font of blood spits from its wound.

And then at last it stills. Dead.

Zoe drops down beside Claire. Exhilarated.

ZOE

That was awesome, Mom!

CLAIRE

Hey, I don't care how awesome it was, don't you ever, ever do anything like that, or you're dead meat.

ZOE

That rat is *dead meat*.

Zoe giggles at her silly joke. But then abruptly her giggle fades. Her nose wrinkling. Her face darkening with concern.

Claire sniffs the air. Smells something too. She whips back around to face the dining table. And then she sees it:

THE TOPPLED KEROSENE LANTERN. COUGHING PLUMES OF DARK SMOKE.

INT. MAIN ROOM - DINING AREA - A FEW MOMENTS LATER

Claire scrambles over to the kerosene lantern.

She inspects the glass bulb. It does not look good: the oil has spilled out of the basin at the bottom of the lantern, causing the fire inside to spit and rage out of control.

Claire reaches down to turn off the fuel valve, but the metal hisses at the touch. She jerks her hand away with a sharp cry.

ZOE

What's wrong, Mom?!

CLAIRE

The lantern, it-it's too hot! Get me the dishrag!

ZOE

The what?!

CLAIRE

The *dishrag*! Quick!

Zoe nods. She scrambles across the room to the water pump. She snatches up the dishrag and tosses it over to Claire.

Claire promptly wraps it around her hand like an oven mitt, grabs onto the lantern fuel valve, spins it "off", and...

Nothing happens.

The flames just continue to rage. Growing ever hotter. Cracks in the glass begin to spiderweb like a sheet of breaking ice.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

It won't turn off!

The cracks continue to spread.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

It's gonna break!

Claire seizes Zoe by the arm.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

GET --

Drags her to the floor.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

-- DOWN!

And...

INT. BEDROOM - SAME

KAAAA-BOOOOOOOM! An explosion echoes into the bedroom.

Ray jolts awake. He is so alarmed that he falls naked over the side of the bed. He lands on the floor. His eyes wide.

RAY
Claire?! Zoe?!

No answer. Only silence.

INT. MAIN ROOM - A FEW MOMENTS LATER

Ray bursts into the main room. Fumbling into his clothes.

He finds the dining table engulfed in a RAGING FIRE. Thick flames throw up plumes of heavy black smoke into the air, choking the room in a black fog, clouding his vision.

His panicked eyes search the smoke for his family.

RAY
Claire?! Zoe?! Are you alright?!

At first there is no answer. But then he hears the sound of coughing. Between those coughs, the voice of Claire emerges:

CLAIRE
We're —
(cough)
O-okay!

RAY
Where are you?!

CLAIRE
(cough)
Here!

Ray tracks her voice to...

THE CORNER OF THE ROOM.

At last he finds Claire and Zoe.

They are both frantic but unhurt by the explosion, working together to crank water out of the water pipe. Small drops of murky water plop into the bucket.

Ray shouts over the roar of the fire.

RAY
How the hell'd this happen?!

ZOE
The thief did it!

RAY
Who?!

CLAIRE
Ray, stop standing there and *help*!

Ray nods. He seizes onto the rusted crank and starts to pump alongside his family. Murky water begins to spit out of the faucet faster and faster until...

The bucket is full.

Claire snatches up the bucket and...

INT. MAIN ROOM - DINING AREA - A MOMENT LATER

SPLASH! She tosses water onto the blazing fire.

The water splashes across the dining table, extinguishing a large part of the fire, but a handful of flames linger.

CLAIRE
We need more water!

RAY
That'll take too long! Here!

Ray tears the bedsheet door down from the bedroom entryway, hurries to her side, hoists the bedsheet above his head, and slams it down against the remaining flames as hard as he can.

A few more flames snuff out.

Claire joins in, tearing off her jacket and pounding it against the flaming table. Knocking out even more flames.

Zoe joins in as well. She lifts Olive above her head and smashes her body against the flames.

WHOMP! They snuff out more flames.

WHOMP! And more.

WHOMP! And...

THE FIRE FINALLY DIES.

The room is now swallowed up in a cloud of dark smoke.

Ray waves his arms. Cutting at the smoke. Coughing.

RAY (CONT'D)
I, I can't see a damn thing!

CLAIRE
H-hold on!

Claire reaches into her pocket. Grabs a lighter. Strikes it.

FWOOM! Its dim flame cuts through the smoke to more clearly reveal Claire and Ray. They stand atop the dying embers of the fire. Their frightened faces slick with sweat and soot.

They should be relieved. But something is *missing*.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
...Where's ZoZo?

RAY
I, I don't know.

Ray sees something buried in the ash.

He scoops it up into his hands.

It's Olive.

INT. MAIN ROOM - A FEW MOMENTS LATER

Claire and Ray stumble through the smoke.

They are frantically searching for Zoe. Ray grips tight to Olive; Claire to the lighter. Claire swings the lighter around in a slow arc, peeling back the darkness bit by bit.

But she sees no signs of Zoe anywhere.

CLAIRE
ZoZo?! Where are you?!

There is no answer.

RAY
Zoe?!

Still no answer.

CLAIRE
Come on, talk to us -- !

Her voice breaks off. She hears something. Sniffing. Coming from somewhere close by. She tracks it to...

THE CORNER OF THE ROOM.

And at last the light illuminates Zoe. She is standing in place. Sobbing. Her damp eyes fixed on the ceiling above.

Claire grabs her shoulders. Angry but worried.

CLAIRE

Hey! What are you doing here?! Are you hurt?! Did the fire burn you?!

ZOE

No, I-I'm okay.

CLAIRE

Are you sure? Are you sure you're not hurt?! Why are you crying?

ZOE

I'm...I'm just scared.

Ray kneels down beside Zoe.

RAY

Hey, there's nothing to be scared of anymore. We put the fire out. Nobody's hurt. And look, even Olive's okay, just a little dirty, that's all.

Ray hands Olive back to Zoe. She hugs her close.

RAY (CONT'D)

See? Everything's gonna be okay.

ZOE

No, Dad. It-it's not. It's not gonna be okay. Th-they're gonna see.

RAY

...Who?

ZOE

(hushed)

The Breathers.

Zoe points a quivering finger skyward.

Claire and Ray follow it up to...

THE VENTILATION SHAFT. CHOKED IN DARK SMOKE.

And we realize: all the smoke from the shelter is filtering out through this small grate. Escaping onto the surface.

CLAIRE

My God...

The Hewitts stare at the vanishing smoke. Horrified.

As Claire continues to watch, her face darkens with a bleak memory, and we begin to push into her eyes. In the reflection of her pupil, we see more smoke slithering through the shaft.

More smoke slips out.

And more smoke.

And more.

And...

INT. HEWITT HOME - KITCHEN - DAY (FLASHBACK)

More. Dark smoke tendrils rise from a frying pan.

Claire is frying bacon on a stove in her suburban kitchen.

Ray stands alongside her, cooking scrambled eggs.

They look significantly different than they do now: their weights average, their cheeks ruddy, their hair groomed.

They look like a suburban husband and wife.

They look...normal.

CLAIRE

...So you can pick ZoZo up after hitting balls? No later than three?

RAY

I told you, yes, I'm only gonna hit a bucket or two.

CLAIRE

Yeah, well, a bucket or two usually turns into nine holes --

RAY

I don't know what you're talking about.

CLAIRE

Ray, I'm serious. I just want to make sure ZoZo isn't stranded at the pool --

ZOE

I'm not going to the pool!

Ray and Claire spin around in surprise.

They find Zoe standing behind them, wearing her (strikingly clean) "Kingsville Swim Club" jacket. Like her parents, she looks well-nourished and normal, but mostly she looks upset.

CLAIRE

What? Why not? I thought you were meeting Megan and Joey --

ZOE

Not anymore. Joey's moving away.

CLAIRE

What? Joey? Joey Neary?

ZOE

Yeah, Joey Neary. And if Joey's not going, how can we play Marco Polo? It's stupid with two people!

RAY

I thought Joey Neary had cooties?

ZOE

He did but Megan did a spell on him and he doesn't anymore but that doesn't matter because now he's leaving and you didn't tell me!

CLAIRE

We didn't tell you because there's nothing to tell. I spoke to Jillian last night. They're not going anywh --

Her voice suddenly trails off and her eyes narrow with surprise. She has spotted something behind Zoe out...

THE SLIDING GLASS DOOR (CLAIRE POV).

Sure enough, THE NEARY FAMILY (JILLIAN, 35 TOM, 38, and, JOEY, 8) is packing up their Volvo on the neighboring driveway. Their movements appear panicked and harried.

Wherever they're headed, it doesn't seem like a vacation.

Claire stares. Now thoroughly perplexed.

CLAIRE

Ray. Watch the bacon.

EXT. HEWITT HOME - BACK PORCH - DAY - A FEW MOMENTS LATER

WHOOM! Claire throws open the sliding glass door.

She strides across to the far end of the back porch. She leans over the guard railing and calls out to the Nearys:

CLAIRE

Jillian?! Tom?!

The Nearys spin around, startled by her voice. Jillian is crying; Tom is rigid with panic; Joey just looks overwhelmed.

JILLIAN

Claire! Y-you scared me!

CLAIRE

I'm sorry...I just, I saw you out the window. What's going on?

JILLIAN

(realizing)

My God. You haven't heard.

CLAIRE

Heard what?

JILLIAN

The news.

CLAIRE

Sundays are no TV days --

TOM

Well, turn it on, Claire! You won't miss it, it's on every damn channel.

JILLIAN

They, they've named it now. AMS. Auto-Mutation Syndrome --

CLAIRE

I, I don't understand! What are you talking about?!

The question arrives too late. Tom and Jillian have returned to packing the car. Flinging luggage into the trunk.

But Joey speaks to Claire. His voice tremulous.

JOEY

I-it's a virus. They don't know where it came from. But the man on TV, he said it's changing people bad --

Before Joey can finish explaining, Tom slams the trunk, grabs Joey by the arm, and drags him into the backseat of the car.

Claire calls out. Still desperate for answers.

CLAIRE

What, what does Joey mean?! It's
changing people?!

Tom calls over his shoulder as he slams the back door.

TOM

It's just not safe here anymore,
Claire! Get Zoe, get Ray, and get
as far away from here as you can!

On that note, Tom leaps into the front of the car with
Jillian, slams the door behind him, and revs the engine.

Joey leans out his open window and shouts one last thing:

JOEY

Tell Zoe I'm sorry I can't play
Marco Polo --

SCREECH! The Volvo peels away onto...

A SUBURBAN STREET.

The Volvo races up the street. Winding up and up and up.

And that is when we realize: the Nearys are not alone. Far
from it. Dozens of other families are leaving as well.
Packing their cars. Speeding away. Fleeing town.

A mass evacuation.

ON THE PORCH,

Claire stares at this chaos in a daze.

Ray walks out onto the back porch and joins her side. He
follows her gaze up the street. His jaw drops at the sight.

RAY

Jesus Christ. The hell is going on?

Claire starts to answer him. But before she can --

AN ALARM BLARES BEHIND THEM. LIKE A PIERCING SCREAM.

Claire startles at the noise and spins one-eighty.

Through the sliding glass door, she sees that the untended
bacon has caught fire, coughing up plumes of dark smoke. The
smoke slithers into a GRATED SMOKE ALARM.

More smoke slips into the alarm.

And more smoke.

And more.

And...

INT. BOMB SHELTER - MAIN ROOM (PRESENT)

More. The last of the smoke escapes through the vent.

Even though the smoke is now gone, Claire continues to watch the grate. Unable to tear her gaze away. Ray and Zoe are equally entranced.

At last Ray speaks. His voice a hushed whisper.

RAY

I think that's the last of it.

ZOE

The Breathers...they're going to see it, aren't they? Aren't they?

RAY

Maybe not. It's sundown. Maybe it's too dark to see the smoke.

CLAIRE

...Maybe.

INT. MAIN ROOM - A FEW MOMENTS LATER

Claire climbs on top of the rusted bucket.

Ray and Zoe hold her ankles. Keeping her steady.

RAY

If you see anything move up there...

CLAIRE

Lower the mirror back down. I know.

Claire raises the "periscope" up the shaft.

She slips it through a slat in the second grate to reveal...

A REFLECTION OF THE SURFACE (CLAIRE POV).

The lower half of the sun has now dipped below the horizon, bathing the church and post-apocalyptic environment in a murky red light. But there is still more than ample light to see...

A MUSHROOM CLOUD OF SMOKE DRIFTING UP INTO THE SKY.

IN THE MAIN ROOM BELOW,

Claire lowers the "periscope" back into the shelter.

Ray and Zoe look up from the floor. Their eyes wide.

ZOE

Could you see the smoke, Mom?

Claire hesitates.

And... .

INT. MAIN ROOM - A FEW MOMENTS LATER

Claire paces. Back and forth. Her anxiety full tilt.

Ray sits on a chair. Trying to remain calm.

Zoe hugs Olive tight. Terrified.

RAY

Claire, don't forget rule two. We
have to stay calm, no matter what.
We have to stay under control --

CLAIRE

I am, Ray, but someone has to
figure out what the hell to do! We
might as well have sent out an SOS
signal! Anyone within a mile of
here will see that smoke!

ZOE

The Breathers are gonna come for
us, I, I know it. They're gonna
find us. Just like Olive dreamed --

RAY

No they won't, sweetie --

CLAIRE

They might --

RAY

Claire, *stop*. You're scaring Zoe.

CLAIRE

I'm trying to protect her!

RAY

You don't *have to*. Even if the Breathers come, by the time they get here, the smoke'll be long gone. They'll have no idea where it came from. *No idea*.

CLAIRE

It won't matter. They'll know we're here. *Somewhere*. They'll comb the area for us.

RAY

Let them. They've searched here a dozen times before and they've never found us. And they won't now.

ZOE

(persuaded)

Yeah, D-Dad's right! We're still hidden, Mom! I checked! Remember?!

CLAIRE

I know, ZoZo, but --

RAY

All agreed we're safe, raise your hands.

Ray and Zoe raise their hands. Stretched high.

RAY (CONT'D)

That's two against one.

Zoe raises Olive's hand.

ZOE

Three.

Claire smiles softly. Feeling a little reassured. But then her expression falls again as her eyes lock onto...

Olive's hand. Stained black with ash.

INT. MAIN ROOM - A FEW MOMENTS LATER

Claire strides to the other side of the room.

She drops beside the remains of the dining table, reaches down into its embers, and scoops up a HANDFUL OF ASH. She lets it filter through her fingers like kernels of sand.

Ray and Zoe walks up behind her. Confused.

ZOE
What's wrong, Mom?

CLAIRE
The wood's burned.

ZOE
...So?

CLAIRE
So burned wood makes ash.

INT. MAIN ROOM - A FEW MOMENTS LATER

Claire thrusts the "periscope" back up the vent shaft.
Slips it through the second grate.
And peers up again at...

A REFLECTION OF THE SURFACE (CLAIRE POV).

The smoke has mostly dissipated into the hemisphere.

But Claire is no longer interested in the smoke. She slowly angles the mirror down to reveal the ground. The foliage and wood which once hid the door is now sprinkled with...

A CARPET OF BLACK AND GRAY ASH.

INT. MAIN ROOM - A MOMENT LATER

Claire drops back down onto the floor.

She does not say anything to Zoe or Ray. But her expression speaks clearly for her. She looks like she just saw a ghost.

Zoe hugs Olive. Her voice hushed and scared.

ZOE
...We're not hidden anymore, are we, Mom?

Claire shakes her head. A somber "no."

RAY
The entire church is in rubble.
They might not notice --

CLAIRE
You want to take that chance, Ray?
We might as well have painted a target on the door. We have to cover the ash.

RAY
Cover it? You want to go up there?
On the *surface*?

CLAIRE
It's the only way.

ZOE
But, but what about the third rule?
Never, ever, open the door.

Claire hesitates. Uncertain. After all, it is *her* rule.

Finally she responds:

CLAIRE
Sometimes rules...even Mom
rules...have to be broken.

INT. VESTIBULE - A FEW MOMENTS LATER

WHOOSH! Claire and Ray stride into the vestibule.

Ray grabs onto the ladder and starts to climb.

Claire kneels level with Zoe.

CLAIRE
Listen to me. If Dad and I aren't
back in five minutes, I want you to
lock the door behind us --

ZOE
W-what?! No! I'm going up there
with you, I'm gonna help --

CLAIRE
Out of the question, ZoZo.

Zoe points angrily at her jacket pocket. "ZOE."

ZOE
Zoe. Stop treating me like a baby.

CLAIRE
I'm *protecting* you.

ZOE
But what if you need me to protect
you? I, I can fight if I have to --

CLAIRE
No you *can't*. My rules still apply
to you.

(MORE)

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

So no matter what happens up there,
no matter *what* you hear, do not
come up. I need you to promise me
that.

ZOE

But --

CLAIRE

Promise me.

Zoe chews her lip. Hesitating. Finally nods.

ZOE

I...I p-promise.

INT. VESTIBULE - LADDER - A FEW MOMENTS LATER

CLICK-SNAP! Ray unbolts the final chain on the door.

The chain flies loose, swinging against the wall alongside
the other locks, which dangle like a bundle of dead snakes.

Ray looks down. Claire is climbing up behind him. Tense.

RAY

Are we sure about this?

CLAIRE

We don't have time for second
guessing. *Open it.*

Ray turns back to the face door, seizes hold of the wheel
handle, and rotates it clockwise. *POP!* The door unlatches.

He presses his palms against the metal.

Exhales a shaky breath.

Heaves upward.

And...

THE DOOR YAWNS UPWARD. HINGES SCREAMING LIKE A DYING ANIMAL.

ON THE FLOOR BELOW,

Zoe squints as a FLOOD OF FIERY LIGHT pours into the shelter.

She thrusts a hand to her forehead like a visor, deflecting
just enough of the light to make out her parents.

ON THE LADDER ABOVE,

Ray and Claire clamber one by one up the final ladder rungs.

As they ascend to the surface, they become dark silhouettes against the ebbing crimson sun. The taller silhouette (Ray) turns back around and begins to wave down at Zoe. At us.

His dark hand swaying back and forth.

Back and forth.

Back and...

KA-WHAM! THE DOOR SLAMS SHUT.

ON THE FLOOR BELOW,

Zoe startles. Jumping back a few feet.

She takes a beat to catch her breath. Her heart pounding in her chest. And then she returns her wide eyes to the ceiling.

She can hear the MUFFLED VOICES OF HER PARENTS above. They are discussing *something*, but it is impossible to tell *what*. And then without warning they stomp across the ceiling.

Dust rains down from the rafters with each step. Marking a clear path. It passes over Zoe. Headed for the main room.

Zoe looks down at Olive. Whispers.

ZOE

They're going this way, Olive. Come on.

Zoe hugs Olive close and...

INT. MAIN ROOM - A FEW MOMENTS LATER

WHOOSH! Zoe pushes through the bedsheet door.

She continues to watch the dust as it falls across the main room ceiling. But her parents do not stop in the main room. They continue across the length of the shelter, passing over the bedroom and beyond, their footsteps gradually receding.

Soon they are completely out of earshot. Gone.

Zoe is now more alone than ever. She looks at Olive.

ZOE

I, I don't know where they went. No, Olive, I, I promised we wouldn't leave...

Her voice trails off. She has noticed something across the room. Glinting faintly in the light.

The "periscope."

INT. MAIN ROOM - A FEW MOMENTS LATER

WHAM! Zoe clambers on top of the rusted bucket.

She stretches on her tiptoes. Without Claire to support her legs, her balance falters and the bucket wobbles perilously, but it levels out at the very last second. Steady. *For now.*

Zoe thrusts the "periscope" up the ventilation shaft.

Slips it through a slat in the second grate.

And angles it to reveal...

A REFLECTION OF THE SURFACE (ZOE POV).

But there is nothing to see.

Her parents are gone. Seemingly vanished into thin air.

Zoe rotates the mirror in search of her parents. Slowly panning the "periscope" in a three-sixty degree arc:

FIFTY DEGREES ROTATION.

We see the ground above the shelter. Still covered in ash.

ONE-HUNDRED DEGREES.

A ruined car. A raven screeching on its hood.

ONE-HUNDRED FIFTY.

Tall grass. Billowing in the breeze.

TWO-HUNDRED.

A grave. Crumbled and black.

TWO-FIFTY.

A street lamp. Shattered.

THREE.

A LARGE SHADOWED FOOT.

IN THE MAIN ROOM BELOW,

Zoe startles back in horror.

Nearly falling.

But then --

IN THE MIRROR REFLECTION,

The shadowed foot strides past the mirror.

It is only Ray.

He clutches a bundle of ASH-FREE BRANCHES AND LEAVES in his arms. Claire soon emerges at his side also carrying foliage. They were simply collecting "camouflage" from the forest.

They stoop down on the ground above the shelter door and begin to spread their "camouflage" across the fallen ash.

Slowly hiding the ash from view.

IN THE MAIN ROOM BELOW,

Zoe exhales with relief.

ZOE
It's just them, Olive. They're
okay. Nothing to worry abo --

She abruptly silences.

Her eyes narrowing.

Concerned again.

IN THE MIRROR REFLECTION,

There is BLURRY TWITCH OF SHADOWED MOVEMENT in the forest behind Claire and Ray. Something is shoving its way through the overgrown foliage. *Something big.* It is...

A LARGE SHADOWED FIGURE. And it is not alone.

TWO MORE SHADOWED FIGURES follow behind.

Headed straight for her parents.

IN THE MAIN ROOM BELOW,

Zoe pales with dread. Her worst fears realized.

She shouts up the shaft:

ZOE
MOM! DAD! LOOK OUT! *BEHIND YOU!*

IN THE MIRROR REFLECTION,

Claire and Ray turn toward the sound of her voice.

They have clearly heard something. But then they shake their heads, turn back around, and return to spreading foliage.

Oblivious to the Shadowed Figures behind them.

The Figures draw closer.

And closer.

And...

IN THE MAIN ROOM BELOW,

Zoe abandons her shouting. *She has to act.*

She snaps her attention to the vestibule bedsheet. Behind it, she can discern the shadowed outline of the shelter ladder.

She looks down at Olive. Her eyes hardening.

ZOE
Sometimes rules have to be broken.

She jumps off the bucket and...

INT. VESTIBULE - A FEW MOMENTS LATER

WHOOSH! Zoe bursts back into the vestibule.

She leaps onto the ladder. Taking two rungs at a time.

Two. Four. Six. Eight. Ten.

Finally she finds herself face to face with the shelter door. She spins its wheel handle, thrusts her small palms against its cold metal surface, and pushes upward with a heaving cry.

But nothing happens. The door is too heavy.

ZOE
No, no, no!

Zoe slams her bony shoulders against the heavy door. But still it does not budge. But she does not give in yet.

She slams it harder..

And harder...

And...

SCREECH! THE DOOR FINALLY YAWNS OPEN.

Not a lot. Just about a foot. But wide enough for Zoe.

She flings her body into the crack of light.

EXT. THE SURFACE - SUNDOWN

KA-WHUMP! Zoe crashes onto her hands and knees.

The world seems to stand still. Everything that she's been missing for three hundred and one days hits her all at once:

A blast of red sunlight blinds her vision...

Stinging gusts of wind whip her hair...

A beetle skitters up her arm...

Cicadas shriek in her ears...

And...

WHAM! A SHADOWED HAND SUDDENLY SNATCHES HER SHOULDER.

Zoe whirls with a stifled scream to find...

Claire. Her shadowed figure slowly comes into focus. She looks furious. Ray stands beside her, more concerned than angry.

CLAIRE

ZoZo?! The hell are you doing out here?! I told you to stay inside!

Zoe is too short of breath to speak coherently.

ZOE

I-I-I-saw-th-them-in-in the-per-peri-periscope -- !

RAY

We can't understand you, slow down!

ZOE

Th-they're c-c-coming!

RAY

What? Who's coming?!

ZOE

B-BR-BREATHERS!

Zoe points behind them.

Claire and Ray whirl around.

The THREE SHADOWED FIGURES are racing through the tall grass which engulfs the graveyard. Almost on top of them now.

Claire gasps in horror.

CLAIRE

Get back in the shelter! Back in
the shelter!

Claire snatches Zoe across the arm --

Drags her back to the door --

But it is too late --

Too late --

WHOOM! THE FIRST SHADOWED FIGURE EXPLODES OUT OF THE GRASS.

It has brown fur. Four legs. And antlers.

A WHITE-TAILED BUCK.

It races right past the Hewitts, so close Zoe's skirt
billows. A WHITE-TAILED DOE and a YOUNG FAWN follow behind.

A family of three. Just like the Hewitts.

The Hewitts turn and watch in stunned silence as the deer
flee across the fallen church. Slowly vanishing from sight.

Ray starts to laugh. He can hardly believe it.

RAY

It's just deer. Nothing to be
scared of, Zoe, huh? *Just Bambi.*

He ruffles Zoe's tangled hair. But Zoe remains tense.

ZOE

Th-they looked scared.

RAY

Don't be ridiculous --

CLAIRE

No. She's right. They were running
away. Running away from *something*.

Claire turns and looks in the direction the deer came from.
Toward the graveyard. She sees gathering darkness and tall
grass swaying in the wind. A chill runs down her spine.

She turns back to Ray. Urgent now.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

We need to get back in the shelter.

RAY
We're not done covering the ash.

CLAIRE
It's covered enough, drop the rest.

RAY
Claire, it was only deer --

CLAIRE
Just do it, Ray!

Ray senses the urgency in her voice. Nods.

He drops the rest of his foliage and wrenches open the shelter door. He ushers Zoe inside and follows right behind.

Claire goes next. The last one in the shelter. Just before she drops her head below, she looks back up at the surface just in time to catch the sun drop below the horizon.

The last glint of light sputters out like a blown candle.

Night is upon us.

Claire descends into the shelter.

INT. BOMB SHELTER - VESTIBULE

KA-WHAM! Claire slams the door shut. Metal crashing.

She promptly begins to re-bolt the chain locks. Her hands tremble, rendering even this simple task arduous. But with concentration, she manages to fasten the locks one by one.

One. Two. Three. Four. Five. Six.

And then she freezes. Not bolting the last chain.

Zoe and Ray look up from the floor. Concerned.

ZOE
Mom, c-come on, h-hurry!

CLAIRE
Quiet, I hear something.

Claire presses her ear against the door. The heavy steel is absorbing and amplifying a noise in the distance. It sounds like a thudding heartbeat. Its rhythm constant but broken.

Boom. Beat. Boom. Beat. Boom. Beat. Boom. Beat. Boom.

Zoe can't take it anymore.

ZOE
What is it, Mom?

Claire slowly pulls her ear off the door.

Looks back down at Zoe.

And whispers.

CLAIRE
...Footsteps.

INT. MAIN ROOM - A FEW MOMENTS LATER

WHOOSH! The bedsheet door sweeps open.

The Hewitts creep out into the main room one by one. Their wide eyes quietly survey the shadowed ceiling above. The *booming* is louder out here. And it is growing ever louder.

They whisper. Their voices barely audible.

RAY
Sounds like just one.

CLAIRE
They usually travel in groups --

ZOE
No. Dad's right. It's just one. I,
I can hear him. H-his *breathing*.

Sure enough, beneath the *booming* footsteps, we can make out the sound of terrifying inhales and exhales. Loud. Raspy. Heaving. Unnatural. Like an animal with blood in its lungs.

Hence Zoe's nickname: BREATHER.

CLAIRE
God, he's really close --

ZOE
There.

Zoe points a tremulous finger at...

THE BEDROOM CEILING.

BOOM! The Breather stomps down onto the shelter roof.

The rafters groan horribly beneath his heavy weight, causing dust to trickle down onto the bunk bed.

As the Breather continues his slow march across the shelter ceiling, more dust continues to fall down, blazing his path.

BOOM! He is headed across the bedroom.

BOOM! Straight for the main room.

BOOM! For the Hewitts.

IN THE MAIN ROOM,

Zoe begins to tremble. Pulls Olive close to her chest.

Claire whispers through gritted teeth.

CLAIRE

Rule one. *Never be loud.*

They all hold their breaths and still their bodies. Watching in terrified silence as the trail of dust passes out of the bedroom and into the main room. Still coming toward them.

BOOM! The Breather is fifteen feet away.

BOOM! Ten feet away.

BOOM! Five feet.

BOOM! One.

WHOOSH! The Breather swoops directly over their heads.

The rafters above whimper and cough a **SHOWER OF DUST** on top of them. Ray gets the brunt of the dust. His eyes water. His nose twitches. His head reels back. He is going to sneeze.

Claire and Zoe flash him a panicked look: "*Don't!*"

Ray shoves a hand over his nose and...

The sneeze is held.

They return their gazes to the ceiling. The Breather is continuing across the main room. Making for the vestibule.

Ray motions with his hand. He wants to follow him. Claire shakes her head. "*No!*" But Ray ignores this and begins to pursue the Breather anyway. Zoe follows right behind him.

Claire has no choice now but to tag along.

INT. VESTIBULE - A FEW MOMENTS LATER

WHOOSH! The Hewitts quietly slip through the bedsheet door.

Their faces promptly darken with a look of helpless horror.

The Breather is making a beeline for the shelter door.

BOOM! He is four feet away from it.

BOOM! Three feet away.

BOOM! Two feet.

BOOM! One.

WHOOM! The Breather stomps directly on top of the shelter door. It groans like the hull of a sinking ship. It seems certain that the Breather has discovered the door. But...

BOOM! The Breather continues his march.

BOOM! Stomping off the door.

BOOM! Past the shelter.

Claire looks at Ray. Relieved. Ray smiles softly.

They look down at Zoe, expecting to find her relieved as well, but she is anything *but*. Her lower lip trembles and her eyes gape wide. She is staring at something behind her.

They follow her eye line to find that...

OLIVE'S PULL STRING IS STRETCHED TAUT.

Its plastic ring has snagged on a candle sconce.

The ring begins to slip from the sconce...

Slipping one centimeter...

Two centimeters...

Three...

WHOOSH! THE RING SUDDENLY RIPS FREE.

Claire tries to grab the string, but it retracts too fast, too fast, retreating into the back of Olive with a *slurp*.

Olive shrieks:

OLIVE
MYYYY SMMMMILEEEE ISSSSS --

Before Olive can finish, Claire rips her away from Zoe and --

KA-WHAM! She slams the doll as hard as she can against the cement wall. The voice box cracks on impact, but rather than silencing Olive, it causes her to shout ad nauseam:

OLIVE (CONT'D)
 STUUUUUCK! STUUUUUCK!
 STUUUUUUUCK! STUUUUUCK!

RAY
 Shut her up!

CLAIRE
 I'm trying!

ZOE
 No, you hurt her! Give her back!

Zoe lunges for Olive, but Ray yanks Zoe back into his arms. She desperately tries to break free, but Ray is too strong. She flails helplessly, watching in tear-filled anguish as...

WHAM! Claire smashes Olive against the wall again.

OLIVE
 STU-STU-STU-STU-

WHAM! And again.

OLIVE (CONT'D)
 UH-UH-UH-UH-UH!

WHAM! And again.

OLIVE (CONT'D)
 Uuuhhhhhhhhhh.

WHAM! And again.

OLIVE (CONT'D)
 Uhhhhh.....

Until at last she speaks no more.

Claire drops Olive to the floor.

Zoe breaks free from Ray and falls beside the broken Olive. She lifts her limp body into her arms and hugs her close.

Claire and Ray, meanwhile, have graver concerns.

Finally Ray dares to whisper.

RAY
 ...He was too far away to hear
 that. Right?

Claire does not respond. But she seems unsure. Very unsure.

She returns her gaze to the ceiling. Scouring the rafters for more falling dust. It seems clear. Quiet. She gently draws aside the bedsheet curtain and looks out into the main room.

As she surveys the main room ceiling...

THE CAMERA TILTS UP TO REVEAL

The shelter door above them.

It is motionless at first. But then very gradually the wheel handle begins to rotate clockwise. Unseen by the Hewitts.

It rotates ten degrees.

Twenty degrees.

Thirty degrees.

And...

KA-BAAAAAAM! THE DOOR YANKS EXPLOSIVELY UPWARD.

The Hewitts jump in surprise and whirl one-eighty. Their eyes snap up to the door. They expect it to blow open but...

The chain locks catch on their latches. Stretching taut.

ZOE

He-he can't get in here, can he?!
Hold fast, ri-right, Dad?!

Ray doesn't respond. He is too scared. Too uncertain.

BAM! The Breather yanks back on the door again.

BAM! And again.

BAM! Again.

Claire turns her attention to the METAL LATCHES which bolt the chains to wall. They loosen a bit from the cement with each BAM! Their bolts unwinding as if by an invisible hand.

Claire pales with grave realization.

CLAIRE

He's too strong.

RAY

What?!

CLAIRE

I said he's too st -- !

SNAP-WHOOSH! A metal latch suddenly tears from the wall.

The latch swings over their heads like a heavy pendulum. It thuds against the ladder. The chain now limp and useless.

There are now only five chains remaining. But not for long.

SNAP-WHOOSH! Another latch tears from the wall.

Zoe squeezes Olive. All hope crushed.

Ray just stares. Stunned.

Claire *thinks*.

Her eyes study the door. Her mind spinning. And then she abruptly whirls around and sprints across the vestibule.

Ray watches her go. Baffled.

RAY

Claire?! Where are you going?!

CLAIRE

Getting something to brace the door! Just wait for me at the top of the ladder!

RAY

At the top of the ladder?!

But she is already gone.

INT. MAIN ROOM - A FEW MOMENTS LATER

Claire drops beside the dead rat. *The thief.*

She grabs hold of the Swiss Army knife handle. It is still jutting out from the back of the rat's corpse. Buried deep.

She twists it, widening the wound, and then yanks hard.

The knife rends out of its flesh.

Blood spurts.

INT. VESTIBULE - SAME

Ray clambers up the vestibule ladder. Moving fast.

Zoe yanks on his leg. Trying to hold him back.

ZOE

No, Dad! You can't go up there!
He's gonna get in!

RAY

Then tell Mom to hurry!

Ray shakes his leg free from Zoe's grip and continues his trek up the ladder. Headed for the shuddering door above.

SNAP-WHOOSH! Another metal latch rips free.

Ray ducks at the last second. It cuts over his head.

Only three chains now remain.

Zoe screams:

ZOE

MOM! HURRY!

INT. BEDROOM - SAME

Claire bursts into the bedroom. Bloody knife in hand.

CLAIRE

I'M HURRYING! JUST HOLD ON!

She races up to...

THE BUNK BED LADDER. BOLTED TO THE BED FRAME BY FOUR SCREWS.

She wedges the bloody knife into the grooves of the first screw and begins to unwind it. Her hands shake so badly that once again even this simple task proves difficult, but finally...

Clunk. The first screw clatters to the floor.

Three more to go.

INT. VESTIBULE - SAME

Ray scrambles to the top of the vestibule ladder.

The door shudders above him. He can hear the sound of raspy breathing emanating from the other side. Heaving with effort.

WHOOSH-SNAP! Another chain latch snaps loose.

This time the swinging latch strikes Ray across the cheek like a slap, slicing open a patch of skin. He nearly slips off the ladder, but he catches himself at the last second.

Below, Zoe squeezes Olive.

ZOE

Dad?! A-are you okay?!

RAY

Yeah, I-I'm, fine! Stay down there!

His eyes snap to the remaining chains.

There are only two more left.

INT. BEDROOM - SAME

Clunk. Another screw clatters to the floor.

Clunk. And then another.

Only one left.

Claire works to unwind the last screw, but it is covered with so much rust that the blade will not fit into its grooves.

CLAIRE

No, no, no, *come on!*

Claire scrapes off some rust. Tries again. But still no go.

She drops the knife, grabs onto either side of the ladder with both hands, and pulls back on it as hard as she can.

Her face flushes red with effort.

Her forehead beads sweat.

Her muscles strain.

And...

WHOOM! The bunk bed ladder tears free into her arms.

INT. VESTIBULE - LADDER - SAME

SNAP-WHOOSH! Another chain lock snaps loose from the door.

It flies loose, swinging at Ray again, but this time he is ready for it, catching it before it clocks him in the head.

A single chain now remains.

He shouts at Claire:

RAY

HE'S ALMOST IN, CLAIRE! WHERE ARE YOU?!

CLAIRE (O.S.)

HERE!

WHOOSH! Claire suddenly explodes through the bedsheet door with the bunk bed ladder in her arms. She charges to the back of the vestibule and stretches the ladder up toward Ray.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Wedge this under the handle! Hurry!

Ray reaches for the ladder. But just before he grabs it --

SNAP-WHOOSH! The last chain lock breaks loose.

ZOE

WATCH OUT DAD!

Ray whirls around.

THE SHELTER DOOR IS OPENING. HINGES SCREAMING.

Daggers of pale moonlight slice into the shelter. We cannot yet see the Breather on the other end, but the sound of his deep, raspy breathing fills the shelter like a chilly wind.

It is only a matter of time. *He is going to get in.*

ZOE (CONT'D)

GET AWAY, DAD! *GET AWAY!*

But Ray does not *get away*. He lunges up the ladder and...

WHOOM! Seizes onto the wheel handle. He yanks down with all his strength. Trying to re-close the door. But the Breather pulls back from the other side. And he is strong. *Too strong.*

The handle rips free from Ray and resumes its rise.

Opening one inch.

Two inches.

Three.

Four.

Until soon we can see onto...

THE SURFACE ABOVE (RAY POV).

Staring down through the hatch:

THE BREATHER.

We can just barely make out his DARK SILHOUETTE against the pale moon. But we see more than enough to make us afraid:

A POWERFUL AND HULKING BODY. HEAVING WITH EVERY RASPY BREATH.

A TANGLE OF APPENDAGES DROOPING DOWN HIS NECK. *TENTACLES?*

AND MOST TERRIFYING OF ALL...

GLOWING RED EYES.

The Breather suddenly hisses --

Diving through the opening --

Lunging right at Ray --

And --

WHOOM! Something large smashes the Breather in the face. So hard it knocks him a few feet away from the door.

ON THE FLOOR BELOW,

The "something large" is the bunk bed ladder.

Claire wields it like a javelin. She thrusts it above Ray's head and back through the opening in the door, slamming the Breather once more. He reels back again. Hissing angrily.

Claire hisses right back:

CLAIRE

LEAVE...

WHOOM! She jabs him with the ladder again.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

...MY....

WHOOM! And again.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

...FAMILY...

WHOOM! And again.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

...ALONE!

WHOOM! And again.

This last hit sends the Breather tumbling back with a guttural scream. His grip tears free from the door.

The door slams back shut with a resonant *CLANG!*

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

NOW, RAY!

Claire passes the bunk bed ladder to Ray.

Ray shoves it beneath the wheel handle just as the Breather yanks up on the door again. The door rises a few inches into the air but then --

WHAM! It slams hard against the bunk bed ladder. Jammed.

WHAM! The Breather yanks on it again. Still jammed.

WHAM! And again. Still jammed.

WHAM! Still jammed.

WHAM! Still.

And then at last the Breather stops yanking on the door. Releasing his hold. It settles back into place. Silent.

Ray looks down at Claire and Zoe. Gasping for air.

RAY
...*Hold fast.*

INT. VESTIBULE - FLOOR - A FEW MOMENTS LATER

Ray and Claire climb down to the vestibule floor.

Zoe crosses to them. Her voice uncertain.

ZOE
Are...are we safe now, Dad?

RAY
Yeah, Zoe. We're safe.

Ray flashes Claire a relieved look.

But Claire doesn't return it. She is not even looking at him. Her attention is still directed up at the door. Concerned.

CLAIRE
...Something's wrong.

RAY
Claire, he can't get in.

CLAIRE
Then what's he still doing up there?

Ray and Zoe follow her gaze to the shelter door.

Sure enough, they can still hear the all too familiar sound of raspy breathing coming from behind the closed steel door.

The Breather is still lingering at the door.
Not moving at all. Just standing there.
Zoe begins to panic again.

ZOE
Wh-why isn't he leaving? Wh-why
won't he just go away?

CLAIRE
I don't know. He's up to something.

RAY
How could he be up to something?
He's just standing th --

DINK-DINK. The sound of rattling metal interrupts.

The Hewitts turn and look behind them.

A FOOD CAN is rolling toward them from across the floor. It
knocks gently against Ray's shoe. Tottering to a stop.

The Hewitts exchange a puzzled look. *What the hell?* But
before anyone has a chance to say anything...

DINK-DINK. Another food can rolls toward them.

DINK-DINK. And then another.

DINK-DINK. And another.

INT. MAIN ROOM - A MOMENT LATER

WHOOSH! The Hewitts sweep aside the bedsheet door.

They look across the main room. Their expressions fall.

The cabinet is shuddering. Up and down. Up and down. It is
shaking with such intensity that it causes the cans to fall
off the shelves and roll across the floor. *DINK-DINK-DINK.*

Claire pales with realization.

CLAIRE
That's what he's doing. He's
waiting.

RAY
Waiting? For...what?

CLAIRE
The rest of them.

And that is when they hear it:

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

Footsteps again. But not just one this time. *Lots.*

It sounds like an approaching herd of elephants. The entire shelter begins to vibrate as if from the aftershocks of an earthquake, sending more food cans raining onto the floor.

Zoe squeezes Olive. Terrified.

ZOE

O-Olive is s-scared...

Ray hugs Zoe in his arms. Trying to keep her calm.

Claire just continues to stare at the cabinet. Transfixed. We slowly push into her tear-stained eyes. In the close-up of her glistening pupil, we can see a reflection of the cans.

Hopping up and down.

Up and down.

Up and...

INT. FORD EXPLORER - COUNTRY ROAD - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Down. Suitcases bounce up and down in a Ford Explorer.

We are once again back in time with the Hewitts.

Ray is navigating a twisty back country road. His knuckles grip tight to the steering wheel; Claire sits in the passenger seat, tense with worry; Zoe sits in the back, crammed between hills of luggage, her eyes shot from crying.

RAY

...Hey, Zoe, look.

Ray points out the windshield. The Kingsville water tower looms above the treetops. Not far off.

RAY (CONT'D)

The water tower. As soon as we're past that, we're out of the county. We're safe.

ZOE

You mean...safe from the sick people?

RAY
That's right. Safe from the sick
people.

Zoe wipes away a stray tear. Feeling reassured.

She shifts her gaze out...

THE SIDE WINDOW (ZOE POV).

The road is eerily empty.

There is not a single car or person in sight. Just an endless stretch of road and forest, all lit in the afternoon sun. But then --

WHOOSH! A car suddenly speeds past the window. Strangely, it is headed in the opposite direction as the Hewitts.

WHOOSH! And then another car speeds past.

WHOOSH! And then another.

WHOOSH! And another.

IN THE EXPLORER,

Zoe furrows her brow. Concerned.

ZOE
Why are all those people headed
back?

Claire seems concerned as well. She turns and looks behind her as the cars vanish down the road. Back into Kingsville.

CLAIRE
I, I don't know.

ZOE
I thought you said we couldn't
stay, th-that it was dangerous.

CLAIRE
It is. It doesn't make any sense.

RAY
Maybe the CDC cleared it already.

CLAIRE
That's impossible, Ray.

RAY
One way to find out...

Ray looks down at the radio. Punches it on.

He gets nothing but static. He tries changing the station. More static. Again. More static. Again. More static. Agai —

CLAIRE

RAY! WATCH OUT!

Ray snaps his gaze back to the road. His eyes immediately shoot wide with panic. He is barreling straight toward...

A STOPPED CAR. BRAKE LIGHTS RUSHING TOWARD US.

Ray hammers down on the brakes --

The SUV skids and fishtails --

Rubber burning hot --

And --

SCREECH! THE SUV ROCKS TO STOP INCHES FROM THE STOPPED CAR.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY - A MOMENT LATER

WHOOM! The Ford Explorer doors fling open.

The Hewitts stumble out. They look up at the road ahead.

A line of twenty odd stopped cars stretch down the road. A traffic jam. It lasts for a hundred yards, and then it abruptly stops, frozen beneath the crushing shadow of...

A TOWERING BARBED WIRE FENCE.

The fence has been erected across the road and extends outward into the bordering forest. Stretching for miles.

Electronic signs blink in furious repetition:

QUARANTINE. NO ACCESS.

QUARANTINE. NO ACCESS.

QUARANTINE. NO ACCESS.

A throng of TERRIFIED CIVILIANS pound and shake the fence. Shouting to be let out. But their shouts are drowned as...

WHOOSH! A BLACK HAWK HELICOPTER CRESTS THE FENCE.

A loud speaker anchored to its steel underbelly blares over the roar of its blades. Calling down to the masses below.

MILITARY LOUD SPEAKER
...ALL CIVILIANS IN KINGSVILLE MUST
RETURN TO THEIR HOMES AT ONCE UNTIL
THE OUTBREAK IS STABILIZED. THIS IS
A QUARANTINE ORDER SIGNED BY
GOVERNOR SCHROEDER UNDER EMERGENCY
CODE ELEVEN. THIS IS FOR YOUR OWN
SAFETY. ALL CIVILIANS WHO ATTEMPT
TO LEAVE THE QUARANTINE ZONE
WITHOUT AUTHORIZATION WILL BE SHOT
ON SIGHT. REPEAT, ALL CIVILIANS IN
KINGSVILLE MUST...

The Black Hawk yaws and proceeds down the fence. Headed to warn away other panicked civilians. The sound of its loudspeaker fades into the wind.

Claire and Ray are in shock. But Zoe does not understand. She looks up anxiously at Claire. Tugs on her sleeve.

ZOE
Mom? What's a "core and teen"?

CLAIRE
Quarantine. It means they're not letting us out.

ZOE
You mean we're trapped in here forever?

Claire hesitates. Uncertain how to answer this. She starts to respond, but then she silences as she notices something odd:

The Ford Explorer is shaking. Jumping up and down a bit on its wheels as if it were some kind of lowrider. And it is not the only car shaking. All the other cars are vibrating too. Setting off a domino of alarms. And that is when we realize:

The road itself is shaking. As if from an earthquake.

Something is clearly headed this way. Something big.

Claire watches as the Ford continues to vibrate.

Hopping up and down.

Up and down.

Up and...

INT. BOMB SHELTER - MAIN ROOM (PRESENT)

Down. Food cans hop on the cabinet.

Claire watches the cans. Still transfixed. But then a hand reaches up and snatches her arm, jolting her back to reality.

She looks down to find Zoe. Her eyes wide as saucers.

ZOE
Mom, *they're* here.

She points up at...

THE BEDROOM CEILING.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

A stampede of footsteps slam down onto the ceiling.

The combined weight of the BREATHER HORDE sends a massive waterfall of dust cascading down into the bedroom. The falling dust rushes toward us as...

BOOM! The Breathers trample across the bedroom.

BOOM! Racing straight for the main room.

BOOM! For the Hewitts.

IN THE MAIN ROOM,

The Hewitts watch the coming dust with rising dread.

Even Ray has lost hope now.

RAY
Christ. How many are there?

CLAIRE
Too many --

WHOOSH! The Breather Horde swoops over their heads.

A curtain of dust swallows them up. They cough and gasp and sneeze and squint. It is almost impossible to see now. But through the curtain of dust, we can see the silhouette of Ray. He is waving. He wants to follow the Breathers.

They trail the dust across the main room into...

THE VESTIBULE.

They look up through the veil of falling dust to find the Breather Horde rushing straight toward the shelter door.

BOOM! Four feet away from it.

BOOM! Three feet away.

BOOM! Two feet.

BOOM! One.

KA-BAM! The Breather Horde begin to attack the shelter door all at once. Only this time they are not yanking up on it. They are smashing on it. Pounding it repeatedly like a drum.

KA-BAM! The bunk bed ladder shudders.

KA-BAM! The steel twisting.

KA-BAM! Denting.

CLAIRE

The ladder's not gonna hold! We
have to get something else -- !

Too late. The bunk bed ladder snaps in half and --

CHA-BOOM! THE SHELTER DOOR BLOWS RIGHT OFF ITS HINGES.

The door somersaults down the vestibule ladder, caroms off a rung, and spits across the floor amid a flurry of sparks.

It skids to a screeching stop at the feet of the Hewitts.

But the Hewitts are not looking at the door.

They are looking up at...

THE OPENING ABOVE THEM (HEWITT POV).

A HALF-DOZEN SILHOUETTED BREATHERS hover around the mouth of the open door. Their crimson eyes bore down at the Hewitts, glinting murderously, their raspy breaths hissing like wind.

Zoe squeezes Olive and looses a long piercing scream.

Ray just stares in horror.

Claire shouts.

CLAIRE

RUN!

And so they do, sprinting away from the door --

Shoving back through the bedsheet door --

Tumbling one by one into --

THE MAIN ROOM.

The Hewitts crash to a stop.

They look around. Searching for somewhere else to run. For somewhere to hide. But there is nowhere. They are trapped.

They look back behind them.

Their eyes shoot wide.

THROUGH THE BEDSHEET DOOR (HEWITT POV),

They see SHADOWED BREATHERS dropping down into the shelter, slamming hard to the floor. One after the next. *DOOM!* One. *DOOM!* Two. *DOOM!* Three. *DOOM!* Four. *DOOM!* Five. *DOOM!* Six.

Their shadows stretch and distort in the light like Ray's in the opening. Only this time they are truly monstrous.

They begin to slink toward the main room.

Their shadows growing larger.

And larger.

And...

IN THE MAIN ROOM,

The Hewitts backpedal away in fear.

Retreating faster.

And faster.

And...

CRUNCH! Something crushes beneath Claire's foot.

She looks down to find that she is standing on the charred remains of the dining table. Her eyes flash with epiphany.

CLAIRE
...Fire.

RAY
What?

CLAIRE
Fire.

Claire whirls around to face a kerosene lantern hanging on the wall behind him. Its flame still burns dimly in the dark.

Without thinking it over, she lunges forward --

Snatches the lantern off the wall --

Hurls it across the shelter --

And --

SMASH-FWOOM! The lantern explodes like a Molotov cocktail.

Oil-fueled flames shoot up the bedsheet, creating a raging wall of fire, cutting the Breathers off from the main room.

But not for long. The fire is rapidly eating through the bedsheet. Disintegrating it. Coughing up plumes of smoke.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

That won't last long!

RAY

What else'll burn?!

CLAIRE

The cabinet!

Claire and Ray scramble over to the food cabinet.

They work together to move it across the main room. Pushing with all of their strength. Tin cans crashing. At last the cabinet reaches the flaming bedsheet. Wood meets fire and...

KA-FWOOM! The cabinet bursts into flames.

Ray and Claire stumble back. Exhausted. Coughing.

RAY

That should hold them awhile!

CLAIRE

But not forever! We have to get out of here!

RAY

How?! There's no other way!

ZOE

...What about the thief?

Claire and Ray spin to their daughter. Confused.

Zoe points at the corner of the room. At first we see nothing, but then the smoke dissipates to reveal the carcass of the rat, floating in a pool of its own blood.

ZOE (CONT'D)

The thief. He didn't get in through the door. Remember?

Claire remembers. *How could she forget?*

She looks up at the ventilation shaft.

And...

INT. MAIN ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

CLANK! One screw scatters to the floor.

CLANK! Two screws.

CLANK! Three.

WIDEN TO REVEAL

Claire standing on the bucket beneath the ventilation shaft.

She uses the Swiss Army knife to unscrew the second grate cover at the top of the ventilation shaft, and then...

WHAM! She pounds the grate with her fist. It blows out onto the surface, revealing a square cutout of moonlight above.

Claire looks down at her family.

CLAIRE
(coughs)
It's gonna be tight.

ZOE
You can fit, Mom.

CLAIRE
I'm not worried about *me*.

She turns her gaze to Ray.

RAY
I'll be fine --
(coughs)
Just get up there! Make sure it's
safe! Go!

CLAIRE
But --

RAY
GO!

Claire goes. She thrusts both hands up the shaft, grabs a firm hold of the surface, and hoists her body up into...

THE VENTILATION SHAFT.

Her emaciated body squeezes into the narrow shaft.

Rusted metal presses in on either side, crushing her raised arms against the side of her body. The claustrophobia is suffocating. But she takes a deep, shaky breath, and...

Shimmies up one foot...

Two feet...

And...

EXT. THE SURFACE - NIGHT

FWOOM! Her head punches out onto the surface.

She cautiously surveys the surrounding area.

It is dark. Difficult to see anything in the murky moonlight. But she sees no glinting red eyes. *No Breathers*. Only the shadowed skeleton of the church. It seems safe. *It seems*.

She grabs onto a tangle of overgrown weeds and uses them as leverage to haul her body out of the ventilation shaft.

Her shoulders squeeze out first.

Then her upper body.

Then her waist.

And then...

WHOOM! She collapses weakly onto the rubble earth. She is bruised and short of breath. But this is no time for respite.

She crawls over to the shaft. Calls down.

CLAIRE

It's clear! ZoZo, come on! Hurry!

INT. BOMB SHELTER - MAIN ROOM - SAME

Zoe climbs up onto the bucket. Ray supports her legs.

Claire's hands reach down through the shaft.

CLAIRE

Take my hands!

Zoe reaches up and grabs onto one of Claire's hands. But not both hands. *She can't*. She cradles Olive in her other hand.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

ZoZo, come on, you have to give me both hands!

ZOE
I, I can't! I can't leave Olive!

CLAIRE
Yes you can! Drop her!

ZOE
But Mom --

CLAIRE
Drop her! Now!

Zoe reluctantly drops Olive. Her body spirals to the floor.
She reaches up and takes Claire's free hand.
Claire hauls her up into...

THE VENTILATION SHAFT.

Zoe's tiny body fits easily. As she is lifted up the shaft,
she looks back down at Olive far below. Abandoned and alone.
Her smile stuck. *Scared.*

EXT. SURFACE - NIGHT

WHOOM! Claire yanks Zoe up all the way onto the surface.
She pulls her up into her arms and sets her on the ground.

CLAIRE
Okay, Ray, she's through! Hurry!

ZOE
But get Olive first!

Claire shoots Zoe a sharp look. But...

IN THE MAIN ROOM BELOW,

Ray shouts back up the shaft. Understanding.

RAY
Don't worry, Zoe!
(cough)
I got her!

Ray kneels down to pick up Olive. But then he freezes. His
face darkening. He has spotted something...

ACROSS THE ROOM (RAY POV).

The burning cabinet is falling apart.

About a quarter of it has already collapsed in the heat of the fire, hills of black ash piling up on the floor. And more and more wood is collapsing with every passing second.

Through breaches in the burning cabinet we can see...

THE BREATHER HORDE. RED EYES CUTTING THROUGH THE SMOKE.

They are waiting to get into the main room.

Waiting to get through to Ray.

RAY

Come on, Olive. We gotta move.

Ray tucks Olive into his belt, climbs onto the bucket, and hauls himself up into...

THE VENTILATION SHAFT.

His head and neck slip through but...

WHAM! His shoulders jam against either side of the ventilation opening. They are about an inch too broad.

Ray groans and strains with effort.

Trying to force himself through.

But still no go.

RAY

I, I can't fit!

ON THE SURFACE ABOVE,

Claire calls back down to him. Her voice hushed but urgent.

CLAIRE

Yes, yes you can! You have to! Just hold on! Hold on! I'll help you!

She reaches down into the narrow shaft, wraps her hands around his lower arms, and pulls back as hard as she can.

Her face flushes red with effort.

Her feet fight for traction.

Her muscles strain.

And then...

IN THE VENTILATION SHAFT BELOW,

POP! Ray's shoulders squeeze into the shaft.

His bones twist and fold unnaturally against the crushing walls of the shaft. From the look on his face, we can tell that the pain is excruciating. But at least he is now inside.

He grits his teeth. Fighting through the pain.

RAY

I-I'm in. K-keep pulling!

ON THE SURFACE ABOVE,

Claire fills with relief.

CLAIRE

Just hold on! We're gonna get you out!

Claire continues to pull back on his arms.

First his head slips through.

Then his shoulders.

Ray is now able to reach out and grab onto a nearby tangle of weeds. He begins to drag himself across the rubble ground.

Claire keeps pulling back on his arms.

Zoe joins in too.

IN THE MAIN ROOM BELOW,

Ray's chest and stomach rise up the shaft.

Only his legs now dangle below.

But he needs to hurry.

The remaining cabinet collapses to the floor and...

WHOOM! THE BREATHER HORDE EXPLODES INTO THE MAIN ROOM.

Their features remain mostly obscured beneath the curtain of smoke, but we can hear their raspy breathing and see their crimson eyes as they make a beeline for his dangling legs.

ON THE SURFACE ABOVE,

Ray continues to drag himself up. Roaring with effort.

Claire and Zoe pull alongside him. Gasping for air.

ZOE
WE GOT YOU DAD!

CLAIRE
HOLD ON! ALMOST THERE!

IN THE MAIN ROOM BELOW,

Ray's waist slips through the ventilation shaft.

His legs quickly begin to follow.

His feet next.

And —

WHAM! A DARK SHADOWED LIMB SUDDENLY LUNGES OUT OF THE SMOKE BELOW AND SNATCHES HIS DANGLING ANKLE. YANKING BACK ON IT.

ON THE SURFACE ABOVE,

FWOOM! Ray's eyes shoot wide and he begins to shoot backwards across the surface. His hands tear free from the weeds.

CLAIRE
RAY!

ZOE
DAD!

Claire and Zoe frantically try to hold on to him.

But the Breathers are too strong. *Too strong.*

He jerks back one foot.

Two feet.

Three.

And —

FWOOM! He rips free from their grip and sucks back down the ventilation shaft as if it were a whirlpool pulling him under.

IN THE MAIN ROOM BELOW,

WHAM! Ray crashes hard to the cement floor.

He is swallowed up beneath the dark smoke. Almost blind. But he can make out terrible glowing crimson eyes all around him. Closing in on all sides. Like sharks moving in on their prey.

Drawing closer.

And closer.

And...

ON THE SURFACE ABOVE,

A *DEAFENING ROAR* echoes up the shaft.

Guttural. Primal. Monstrous.

CLAIRE

RAY!

ZOE

DAD, NO!

They scramble forward and look down into...

THE VENTILATION SHAFT (CLAIRE AND ZOE POV).

Through the dark smoke, they see and hear flashes of horror:

A SHADOWED BODY FLYING THROUGH THE SMOKE AT INHUMAN SPEED.

THE SOUND OF SHATTERING BONES AND TEARING FLESH.

A DISMEMBERED ARM SOARING THROUGH THE AIR.

A GEYSER OF BLOOD SPLASHING UPWARD.

HORRIBLE RASPING SCREAMS.

AND...

ON THE SURFACE ABOVE,

Zoe cries out. Tears flooding her eyes.

ZOE

DAD! NO!

She tries to jump back down the ventilation shaft to save her dad, but Claire snatches her away, yanking her into her arms.

Zoe kicks and flails and screams.

ZOE (CONT'D)

LEMME GO! LEMME GO!

CLAIRE

THERE'S NOTHING WE CAN DO!

ZOE

WE, WE HAVE TO HELP HIM!

CLAIRE
WE CAN'T!

ZOE
YOU'RE A LIAR!

Zoe punches Claire with her little fists.

ZOE (CONT'D)
I HATE YOU! I HATE YOU!

She punches Claire again and again until finally exhaustion takes over and she dissolves into choked sobs.

Claire hugs her close. Holding back tears of her own.

CLAIRE
It's okay, baby, it's okay, it's
oka --

Her voice breaks off. She sees something...

ACROSS THE RUINED CHURCH (CLAIRE POV).

A swarm of red eyes are cutting their way through the inky black night like hellish fireflies. Another BREATHER HORDE.

Eight of them this time. Headed this way. And fast.

Claire pales with horror.

CLAIRE
We have to run --

ZOE
(sobbing)
Wh-what?

CLAIRE
RUN!

Claire drops Zoe to the ground, snatches her hand, and drags her away as fast as she can from the pursuing Breather Horde.

They plunge headlong into...

THE CHURCH CEMETERY.

Their bodies are swallowed by shoulder-high grass.

It is nearly impossible to see in here, but Claire forces them to keep moving forward. Cutting left. Right. Left. Left again. Threading perilously through the ruined headstones.

They are making their way toward the charred forest.

Its dark mouth looms up ahead. Fifty yards away.

Zoe shoots a look over her shoulder.

BEHIND THEM (ZOE POV),

The grass shudders and parts. The sound of raspy breathing hissing. It seems like they are being pursued by the wind.

WHAM! Zoe suddenly trips over a jutting headstone.

She tumbles to the ground. Scraping her knee. She cries.

ZOE

MOM!

CLAIRE

I GOT YOU!

Claire hauls Zoe back to her feet just as --

WHOOSH! The Breather Horde charges out of the tall grass. Their burning red eyes lunge forward with a sharp hiss.

Claire pulls Zoe away at the last second and drags her into...

THE FOREST.

It is dark in here. Impossibly dark.

But Claire and Zoe continue to sprint as fast as they can. Dangerously fast. Weaving between the maze of blackened trees.

But no matter how quickly and shrewdly they maneuver through the forest, the Breather Horde remains close behind them, their footsteps pounding the earth like a rising drumbeat.

DOOM. DOOM. DOOM. DOOM. Drawing closer.

DOOM. DOOM. DOOM. And closer.

DOOM. DOOM. And closer.

DOOM. And --

WHOOM! The ground suddenly drops out beneath Claire and Zoe. They both scream as they go tumbling head over heels down...

A STEEP HILLSIDE.

Plummeting wildly --

Down and down --

And down --

And --

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT

WHUMP! Their bodies crash to a stop on hard cement.

They have landed on the country road from the flashback. The traffic jam of cars, including their Ford Explorer, still remain, only now they are charred and overgrown and empty, relics of some past world.

Another relic towers above them:

THE BARBED-WIRE FENCE.

Warning signs continue to blink in furious repetition, flashing the road in a strobe-like pattern of yellow light:

QUARANTINE. NO ACCESS.

QUARANTINE. NO ACCESS.

QUARANTINE. NO ACCESS.

Claire weakly peels her body off the cement. She is bruised and gasping for air. But she is still okay. *Still okay.*

She hauls Zoe onto her feet. Looks her in the eyes.

CLAIRE

Are you okay?! Talk to me, ZoZo!
Can you still run?!

Zoe nods timidly. Chokes back a sob.

ZOE

...Wh-where are we?

CLAIRE

Right where it all started. Come
on, we gotta keep going! Hurry!

Claire snatches Zoe's hand and begins to lead her toward the forest on the opposite side of the country road. But then...

WHOOM! A GIANT SHADOWED MONSTER EMERGES BENEATH THE TREELINE.

Twenty feet wide. Ten feet high. Ten thousand pounds.

It roars so ferociously that it displaces the air, sending plumes of dirt sucking upward. As it rises above the trees and into view, we realize that this monster is in fact...

THE BLACK HAWK HELICOPTER.

It swoops right overtop Claire and Zoe, whipping their clothes into a frenzy, and shines a blinding searchlight on them. A loudspeaker blares from its steel underbelly:

MILITARY LOUDSPEAKER
DO NOT MOVE OR WE WILL OPEN FIRE!
REPEAT, DO NOT MOVE OR WE WILL OPEN
FIRE!

Zoe looks at Claire. Panicked.

ZOE
Mom, wh-what do we do?!

CLAIRE
Run! Keep running!

Claire yanks Zoe forward, forcing her to run.

They charge for the woods opposite --

Twenty feet away --

Ten feet --

Five --

WHOOM! SOMETHING FIRES DOWN FROM THE HELICOPTER.

But it is not a bullet. It is an ENORMOUS POLYMER NET, like the kind hunters use to capture wildlife. It slams down on top of Claire and Zoe, wrapping around them, entangling their bodies, sending them slamming headfirst into the pavement.

They writhe and flail and scream. Desperately trying to break themselves free from the net. But the net is held down by...

FOUR STEEL WEIGHTS. There is no escape from here.

Zoe's eyes suddenly shoot wide. She screams:

ZOE
...The Breathers. Th-they're
coming! They're coming!

Claire follows her gaze back to...

THE FOREST (CLAIRE POV).

The Breather Horde has started to slink out of the dark mouth of the woods one by one. They stomp down the hill and cross onto the road. Methodically approaching Claire and Zoe.

Their features are still hidden beneath the cover of night, but as they near the Black Hawk, the searchlight gradually washes over them, revealing more of them with every step.

ONE STEP.

GAS MASKS obscure their faces. Heavy black polymer.

TWO STEPS.

MOUTHPIECES filter their breathing. Raspy and unnatural.

THREE STEPS.

INHALATION TUBES droop down their necks. Tentacle-like.

FOUR STEPS.

NIGHT VISION GOGGLES cover their eyes. Glowing red.

FIVE STEPS.

HAZMAT SUITS cover their bodies. Armored and hulking.

SIX STEPS.

M-16A4 RIFLES thrust from their gloved hands. Silenced.

SEVEN STEPS.

AMERICAN FLAGS adorn their shoulders. Stars and stripes.

EIGHT STEPS.

These are not monsters at all. These are...

NINE STEPS.

US. MILITARY SOLDIERS.

Claire pulls Zoe close. Protecting her as...

The Breathers quickly swoop around them with their M-16A4 rifles raised high. But they do not open fire. Not yet.

A tall Breather with a silver bar glinting on his upper chest (BREATHING LIEUTENANT) waves a hand signal up at the Black Hawk. It promptly yaws one-eighty and flies back across the fence, leaving us with only the flashing light of the signs.

Claire struggles in the net. Still trying to break free.

CLAIRE

Let us go! LET US GO!

The Breather Lieutenant ignores her. He turns to Breather Two and speaks, his voice filtered and distorted by the gas mask.

BREATHER LIEUTENANT

Test them.

BREATHER TWO

Yes, sir.

Breather Two approaches the net.

He removes a HYPODERMIC GUN from his belt. It looks like a pistol crossed with a hypodermic needle, with a thick glass barrel syringe and a chrome trigger.

Claire draws Zoe behind her back. Keeping her away.

CLAIRE

Don't you dare touch her!

But Breather Two does not want Zoe. He wants Claire.

BREATHER TWO

Don't move.

He thrusts the hypodermic gun through the net, shoves its nozzle against her upper arm, and squeezes the trigger.

THUNK! A needle shoots forward. Into her arm. *Her vein.*

Claire winces. As we hear the sound of blood siphoning from vein to syringe, we slowly push into her tear-stained eyes. In her pupil, we see the reflection of the quarantine sign.

It flashes its message.

QUARANTINE. NO ACCESS.

Blinking again.

QUARANTINE. NO ACCESS.

And again.

QUARANTINE. NO ACCESS.

And...

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Again.

QUARANTINE. NO ACCESS.

The same sign reflects in the Ford Explorer's windshield.

Claire stares wide-eyed at their SUV, which is still hopping up and down. Up and down. Up and down. Like some lowrider.

Behind her, Ray holds tight to Zoe.

ZOE

Dad, it's an earthquake!

RAY

No, baby, it can't be. Kingsville doesn't have earthquakes.

ZOE

Th-then what is it?!

CLAIRE

...Something big.

Claire looks back at...

THE QUARANTINE FENCE (CLAIRE POV).

A PAIR OF BLACK DOTS FLY BEHIND IT. SHADOWED BENEATH THE SUN.

They are soaring toward the fence...

Rushing closer...

And closer...

And...

CHA-FWOOM! A PAIR OF F/A18 HORNET JETS swoop over the fence.

They fly so close to the ground that their rumbling engines shatter a dozen car windows and set off even more alarms.

The Hewitts are nearly knocked over by the turbulence. They spin as the jets rush past them and continue down the road.

They are flying straight for downtown Kingsville.

ZOE

Wh-what are those planes doing?

CLAIRE

Those aren't planes. Those are jets. Military jets.

RAY

The hell does the CDC need with military jets?

No one answers. No one knows.

They simply continue to watch as...

IN THE DISTANCE (HEWITT POV),

The jets soar overtop downtown Kingsville.

And that is when it happens: something drops off the wings of one of the jets. It looks like a piece of the wing broke off. But of course it is not a piece of the wing at all. It is...

AN M77 INCENDIARY BOMB. 500 POUNDS OF PURE EXPLOSIVE.

The bomb tumbles down toward the ground below...

Nose-diving for downtown Kingsville...

One-thousand feet...

Five-hundred...

Two...

One...

DAAAAAAA-DOOOOOOOOOOM! A MASSIVE EXPLOSIVE TEARS ACROSS THE DISTANT SILHOUETTE OF DOWNTOWN KINGSVILLE. A WALL OF FLAME AND SMOKE AND ASH SWIRLING UP LIKE SOME HELLISH CYCLONE.

ON THE COUNTRY ROAD,

The Hewitts stumble back. A furnace wind slapping them.

Panic seizes the crowd. Everyone running, crying, screaming.

Claire turns to Ray. Shouts over the cacophony.

CLAIRE

My God...th-they just told everyone
to go back to town!

RAY

It, it has to be a mistake!

ZOE

The planes are coming back!

Claire follows Zoe's gaze...

FAR OFF IN THE DISTANCE (CLAIRE POV),

WHOOSH! The jets have swung back around.

They are headed back this way.

And fast.

ON THE COUNTRY ROAD,

The Hewitts stare in shock.

Zoe looks at her parents. Terrified. Sobbing.

ZOE

Mom! Wh-what do we do?! What do we
DO?!

As Zoe continues to shout, Claire silently surveys the chaos. She sees sobbing children. Screaming parents. Cars screeching away. Panicked people attempting to scale the fence, only to have it electrocute them, launching them back to the road.

But amidst this tumult, she notices a single peaceful image:

A FAMILY OF THREE. CROUCHED SILENTLY ON THE ROAD. PRAYING.

As Claire absorbs this peaceful image, a calmness sweeps over her and the cacophonous clamor gradually fades into silence.

Her gaze shifts to the forest. Towering above the trees:

A CHURCH CROSS. GLINTING IN THE SUN LIKE A BEACON.

CLAIRE

...First Methodist.

RAY

What?

CLAIRE

First Methodist Church. They have
an old bomb shelter out back.

Ray suddenly remembers this too.

His eyes flash with a glimmer of hope.

EXT. FOREST - GRAVEYARD - LATER - DAY

WHOOSH! The Hewitts race side by side. Making for the church.

They run across the very same areas that Claire and Zoe just traversed in the present. Only this time they headed in the opposite direction, and outrunning jets instead of Breathers.

They weave between the maze of trees...

Burst out of the forest...

Across the graveyard...

And...

EXT. FIRST METHODIST CHURCH - A LITTLE LATER

They emerge at the back of the FIRST METHODIST CHURCH.

The building is still standing. Untouched by fire.

The Hewitts crash to a halt. Heaving and clutching at their sides. Exhausted from their run. But they can't stop now.

RAY

Where is it?! Where's the door?!

CLAIRE

I don't know! I-it's here,
somewhere!

Claire scans the ground. She spots a patch of yellow peeking out beneath tangled weeds. She drops to her knees and tears up some of the weeds to reveal it is the yellow paint from...

A FADED NUCLEAR FALLOUT SIGN.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Found it!

Ray and Zoe quickly join Claire. They work together to uncover the rest of the weeds until at last they unveil...

THE BOMB SHELTER DOOR.

Claire spins the wheel handle and yanks up on the door, but nothing happens. The hinges are heavily rusted over. Stuck.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

It won't open!

RAY

It has to!

Ray begins to help Claire pull up on the handle.

Zoe looks fearfully over her shoulder as...

IN THE DISTANCE BEHIND THEM (ZOE POV),

WHOOSH! The jets roar over the country road.

Another incendiary bomb drops. A curtain of flame and smoke explodes on impact, rising high above the trees. The blast of the explosion drowns out the sound of piercing screams below.

And then the jets unexpectedly bank one eighty.

Speeding toward the Methodist Church now.

Toward the Hewitts.

AT THE CHURCH,

ZOE

Mom! Dad! They're coming! Hurry!

Claire and Ray continue to yank on the door.

Pulling up harder.

And harder.

And...

WHOOM! THE DOOR WRENCHES OPEN.

INT. BOMB SHELTER - VESTIBULE - A MOMENT LATER

The Hewitts drop into the shelter one by one.

Zoe scrambles down the ladder first, Ray follows behind her, and Claire comes last. She seizes the wheel handle so hard the rusted metal slashes her palm. She flinches in pain but doesn't stop. There is no time. No time. The scream of the jets has reached an ear-splitting pitch. Almost overtop now.

RAY

SHUT IT CLAIRE!

Claire yanks the door down on top of them --

It slams firmly shut --

And the world goes --

BLACK.

DAAAAAAA-DOOOOOOOM! AN INCENDIARY BOMB ERUPTS OVERHEAD.

The roar of rushing flames and the subsequent demolition of the church and its surroundings wash over us like a crashing tidal wave. This is the sound of mass destruction. Of death.

But as abruptly as the destruction began, it ends.

We hear fitful sounds of re-emerging life.

A cough. A gasp. A voice.

CLAIRE (O.S.)

Is...everyone okay?

RAY (O.S.)

Yeah.

ZOE (O.S.)
 ...Uh-huh.

INT. BOMB SHELTER - MAIN ROOM - A LITTLE LATER

The Hewitts stagger one by one into the main room.

Claire and Ray hold up their cell phones, using their glowing LCD displays as flashlights. They pan the blue light around in somber silence. Everything is in disarray. Spiderwebs and dust blanketing all. A fraction of the "home" it will become.

Ray crosses to the cabinet. Opens it.

RAY
 Hey, I found some lights.

He removes a lighter. Strikes it. The dim amber light illuminates the other items in the cabinet. Candles, lanterns, oil, and, of course, food. Lots of food.

Ray smiles thinly. Trying to be optimistic for Zoe.

RAY (CONT'D)
 Zoe, come look. They got everything in here. Really. And, hey, look at this...

He plucks a doll off the top shelf. Holds it out. The doll's hard shell body is coated in dust and spiderwebs, but her freckled face and "stuck smile" prove instantly familiar.

Zoe takes Olive from Ray. She hugs her new friend close. Already feeling a little bit better. A little comforted.

She looks at Ray. Choking back her sobs.

ZOE
 ...Dad?

RAY
 Yeah?

ZOE
 H-how long do we have to stay here?

RAY
 I, I don't really know. Hopefully not long. I'm sure all this...it'll be cleared up soon. It's gotta just be some sort of...terrible mistake.

CLAIRE (O.S.)
 No, Ray. It wasn't a mistake.

Ray and Zoe turn around in surprise.

They find Claire standing rigidly against the wall.

She is looking down at her right hand. Her expression is grave. Her body trembling. Her voice frail and small.

She doesn't want to say this. But she has no choice.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

The shelter door, it...it cut me.

She holds up her right hand. Palm up.

A narrow cut slices down her palm. Blood slithers down her skin. And there is something very peculiar about this blood:

The color is not red like it should be. It is inky black. And strangest of all, there are THINGS swimming within the blood. Some sort of parasites. Hundreds of them. Like tiny squids.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

...We're infected --

HISS! The blood sizzles like boiling water.

Shooting violently upward.

Coming alive.

And --

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT (PRESENT)

HISS! A STREAM OF BLACK BLOOD sucks into the hypodermic gun.

Claire winces in pain. Jolted back to the present.

Breather Two rips the gun out of her arm. Her black blood writhes inside its thick glass syringe. The squid-like parasites slamming up against it. Trying to escape. Alive.

Breather Two turns back to the Breather Lieutenant.

BREATHING TWO

She's got AMS, alright, sir. You want me to check the girl too?

BREATHING LIEUTENANT

She's been in contact with the mother. They're both infected.

The Breather Lieutenant approaches the net.

He kneels down level with Claire and Zoe. Claire continues to protect Zoe. Holding her safely behind her back.

CLAIRE

St-stay away from us! Stay away!

But the Breather Lieutenant does not stay away. He continues to stare at them. Scrutinizing them like animals in a cage.

BREATHER LIEUTENANT

They look so...harmless.

CLAIRE

We, we've never hurt anyone! Just please, do what you want with me, but let my daughter go! She's just a little girl!

BREATHER TWO

We could take the girl back to base, sir. The CDC could use a young test subject --

BREATHER LIEUTENANT

She's not a "girl" anymore, Private. She's a monster.

The Breather Lieutenant stands back up.

BREATHER LIEUTENANT (CONT'D)

And none of us get to go back home until all the monsters are dead.

Zoe overhears this. She begins to sob.

Claire grows more desperate. She thrashes up against the net. Trying to break out again. But the net still holds strong.

CLAIRE

I won't let you touch her! I WON'T!

As her anger continues to swell, she begins to shudder all over in a paroxysm of rage. As she shudders ever faster and faster, her body undergoes a shocking metamorphosis:

THE HUE OF HER SKIN DRAINS FROM PALE TO WHITE.

ZOE

Mom, the-the second rule -- !

HER VEINS PALPITATE AND BULGE AND DARKEN.

CLAIRE

K-keep away from me -- !

HER PORES WEEP HEAVY BEADS OF BLACK SWEAT.

ZOE

Never lose control -- !

HER BREATHING RAPIDLY ESCALATES.

CLAIRE

KEE-KEEP A-WAAAAAY -- !

HER PUPILS DILATE TWICE THE SIZE.

She lunges forward with a savage roar.

WHOOM! She crashes hard into the net. Flailing against it. Clawing at it. Biting into it. Her strength animalistic. Her speed inhuman. The weights which pin the net jerk forward on the road, but not enough to free them. They remain trapped.

Breather Two falls back. Obviously intimidated. But the Breather Lieutenant looks on. His masked face emotionless.

BREATHER LIEUTENANT

Not so harmless anymore.

He stands back up and slowly steps away from the net. Dropping back in line with the other Breathers.

BREATHER LIEUTENANT (CONT'D)

On my order.

He raises a hand. Straight up. Palm flat. "Prepare to fire."

The Breathers elevate their rifles in response. *One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight.* All targeted right at Claire and Zoe. This is a firing squad. This is an execution.

TIME SLOWS TO A CRAWL. INCHING FORWARD.

Zoe sobs with panic. Tears raining down her cheeks...

Claire continues to thrash and flail wildly...

The net budes but does not move enough...

The Lieutenant starts to drop his hand...

Down and down...

And down...

And...

SPLAT! A spray of blood hits both Claire and Zoe in the face. They gasp and recoil from the impact of the blood.

But they do not fall over.

Still alive.

REVERSE ANGLE TO REVEAL

The blood came from Breather Two.

His neck has been ripped open down to the larynx. A geyser of blood showers the road and he crumples limply to reveal...

RAY. STANDING TALL BEHIND HIM. STILL ALIVE.

But he does not look like Ray anymore. His pupils are too large. His skin too white. His veins too visible. His body spattered with blood. He looks like some kind of monster.

TIME SUDDENLY RAMPS BACK UP TO NORMAL SPEED.

The Breathers whirl around. Shouting.

BREATHER THREE
Another infected!

BREATHER FOUR
Jesus Christ!

A volley of gunfire erupts.

Ray leaps fearlessly into the crowd of the six remaining Breathers. His movements fast. *Inhumanly fast*. We glimpse flashes of violence each time the quarantine sign blinks:

QUARANTINE. NO ACCESS.

Ray grabs Breather Three. Spins his head one-eighty.

QUARANTINE. NO ACCESS.

Ray bites Breather Four. Tearing open his neck.

QUARANTINE. NO ACCESS.

Ray kicks Breather Five. Shattering his knee.

QUARANTINE. NO ACCESS.

A bullet catches Ray in the arm.

QUARANTINE. NO ACCESS.

Another one in the chest.

QUARANTINE. NO ACCESS.

Another in the leg.

QUARANTINE. NO ACCESS.

In the gut.

QUARANTINE. NO ACCESS.

WHUMP! Ray falls like a rag doll to the pavement.

As a pool of black blood flows from his wounds, he gradually transforms back into his normal self. His pupils retract. His skin regains color. His veins retreat. His breathing steadies.

But he has left behind chaos.

Two Breathers lie dead. Another rolls around with a shattered leg. Only the Lieutenant and three others remain uninjured.

BREATHER SIX

We need medical down here,
Lieutenant!

BREATHER LIEUTENANT

We kill the other infected first.

BREATHER SIX

He took out half our team!

BREATHER LIEUTENANT

That's an *order*, Private!

The Breathers turn around to face Claire and Zoe.

They raise their M16A4s and reach for their triggers, preparing to fire, but there is nothing to fire upon.

The net is empty. A large hole torn in it.

Claire and Zoe have escaped.

BREATHER SEVEN

The hell'd they go?!

The Breather Lieutenant raises a hand. Cupping it to his ear. "Listen." Silence falls. And that is when they hear it:

TAPTAPTAPTAP. Skittering footsteps. They are echoing from behind the charred shell of the Hewitt's Ford Explorer.

The Breather Lieutenant waves his hand.

Motioning them forward.

And...

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT - A FEW MOMENTS LATER

WHOOSH! The Breathers sweep around the Explorer.

They raise their M16A4s rifles. But no shots are fired. There are no "infected" back here. At least none in sight.

As they continue to search the area, the camera slowly pulls away, gliding backwards through the broken windshield of...

THE FORD EXPLORER.

A pair of small eyes peek out of the darkness.

It is Zoe. Alone. Hidden behind a mound of charred luggage.

She holds her breath and stills her body. Trying not to draw any attention to herself. Through the broken windshield, she can see the crimson eyes of the prowling Breathers.

Still searching for Claire. *For Mom.*

ON THE COUNTRY ROAD,

The Breathers creep forward. One step. Two steps. Three.

TAPTAP! A SHADOW darts between two cars ahead.

TAPTAP! And then it darts to the right.

TAPTAP! And then behind them.

Seemingly everywhere and nowhere at once.

BREATHER FIVE

Christ she's fast -- !

BREATHER SIX

Where'd she go -- ?!

WHOOM! The hood of a nearby car bounces.

A SHADOW is running across it.

Racing toward them.

Roaring.

BREATHER LIEUTENANT

THERE!

The Breathers squeeze their triggers and --

IN THE FORD EXPLORER,

Zoe holds her ears in horror as the SOUND OF HISSING BULLETS and PIERCING SCREAMS reverberate through the burnt metal shell of the SUV. Once again, our vision is very limited, but we glimpse snapshots of violence every time the sign flashes:

QUARANTINE. NO ACCESS.

A Breather flips hard into the side of the car. Crushing it.

QUARANTINE. NO ACCESS.

A severed arm soars through the open passenger window.

QUARANTINE. NO ACCESS.

A rain of blood splatters across the steering wheel.

QUARANTINE. NO ACCESS.

A decapitated head spits into the front seat.

QUARANTINE. NO ACCESS.

Dark blood paints the driver's seat.

QUARANTINE. NO ACCESS.

More paints a seat belt.

QUARANTINE. NO ACCESS.

And...

QUARANTINE. NO ACCESS.

A body flips onto the hood.

QUARANTINE. NO ACCESS.

But it is not a Breather.

QUARANTINE. NO ACCESS.

It is Claire.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT - SAME

Claire lies on the Explorer hood. Writhing in pain.

She has been shot in the upper left leg. As black blood spills from her wound, her "infection" recedes into her body little by little, until she looks human once more.

She looks up in fear as...

The Breather Lieutenant approaches. M-16A4 raised high.

He is now the last remaining Breather. The other three lie in broken heaps around him. Two are dead. One on his way out.

The Breather Lieutenant stomps through the blood, steps up to Claire, and thrusts the muzzle of his M-16A4 right up against her forehead. The hot metal hisses. Burning a small ring into her pale flesh.

BREATHER LIEUTENANT
You just killed five US soldiers.

His finger reaches for the trigger...

BREATHER LIEUTENANT (CONT'D)
You're just what we say you are.

Squeezes down...

BREATHER LIEUTENANT (CONT'D)
A monster.

And...

CLICK! Nothing happens.

CLICK! Still nothing.

CLICK! Out of bullets.

He retrieves a fresh magazine clip from his belt. But before he has a chance to load it, a small, quiet voice interrupts:

ZOE (O.S.)
Get away from my mom.

The Breather Lieutenant looks up in surprise at...

THE ROOF OF THE FORD EXPLORER.

Zoe is standing on it. Silhouetted by the crescent moon.

She has begun to let the virus take hold of her body. As she changes, the Breather Lieutenant begins to reload his rifle, moving fast, trying to outpace the rate of her metamorphosis.

ZOE'S

Skin drains from pale to white. .

THE LIEUTENANT

Slams the clip in the chamber.

ZOE'S

Veins palpitate and darken.

THE LIEUTENANT

Yanks back the rifle bolt.

ZOE'S

Pores weep black sweat.

THE LIEUTENANT

Raises the rifle.

ZOE'S

Pupils dilate.

THE LIEUTENANT

Aims.

AND --

WHOOM! Zoe leaps onto the Breather Lieutenant.

She sends him flipping back against the road as his rifle goes off. The bullet whizzes right above her head. Miss.

The Breather Lieutenant tries to fire again, but Zoe crawls on top of him and pins him down. She raises up a fist and...

WHAM! Smashes his arm. Fracturing his bone at the elbow.

WHAM! Smashes his leg. Shattering his kneecap into pieces.

WHAM! Smashes his face. Blowing right through his gas mask.

The Breather Lieutenant is now unmasked. His face appears young. Perhaps mid-thirties. Brown hair. Blue eyes. Human.

His forehead sweats. His eyes spill tears. He is terrified.

Zoe raises a fist high into the air.

Readying for one more hit.

For the kill.

CLAIRE (O.S.)

Stop.

Zoe snaps her head with a growl to find --

Claire. She has climbed off the crumpled hood of the Ford Explorer. Weak and limping and bloodied. But still conscious.

She holds out her hands. Speaks in a calm voice.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

You don't have to kill him. It-it's
okay, baby. We're safe now --

WHOOSH! Zoe lunges at Claire with a guttural roar.

She slams Claire back onto the hood of the SUV and raises up her fist. Her rage unbridled. She is going to kill her mom.

Claire tries to reach out to her one last time.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Rule number two?! Remember?! You
can control it! Control it, ZoZo --
(corrects herself)
Zoe.

Zoe holds back her fist at the last second.

The virus still maintains a powerful hold over Zoe. But the little girl underneath seems to hear Claire. *To understand.*

Zoe's breathing begins to slow.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

That's it, you can do it...

Her skin regains its color.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Come back to me...

Her pupils retract.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Come back...

And at last she is a little girl once more.

Zoe blinks. Staring at Claire. Disoriented.

ZOE

...Mom?

Claire nods. Her eyes smiling.

CLAIRE

That's right. It's Mom. You saved me. You *protected* me.

ZOE

I know.
(realizing)
You called me Zoe.

CLAIRE

I know.

Zoe leaps into her mother's arms. They hold tight to one another for a long time. But then Zoe pulls away. Worried.

She looks at her mom's wounded leg.

ZOE

You're hurt. Here...

Zoe removes her "Kingsville Swim Club" jacket, stoops down, and ties it tautly around the wound. Stanching the blood. Claire smiles in thanks. But before she can say anything --

A PAINED SCREAM interrupts.

Claire and Zoe look behind them at the Breather Lieutenant.

He lies on the pavement, writhing and screaming in terrible agony. His body is broken, unable to stand, and his wounds leak...

BLACK BLOOD.

ZOE (CONT'D)

What do we...do with him?

CLAIRE

Leave him. He's one of us now.

Claire wraps her arm around Zoe for support, and then together they walk away, leaving the Lieutenant behind.

His screams fill the air.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT - A FEW MOMENTS LATER

Claire and Zoe stumble out from behind the Ford Explorer.

The pavement beneath them runs red with a river of blood. Severed Breather limbs drift through the current like flotsam.

Zoe points down the road.

ZOE

Look.

Claire follows her direction to find Ray lying prostrate in a pool of inky black blood. His chest rises up and down.

He is breathing. *Still alive.*

A FEW MOMENTS LATER,

Claire and Zoe drop down beside Ray.

Claire takes his hand into her own. Squeezes it.

CLAIRE

Ray?! Can, can you hear me?!

Ray nods weakly. Still conscious. He is unable to speak, but he can still move a little. His hand twitches, jerking downward, and removes something from the side of his belt.

He holds it up to Zoe. It is...

OLIVE. BLOODY BUT INTACT.

Zoe takes Olive. Hugs her close. Smiling through tears.

ZOE

You...you didn't leave her...

Ray smiles warmly. Shakes his head. *Of course not.*

But then his smile abruptly drops. He opens his mouth to speak, desperate to communicate something with his family, but his lips produce no sound, only black blood.

Claire wells with tears.

CLAIRE

What is it, Ray? What's the matter?! Please talk to me!

Ray tries to speak again. Summoning the last of his strength.

Finally his voice emerges. Frail. Weak. Urgent.

RAY

...Hide...

He points a quivering finger behind them.

Claire spins around to face...

THE QUARANTINE FENCE (CLAIRE POV).

A cyclopean light hovers behind the fence.

It is growing rapidly in size.

Roaring monstrously.

The Black Hawk.

ON THE COUNTRY ROAD,

Claire snaps back to Ray. Panicked.

CLAIRE

Ray, I, I need you to hold on to
me, we're getting you out of here --

Her voice breaks off.

Ray's hand now lies limp on the ground. Unmoving. His body
is just as lifeless. His glassy eyes as still as marbles.

He is dead.

Zoe bursts into sobs. Hugs her father tight.

Claire wants to mourn him as well. But there is no time.

She clambers weakly to her feet. Tears Zoe away from Ray.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

We can't stay here, baby, we, we
have to go! We have to hide!

Claire scours the surrounding area for somewhere, for
anywhere, to hide. And that is when she notices something:

The river of blood on the pavement is all flowing in the
same direction. Rushing down a decline in the road toward...

A VENTED STORM DRAIN.**EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - CURB - NIGHT - A FEW MOMENTS LATER**

BAM! Claire slams a shard of cement into the drain vent.

She pounds it again and again until finally the vent blows
free from its hinges. It spits down into the darkness below.

Claire ushers Zoe toward the gutter.

CLAIRE

Get down there! Hurry!

Zoe drops to the ground, slips through the mouth of the gutter, and lowers herself inside. She falls out of sight.

Claire shoots a terrified look over her shoulder.

The Black Hawk has crossed the fence now.

Forty yards and closing in.

Claire dives into...

THE STORM DRAIN.

She drops down --

And down --

And --

WHAM! She lands next to Zoe atop a heap of road debris.

Her wounded leg crumples on impact and she topples over with a gasp. The "Kingsville Swim Club" jacket falls off her leg, joining the road debris. But there is no time to retrieve it.

Claire climbs to her feet. Fighting through the pain.

CLAIRE
Hurry, Zoe, this way!

She drags Zoe down a narrow tunnel just as --

WHOOSH! THE BLACK HAWK ROARS ABOVE THE STORM DRAIN.

Its searchlight shines into the open grate. It pans left to right. Probing for Claire and Zoe. But all it finds is the fallen swim club jacket. Stitched with a single name: "ZOE."

Claire and Zoe have vanished down the tunnel. Out of sight.

The spotlight returns its gaze to the road.

And the world falls into...

DARKNESS.

INT. DARKNESS - UNKNOWN - LATER

Silence.

After a very long beat, Zoe begins to call out into the darkness. Her voice is hushed and timorous and scared.

ZOE (O.S.)
...Mom? Are you awake?
 (no answer)
Mom? Mom? Mom?!

Finally Claire answers. Groggy and half-asleep.

CLAIRE (O.S.)
...Zoe? Wh-what are you doing up
already? Go back to sleep.

ZOE (O.S.)
I, I can't. Olive is scared.

CLAIRE (O.S.)
...Okay, just hold on. I'll get the
light.

We hear some rustling movement.

The flick of a flint wheel.

And then...

FWOOM! A lighter strikes. Its fluttering flame throws a
dim light across the dark, revealing that we are inside...

THE SEWER SYSTEM UNDER KINGSVILLE.

Zoe and Claire huddle in a small alcove.

Claire's condition has worsened. Even though her wound has
been re-stanching with torn cloth, the loss of blood has
taken its toll, leaving her fatigued, colorless, and weak.

She holds up the lighter. Illuminating Zoe.

Zoe is hugging Olive. Frightened.

CLAIRE
...What is it? What's wrong with
Olive?

ZOE
Sh-she heard something. I think a,
a Breather's coming.

CLAIRE
No, sweetie. No one's coming. You
were just having another nightm --

Claire's voice breaks off. She now hears something too. A
familiar sound. Reverberating across the sewer.

BOOM. Boom. BOOM. Boom. BOOM. Boom. BOOM. Boom.

The unmistakable drumbeat of footsteps.

Claire snaps to...

THE TUNNEL OPPOSITE (CLAIRE POV).

A SMALL SHADOW flutters on the wall.

It is moving this way. *Toward Claire and Zoe.* As it draws ever closer, it distorts on the rounded tunnel wall, growing monstrously taller. Just like Ray's shadow in the beginning.

Claire gasps.

CLAIRE

My god. They tracked us.

She climbs weakly to her feet. Pulls Zoe with her.

They turn to run, but then a voice shouts:

VOICE (O.S.)

MARCO!

They freeze in place. Startled by the voice. They slowly turn back around to face the tunnel opposite. Baffled.

The "shadow" is calling out to them.

SHADOW (O.S.)

MARCOOOOOO!

The voice rebounds off the walls.

SHADOW (O.S.) (CONT'D)

MAAAARCOOOOOOO!

And again.

SHADOW (O.S.) (CONT'D)

MAAARRCCOOOOOOOOO!

Zoe timorously responds.

ZOE

...Polo?

Claire slaps a hand over Zoe's mouth. *Quiet.* But it is too late. The monstrous shadow now realizes that they are here.

It races down the tunnel.

Around the corner.

And into view.

It is...

JOEY NEARY. THE NEIGHBOR BOY FROM THE FLASHBACK.

Although he is dressed in tattered clothing, he looks surprisingly well nourished: his belly is rounded with fat, his cheeks ruddy with health. He grips a small flashlight in one hand, Zoe's "Kingsville Swim Club" jacket in the other.

Claire and Zoe can scarcely believe their eyes.

ZOE (CONT'D)

...Joey?

CLAIRE

Joey Neary?

Joey nods. He holds up Zoe's jacket.

JOEY

...I found you.

INT. SEWER SYSTEM - TUNNEL - LATER

The flashlight beam bounces across the damp sewer floor.

The beam comes to rest on a HATCH DOOR cut into the floor. Two faint words have been carved across its rusted face:

"NEW KINGSVILLE"

Joey kneels beside the hatch. Grips its handle. And...

CREEEEEEEAAAAAK! He wrenches it open. Hinges shrieking.

A rusted ladder spirals down through the open hatch, dropping about a dozen feet to a large SEWER CHAMBER below. It is hard to make out much from this height, but we can see the warm glow of candlelight and hear sounds of bustling life.

Footsteps. Voices. Laughter. Even a crying baby.

Life down here is still hanging on. Still growing.

Zoe turns to Joey in awe.

ZOE

Is everyone...different like us?

JOEY

Yeah. But...it isn't different anymore. It's normal. *Come on.*

Joey drops into the hatch and scurries down the ladder.

Zoe tucks Olive safely beneath her arm and begins to follow after him. But then she stops and looks back up at her mom.

ZOE

Hey, Mom?

CLAIRE

...Yeah?

ZOE

Do you think it's morning yet?

CLAIRE

It's gotta be by now. Why?

Zoe smiles softly.

ZOE

Because that means it's three
hundred and two now. Three hundred
and two days.

Claire shakes her head. Her eyes glistening with tears.

CLAIRE

No. Not days. *Miracles*.

Zoe takes this in. Her own eyes welling with tears.

And with that, she begins to climb down the ladder. Slowly descending toward their new home below. Their new life.

Claire follows behind. As she drops beneath the sewer floor, she reaches up and grabs hold of the hatch door. Her pupils dilate for a second, revealing the hidden "monster" beneath, and then they retreat back to normal size. Human once again.

She yanks down on the hatch door.

It slams down on top of us.

Closing with a *clang*.

And all goes...

BLACK.

HIDDEN

