

THIS MORTAL COIL

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Faith: that which enables us to believe
things which we know to be untrue.

-- Dr. Abraham Van Helsing

FADE IN:

INT. HIGH-RISE CONDO - NIGHT

Darkness. A shaft of light bursts forth from under a door, animated by shadows of people arriving.

MAN (O.S.)
(behind door)
Everything's going to be all right.

A key in the lock turns, slides back a dead bolt.

Door opens spilling in bright light -- revealing a group of people in silhouette.

They appear to be frozen with anxiety, until one person flips on an entry hall light:

LARA WHITAKER, fourteen, angry with impatience pushes her way past everyone.

She bumps hard into her mother -- but doesn't say anything, disappearing down a dark hallway.

KATHY WHITAKER, late thirties, tears streaming down her face, clutches four-year-old EVAN WHITAKER on her shoulder.

KATHY
Watch it, Lara!

Kathy hurries with Evan in the opposite direction from Lara, out of sight.

DEREK WHITAKER, early forties, adjusts his wire-frame glasses as he yanks his key from the lock.

He closes the door, contemplating who to follow.

DEREK
Damn it, everything's going to be
all right...

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Kathy lands on the bed, cradling Evan in her arms. He buries his face in her chest.

She reaches out to a Kleenex box, finds it empty.

Derek comes in with a new box and hands it to her.

KATHY
We got him back.

DEREK
Yes. We did.

Kathy wipes her nose with a tissue.

Derek places a gentle hand on Evan's back.

DEREK (CONT'D)
Evan, buddy.

Evan doesn't move, doesn't respond.

Derek pulls out a set of keys -- holds them up to Kathy.

KATHY
Derek! Why didn't you tell me?

She jumps up, still holding Evan tight.

DEREK
Kathy! When could I?

KATHY
Let's go!

DEREK
Right now?

KATHY
YES! RIGHT NOW!

Kathy leaves, Evan clinging to her.

INT. EVAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Kathy opens the closet, starts taking out clothes -- Evan still in her arms.

DEREK
Shouldn't we wait until-- ?

KATHY
No!

She throws the clothes on a bed -- then collapses against his chest, on the verge of tears.

KATHY (CONT'D)
Please, Derek. I just want to get away from this fucking city.

Derek cringes -- Kathy never usually swears, but when she does he knows he can't say no.

INT. FAMILY ROOM - NIGHT

In the darkened room, Lara stares out the window.

A cat, GOLDIE, jumps onto the ledge beside her.

Far below them on the sidewalk -- a mad rush of activity: TV reporters, camera crews, ambulance and police.

Lara watches the spectacle, scared and excited.

She finds a television remote -- turns it on.

Goes to the sofa to watch, Goldie jumps in her lap.

Finds a channel broadcasting live from the sidewalk below.

The camera follows an ambulance as it drives off, followed by several police cars.

TV REPORTER (V.O.)

... All we know right now, Tracy,
is the boy has just been reunited
with his family, after being held
captive for almost a month by this
man --

The mug shot of a creepy-looking middle-aged man flashes on screen, he wears an expression of supreme ambivalence.

Lara clenches her fists, while Goldie digs his claws into her knees, watching along with her.

TV REPORTER (V.O.)

-- who was caught by tips called
into police from the surveillance
footage that we first broadcast of
Evan Whitaker, son of famed AIDS
researcher, Dr. Derek Whitaker, who
was abducted at a local department
store one month ago.

Derek walks by -- notices light from the TV screen illuminating Lara's face.

DEREK

Lara...

The screen cuts to a black and white image from a clothing department store video surveillance camera.

LARA

(to Derek)

God! Why do they always have to
show that!

A small boy (Evan) being snatched by an older man, as a young woman (Lara) faces the opposite direction.

TV REPORTER (V.O.)

After a five hour standoff with police, the man was shot and killed as officers moved in to rescue the four-year-old boy.

A photo of a Evan smiling, fills the screen.

Lara glances up at Derek -- he has tears in his eyes.

TV REPORTER (V.O.)

Police officials have identified the suspect as Shade Leon Marcato, whom they have confirmed as being a recently released level three sex offender.

Derek storms to the TV --

REPORTER (V.O.)

It remains unclear at this hour as to whether he raped or molested the kidnapped boy during the past...

-- turns it off.

LARA

Daddy! Wait a minute! I want see what they --

DEREK

They don't know what the hell happened --

Lara runs back to the window.

Derek peers over her shoulder, dreading what he has to say.

DEREK (CONT'D)

I got the keys to the new house today. Your mother wants to go there, tonight. Right now.

Lara looks at Derek.

LARA

What?! Right now?! What about school? And all my friends?

DEREK

I'm sorry, honey. But we'll just have to deal with it.

LARA

I don't understand how moving is going to make everything better.

DEREK

I know, I know. I hope it does.

Derek hugs her tight -- trying hard to hold back more tears.

EXT. HIGH-RISE CONDO - NIGHT

Reporters and camera crews mull outside of the immense, ornate condominium, waiting for something to happen.

A large SUV SCREECHES from around a corner -- SKIDS to a stop in a loading zone at the entrance.

A VALET DRIVER gets out, runs to the door -- reporters race into position at the entrance.

The Whitaker family comes out, led by the valet.

Derek carries luggage with help from a DOORMAN.

Lara has sleeping bags slung over each shoulder and a carrier with Goldie inside.

Kathy holds Evan in her arms, his face hidden under a blanket, turned away from the crowd.

Reporters and camera crews converge upon the family, shouting questions at them for comment.

Kathy climbs into the backseat with Evan -- she keeps their faces turned away from the cameras.

The valet and doorman help them load the bags and luggage.

DOORMAN

Good luck, Dr. Whitaker.

Derek nods to the man as he sits behind the steering wheel -- Lara squeezes into the passenger seat --

-- as reporters try to shove microphones into her face.

The doorman and valet push the crowd back -- Derek floors the car and SPEEDS away.

VALET

Leave 'em alone you wolves!!

They drive down a major boulevard in the center of the city, a light rain beginning to fall.

EXT. CITY STREETS/SUBURBAN ROADS - MONTAGE - NIGHT

The family escapes the city: heavy traffic, bright lights, loud noise, crazy people, strange random stares...

Out into the suburbs: tree-lined roads, single family homes, an old church, a large cemetery, peace and quiet...

EXT. CUL-DE-SAC - NIGHT

The SUV pulls into a small suburban development of seven large, older homes, situated around a cul-de-sac.

EXT. WHITAKER HOUSE - NIGHT

They turn into the large driveway of a white, four-bedroom Victorian-style house.

Derek aims a remote to open the garage door, pulls the car inside.

INT. WHITAKER HOUSE - GARAGE - NIGHT

The door closes behind them, a hanging bare bulb light illuminates the tight space.

DEREK

Here we are.

INT. WHITAKER HOUSE - FOYER - NIGHT

They enter the dark, quiet house -- Derek hunts around for a light switch.

He finds it -- a chandelier lights up, revealing a stairwell, the front door and a hall to the kitchen.

Lara puts down the carrier with Goldie, opens the door.

He hesitates -- before jumping out to explore the house.

Derek puts the sleeping bags and luggage by the stairwell.

With a free arm, Kathy pulls Lara close to kiss her on the cheek.

Kathy grabs a sleeping bag and heads upstairs.

Lara turns to Derek, resigned. He tries to smile.

DEREK

Go find your room. Try to get some sleep, honey.

LARA

We forgot Goldie's litter box.

Derek glances up at Kathy, half-way up the stairs.

KATHY

Just let him go outside.

LARA

What if he doesn't come back?

KATHY

He'll come back.

Kathy disappears down a hall with Evan.

DEREK

If he gets hungry enough, he will.

LARA

Gee, Dad, that makes me feel so much better.

Goldie meows from the kitchen, in the darkness.

Derek goes back to the garage.

INT. WHITAKER HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Lara finds the kitchen light, turns it on.

The spacious kitchen wraps around a cooking island.

Nearby, a sliding glass door leads to the backyard.

Already at the door, Goldie waits.

LARA

Well, Goldie, it's up to you.

He rubs his body against her shins, interested.

Lara kneels down gives him a kiss on the head.

Unlocks the sliding glass door, opens it.

Peering through the doorway, Goldie surveys the land.

LARA (CONT'D)
Maybe you can catch a mouse or
something.

He brushes against her legs -- then darts outside,
disappearing into the dark. She closes the door.

INT. WHITAKER HOUSE - GARAGE - NIGHT

Derek gets the rest of the luggage, locks the car.
Goes back inside -- turns off the garage light.

INT. WHITAKER HOUSE - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Through a window in a small bathroom next to the door to the
garage -- a light from across the street catches Derek's eye.

A NEIGHBOR pulls his car into a garage.

Derek pauses for a moment, watching through the curtains.

The driver gets out, goes to open the passenger door -- a
body slumps over into the driver's arms --

-- as the garage door comes down -- cutting off the view.

He's intrigued, but not sure what to think.

INT. WHITAKER HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Kathy paces the empty room still carrying Evan, whispering in
his ear.

Derek comes in with their luggage. He opens the sleeping
bags, lays them on the floor.

Kathy nestles down on her bag with Evan in her arms -- Derek
lays down next to them.

Evan turns to Derek -- smiles. Derek leans over to give him
a kiss on the cheek.

Kathy cries tears of joy -- Evan snuggles between them, safe.

DEREK
Let's all get some sleep.

Evan closes his eyes, fast asleep. Kathy strokes Evan's
hair, staring at his face.

Derek turns over on his back, staring at the ceiling, pensive, exhausted.

Forces himself to close his eyes.

INT. WHITAKER HOUSE - LARA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Lara unfurls her sleeping bag on the floor near the window.

Opens her luggage, pulls out an MP3 player -- puts the earphones in her ears, listens to a melancholic Gothic song.

High in the clear sky a three-quarter moon casts a pale white light down upon her face.

She falls asleep listening to the music.

INT. WHITAKER HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT - LATER

Evan wakes up screaming.

Kathy springs upright in fright.

She finds him -- hugs him, tries to calm him down.

KATHY

It's okay honey, we're here, we're here...

Derek rolls over. Finds his wristwatch on the floor, checks the time -- 4:00 AM.

DEREK

I'm going to get a drink of water.

INT. WHITAKER HOUSE - STAIRWELL - NIGHT

Derek walks down the stairs.

Through windows next to the front door he can see the door on garage across the street -- it opens again.

He stops on the foyer landing to look.

This time the driver has no passenger. Garage door closes and the car drives away.

He doesn't think much of it, goes to the kitchen.

MOMENTS LATER

Derek glances out the window again as he goes back upstairs, taking a sip from a bottled water.

A group of people are now leaving the house across the road.

Fascinated -- he sneaks back down to the window to watch.

Six people march out into the street: an OLDER COUPLE, a MIDDLE-AGED COUPLE and two single SENIORS.

They spread out into the cul-de-sac in different directions.

DEREK

What the hell?

Moonlight casts a ghost-like pallor over their faces.

The older couple appears to glance in his direction --

-- Derek leans back in the shadows to avoid being seen.

The people return to each of their homes -- none of them talk or wave goodbye to each other.

Derek shakes his head, puzzled, goes back upstairs.

INT. WHITAKER HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - MORNING

Evan wakes up.

He stands and looks down at his parents, watching them sleep.

Kathy reaches out for him -- wakes up with a shudder when she can't feel him.

He jumps on her, giving her a hug.

KATHY

Evan...

Derek rolls over.

DEREK

What did you say?

He opens his eyes -- sees Evan, smiles.

DEREK (CONT'D)

Hey, buddy --

KATHY

Are you going in to work?

DEREK
No. I'll go back in on Monday.

KATHY
Good.

DEREK
I'll call the movers, see if we can
squeeze a rush job out of them.

They both tickle Evan joyfully.

He giggles out loud with delight, falling into their arms.

INT. WHITAKER HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

In her pajamas, Lara opens the sliding glass door, sticks her head outside.

LARA
Goldie! Goldie!

No sign of Goldie. She closes the door, worried.

EXT. WHITAKER HOUSE - DAY - LATER

The garage door opens. Bright daylight reveals the family standing there -- they step out onto the driveway.

Derek inspects the shaggy front lawn.

Compared to all the neighbors in the cul-de-sac, their yard needs a good mowing and some serious weeding.

DEREK
We'll pick up a lawn mower on the way back.

KATHY
It would be nice not to stick out like a sore thumb.

LARA
I think it's cool, in a spooky way.

Derek and Kathy exchange a knowing glance, smiling.

DEREK
We'll pick one up.

He climbs into the SUV with Lara, backs down the driveway.

Kathy and Evan wave goodbye to them.

EXT. WHITAKER HOUSE - BACKYARD - DAY

The ragged lawn has grown even taller than the front yard.

Tall wooden fences border the neighbors on each side, the yard ends on the edge of a dense forest.

Evan runs up to the woods -- Kathy right behind him.

KATHY

Evan, will you promise me never to go in the woods without us?

He nods, runs to inspect a pile of fire wood.

KATHY (CONT'D)

Maybe we can make a fire in the fireplace tonight.

Evan runs along the fence to a gate, jumps trying to reach the latch.

She picks him up and shows him how to work it, opens the gate, walks through, closes it behind them.

EXT. WHITAKER HOUSE - FRONT YARD - DAY

Kathy and Evan tramp across the overgrown front lawn.

EXT. CUL-DE-SAC - SIDEWALK - DAY

They stroll hand-in-hand around the neighborhood, checking out the houses.

Each house has closed curtains, blinds and garage doors.

No cars in any driveway or on the street.

Immaculate, clean lawns, gardens and walkways.

KATHY

Let's go back home...

For all the perfection -- no sign of life anywhere.

EXT./INT. WHITAKER HOUSE - DAY - MONTAGE

Derek and Lara return from their shopping trip.

Everyone helps unload bags of food -- and a lawn mower.

Derek wanders in the backyard making a cell phone call.

Kathy puts away food with help from Lara and Evan.

Derek mows the front yard.

Kathy carries wood to the fireplace.

Evan helps her by carrying an armful of kindling.

INT. WHITAKER HOUSE - FAMILY ROOM - NIGHT

Kathy plays with Evan on the floor, he hugs stuffed animal.

Lara reclines on a window seat -- turns off her MP3 player, takes the earplugs out of her ears.

Fresh from a shower with a change of clothes, Derek collapses onto the floor by Kathy.

DEREK

Mowing the grass wiped me out.

He tickles Evan -- makes him giggle.

LARA

I'll bet you did that a lot when you were a teenager.

DEREK

And I made money at it too. You should try it sometime.

LARA

For twenty bucks an hour I will.

Derek and Kathy laugh.

DEREK

The movers said they will get here tomorrow at eight a.m.

LARA

It's about time.

Lara goes into the kitchen.

KATHY

Lara...

LARA

Mom...

DEREK

And -- it's going to cost us a bloody fortune...

KATHY
Derek...

DEREK
Kathy...

Everyone laughs. The doorbell rings. Evan jumps into Kathy's lap.

DEREK (CONT'D)
That must be the pizza!

LARA
The best thing I've heard all day.

KATHY
Did you hear that, Evan? We're going to have pizza!

Evan smiles, all excited.

A LITTLE LATER

A fire blazes in the fireplace.

Spread on the floor before it, the family munches on pizza out of the delivery box, each with a soft drink.

KATHY (CONT'D)
I'm hungrier than I thought.

DEREK
Me too. The neighborhood's been nice and quiet so far.

KATHY
It better be, with both a church and a cemetery nearby.

LARA
I want to go explore that cemetery, it looks pretty cool.

DEREK
(to Lara)
Have you seen Goldie yet?

Lara snorts.

LARA
Are you kidding? He's never coming back.

KATHY
Well, with that attitude...

Lara shakes her head -- gets up and leaves.

DEREK
(to Kathy)
Have you seen him?

KATHY
No. He'll come back.

DEREK
(to Evan)
He's coming back.

Evan smiles at Kathy.

INT. WHITAKER HOUSE - LARA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Lara opens the window, perches herself out on the ledge.

She clicks through a song list of Gothic rock songs on her MP3 player, plays an ethereal-sounding tune.

The yard appears to be a black void.

Lara leans out, sees the foggy cemetery in the distance.

She wobbles, almost loses her balance on the ledge --

-- when several small dark shapes fly by the window, startling her.

Were those -- bats? Lara jumps down, watches them fly off into the night sky.

She's a little frightened -- but intrigued.

Closes the window and goes to lay on the bed.

FADE OUT.

EXT./INT. WHITAKER HOUSE - MONTAGE - DAY

A semi-truck and trailer pull up alongside the house.

Movers wheel stacks of boxes inside the house, Derek points which direction to put them.

Lara watches the movers bring furniture into her room:

Bed, desk, dresser and vanity table with mirror.

Kathy helps Evan unload a box of his toys -- he plays with them delighted.

In the master bedroom, a mover helps Derek lift a bed onto the bed frame.

Evan plays inside a large empty box -- he jumps out like a jack-in-the-box --

-- making a mover jump with feigned fright -- everyone laughs.

INT. WHITAKER HOUSE - LARA'S ROOM - DAY - LATER

Lara unpacks and organizes her belongings.

Hooks up speakers to the MP3 player -- plays a snappy Gothic rock tune.

Puts her laptop computer on the desk, piles a stack of music CD's next to it.

Tacks up one poster -- for the band Bauhaus, it has an image from the silent film The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari.

On a small bookshelf next to the bed she arranges a collection of horror-related novels and books:

Edgar Allan Poe, Stephen King, John Polidori's The Vampyre, Bram Stoker's Dracula, Anne Rice's Interview with a Vampire.

And a couple of non-fiction titles: Vampires: Restless Creatures of the Night and In Search of Dracula.

At her vanity mirror, Lara applies dark eyeliner around her eyes -- attempting to create a Gothic rock look.

EXT. WHITAKER HOUSE - BACKYARD - DAY - LATER

Dressed in her signature dark clothes, Lara steps outside.

She shakes a plastic container of cat treats.

Evan plays in a pile of dirt by a fence.

Kathy and Derek relax on the patio step.

They sip cups of coffee, watching Evan's every move.

LARA

What if he's run away? Or was hit
by a car?

KATHY

If he was hit by a car, there's not
much we can do, I'm afraid.

Lara drops down beside Kathy, dejected. Kathy wraps her arm around Lara's shoulder, trying to comfort her.

LARA
We shouldn't have let him out.

KATHY
Don't worry, honey, he'll be back.

Kathy turns to Derek

KATHY (CONT'D)
I made a doctor's appointment for Evan on Monday.

DEREK
Okay. I need you take me to the train station before you go.

LARA
You should get a bike, Dad. It's the green way to travel.

KATHY
That's a good idea, Lara. Might help get him back in shape.

Kathy smiles at him -- nudging him in the stomach.

DEREK
Oh, I see. Now I'm out of shape...

Lara and Kathy laugh.

KATHY
(to Lara)
Then we'll go get you enrolled in that high school we looked at.

LARA
Okay.

KATHY
(to Derek)
Are you going to mow the backyard?

DEREK
No, I'm exhausted from unpacking.

LARA
Poor, Daddy...

Evan crawls into Derek's lap to give him a hug.

INT. WHITAKER HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

The family has gathered around the table, full of food.

DEREK
Here's to our first home-cooked
dinner in our new home!

KATHY
To our new beginning.

She raises her wine glass -- Derek does the same.

Evan raises his cup too -- they clink their glasses to his,
laughing.

Lara resists the urge to join in the fun, preferring to sulk
and pick at her food.

LARA
Yeah, well, starting a new school
isn't going to be much fun.

DEREK
You'll make new friends, Lara, I'm
sure of it.

Evan drops his fork -- points his finger --

EVAN
Goldie!

The first words out of his mouth since their reunion startles
everyone.

They all turn in the direction he's pointing -- the sliding
glass door --

The cat, Goldie, waits there -- a dead animal in his mouth.

LARA
Goldie!

Derek laughs -- Kathy groans.

LARA (CONT'D)
Is that a mouse?

DEREK
It's too big to be a mouse.

Lara and Derek both go to the door -- Kathy puts a hand on
Evan's arm, making him stay put.

KATHY

Evan, let Daddy take a look first.

Goldie paces back and forth, a large bloody lump of fur clenched in his mouth.

LARA

Ewwwww! What is it? It's huge!

Derek moves around Lara -- opens the door a crack -- blocks Goldie from coming inside with his foot.

He steps out -- closing the door behind him.

Goldie drops the carcass at his feet. Derek recognizes it and smiles. A bat.

He picks it up by one of its wings -- turns around to show it off to the others.

Lara and Kathy both recoil at the sight of it.

LARA (CONT'D)

It's a bat!

(to Kathy)

I thought I saw one last night.

KATHY

You did?

LARA

Yeah, right outside my window!

Derek opens the door to let Goldie go inside.

He considers what to do with the bat.

KATHY

Get rid of it!

DEREK

I am!

EXT. WHITAKER HOUSE - BACKYARD - NIGHT

Derek steps out in the yard and flings the bat into the darkness, it falls somewhere on the grass.

Kathy and Lara stare him with disbelief.

INT. WHITAKER HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Derek scrubs his hands with soap and water in the sink.

DEREK

Don't worry, it'll biodegrade. Or maybe Goldie will finish eating it.

LARA

Daddy! That's gross.

DEREK

Or maybe I'll just move it tomorrow, all right?

Derek goes back to his seat.

DEREK (CONT'D)

Shall we finish our dinner?

Everyone laughs. Goldie rubs against Lara's leg, happy to be home again.

INT. WHITAKER HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

Kathy fills a coffee maker with water.

At the sliding glass door, Goldie paces back and forth meowing, wanting to be let out.

KATHY

Just a minute, Goldie.

Kathy opens the fridge, takes out a bag of coffee. Opens it while going to the door.

The cat stares at her with impatience -- meowing like crazy.

KATHY (CONT'D)

What has gotten into you?

Kathy unlocks the door -- when she notices something out in the yard -- and screams.

The bag of coffee drops from her hand -- it bounces off Goldie -- spilling across the floor -- the cat runs away.

A body lays in the grass, a naked body -- face down.

DEREK

(from upstairs)

You okay down there?

Lara comes in the kitchen, yawning.

LARA

Geez, what's going on Mom --

Hearing Lara's voice shakes Kathy out of her trance.

Lara steps up beside her, glances outside -- and screams.

LARA (CONT'D)
Holy shit! Who is that?

Kathy turns to Lara, angered at hearing her swear -- throws her arms around her, turning away from the window.

KATHY
DEREK!!

Lara struggles to get free of Kathy's grip.

Derek runs in holding Evan in his arms.

DEREK
Jesus, I'm right here --

LARA
Daddy -- look!!

Kathy lets go of Lara -- grabs Evan from Derek and runs back upstairs.

DEREK
Look at what?

He sees it. A body laying still in the grass. Nude.

DEREK (CONT'D)
What the fuck is that?

Lara reacts to her dad's swearing -- tries to pretend she's not shocked -- he becomes a little self-conscious.

Derek opens the sliding glass door. Lara bumps into him -- she wants to go outside too.

He puts a hand on her shoulder holding her back.

DEREK (CONT'D)
Stay here.

LARA
Daddy!!

DEREK
Get my cell phone.

Lara cringes at his barking orders. He glares at her.

DEREK (CONT'D)
LARA! Please...!

LARA

Okay, okay.

She goes to find his cell phone.

EXT. WHITAKER HOUSE - BACKYARD - MORNING

Derek jogs to the body -- it's an older man, lying face down.

DEREK

Hey -- Mister --

He nudges the man with his foot. Rigor mortis?

DEREK (CONT'D)

Mister? Are you okay?

Bends down to roll him over -- grunting hard, Derek succeeds.

The man's neck has been torn out, bloody and ragged -- as if eaten out by an animal.

DEREK (CONT'D)

Jesus H. Christ!

Derek jumps back in horror at the sight, his white T-shirt soaked with blood.

The dead man appears to be in his seventies or eighties, with an imposing build -- his milky white eyes frozen wide open.

Lara appears out of nowhere at Derek's side -- scaring him.

She sees the man's neck and screams again -- dropping the cell phone in grass.

Derek picks up the phone and physically turns Lara around, pushing her back to the house.

DEREK (CONT'D)

Lara, stay inside until the police get here.

Hand over her mouth, she runs back inside.

Derek dials 911. He can't take his eyes off the body.

DEREK (CONT'D)

My God...

INT. WHITAKER HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING - LATER

Kathy pours coffee into three cups on the kitchen table.

One for herself, one for Derek and one for DETECTIVE FRANKLIN, late fifties, dressed in a suit and tie.

He searches his pockets for a pen.

DETECTIVE FRANKLIN

Thank you, ma'am.

Through a window, Lara watches the crime scene investigators scour the yard.

Working behind crime scene tape -- they take photos, collect evidence.

A policeman stands next to the dead man, a white sheet covers the body.

Evan plays with his toys in the adjacent family room -- unaware of what's going on.

Detective Franklin finds his pen -- opens a small note pad to a blank page.

DETECTIVE FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

So, you found the body, Mrs. Whitaker?

KATHY

Yes.

She glances down at Evan, Derek squeezes her hand.

DEREK

What happens now?

DETECTIVE FRANKLIN

The coroner is on the way here. Do either of you recognize this man?

Derek and Kathy both shake their heads.

DEREK

We just moved here two days ago.

DETECTIVE FRANKLIN

Oh really? Where from?

DEREK

Seattle. Listen, is there a way we can keep this out of the press?

DETECTIVE FRANKLIN

Why?

Derek nods to Evan -- the detective looks at the boy.

DEREK

Because we've been hounded by the news media ever since our son was abducted four weeks ago.

DETECTIVE FRANKLIN

Oh, right. The Evan Whitaker case. I remember that bulletin going out. The police got your boy back.

KATHY

We moved to... Get away from bad things happening. And now this!

She tries hard not to cry, scoops up Evan and leaves.

DEREK

Kathy!

DETECTIVE FRANKLIN

Mrs. Whitaker -- I, a --

He rises from his seat

DEREK

I'm sorry, Detective Franklin. She's still recovering from the whole ordeal. We came out here to help move on with our lives.

Derek watches the detective scribble down his notes.

DETECTIVE FRANKLIN

Of course, I understand. We'll do what we can to keep the press out.

DEREK

Thank you, we appreciate it.

LARA

(to the Detective)

What happened to his neck?

Detective Franklin smiles at Lara.

DETECTIVE FRANKLIN

The coroner will determine that after he does an autopsy.

A POLICEMAN enters, walking up to Detective Franklin.

POLICEMAN

Sir, one of the neighbors is here, she wants to look at the body.

DETECTIVE FRANKLIN

Oh?

POLICEMAN

She lives next door here on the right, her name is Aurora Lee.

DETECTIVE FRANKLIN

(to Derek)

Do you know her?

Derek shakes his head.

DETECTIVE FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

Well, let's go talk to her.

They all get and follow the policeman outside.

EXT. WHITAKER HOUSE - BACKYARD - MORNING

The policeman leads Detective Franklin, Derek and Lara to the fence gate and swings it open.

On the other side, another policeman waits with AURORA LEE.

Pushing past seventy, she has a timeless, regal air about her -- fancy robe and slippers, hair bundled under a scarf.

She wears an unusual-looking pair of dark sunglasses.

Alert and annoyed, she charges ahead into the yard.

DETECTIVE FRANKLIN

Mrs. Lee?

AURORA

Yes. You are?

DETECTIVE FRANKLIN

Detective Franklin.

Aurora sizes him up, she's not impressed -- turns her attention to Derek and Lara.

Derek extends a hand to her.

DEREK

Hello, my name is Derek Whitaker. This is my daughter, Lara. We're your new neighbors.

She shakes his hand.

AURORA

Nice to meet you, considering the
grim circumstances.

Aurora smiles at Lara, impressed.

Lara grins back, demure.

DETECTIVE FRANKLIN

Why do you want to view the body?

AURORA

Last night, my husband never came
home.

DETECTIVE FRANKLIN

And you have reason to believe-- ?

AURORA

I don't have a reason to believe
anything, Mr. Franklin, but he has
never been late coming home. Ever.

She glances past Detective Franklin at the covered body.

DETECTIVE FRANKLIN

All right then. Shall we?

Detective Franklin takes her to the body, Derek and Lara
follow behind.

The CORONER kneels on the ground, writing notes on a pad.

DETECTIVE FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

Jimmy, can you -- ?

JIMMY, (the coroner) nods -- lifts the sheet, revealing the
dead man's face.

Aurora removes her sunglasses -- Lara notices her long
fingernails.

The old woman leans over to get a closer look at the man's
face -- her eyes widen.

She grabs the sheet and pulls it down farther -- to find the
neck has been torn out.

AURORA

Oh my. My poor dear...

Detective Franklin can't believe it.

DETECTIVE FRANKLIN

Is this your husband, Mrs. Lee?

AURORA

It is. His name is -- was,
Raymond.

Detective Franklin makes a note of it on his pad.

Derek and Lara glance at each other, surprised.

Without warning -- Aurora shoves the coroner away from the body -- he falls backward on his ass.

She drops to her knees and wraps her arms around Raymond's neck -- the sunglasses fall out of her hand.

Lara gasps -- Derek doesn't know what to do -- he turns to Detective Franklin.

CLOSE ON AURORA

She closes her husband's wide open eyes -- whispering into his ear.

AURORA (CONT'D)

You old fool. You should have
waited for me.

Detective Franklin and the two policemen dive down and lift her off the body.

DETECTIVE FRANKLIN

Mrs. Lee! Please don't touch the --

The two police officers put Aurora on her feet -- she shakes off their grip.

DETECTIVE FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

I'm sorry about your loss, but --

Oblivious to the blood covering half her face, neck and fancy robe -- Aurora turns to Derek --

-- her eyes move past him -- rising up to the house.

In a bedroom window on the second floor, Kathy holds Evan in her arms watching the scene -- she locks eyes with Aurora.

From over the roof a shaft of light from the rising sun spills forth.

Everyone scattered around the backyard throws a long shadow on the ground -- everyone except Aurora.

Kathy disappears behind the curtain.

The light snaps Aurora out of her reverie. She searches for her sunglasses and puts them on.

AURORA
(to Detective Franklin)
I want him cremated immediately.

Jimmy throws the sheet back over Raymond's body.

DETECTIVE FRANKLIN
Mrs. Lee, we need to perform an
autopsy to determine --

AURORA
Absolutely not!

Detective Franklin does a double-take.

DETECTIVE FRANKLIN
Excuse me?

JIMMY
Don't you want to know what
happened to your husband?

AURORA
It is quite obvious that he was
ravaged by an animal.
(to Derek)
How or why he ended up in your
backyard, only the devil knows.

DEREK
We're very sorry for your loss.

AURORA
Thank you.

She hurries to the gate, lets herself out.

DETECTIVE FRANKLIN
Wait! Mrs. Lee! I have a few more
questions I need to ask --

AURORA
Detective, I need to go home so I
can get some sleep. Good day.

Detective Franklin and Derek exchange curious glances.

The detective pulls out a business card, hands it to Derek.

DETECTIVE FRANKLIN
We'll be in touch, Mr. Whitaker.

INT. WHITAKER HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING - LATER

Lara watches the police wrap up their work through curtains over the sink.

Derek nods to Detective Franklin as EMT's arrive with a stretcher -- they proceed to lift the body onto it.

INT. WHITAKER HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Lara peeks through the curtains, watches the EMT's carry the stretcher into the ambulance.

Detective Franklin and Derek shake hands. Derek returns to the house, coming inside.

LARA

Do you really think it was that woman's husband?

He stops in his tracks, inspecting his shirt.

DEREK

This is just great... If she says so, then it must be.

Derek goes to the kitchen, Lara follows him.

INT. WHITAKER HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Derek pours himself a coffee -- gulps it down. Kathy comes in, ignoring Lara.

KATHY

What did that woman say, Derek?

LARA

(to Kathy)

This is just great! Thanks for making us move away from the city to escape all the bad 'violence.'

DEREK

Lara! Don't talk to your mother that way!

KATHY

(to Lara)

Your room faces the backyard. Didn't you hear anything last night?

LARA
No, I didn't hear anything last
night. Or don't you believe me?

DEREK
Lara!!

LARA
Go ahead and take her side, Daddy.
She'll find a way to blame this on
me too.

Lara stomps out, goes upstairs.

KATHY
LARA! Come back here right this
minute. Goddammit...

DEREK
Let her go -- she'll calm down.
This couldn't be worse timing.

KATHY
You haven't told me what that woman
said yet.

DEREK
Well, apparently, the dead man is
her husband.

KATHY
That's just great. What do they
think happened?

DEREK
They don't know. I've got to get
rid of that blood out there...

EXT. WHITAKER HOUSE - BACKYARD - DAY - LATER

Derek sprays a water hose on the bloody spot in the grass.

He gets the lawn mower out -- mows over the bloody spot
several times, the blood remains visible.

Derek washes the spot down again with the hose until it
finally fades from sight.

EXT. WHITAKER HOUSE - EVENING

Dark cumulus clouds drift across the sky.

On the curb, Lara listens to some moody Gothic rock music on her MP3 player.

In the distance a TEENAGE BOY on a skateboard comes racing down the street.

Lara notices him. The boy spots her, heads in her direction.

He rides up onto the sidewalk, cuts across -- jumps off the curb, skidding to a stop in front of her.

She turns off the music and removes the earphones.

He's tall, gaunt and pale. Small, funky dark sunglasses cover his eyes.

Wears a black jean jacket -- the back has a color painting of what appears to be a fallen angel, in a burning pit of hell.

BOY

Hello. I'm Tommy.

A bewitching smile spreads across his face. He holds a small, old can of V-8 juice.

LARA

Hi. I'm Lara.

TOMMY

You want some, Lara?

Tommy offers the V-8 to her. She sees the crust around the opening -- tries not to wince.

LARA

No, thanks.

He wipes juice off his lips with the back of his hand.

TOMMY

You just move here?

LARA

Two days ago.

TOMMY

Where you from?

LARA

Downtown.

TOMMY

That's cool. I live across the street. You're what -- sixteen?

LARA
Fourteen. And a half. You?

TOMMY
I'm still seventeen.

LARA
Do you go to Fairview High?

TOMMY
Nope. My parents home school me.

LARA
Oh. Do you like it?

TOMMY
It's okay. I'd rather go to public school. But, my parents are weird.

Lara studies his house -- the curtains move, someone there?

TOMMY (CONT'D)
Heard the cops came to your house.

LARA
Yeah, there was a dead guy in our backyard.

She points to the house next door.

LARA (CONT'D)
Turned out to be one of our neighbors.

TOMMY
Mr. Lee? Wow, what a trip. That must have been freaky.

LARA
It was pretty scary.

INT. WHITAKER HOUSE - EVAN'S ROOM - EVENING

Kathy puts away some of Evan's clothes in the closet.
Through a window she sees Lara talking with Tommy.
She studies the boy -- and the effect he has on Lara.

EXT. CUL-DE-SAC - EVENING

Tommy flips the skateboard in the air, catches it.

TOMMY
You skate?

LARA
Sometimes.

TOMMY
Want to try mine?

He offers the skateboard to her.

LARA
Sure.

TOMMY
Great! I've always wanted someone
my age to hang out with. All the
people around here are really old.

LARA
Old?

TOMMY
Yeah, like hundreds of years old.

Lara laughs. Tommy drops the skateboard at her feet.

She steps on it and pushes off. Goes up the street.

Tommy's impressed by her moves on the skateboard -- she
skates onto the sidewalk.

Lara comes flying down fast -- cuts across to jump off the
curb -- like Tommy did.

But instead of a smooth landing -- she loses her balance,
falling backwards --

Tommy springs forward with incredible speed -- catches her
before she hits the ground.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
Whoa!

LARA
Thanks.

She stares at his face. He lifts the sunglasses -- showing
his dark, magnetic eyes.

TOMMY
Are you okay, Lara?

A loud, deep male voice cries out:

MAN (O.S.)

TOMMY!!

Tommy jerks his head around at the sound. Lara turns to look as well.

EXT. TOMMY'S HOUSE - EVENING

At the open front door, FRANK GORDON, late fifties, wearing a grungy bathrobe.

Even in the shadows -- his piercing eyes make an impression.

FRANK

Come home -- NOW!

Tommy drops the sunglasses back over his eyes.

TOMMY

(shouting)

Be right there, Pops.

(to Lara)

See you later, Lara.

Lara smiles.

Tommy grabs his skateboard -- runs home, disappearing inside.

INT. WHITAKER HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Kathy loads the dishwasher while Evan plays with toy cars on the kitchen table.

Lara enters, whistling. Goes to the fridge, digs around before deciding on a soda.

KATHY

Who were you talking to, Lara?

LARA

What do you mean?

KATHY

I saw you from Evan's window.

LARA

Oh, him. Tommy. He lives across the street.

KATHY

How old is Tommy?

LARA
Seventeen.

KATHY
Did you tell him how old you are?

She drinks her soda, getting peeved at the third degree.

LARA
Yes, Mom, I told him.

Lara stalks out of the room as Derek walks in -- he senses the rising tension.

DEREK
What's wrong now?

KATHY
Oh, nothing.

INT. WHITAKER HOUSE - LARA'S ROOM - NIGHT - LATER

On the bed, Lara writes in a leather-bound journal.

A KNOCK on her door -- it opens, Derek peaks his head in.

DEREK
Lara?

Lara closes the journal -- impatient.

He comes in carrying a wooden baseball bat.

DEREK (CONT'D)
Put this under your bed.

Her mood changes -- surprised by his candor.

LARA
Why? Because of the dead body?

Derek shrugs. Lara takes the bat, staring at it.

DEREK
Just to be safe, okay?

He gives her a hug and a kiss on the cheek.

LARA
Thanks, Daddy.

Derek leaves, smiling.

Lara slides the bat between her feet, under the bed.

She goes back to writing back in her journal.

THE NEXT MORNING

Kathy shakes Lara out of a peaceful sleep.

KATHY

Lara. I have to take your dad to the train. Can you please keep an eye on Evan while I'm gone?

LARA

Sure you can trust me?

KATHY

Don't start.

She gives Lara a withering eye as she leaves.

LARA

Shit.

INT. WHITAKER HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Lara and Evan are eating bowls of cereal, while cartoons play on a small television on the kitchen counter.

Off screen, the garage door can be heard opening.

He looks at Lara, excited.

LARA

Go see Mommy.

EVAN

Mommy!

Evan jumps down from his chair. Kathy enters.

KATHY

Evan! You're awake!

EVAN

Mommy!

They embrace.

LARA

Of course he is... I'm going to go take a shower.

KATHY
(to Evan)
Are you done eating?

EVAN
Yes.

KATHY
Okay good. Lets go get dressed for
our doctor's appointment today.

Kathy leads him out of the room.

KATHY (CONT'D)
(to Lara)
I hope you didn't forget that we're
enrolling you in that school today
did you?

LARA
I didn't forget Mom.

EXT. WHITAKER HOUSE - DAY

Kathy pulls the SUV out of the driveway, with Lara in the
passenger seat and Evan in the back.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Crowded waiting room. Evan fidgets on Kathy's lap.

Lara reads a worn paperback copy of Anne Rice's "Interview
with a Vampire".

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

In the administrative office, Kathy fills out enrollment
forms, while Lara looks on, resigned to her dismal fate.

With all the paperwork finished, a secretary leads Lara to
her class as Kathy and Evan wave goodbye.

INT. RESEARCH LAB - NIGHT

Derek peers with machine-like concentration through the eye
piece of a microscope.

One of his assistants, STAN, late thirties, walks up.

STAN
Derek, we're going to take break
for a bite of food -- ?

Derek looks up, takes off his eyeglasses, rubs his eyes.

DEREK
Fine, Stan -- half hour?

Stan nods.

STAN
You want to join us?

DEREK
No, thanks. But could you bring me
back a sub?

STAN
You got it. Everything on it?

DEREK
Yeah, thanks.

STAN
No problem, boss.

Joined by a couple of other RESEARCH SCIENTISTS, Stan turns to leave.

INT. RESEARCH LAB - LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

Derek goes to his locker and finds his work bag -- digs around inside it -- finds an apple, takes it.

He also comes across the bloody shirt in the plastic bag. His memory jogged by the sight of it, he takes that too.

INT. RESEARCH LAB - NIGHT

Derek looks around, making sure he is alone in the lab.

He goes and sits on a stool, taking a bite out of the apple, staring at the bloody shirt in a bag on the counter.

Clears a space on the counter and opens the bag, carefully taking the shirt out.

He wipes off some of the blood from the shirt with a cotton swab stick.

Puts the swab inside a test tube, transferring it.

He places the tube inside a machine that performs a test on the blood.

In walks another researcher, GEORGE, munching on a sandwich as he walks up behind Derek, to peek over his shoulder.

GEORGE
Whatchya doing?

Derek is perturbed by his appearance out of nowhere.

DEREK
Jesus, George! What does it look like I'm doing?!

GEORGE
A blood count on something?

Derek presses a button and the machine comes to life.

He stuffs the bloody shirt in a table drawer as George shuffles out of sight, pretending not to watch.

Derek takes another bite of the apple -- as the machine begins to print out the results.

He sits back and looks it over -- becomes confused.

The test results state the hemoglobin count as "40".

DEREK
What the hell is this?

Derek tosses the apple core in the trash and takes the test tube out of the machine to clean it.

EXT. CUL-DE-SAC - AFTERNOON

At the top of the drive, a school bus comes to a stop at the intersection.

The doors open and Lara steps off, holding a book bag.

She strolls down the sidewalk beside Tommy's house -- a single story rambler.

On one side a window covered over with black cloth has some rock band stickers on it -- must be Tommy's bedroom.

An eerie stillness pervades the cul-de-sac as Lara continues on home.

INT. WHITAKER HOUSE - KITCHEN - EVENING

Kathy, Lara and Evan have almost finished eating dinner.

The doorbell rings making everyone jump.

EVAN

Daddy!

LARA

I'll get it!

KATHY

How about we all go together?

INT. WHITAKER HOUSE - FOYER - EVENING

Through the window Lara can see Aurora Lee outside on the front step.

Lara opens the door.

AURORA

Hello, Lara.

LARA

Hi.

Aurora wears elegant, vintage clothes, long dark hair down and flowing, eyes hidden behind her unique dark sunglasses.

Kathy enters with Evan in her arms.

Even though the sun has already set, it's not dark yet.

AURORA

(to Kathy)

Good evening. I hope I'm not intruding.

KATHY

Hello. No, we've just finished our dinner.

Lara checks out Aurora's clothes, fascinated -- but then she sees Tommy skateboarding down the street.

LARA

Mom? Can I go outside for awhile?

Kathy sees the boy.

Aurora turns to look as well, smiles.

KATHY

Be sure to come in when it gets dark out.

LARA

Yes, Mother.

Lara takes her jacket off a coat rack, steps past Aurora.

KATHY

Sorry. I'm Kathy Whitaker.

AURORA

That's quite alright. My name is Aurora Lee.

KATHY

Nice to meet you. This is my son Evan.

Evan hides on Kathy's shoulder, being bashful.

KATHY (CONT'D)

We are truly sorry for your loss, Mrs. Lee.

AURORA

May I come in?

KATHY

Yes, of course. Please do.

Aurora removes her sunglasses. Her bright eyes catch Kathy off guard -- she's mesmerized for a moment.

INT. WHITAKER HOUSE - KITCHEN - EVENING

Kathy offers a chair to Aurora -- they sit at the table.

Evan wanders into the family room to play with his toys.

AURORA

I came over to thank you for finding my husband.

KATHY

Please, there's no reason --

Aurora inspects the kitchen and family room.

AURORA

Oh! You've really changed things around from how the Smith's had it.

KATHY

You mean the previous owners?

AURORA

Yes. Lovely people. They invited over the entire cul-de-sac for their housewarming party. Whatever happened to them? We never saw any for sale signs or anything.

KATHY

We got the house through a foreclosure auction I'm afraid.

AURORA

Oh really? That's something isn't it? I had no idea they were having any problems.

KATHY

Sad sign of the times I guess.

Uncomfortable talking about it, Kathy glances around for something else to talk about.

KATHY (CONT'D)

Would you like something to drink?

AURORA

No, thank you. I was so worried about Raymond.

Aurora grabs Kathy's wrist -- leans forward, eye to eye.

AURORA (CONT'D)

I hope finding my husband, dead, will not -- set you back.

Kathy holds her breath. Aurora lets go of her hand.

KATHY

It's so terribly sad.

AURORA

If you don't mind me asking, how did you happen to move out here?

KATHY

Do you watch the news?

AURORA

You mean television? Oh no, I don't own one. That flickering light -- it drives me crazy.

KATHY

Well... Our son was abducted by a pedophile, and we, luckily -- we just got him back.

AURORA

That sounds absolutely dreadful.

KATHY

We just wanted to live somewhere, more safe.

Aurora glances over at Evan with genuine concern.

AURORA

The Swanson's, a family just down the street -- their son met with a fatal accident. He must have been the same age as Evan.

KATHY

I'm sorry to hear that.

Aurora changes tangents again without batting an eye.

AURORA

Has he been baptized?

KATHY

Baptized? Who -- Evan? Why do you ask?

AURORA

No reason really. Just curious.

KATHY

No, he's not. We're not religious.

AURORA

Makes one's life easier to live, doesn't it?

She laughs, picking up her sunglasses.

AURORA (CONT'D)

I see Lara has made a friend out of Tommy Gordon already, yes?

KATHY

I guess she has. Is he a nice boy?

AURORA

He looks worse for wear I suppose, but I trust him.

Kathy changes the subject.

KATHY
Have the police figured out what happened to your husband?

AURORA
I doubt they ever will. It was some sort of bizarre accident.

KATHY
Accident? With that injury? How did he end up in our backyard?

Aurora leans forward, as if she's about to reveal a secret.

Kathy finds herself leaning forward also, waits for it --

AURORA
Raymond was an alcoholic.

KATHY
Hmmm...

AURORA
Well, I really should be going. It was very nice to meet you, Kathy.

Aurora gets up, Kathy goes with her to the front door.

AURORA (CONT'D)
You should come over to my house for tea some evening.

KATHY
I would enjoy that.

AURORA
Good.

EXT. CUL-DE-SAC - SIDEWALK - EVENING

Lara and Tommy sit on the curb -- they see Aurora and Kathy stepping outside -- the women turn to watch them.

LARA
They're talking about us.

TOMMY
Of course.

LARA
You look like a bad influence.

TOMMY
I do my best to corrupt young
hearts...

They watch the two woman talk.

Aurora becomes animated -- points out each house to Kathy.

LARA
Is Aurora the local welcome wagon?

TOMMY
And the wagon leader, too. She's
lived here the longest, I think.

Aurora says goodbye and goes home. Kathy gazes back at Lara and Tommy one more time, before going inside.

INT. WHITAKER HOUSE - KITCHEN - EVENING

Kathy stacks the dirty dishes on the table -- finds a necklace under the edge of one of them.

A fine chain with a beautiful, silver Ankh pendent.

It must have been left by Aurora by accident.

Intrigued, she shoves it in a pocket, continues to clean up.

EXT. CUL-DE-SAC - EVENING

Lara listens to another Gothic rock song on her MP3 player, watching Tommy skateboard up and down the street.

He skids to a stop before her.

TOMMY
What are you listening to?

LARA
What?

She pulls out the earphones.

Tommy bends an ear down, listening -- Gothic rock music can be heard faintly.

TOMMY
Sounds like -- Sisters of Mercy?

LARA
It is!

TOMMY
 (singing)
 "Lucretia, my reflection, dance the
 ghost with me..."

She's struck by his Andrew Eldritch impression, coming out of the blue.

LARA
 I take it you like the Sisters?

TOMMY
 Of course! You know they don't actually consider themselves to be "Goth," right?

LARA
 How do you know that?

TOMMY
 Just meaningless trivia from my former life... Who else do you like?

LARA
Bauhaus, Dead Can Dance, Siouxsie and the Banshees, Cocteau Twins...

TOMMY
 No Cure?

LARA
 I prefer Tears for Fears.

TOMMY
 Those are all great bands. But have you ever heard these guys?

He turns his back to her, showing off the wild painting.

LARA
 I was wondering what that was.

TOMMY
 It's from the cover of a record called "Sad Wings of Destiny" by Judas Priest.

LARA
 Aren't they a heavy metal band?

TOMMY
 Well, to some they are, but to me they're the granddaddies of Goth.

Lara laughs.

LARA
I've never heard that before.

TOMMY
I'm serious! So, you've never
heard the music on "Sad Wings"?

LARA
No, I haven't.

TOMMY
Well, here's serendipity for ya --

Tommy pulls a CD from his jacket -- the cover has the same
artwork as his jacket.

Lara glances from her MP3 player -- to his CD.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
You have a CD player?

LARA
I have an old portable somewhere.

TOMMY
Good. I love old twentieth century
technology.

He gives her the disc -- sits closer to her, points out songs
on the back.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
Listen to "Dreamer Deceiver" and
"Deceiver." Two best epic Goth
songs of all time.

LARA
Oh yeah? Better than "Some Kind of
Stranger"?

TOMMY
That's cool, but these are way
beyond. Give it a try and tell me
what you think. I gotta go home.

LARA
Okay. Thanks, Tommy.

Tommy skates back to his house, whistling a tune.

Lara puts the earphones back in her ears as she studies the
CD cover on her walk home.

EXT. WHITAKER HOUSE - NIGHT - LATER

A taxicab pulls up to the house, Derek gets out.

INT. WHITAKER HOUSE - FOYER - NIGHT

Derek enters -- running to a bathroom nearby.

DEREK
I'm home!

INT. WHITAKER HOUSE - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Hovering over the toilet, Derek pees in the dark. Relief.

He happens to peek through a curtain next to him -- sees all the same neighbors he saw the other night.

DEREK
Freaky deja vu...

This time, they all head toward Aurora Lee's house.

No small talk, they file into the house one by one.

INT. WHITAKER HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Derek comes in, throws his work bag on a bench.

DEREK
Sorry I'm late. Not used to taking
the train yet I guess.

He gives Kathy a kiss, Evan a hug.

DEREK (CONT'D)
I just saw all the neighbors going
over to Mrs. Lee's house.

He waves to Lara -- she's on a couch in the family room, listening to music, flipping through a magazine.

KATHY
Maybe they're paying her their
respects. You just missed her.

DEREK
She came by? What did she say?

KATHY
She seems to think her husband's
death was an accident.

DEREK

Why?

Kathy shakes her head, smirking.

KATHY

Get this -- because he was an
alcoholic.

Derek doesn't believe it either.

DEREK

That sounds a little bit -- nutty.
Did the detective ever call back?

KATHY

No.

DEREK

(to Lara)
How was the first day at school?

LARA

(clicks off the music)
Nothing special.

She gets up to leave -- Derek notices the CD in her hands.

DEREK

Got a new CD?

LARA

This? Tommy lent it to me.

DEREK

Tommy?

Lara clicks her music back on -- ignoring him.

Derek watches her leave -- left hanging abruptly.

Kathy picks up Evan, gives him hug -- goes over to Derek.

KATHY

(whispers)
A teenage boy who lives across the
street.

DEREK

Great.

He tickles Evan -- gets a giggle.

DEREK (CONT'D)

Is it my turn to read?

KATHY
No, it's my turn.

DEREK
All right -- good night, buddy.

Kathy takes him up to bed.

A LITTLE LATER

Derek eats a sandwich and drinks a beer while reading a book, when Kathy comes back in.

KATHY
He's asleep.

DEREK
How did it go at the doctor?

Kathy sits at the table, takes a swig off his beer.

KATHY
He was able to corroborate the police report -- there was no anal abuse. But far as him being orally sodomized, he couldn't really say.

DEREK
Christ.

KATHY
I've have an appointment with a child therapist for this Wednesday to determine if he might suffer any post traumatic stress disorder.

DEREK
Okay. We're going to have to think about getting a second car.

KATHY
Why not a bike like Lara said?

Derek smiles with mouthful of sandwich.

The LOUD ENGINE sound of a lawn mower outside shatters the peaceful quiet they were enjoying.

Derek and Kathy gape at each other in astonishment.

DEREK
What the hell time is it?

He reads his watch -- 8:59 PM. Gets up, goes to the door.

KATHY
What are you doing?

DEREK
I'm going to see who it is.

EXT. WHITAKER HOUSE - NIGHT

Derek walks down the front steps, Kathy right behind him.
Next door, an old MAN mows his front yard.

KATHY
That must be Mr. Holderman.

Derek glances at her, surprised.

KATHY (CONT'D)
Aurora gave me the lowdown on who's
who around here.

DEREK
Terrific. He's going to wake up
Evan with that thing.

Derek advances toward Mr. Holderman.

Kathy grabs his arm, holding him back.

KATHY
Derek --

DEREK
Hey! Hello!

PHILIP HOLDERMAN, a spry seventy-year-old, who seems to be
unaware of Derek shouting at him.

DEREK (CONT'D)
MR. HOLDERMAN? HELLO?!

KATHY
Derek -- stop!

DEREK
What? You think he's deaf or
something?

KATHY
Maybe he is!

DEREK
All right.

Derek and Kathy turn to go back -- when Mr. Holderman acknowledges their presence.

PHILIP
Evening, folks!

He flashes a bright smile, gives them a polite nod.

Kathy smiles, Derek gives him a half-hearted wave, before they go back to their front porch.

DEREK
So, who's who according to the crazy old lady?

Kathy punches him in the ribs.

KATHY
Over there is Myrtle McNeil.

DEREK
Myrtle McNeil. Classic.

KATHY
Stop it. Next to her are the Joe and Beth Swanson. They had a boy Evan's age who died.

DEREK
That's terrible. What happened?

KATHY
Aurora didn't elaborate. Across the street are Susan and Frank Gordon, they have a son -- Tommy.

DEREK
Right. Tommy.

KATHY
He's seventeen.

DEREK
Wonderful. Like I need more things to worry about!

They go back inside.

INT. WHITAKER HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Derek and Kathy change into night clothes.

KATHY
Aurora told me something really
strange about our house today.

DEREK
It's haunted, right?!

KATHY
No! She said the former owners just
suddenly "disappeared" one day.

DEREK
Disappeared?

KATHY
That's what she said. Did the agent
ever tell you anything about the
previous owners?

DEREK
No, he didn't. But I guess we
never asked him about it either.

Kathy looks at him, concerned.

DEREK (CONT'D)
Okay, I'll call him and ask.

They lay down on the bed, embracing.

DEREK (CONT'D)
You want to hear something really
creepy I learned today?

KATHY
God, Derek -- what?

DEREK
It's about the old man, dead in our
backyard.

KATHY
You heard from the police?

DEREK
No, not yet. I brought my t-shirt
with the blood on it to work, ran a
sample through a CBC.

KATHY
English.

DEREK
Complete blood count. A blood test.

KATHY

Why'd you do that?

DEREK

I don't know, just curious. Never get much of a chance to play C.S.I. at work you know. Anyway, it had an extremely high hemoglobin count.

KATHY

Which means what?

DEREK

Well it means it's probably from an animal and not a human. Weird huh?

KATHY

That's frightening! You should call the detective and ask if any wolves or coyotes are loose around here.

DEREK

I will, honey.

He turns off the bedside night light.

KATHY

Thanks for giving me more to worry about.

DEREK

Don't worry, it's probably nothing...

EXT. WHITAKER HOUSE - MORNING

Lara walks up the street to wait for the school bus.

EXT. CUL-DE-SAC - SIDEWALK - MORNING

Passing by Tommy's house, she notices something strange.

The bedroom windows on one side appear to be blacked out with something like cloth.

INT. RESEARCH LAB - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Derek steps into an empty conference room to make call on his cell phone.

He pulls a couple of business cards out of his wallet and begins dialing.

DEREK

Hello, Steve? It's Derek Whitaker.
Oh he's doing much better, thanks.
Look, I have a quick question.

George walks by, spies him through the window and waves.

Derek tries to wave back, half smiling.

DEREK (CONT'D)

A neighbor told my wife that the previous owners had mysteriously vanished, or something crazy like that... Oh right, because it was foreclosed? Well I guess that explains it. Okay then, well, thanks for your time, I'll be in touch. Good bye.

He hangs up the call. Swears under his breath as he dials the next number.

DEREK (CONT'D)

Hello, Detective Franklin? This is Derek Whitaker. Yeah, we had the dead neighbor in our backyard. Have you been able to determine the cause of death yet?

Derek pulls out a note pad and pen from his lab coat pocket.

DEREK (CONT'D)

Why am I asking? Well, I'm a medical researcher and I happened to run a test on the man's blood that was on my shirt -- and it's looking like it might be animal blood. We're wondering if it might have be a wolf or -- ?

He clicks the pen over and over.

DEREK (CONT'D)

She doesn't want you to pursue the case? The case is closed? What? I'm not trying to do your job! I'm just trying to help -- okay, fine. Yeah, right...

Derek hangs up, threatening to throw the phone at the wall.

DEREK (CONT'D)

Wonderful.

He shakes the experience off and leaves.

EXT. AURORA'S HOUSE - DAY

An imposing Victorian behemoth, worn by time, but well kept.

Kathy and Evan go up to the front door.

She points out the door bell button to Evan, urges him to push it. He does so happily. No answer.

Kathy leans over the railing on the front porch -- peeks in through a crack in the curtains.

Elegant antique furniture occupies the front room, all covered with clear plastic.

KATHY

I guess she's not home. We'll have to try again later.

They walk back home.

EXT. WHITAKER HOUSE - BACKYARD - DAY - LATER

Kathy weeds the garden, while Evan digs in the dirt.

She gets up to stretch -- looks at the fire wood stacked along the fence against a storage box.

On impulse, Kathy climbs on top of the box -- to peek over the fence into Aurora's backyard.

In contrast to the neat and clean front yard --

-- the backyard runs wild with weeds and overgrown grass.

A rusting set of patio furniture appears forlorn.

Kathy notices dark cloth covering all the windows, curious.

She jumps down next to Evan. Points out a weed to him, he pulls it out with relish and gives it to her.

INT. WHITAKER HOUSE - KITCHEN - EVENING

Derek, Kathy, Evan and Lara sit at the table, finishing dinner.

KATHY

(to Derek)

I need to go over to Mrs. Lee's for a minute.

DEREK

Ask her why she doesn't want the cops to investigate her husband's death...

KATHY

Derek... I want to return this.

Kathy pulls the Ankh necklace out of her pocket.

KATHY (CONT'D)

She left it here yesterday by accident. I tried going over earlier, but she wasn't home.

LARA

What is it? Let me see.

She shows the shiny silver pendant to Lara.

LARA (CONT'D)

That's an Ankh. It's beautiful.

DEREK

(to Lara)

I think you're right.

KATHY

What is it?

LARA

Ankh. An ancient Egyptian symbol for life.

KATHY

How do you know that?

LARA

Because I've read about them, that's how.

Derek smiles at Kathy -- hey, she's smart!

DEREK

Go ahead. I'll get these rug rats to help clean the table.

Evan laughs while Lara rolls her eyes.

LARA
Whatever...

EXT. AURORA'S HOUSE - EVENING

It's not quite dark out, even though the sun has set.

Kathy rings the doorbell. Aurora answers wearing her dark sunglasses.

AURORA
Kathy! How nice to see you!

Kathy holds up the Ankh necklace. Aurora chuckles.

AURORA (CONT'D)
I see, won't you come in?

KATHY
Um, just for a minute.

AURORA
Please.

Aurora guides her inside -- a gentle hand on her shoulder.

INT. AURORA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Kathy hands the necklace to Aurora.

She takes it and invites Kathy to sit -- points to a plastic covered couch.

Aurora takes off her sunglasses, smiling.

AURORA
I just brewed some tea, would you
drink a cup with me?

KATHY
Well... Okay.

Aurora leaves to get the tea.

Kathy gazes around the crowded room: ornate antique furniture, paintings, sculptures and various knickknacks.

A fireplace with a large wooden mantle, inscribed with the phrase -- "Media in vita morte sumus."

Aurora returns carrying a silver tea serving set -- with china cups and saucers.

She notices Kathy mouthing the phrase.

AURORA
Media in vita morte sumus.

KATHY
Latin?

AURORA
Yes. Do you know it?

Aurora hands her a cup of tea -- Kathy can't help but notice her long, pointed -- unpainted fingernails.

KATHY
Only a little. I used to be a teacher. What does it mean?

Aurora goes to a chair opposite, sips her tea.

AURORA
"In the midst of life, we are in death."

KATHY
Wow. Sounds existential.

AURORA
Raymond and I always thought it had an optimistic ring to it.

Kathy smells the tea, draws back -- wrinkling her nose, noticing that its red in color.

KATHY
Ohhhh! That's strong. I've never had a red tea before.

AURORA
It's called Rooibos, an herbal tea from South Africa.

Kathy takes a sip, hesitant.

KATHY
Mmmmm. This is pretty good!

AURORA
I agree the smell is strong, but the tea is quite invigorating.

Aurora looks at the Ankh necklace in her hand, Kathy watches her fondle it.

AURORA (CONT'D)

I must admit, when I first saw you,
at the window -- you reminded me of
my daughter.

The hairs on the back of Kathy's neck prick up -- she shifts
on the plastic couch cover couch, it makes a SQUEAKY sound.

AURORA (CONT'D)

This necklace belonged to her. Her
name was Violet.

Aurora nods at the photos on the mantle.

Kathy gets up to take a look, squeaking off the couch.

She studies the variety of framed photos of Aurora and
Raymond, which span over many decades.

In the middle, a lone photo portrait of Violet. A young
woman -- a dark beauty in 1950's fashion.

Kathy motions -- this her? Aurora nods.

KATHY

She's beautiful. My daughter told
me the pendant is called an Ankh.

AURORA

Lara is very perceptive.

KATHY

Doesn't it hold a special
significance for you?

Aurora observes the swirling leaves in her tea.

AURORA

The pain of fleeting joy.

Kathy doesn't know what to say.

AURORA (CONT'D)

If you don't feel comfortable
wearing it, maybe Lara would?

Kathy nods, smiles.

She notices the large painting over the fireplace -- of an
exotic looking mountain range.

AURORA (CONT'D)

The painting is from my homeland.
It's the Tatra, the highest peaks
in the Carpathian mountains.

KATHY
Is that in... Poland?

AURORA
Hungary.

KATHY
Right. Sorry.

Kathy finishes her tea -- wants to put the cup somewhere.

Aurora points to the tea tray.

KATHY (CONT'D)
I'm sorry, but is it all right if I
use your bathroom?

AURORA
Of course, it's down the hall on
the left.

KATHY
Thank you.

INT. WHITAKER HOUSE - BATHROOM - EVENING

Kathy closes the door, breathing hard. Pulls down her pants,
sits down to pee. She glances up at the wall.

A large painting -- a copy of Edvard Munch's Madonna, hangs
over the sink, instead of a mirror. Curious.

INT. AURORA'S HOUSE - EVENING

Aurora waits by front door, as Kathy comes back.

AURORA
I am so happy your family had the
good fortune to come to our little
corner of the world.

She takes Kathy's hand and places the necklace into it, wraps
her fingers around it -- looks her in the eye.

AURORA (CONT'D)
I hope your time here will bring
you a new peace.

KATHY
Are you sure you want me to keep
this, Mrs. Lee?

AURORA

Yes. That which is done out of love, always takes place beyond good and evil.

Aurora opens the door, nods good night.

EXT. AURORA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Indeed, the sun has set, surprising Kathy.

She turns to say goodbye -- Aurora steps forward, kisses her on each cheek, smiling.

INT. WHITAKER HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Kathy jogs in and gives Derek a big kiss on the lips.

LARA

Are you all right, Mom? That took forever.

DEREK

What did she say about the police?

KATHY

I couldn't ask her.

DEREK

Maybe I should go ask her...

Kathy elbows him to stop -- she holds up the Ankh necklace.

KATHY

(to Lara)
Do you want this?

LARA

Mrs. Lee didn't want it back?

Lara takes it from her, excited.

KATHY

She really wants me to have it for some reason.

Lara puts the pendant around her neck, admiring it.

KATHY (CONT'D)

It belonged to her daughter.

LARA

Where is she?

KATHY

Deceased. I'm mean, she didn't come out and say, but that's what she implied.

DEREK

You must have made quite an impression on her.

KATHY

Yeah, I don't what to think.

She turns to Lara.

KATHY (CONT'D)

Can you watch Evan for me tomorrow? I have to take your father to the train again.

Lara tries to act mature about it.

LARA

I'll watch him, Mom.

KATHY

You promise?

LARA

I promise.

Derek regards her with a new sense of hope.

KATHY

(to Evan)

Shall we get you ready for bed?

Evan crawls into her lap, hugging her.

LARA

Thanks, Mom.

She refers to the necklace -- and the trust.

KATHY

You're welcome.

INT. WHITAKER HOUSE - LARA'S ROOM - NIGHT

At her vanity, Lara stares in the mirror at the Ankh around her neck -- the perfect addition to her burgeoning Goth look.

She finds her coat, takes out the CD she got from Tommy.

Digs through a drawer, uncovers an old portable CD player.

Puts the disc in -- switches earphones from the MP3 to the CD player and puts them in her ears.

Presses the forward button to the songs, hits play.

She lays back on the bed. Turns off the lamp.

Listening to the music -- Lara notices something outside the window -- two glowing eyes, floating in the dark.

The window panes CREAKS open -- in rushes a gust of wind.

Hypnotized, Lara sits upright.

From the darkness a shape forms and floats into view --

-- it's Tommy, defying gravity -- he steps onto the window ledge, not making a sound.

His seductive eyes prompt Lara to rise -- powerless before his strong will.

Tommy extends a hand to her -- beckons her to him.

Lara grasps his hand -- he lifts her up onto the window ledge without effort -- their eyes locked together.

He leans close to her ear -- hears the music -- smiles, takes the CD player out of her hand, clips it onto her belt.

They balance on the ledge -- he puts his arm around her waist, stepping forward -- pulling her -- into space.

Lara peers down -- hit by a sudden fear of falling -- discovers her foot now stepping onto the grass. Firm.

She gazes at the full moon -- bats fly across the sky.

Can this all be a dream?

EXT. WHITAKER HOUSE - BACKYARD - NIGHT

Tommy leads Lara into the woods, holding her hand.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

White moonlight illuminates the forest as they wind through the trees to a fork in the path.

One way leads to the church, the other goes to the cemetery.

Lara nods at the church -- Tommy grimaces, he nods toward the cemetery instead.

EXT. CEMETERY - NIGHT

A massive, old burial ground -- it spans many acres, with a large hill and a perimeter of forest on two sides.

They pass by moonlit tombstones and mausoleums.

From the hilltop, they behold the vast landscape.

Tommy lets go of Lara's hand to run down the hill -- deep into the cemetery -- waving at her to follow.

Lara runs after him -- scared and excited.

He stops at a tall gravestone -- it has a spire with a cross on top -- it fills his eyes full of hatred.

Lara stops next to him -- out of breath from running.

He springs into the air -- kicks the cross off with the heel of his leather boot -- it CRASHES to the ground, crushed.

He lands on his feet -- laughing.

Shocked by his outburst of violence -- Lara fears what he might do next.

The sound of HOWLING WOLVES makes them both turn around.

From over the hill's summit a pack of wolves appear --

-- and charge right at them -- their fiery red eyes on fire.

Frightened -- Lara backs into Tommy -- he pushes her toward the approaching wolves.

Frozen with fear -- Lara doesn't know whether she should run or scream.

Laughing, Tommy throws his arms around her from behind, embracing her as --

-- the vicious wolves run past them -- a powerful wind blows by in their wake --

-- they disappear into the darkness of a forest nearby.

Tommy whoops with crazy joy -- Lara's adrenaline pumps overtime -- inspired by his joyous enthusiasm.

He grabs her hand -- runs fast again.

Lara tries to keep up -- except she trips and falls to the ground -- he drags her for moment --

Tommy stops to sweep her off her feet -- cradles her body in his arms -- she puts her arms around his neck.

He carries her over to a large granite gravestone.

Lays her down on the horizontal slab.

Moonlight frames the back of Tommy's head, it gives him an ethereal glow -- sexy and dangerous.

Lara breathes hard and fast -- her breath visible as short bursts of steam from her mouth.

Tommy's not out of breath -- in fact, he does not have any visible steam coming out of his mouth at all.

He blows on the little clouds coming out of her mouth -- his cold breath dissolves the steam.

Tommy moves closer to Lara's lips -- he inhales deeply and blows his icy breath over her mouth --

-- turning Lara's breaths into sparkling ice crystals -- which shimmer and evaporate on contact with her skin.

His mysterious, beguiling radiance holds Lara in its grip.

Tommy lies down beside her -- embracing her -- kissing her.

Their lips part -- he moves along her cheek, ear, kissing her skin -- moving his way down her neck.

Lara closes her eyes -- lost in the passionate moment.

Tommy opens his mouth -- baring sharp vampire teeth -- he sinks the fangs deep into her neck, drawing blood.

Lara's eyes fly open -- a scream tearing out of her throat.

INT. MAUSOLEUM - NIGHT

Lara bolts upright -- grabbing at her neck -- finding it wet with blood -- horrified --

-- and shocked by the sudden change of location -- can this still be a dream?

Or a nightmare?

Tommy puts a finger to his bloody lips to say "shhhhh."

Her eyes adjust to the darkness --

-- they lay on the floor of a balcony, overlooking a large room, made of old stone.

The flickering light of dozens of flaming torches throw animated shadows through a balustrade.

Something ominous must happening down below them --

-- just out of sight -- bats fly overhead toward the light.

Lara flinches -- she grips Tommy ever tighter -- he shakes her hands loose.

He crawls to the ledge -- to watch the scene below, between the balusters --

Lara shakes with fear, crawling behind him -- keeping her eyes on the floor --

-- she reaches him -- lifts her head -- her eyes steady on Tommy, she's afraid to look --

-- he watches the scene below with manic delight, shadows from the torchlight play over his face.

Lara turns her eyes from his face to look below --

A group of seven NUDE PEOPLE -- men and women of middle and older ages --

-- arranged around a large wooden table, all their eyes focused on --

A young boy laying on the table -- awake, gagged, tied down -- scared to death.

A large silver chalice and knife lay next to the boy's head.

Before each person rests a tall silver cup.

She notices one person -- an older woman -- Aurora Lee?

The woman picks up the knife -- slices open the boys neck --

-- fills the chalice under the geyser of blood.

Lara can not believe her eyes.

The boy's thrashing body slows to a stop.

Another person takes the chalice -- and uses it to pour blood in all the cups around the table.

When the cups are all full, the people raise them in unison to drink the blood.

Lara vomits at the sight of the murderous ceremony -- she doubles over --

-- Tommy glances back at her -- as if in slow motion.

All the people turn to stare at Lara and Tommy.

Lara faints, collapsing to the --

EXT. CEMETERY - MORNING

-- instead of hitting the floor -- she falls back onto the gravestone where Tommy kissed her earlier.

She lays alone, passed out.

A LITTLE LATER

A light mist hanging over the cemetery grounds moistens Lara's face, causing her to wake up.

She jumps up, looking around for Tommy -- no sign of him.

Feels her neck wound -- blood on her hands -- blood on the Ankh pendant.

Terrified, Lara slides off the gravestone and runs up the hill as fast as she can.

EXT. WHITAKER HOUSE - MORNING

Kathy drives the SUV into the garage, closes the door.

INT. WHITAKER HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

Kathy finds the room empty.

She heads toward the stairs, when she sees Lara through the sliding glass door -- running from the forest into the yard.

KATHY

Lara?

Lara reaches the door -- pounding on it -- wild-eyed and frantic --

LARA

MOM! Let me in!

Kathy goes to unlock the door.

KATHY

Lara?!

She hugs her mother tight -- as if she hasn't seen her in a million years.

LARA

Mommy...

Kathy sees the blood, dirt in her hair and clothes.

KATHY

Lara! What happened? Where's Evan?!

Lara coughs, trying to catch her breath, lets go of her.

LARA

Mom... I was... I was...

KATHY

Have you been out all night long?

Kathy leans in to smell her breath.

KATHY (CONT'D)

What were you doing? Drinking?
Did Tommy give you drugs?

Lara goes toward the stairs -- not ready for this now.

Kathy clenches Lara's arm -- stopping her.

KATHY (CONT'D)

Answer me!

LARA

I didn't drink or do any drugs.
And Tommy didn't --

KATHY

Were you out all night?

LARA

I... I didn't mean to, I was --

Evan enters, scared.

EVAN

Mommy...

His appearance jolts Kathy out of her anger.

KATHY

Baby...

Relieved, she picks him up. Turns to Lara, glaring.

LARA

I was with Tommy. We went to the cemetery. Nothing happened. I'm sorry, I didn't plan to stay out.

KATHY

Did he hurt you somehow?

Kathy nods to the blood on her neck and hands.

LARA

No, Mom, he didn't. I... I just got a scrape walking through the woods. I really don't feel well.

Lara clutches her stomach in pain -- she's not faking.

KATHY

Well, you look like hell, Lara. You want me to take you to school?

LARA

Can I go tomorrow? I feel terrible, I need to get some --

Kathy pushes her toward the stairs.

KATHY

Go. Get some sleep. I have to get Evan to his appointment, we'll be gone most of the day.

LARA

I'll stay here, I promise.

KATHY

You better. Move.

EXT. WHITAKER HOUSE - DAY

Kathy drives away with Evan in the SUV.

INT. WHITAKER HOUSE - BATHROOM - DAY

Lara cleans the blood off her neck and chest.

In the mirror she checks the puncture wounds on her neck.

Peels open a couple of Band-aids and covers the tiny holes.

Holds the Ankh pendant under the faucet in the sink, washing off the blood.

INT. WHITAKER HOUSE - LARA'S ROOM - DAY

Lara takes the CD player off her belt, throws it down.

She turns on the MP3 player, hooked up to a pair of speakers, plays mournful-sounding Gothic rock tune.

At the vanity mirror, she tries to wipe the smeared makeup off her face.

The dark circles under her eyes doesn't seem to want to come off -- no matter how hard she rubs.

She's only making it worse -- eyes already red from crying.

Sunlight from the window irritates her eyes, she closes the curtains.

Going through a drawer in her vanity -- she finds a pair of cheap sunglasses.

Lara puts them on -- it seems to relieve the pain.

She clutches her stomach in pain again -- extreme hunger.

INT. WHITAKER HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Still wearing the sunglasses, Lara searches for something to eat in the refrigerator.

Smells the milk -- she makes a face. Smells the orange juice -- she makes another face.

Finds a can of soda pop, opens it.

Sees a package of red ground beef -- grabs it on impulse.

Rips open the plastic -- smells the meat -- for some reason she finds it attractive --

-- shoves a handful of raw beef into her mouth, chewing.

She tries to swallow -- but it hits her in the wrong way.

Runs over the kitchen sink and vomits.

Lara drinks down some soda pop -- it makes her double over the sink -- throwing it all up again.

EXT. WHITAKER HOUSE - DAY

Lara opens the front door.

The daylight hits her like a powerful burning force like she's never experienced before.

She closes the door, but leaves it unlocked.

Runs across the street to Tommy's house.

EXT. TOMMY'S HOUSE - DAY

Lara rings the doorbell. Nothing.

Knocks on the door. Pounds on the door.

Still nothing. Angry, she kicks it.

She runs around the house to Tommy's bedroom window.

EXT. TOMMY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Lara knocks on the window. Finds it unlocked, to her surprise -- she opens it.

Dark shadows make it hard to see inside.

She glances up and down the street -- climbs inside -- closes the window.

INT. TOMMY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Lara removes the sunglasses, her eyes adjust to the darkness.

Details become visible -- rock posters on the walls, an old electric guitar, Tommy's skateboard.

On the far wall -- Tommy lays on a bed, asleep.

Lara kneels beside him -- touches his shoulder -- nothing.

Shakes him -- nothing.

LARA

Tommy! Tommy, wake up!

He's rigid -- he doesn't even seem to be breathing!

LARA (CONT'D)

Tommy! Please wake up!

Lara slaps his face -- nothing -- can he be dead?

Feels his bed -- covered with a layer of what -- dirt?!

She puts her ear to his chest.

After a few moments her eyes widen -- a scream rises in her throat --

-- she jumps off the bed screaming -- vaults out the window -- the window panes slamming shut behind her.

EXT. TOMMY'S HOUSE - DAY

Lara struggles to put the sunglasses back on as she runs home, the sunlight becoming unbearable.

INT. WHITAKER HOUSE - LARA'S ROOM - DAY

Lara goes to the vanity, crying -- takes off the sunglasses.

Studies her face in the mirror.

A sudden pain in her stomach makes her double over again -- rolling to the floor.

Knocks against the bookcase -- a bunch of books slide out on the floor beside her.

She picks up the one titled Vampires: Restless Creatures of the Night -- stares at it -- when the epiphany hits her.

LARA

This can't be real.

Drops the book and springs to her feet.

Goldie meanders in -- brushing up against Lara.

But he senses something wrong -- backs away.

He hisses at her, raising his hackles -- runs out, scared.

Shocked, Lara puts on the sunglasses and leaves.

INT. WHITAKER HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Lara runs outside through the sliding glass door, leaving the door open.

INT. WOODS - DAY

Lara retraces her path through the woods -- takes the fork in the path towards the church.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

The church appears to be old and rundown, but not shuttered.

Empty parking lot -- not a soul in sight.

Lara runs to the entrance -- tries the door, it opens.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Inside, Lara lifts the sunglasses.

Tall stained glass windows glow -- lit candles line the sanctuary's walls.

A CREAKING noise causes Lara to duck down inside a row of pews, hiding.

Peeks over the edge to see if anyone appears.

Nobody. Complete silence.

Slips out from the pews -- runs up the aisle to the altar --

-- stops in her tracks because of a huge statue of Christ's crucifixion hanging overhead on the wall.

She turns away in embarrassment and pain.

Sees a cabinet behind the altar, searches inside -- nothing.

Glances inside the pulpit -- nothing. Notices a door next to the altar.

INT. CHURCH - VESTIARY - DAY

Lara goes through the door -- finds a small storage room, she searches the cabinets and drawers.

Discovers an unmarked bottle of water, clear-glass in the shape of a wine bottle.

She removes the stopper -- takes a sip -- spits it out -- retching. Puts the bottle on the floor.

Inside another drawer she finds boxes of host.

She leaves with one box of host and the bottle of holy water.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

At the altar, Lara puts down the water, takes a host wafer -- studies it, smells it.

Unsure, she takes a small bite -- it causes her to heave -- she vomits all over the altar.

She wipes her mouth off with the cloth covering the altar.

Picks up her loot -- runs like hell out of there.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

Lara sprints across the parking lot to the woods.

EXT. WHITAKER HOUSE - BACKYARD - DAY

Runs through the sliding glass door -- closes it behind her.

INT. WHITAKER HOUSE - GARAGE - DAY

Lara searches for her father's toolbox, finds it.

Takes out a pocket knife and a black rubber mallet.

INT. WHITAKER HOUSE - FAMILY ROOM - DAY

By the fireplace -- Lara picks through the wood kindling, taking the strongest sticks.

INT. WHITAKER HOUSE - LARA'S ROOM - DAY

Lara drops everything on the bed -- closes the door -- locks the window -- adjusts the curtains.

Removes the sunglasses, faces herself in the mirror, wiping away tears in her eyes. Yawns, long and hard.

Stashes the holy water and box of host under the bed.

On the bed, she whittles a stick of kindling with the pocket knife -- shavings fall into a waste basket.

Sharpens the end to a nice point. Picks up another stick, continues to whittle.

EXT. WHITAKER HOUSE - EVENING - LATER

Derek, Kathy and Evan drive into the garage.

INT. WHITAKER HOUSE - EVAN'S ROOM - EVENING

Asleep on Kathy's shoulder, she lays him down on his bed.

INT. WHITAKER HOUSE - LARA'S ROOM - EVENING

A KNOCK on the door -- Derek and Kathy enter, trying to be quiet.

Asleep on covers, Lara still wears her clothes.

KATHY

Lara?

Derek pulls back the curtains -- light from the setting sun creeps in.

They see a pile of sticks of kindling on the floor -- the pocket knife and rubber mallet laying nearby.

DEREK

What the hell is she doing?

Derek picks up the knife -- closes it, puts it in a pocket.

Kathy puts her hand on Lara's forehead.

Derek kneels down beside her.

Her breathing shallow, slow. He shakes her gently.

DEREK (CONT'D)

Lara.

No response. Kathy bites her lip.

Derek nods at the door.

DEREK (CONT'D)

Let's let her sleep, okay?

He kisses her on the forehead. They leave, closing the door.

LATER THAT NIGHT

Lara wakes from a nightmare, bathed in sweat.

The clock reads 4:30 AM. The household sleeps.

She grimaces, clutches her stomach. Overwhelmed by hunger.

Lara gets on her feet -- faces the door for a moment -- turns to the window instead.

Opens it -- crawls out over the ledge -- hangs down, falls to the ground rolling, jumps to her feet.

EXT. WHITAKER HOUSE - NIGHT

Lara goes through the gate to the front yard. Runs across the street to Tommy's house.

EXT. TOMMY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Lara dips past Tommy's window -- goes round to the back.

Finds another window with a light on -- the kitchen?

She crouches down low -- listening at the window.

EXT. TOMMY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Inside, BETH and JOE SWANSON chat with SUSAN GORDON.

BETH

Baptized?

SUSAN

Not according to the mother.

Tommy comes in.

TOMMY

When's dad coming home? I'm hungry.

SUSAN

He should be here any minute.

A KNOCK on the front door.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

Can you get that Tommy?

Tommy goes to the front door.

INT. TOMMY'S HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

Philip Holderman and MYRTLE MCNEIL wait on the front step.

She's a fit little woman in her eighties, smiles at Tommy.

MYRTLE

Are we late?

Philip holds up a thermos bottle -- a wide grin on his face.

INT. TOMMY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN -- NIGHT

Tommy comes back with Myrtle and Philip.

SUSAN

Evening, Myrtle. Philip.

Myrtle takes an empty seat at the kitchen table.

TOMMY

I should invite my new girlfriend
over for dinner.

The group gathered glance at each other with alarm.

BETH

Your new girlfriend?

SUSAN

What do you mean, Thomas?

Tommy finds his crusty can of V-8 in the fridge. Philip
clamps a hand on Tommy's shoulder.

PHILIP

It's not the new neighbors is it?

TOMMY

Yes. It's new girl across the
street.

SUSAN

Tommy... Are you being a good boy
now? What the hell have you done?

TOMMY

She's been bit -- but not bled.
Probably turned by now.

He takes a swig off the V-8 can. Burps.

EXT. TOMMY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Lara follows the conversation -- in a state of disbelief.

SUSAN (O.S.)
Damn it, Tommy. That's not part of
the plan for your aunt and uncle to
adopt that boy.

TOMMY (O.S.)
Too late.

Lara's eyes widen -- she SNAPS a bush branch -- holds her
breath -- freezes.

It was loud enough for everyone inside to hear it.

She swears under her breath, ready to bolt.

EXT. TOMMY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Susan nods Tommy toward the backyard. He agrees -- jogs to
the front door.

JOE
Well, that changes everything.
(to Beth)
Your mother needs to get that boy
as soon as possible.

Beth regards Susan with concern.

EXT. TOMMY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Lara turns to run -- straight into Tommy's arms.

TOMMY
Lara. You made it! Just in time
for dinner.

She wants to scream -- but nothing comes out.

LARA
Tommy! What's going on?!

TOMMY
Shall we go inside? My parents are
dying to meet you.

Tommy's snickering laugh scares her -- grabs her arm and
drags her inside the house.

INT. TOMMY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Tommy enters with Lara -- holding her hand against her will.

TOMMY

Guess who came to see me.

Susan, Joe and Beth rise to their feet to greet Lara.

TOMMY (CONT'D)

This is Lara.

Lara does not speak, frightened

TOMMY (CONT'D)

This is my Mom, Susan -- that's my
Aunt Beth and Uncle Joe.

They stare at the two little band-aids on her neck.

TOMMY (CONT'D)

And that's my Mom's cousins --
Myrtle and Philip.

They all attempt to smile at Lara, trying to contain their
shock.

Before anyone can say anything -- the GARAGE DOOR OPENING can
be heard.

TOMMY (CONT'D)

Daddy's home! Time to eat!

INT. TOMMY'S HOUSE - GARAGE - NIGHT

Tommy props open the doorway to the garage.

Behind the wheel, Frank props up a heavy-set man beside him,
who appears to be what -- asleep? Dead?

Joe comes in to help.

JOE

Looks like you need some help.

Frank gets out -- the passenger slumps over --echoing a
similar scene Derek witnessed earlier.

FRANK

Thanks, Joe. He's a heavy one.

Lara watches this -- puts a hand to her mouth in horror.

FRANK (CONT'D)

(to Tommy)
Who's that?

INT. TOMMY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Tommy smiles proudly.

TOMMY

Lara!

Susan and Beth continue their conversation.

Lara turns away, doubling over.

INT. TOMMY'S HOUSE - GARAGE - NIGHT

Frank opens the passenger door.

JOE

Can you help us, Tommy?

INT. TOMMY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Tommy wants to dispel Lara's distress.

TOMMY

Just a minute you guys.

He pulls Lara away from --

INT. TOMMY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

-- into his bedroom, shuts the door.

LARA

Tommy... I'm sick.

Lara clutches her stomach -- the pain excruciating.

TOMMY

No. You're just thirsty.

He takes a drink from the V-8 can.

Lara can smell it -- drawn to it.

TOMMY (CONT'D)

Is it time for a V-8?

He offers her the can.

She takes it -- brings it to her lips, plunging in the abyss.

TOMMY (CONT'D)

Can't eat anything, can you? This will quench your thirst.

Lara succumbs to her ravenous hunger -- drinks it down --
-- the blood runs down her chin -- down her neck.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
Hey now, don't waste it. That's
some premium all-American blood
you've got there.

She finishes -- throws the can at him -- it hits him.

LARA
What am I going to do Tommy?

TOMMY
'Tis too late my sweet Lara. Ye
have shuffled off this mortal coil.

LARA
What?! Are you talking about the
band --

Tommy has a good laugh.

TOMMY
Yeah right, the band. No, it's from
Shakespeare. They teach you that in
'public school' don't they?

LARA
I know about Shakespeare...

TOMMY
"To die, to sleep -- to sleep,
perchance to dream. Ay, there's the
rub, for in that sleep of death
what dreams may come, when we have
shuffled off this mortal coil..."

Lara pounds her fists on his chest to make him stop.

LARA
How could you!

TOMMY
How could I what? Give you what
you've always wanted? A way out
from your meaningless life?

Lara wipes her mouth off -- sees the blood on her hand.

LARA
Your life has meaning?

TOMMY

With true freedom comes meaning.
You were never free before, not
even close. I'm free to live.

LARA

You're confused.

TOMMY

Those people who punch clocks every
day are confused. Their "freedom"
is an illusion.

Tommy takes a step closer to her, she steps back.

LARA

I won't let them take Evan.

TOMMY

Lara, Evan will always be your
little brother. For all eternity.

Tommy grabs her -- to kiss her -- as their lips touch -- Lara
knees him hard in the groin -- he buckles over.

She throws open his blacked out window -- a blast of white
light enters -- the sun has risen!

The bright burning rays hit Tommy square in the face.

He screams -- his face and hands on fire -- he crawls out of
light -- burning and smoking.

Lara dives out the window --

EXT. TOMMY'S BEDROOM WINDOW - MORNING

-- she rolls in the grass to her feet -- runs like mad.

EXT. CUL-DE-SAC - MORNING

Smoke burns from her body -- Lara pulls her jacket over her
head -- shielding herself from the sun.

EXT. WHITAKER HOUSE - MORNING

Finds the front door locked -- she pounds it with her fists.

Sees Kathy coming down the stairs through the window.

INT. WHITAKER HOUSE - MORNING

Kathy jumps at the noise -- startled to see Lara through the window -- she screams.

KATHY

Lara?!

She runs down and opens the door -- Lara burns past her, up the stairs -- smoke trailing, to her bedroom.

INT. WHITAKER HOUSE - LARA'S ROOM - DAY

Lara runs to the window -- locks it -- closes the curtains.

LARA

Mom, close the door!

Kathy cannot believe her eyes -- shuts the door.

KATHY

Were you in a fire?

LARA

Sort of.

Lara pats herself down with the jacket -- the smoke clears. She has a few minor burns.

KATHY

Is Tommy involved with this?

Lara gets the host and holy water out from under the bed.

She's slowing down -- getting sleepier by the second.

LARA

Mom, put the host around Evan's bed. Put this somewhere safe.

KATHY

What is this for?

LARA

Protection. I stole them from the church...

Lara crawls under the covers, shivering, cold.

KATHY

You did what?!

LARA
I'm sorry, Mom. I lied before.
This isn't a scratch.

She pulls the band-aids off her neck.

KATHY
It's not?

LARA
It's a bite.

KATHY
A bite? From what?

LARA
Not what, Mom -- who. Tommy.

KATHY
Tommy bit you?

Lara turns away, embarrassed.

LARA
He's turned me -- into a vampire.

Kathy's tense expression transforms into relief. Laughs.

KATHY
A vampire?! Oh, come on, honey. I
know you're upset about moving --

LARA
Mom! Tommy is a vampire! His
parent's are vampires. Everyone
who lives here is a vampire. I
think they're all related --

KATHY
Honey, that's just not possible.

Lara struggles to keep her eyes open.

LARA
Mom... Evan is not safe. Tell dad
I need, I need a blood transfusion.

KATHY
What on earth for?

Lara passes out, asleep.

Kathy holds the box and bottle in her hands -- not sure what
to think.

INT. WHITAKER HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY - LATER

Kathy fixes lunch for Evan. He plays with some toys.

EVAN
Lara's sick?

KATHY
Yes, she's sick.

EVAN
She's sleeping?

KATHY
Yes. Sometimes that helps when
you're really sick.

Kathy gives him a plate with a sandwich and fruits.

EVAN
I'm getting tired too.

KATHY
You can take a nap after we eat
lunch then, okay?

Evan nods, takes a bite out of an apple slice.

Goldie's off in the corner licking himself.

INT. WHITAKER HOUSE - EVAN'S ROOM - DAY - LATER

Fast asleep on his bed, Kathy strokes Evan's hair. She sneaks out, closing the door.

INT. WHITAKER HOUSE - LARA'S ROOM - DAY - LATER

Kathy puts her hand on Lara's forehead, checking for fever.

KATHY
My god, you're freezing.

She goes to the closet and finds an extra blanket.

Throws over Lara and tucks it around her face.

She collapses on the floor, sitting against the wall. Holds her head in her hands, near exhaustion.

She kicks off her shoes, removes her socks -- rubs her feet.

Notices a book laying on the floor -- she picks it up.

Vampires: Restless Creatures of the Night.

Reaches up to a lamp on the nightstand, turns it on.

Kathy thumbs through the colorful, lurid pages.

A bemused smile spreads across her face -- until something stops her cold.

An engraving of a mountain range -- similar to the painting over Aurora's fireplace --

-- reading a caption next to a picture catches her eye --

-- the kicker -- the words "Tatra Mountains" -- Aurora had said her painting was from the same place.

The accompanying text explains the area was notorious for the proliferation of vampires in Eastern Europe...

An epiphany dawns on Kathy -- can Lara be right?

She puts the book down beside Lara, shakes her --

KATHY (CONT'D)

Lara?

Kathy lifts one of Lara's eyelids -- shines the lamp in her eye -- the pupil does not contract.

No reaction.

KATHY (CONT'D)

Shit.

Picks up the box of host and bottle of holy water.

A glance under the bed reveals more sticks of kindling.

Sharpened into stakes.

INT. WHITAKER HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

Kathy dials her cell phone -- the wood stakes, holy water and host lay beside her on the bed.

KATHY

Hi, Derek. Yes, she's been asleep all day. Listen, honey, this going to sound a little strange, but can you bring home some equipment to perform a blood transfusion?

She fondles the sharpened point of a stake.

INT. RESEARCH LAB - DAY

Derek sits back on his stool, holds a cell phone to his ear.

DEREK
What you do mean a blood
transfusion?!

His assistant Stan, cocks an eye in Derek's direction after his strange outburst.

Derek tries to play it off as a joke to Stan, gesturing.

INT. WHITAKER HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

Kathy pricks her finger on the stake, drops it.

KATHY
I think Lara might need one.

She sucks on the tiny bead of blood on her finger.

KATHY (CONT'D)
I know it sounds crazy -- I'll
explain why when you get here.

INT. RESEARCH LAB - DAY

Derek swivels away from Stan, lowering his voice.

DEREK
Okay, okay. I'll see what I can do.
Yes. I love you too. Bye.

Derek clicks off and shoves the phone in a pocket, lost in thought.

Another researcher, GEORGE, taps him on the shoulder and Derek jumps out off his stool, startled.

DEREK (CONT'D)
Jesus, George, speak up man! What
do you need?

GEORGE
Sorry, Derek. Cindy asked me to
pass this on to you.

George hands him a set of faxed documents.

DEREK

Oh, thanks. Sorry I flew off the handle --

GEORGE

That's all right, Derek. Hope it's good news!

George slinks off out of sight, grimacing at Stan.

Derek takes a look at the handful of sheets: it's a summary report sent by Detective Franklin regarding the previous owners of the house.

Reading it, Derek learns that the house did foreclose because the owner's did indeed, one day, simply vanish.

Whereabouts or condition of the previous owners are still unknown.

DEREK

I don't believe it. She was right.

He pulls out his cell phone, dials, then stops, hanging up.

INT. WHITAKER HOUSE - EVAN'S ROOM - DAY

Evan does not make a sound, asleep on his small bed.

Kathy comes in, places the bottle of holy water on a dresser.

Kneels down beside him, opening the box of host.

Takes one wafer out -- sniffs it -- pops it into her mouth on impulse, chewing it.

Takes out another and holds it over Evan, wondering what to do with it.

Decides to lay them out, all around his body.

Kathy steps back -- examining the scene, unsure.

Exchanges the box of host for the bottle of holy water.

Pulls out the stopper -- sniffs it, finds a wash cloth in a dresser drawer, pours some on it.

Touches the cloth to Evan's forehead.

He shifts uneasy -- she takes it back fast.

Kathy stares at the cloth and water in each hand -- shakes her head, dismissive.

KATHY

What the hell am I doing.

She slams the bottle of holy water on the dresser next to the host and leaves, closing the door.

EXT. WHITAKER HOUSE - NIGHT

Derek pulls in the driveway, parks the SUV in the garage.

INT. WHITAKER HOUSE - LARA'S ROOM - NIGHT - LATER

Derek comes in with Kathy. In one hand he has a leather medical bag, the other a stethoscope.

Lara sleeps coma-like, dead to the world.

DEREK

(whispering)

We should just take her to the hospital.

KATHY

Just look at her first.

Derek drops the stuff on the floor, shakes Lara's shoulder.

Lara's eyes fling open, staring at the ceiling.

Kathy lets out a tiny cry -- it makes Derek jump.

DEREK

(to Lara)

Honey, we're thinking about taking you to a doctor --

Lara grabs Kathy's hand, squeezing it tight.

LARA

The Swanson's want to take Evan. They want to make him their own.

Kathy shakes her head, confused.

LARA (CONT'D)

I heard them talk about it!

DEREK

What the hell -- ?

Lara tries to get up -- Derek makes her lay back down.

DEREK (CONT'D)
Hold on a minute.

She looks around for the stakes, holy water and host -- doesn't see them -- turns to Kathy.

KATHY
They're in our room. I used them
in Evan's room.

Lara nods, regards Kathy with complete calm.

LARA
The water burns them.

Derek laughs.

LARA (CONT'D)
And the stakes must be driven
through the heart.

Now he gets it.

DEREK
Okay, let's not forget about using
a crucifix to --

They both turn to him with the utmost seriousness.

LARA
Do you have one, Dad?

He eyeballs each of them in turn.

DEREK
Oh, come on! Are you guys kidding?
You're not talking about -- ?

Lara bolts upright, turns her head in the direction of Evan's room.

LARA
She's here.

In the next room -- a sudden CRASH, GLASS BREAKING.

Evan screams.

Derek gapes at Kathy in astonishment.

Lara jumps out bed, running out -- Kathy and Derek follow.

INT. WHITAKER HOUSE - EVAN'S ROOM - NIGHT

They find Evan on his bed screaming -- because of Aurora Lee.

She's perched on his window sill inside the room -- her eyes glowing a fiery red -- vampire fangs flashing.

Kathy and Derek cower before Aurora's frightening visage.

Lara runs to Evan.

LARA

Evan! Don't move!

Aurora flies across the room toward Evan -- the host surrounding him repels her -- she hisses at him.

EVAN

MOMMY!!

KATHY

Stay away from my son!

Kathy charges at her, screaming.

Aurora's sharp fingernails lash out -- striking her in the face -- and crashing across the floor, knocking over Derek.

Derek helps Kathy to roll over, as she touches the blood forming on her cheek.

At the sight of his mom being hurt -- Evan scrambles off the bed in her direction.

EVAN

MOMMY!!!

LARA

NO!!!

Aurora swoops down upon him and picks him up -- leaps onto the window sill -- steps off the ledge -- out of sight.

Derek throws himself head long at Aurora -- trying to grab at Evan --- but misses.

Kathy runs to the window, beside Derek -- they see Aurora bound over the fence with Evan to her house.

DEREK

What the hell was that?!

KATHY

I'm going over there.

DEREK
I'm coming with you.

KATHY
No. Lara needs your blood.

Derek can't believe what he's hearing. Kathy nods to Lara.

KATHY (CONT'D)
You tell him.

Kathy runs out with fierce determination.

Derek looks back and forth from Kathy to Lara, dumbfounded.

INT. AURORA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Kathy sprints up to the front door, peeks in the window -- nothing but darkness.

Moonlight reflects off the plastic covering the living room furniture.

Slides the bottle of holy water into her back pocket.

Tightens her grip on a sharpened wood stake.

Grabs the door handle, squeezes the lever -- to her surprise it's unlocked.

Opens the door -- complete silence. Kathy steps inside, leaving open the door.

INT. AURORA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

She sees a light under a closed door in the kitchen.

Puts her ear to the door. Voices. It must be a cellar.

Opens the door as quietly as she can -- the voices become more audible now.

INT. AURORA'S HOUSE - CELLAR - NIGHT

Kathy creeps down the stairs without a sound.

The large black room appears to be cavernous.

Aurora and all the neighbors have gathered in a semicircle around a cloth draped table.

Myrtle McNeil pours blood from a silver chalice into cups in front of everyone present.

Tommy, Frank and Susan Gordon, Philip Holderman, Beth and Joe Swanson -- all pick up their cups.

Kathy reaches the last step, hiding in the shadows.

Aurora stands there with her back to Kathy.

In her outstretched arms she holds Evan -- his small body unconscious and limp.

AURORA

We give this gift for my daughter,
Beth, and her husband Frank.

Aurora lays Evan down on the table.

AURORA (CONT'D)

To help relieve your past sorrows
and give you a son to brighten your
nights for all eternity.

Kathy clutches the wood stake with both hands -- lifting it over her head --

-- as she lunges from the dark -- striking Aurora in the back -- the stake erupts out her chest -- piercing her heart!

Aurora shrieks out in terror -- grabs the stake -- spins around to confront Kathy.

TOMMY

GRANDMA!

All the neighbors react in horror -- their fangs visible.

AURORA

For the blood is the life.

Kathy shoves Aurora away -- as she grabs the bottle out of her back pocket --

-- and smashes the neck off on the table edge -- splashes the holy water into the faces of all the neighbors.

They all SCREAM trying to dodge the water -- as it produces horrible smoking burns across their faces.

Kathy throws the bottle at Tommy -- scoops up Evan like a rag doll -- runs back to the stairs.

Halfway up -- Tommy grabs her ankle --

-- his face burned by the sun -- Kathy screams.

She wrenches her ankle away -- kicks him hard in the face -- he falls back down the stairs.

Kathy makes it to the top -- swings the door closed.

INT. AURORA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

She dashes to the front door -- glances down -- a river of filthy rats nip at her bare feet!

Kathy screams -- Evan wakes up -- he screams too. She hops and skips across the floor like crazy.

EXT. AURORA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

With Evan screaming in her arms -- Kathy jumps out the front door running as fast as she can.

The rats come streaming outside -- a virtual flood of writhing vermin.

EXT. WHITAKER HOUSE - NIGHT

Kathy reaches the lawn -- when a wave of bats appears.

She gets inside the door -- slams it shut -- as a bat SMASHES in to it -- resounding like a HUMAN-SIZED THUD.

Kathy locks the door -- Frank Gordon appears in the window beside the door -- his fangs flashing.

They both scream -- Kathy makes a run for the stairs.

INT. WHITAKER HOUSE - LARA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Lara lays on the bed -- an intravenous tube stuck in her arm, connected to a large jar full of blood.

Derek nurses a bandage on one of his arms -- he jerks at the commotion downstairs.

LARA

Mom's home.

INT. WHITAKER HOUSE - STAIRWELL - NIGHT

Kathy climbs the stairs with Evan -- Derek appears and guides them into Lara's room -- shuts the door.

INT. WHITAKER HOUSE - LARA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Kathy collapses beside the bed with Evan -- sees the blood going into Lara's arm.

Derek goes to the window -- just in time to see Tommy jumping the fence -- then LEAPS up to the window sill!

Before he can react -- Tommy lands on the ledge -- KICKS open the window panes -- SMASHING the glass --

-- knocking Derek to the floor. Kathy and Evan scream.

LARA
DADDY!!!

Tommy flies across the room to Lara's bed. He straddles her body, grabs the tube going into her arm --

TOMMY
Come now, Lara, don't you realize
this is too late?

-- and yanks it out savagely.

LARA
Tommy -- aaahhhhhh!!

Derek jumps onto Tommy's back -- he shakes Derek off with one swipe of his arm --

-- it sends him flying -- CRASHING into the vanity table, SHATTERING the mirror.

One lens of his eyeglasses CRACKS -- Derek adjusts them back on his nose.

He sees one of Lara's hands trying to reach under her bed.

Following her hand -- the baseball bat. Derek rolls forward and grabs it -- jumps to his feet.

He winds the bat behind his back --

-- Kathy shoves Evan's face into her chest to prevent him from watching --

-- and swings the bat with terrific force against the back of Tommy's head.

With a loud, sickening CRACK -- the bat breaks in two, over Tommy's head.

Tommy gives his head a little shake, laughing.

Lara scrambles out from under his body to the floor.

TOMMY

Nice swing you got there, Pops.

Derek flips over the broken piece of bat handle -- raises the sharp end over his head with both hands --

Tommy turns to face Derek.

-- and brings it down into Tommy's chest with all of his might -- straight into his heart!

Tommy's eyes bug out in horror as he grabs at the bat handle piercing his chest, screaming --

Face to face with Derek -- Tommy falls limp to the floor, cursing and spitting blood.

Kathy gets up, struggling to hold Evan -- Derek helps Lara get to her feet.

A heavy THUMP hits the roof over their heads -- all their faces look up.

KATHY

What are we going to do?

LARA

We need a knife big enough to cut off a head.

Derek shakes his head in disbelief.

DEREK

You've got to be kidding me!

They all jump at the sound of someone trying to SMASH in the front door downstairs.

LARA

(to Kathy)

Where are the stakes?

KATHY

In our bedroom.

Lara picks up the rubber mallet from the dresser.

LARA

Dad -- do we have anything else like this? A hammer?

Derek nods, wild-eyed.

LARA (CONT'D)
Okay -- get the hammer and a knife
and meet us in Evan's room.

INT. WHITAKER HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Lara goes to the master bedroom. Kathy takes Evan into his room. Derek runs down the stairs.

INT. WHITAKER HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

In a drawer, Derek finds a big butcher knife -- takes it.
From a low cabinet, he finds a metal claw hammer -- grabs it.
The FRONT DOOR breaks down with a loud CRASH.

INT. WHITAKER HOUSE - EVAN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Kathy grabs the box of host -- jumps on the small bed with Evan -- throws out more pieces around them on the bed.

INT. WHITAKER HOUSE - STAIRWELL - NIGHT

Lara sprints down the hall to the stairwell, holding the stakes.

She sees Frank and Susan Gordon entering the house through the broken down front door --

-- just as Derek stumbles into the foyer carrying the hammer and knife.

LARA
DAD!!

Lara hurls a wood stake down to him -- it hits the floor in front of Frank and Susan.

Frank springs at Derek -- while Susan in a single bound leaps up stairwell -- landing in front of Lara.

INT. WHITAKER HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Derek holds the knife out in front of him -- Frank knocks it out of his hand with ease --

Derek swings the hammer in his other hand at Joe's head -- connects, slamming him into the wall.

INT. WHITAKER HOUSE - STAIRWELL - NIGHT

Susan tackles Lara -- they both fall to the floor.

Lara screams -- scratches her fingernails across Susan's face -- leaving a deep, bloody trail of gashes on her cheek.

Stunned by the blow, Susan rolls off her --

Lara crawls on top of her, holding her down -- puts a stake over Susan's heart -- pounds it in with the mallet.

She keeps on pounding -- as blood splashes in her face.

Susan dies in abject terror -- clawing at Lara's face.

A loud CRASH of a window exploding -- followed by loud screaming erupts from Evan's room.

INT. WHITAKER HOUSE - FOYER - NIGHT

Derek trips over Frank's slumped body -- drops the hammer, he crawls across the floor, reaching for the wood stake --

Back on his feet, Frank turns to Derek -- leaps through the air at him --

Derek rolls over on his back -- holds up the stake with both hands high --

-- Frank lands on him -- impaling himself on the stake!

Frank screams -- thrashing back and forth -- Derek struggles to throw him off -- blood gushing all over him.

Derek pushes himself upright -- sees a dark figure with glowing eyes at the sliding glass door.

INT. WHITAKER HOUSE - EVAN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Myrtle McNeil jumps down from the destroyed window sill -- heading straight for Evan.

But the host around him and Kathy repels her -- she opens her mouth -- baring her fangs in shock.

Kathy and Evan both scream. Lara runs in going straight at Myrtle swinging the mallet --

-- Myrtle turns and strikes Lara across the face with unbelievable force for such an old woman --

-- knocking her to the floor -- Myrtle stomps her foot on Lara's neck --

-- Kathy appears from behind -- she shoves the old woman off her feet with all her might --

Myrtle falls to floor, rolling on her back -- Kathy straddles her body, positions the last stake over Myrtle's heart --

-- as Lara tosses the mallet to Kathy --

-- she catches it and swings it over her head -- smashing it down on the stake in one powerful swing --

Myrtle's eyes bulge in extreme pain and terror -- blood spurts out all over Kathy.

Evan screams in horror at the carnage.

Kathy runs to him -- shielding him from the bloody mess of Myrtle McNeil's twitching body.

They hear a huge CRASH of GLASS from downstairs -- Lara helps Kathy pick Evan up as they run out.

INT. WHITAKER HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Philip Holderman steps through the shattered sliding glass door -- his burning eyes locked on Derek.

Goldie confronts Philip -- the hackles on his back rise -- hissing at the vampire --

-- Philip in turn hisses back at the cat, showing his fangs.

Goldie jumps through the broken window, getting the hell out of there.

INT. WHITAKER HOUSE - FOYER - NIGHT

Derek picks up the knife and hammer -- goes to the stairs.

INT. WHITAKER HOUSE - HALLWAY/STAIRWELL - NIGHT

Lara, Kathy and Evan step over Susan's dead body -- going down stairs -- they see Philip reaching out for Derek's neck.

Lara vaults over the stair railing -- landing on Philip.

Derek dives out of the way -- as Lara CRASHES with Philip onto the floor.

Lara rolls off -- Derek swings the hammer and SMASHES Philip in the head as he lays on the floor --

LARA

That's not going to work!

Her remark gives Derek pause -- gives Philip just enough time to grab Derek's ankle -- and yank him off his feet.

He hits the floor hard -- the hammer and knife shoot out of his hands.

Lara picks up the large knife -- as Philip gets to his feet --

-- she swings it with both hands -- cutting off his head in one incredible swoop!

Clutching Evan in her arms -- Kathy jumps over the head bouncing across the floor, they're both screaming.

KATHY

Get to the car!

The headless body hits the floor beside Derek -- he screams.

Lara grabs Derek's hand -- pulls him to his feet with sudden super human strength -- they follow Kathy to the garage.

INT. WHITAKER HOUSE - GARAGE - NIGHT

They get to the car -- Derek checks his pockets -- he turns to go back.

KATHY

Where are you going?!

DEREK

I gotta get the damn keys!

LARA

Get in the car, Mom!

Derek goes back inside.

Kathy and Lara both reach for door handles on the SUV -- only to find the car locked!

INT. WHITAKER HOUSE - FOYER - NIGHT

Derek tears through a jacket hanging on a coat rack -- finds his car keys -- he turns around to find --

-- Joe and Beth Swanson right there behind him.

Derek unlocks the SUV with the electronic key.
They hiss at him as he charges toward the garage.

INT. WHITAKER HOUSE - GARAGE - NIGHT

Derek slams the door -- Joe and Beth CRASH against it.
Kathy scrambles into the front passenger seat with Evan on her lap.

Lara climbs into the back seat -- locks her door.

Derek gets halfway to the car -- when the door EXPLODES off its hinges behind him --

Joe and Beth both jump and fly into the garage --

Derek opens the car door when Joe's fangs chomp down on his neck -- he screams out pain --

-- he punches Joe in the stomach with an elbow -- pushing him off his neck -- he jumps into the car.

Beth throws herself at the windshield -- SHATTERING the GLASS -- punches a hole through it -- grabs Evan --

INT. SUV - NIGHT

Kathy screams at the top of her lungs -- trying to fight the vampire off Evan --

-- as Beth manages to sink her fangs into him!

Derek tries to fight Beth off as well -- when Joe leaps onto the car hood --

Lara explodes in rage -- blossoms into full vampire mode -- flashing her fangs -- flies over the seat hissing --

-- she attacks Beth -- pushes her back out -- makes sure Kathy has a grip on Evan --

Derek gets the key in the ignition -- turns on the engine.

KATHY
GO! GO! GO!

Joe catches Beth -- together they both attack Lara --

Lara twists -- locks eyes with her mother for an eternal moment -- her animal ferocity turns to tragic pathos --

-- as she gets pulled backward out through the windshield.

Derek shifts into reverse -- pushes the gas pedal to floor -- the tires SQUEALING on the cement floor --

INT. WHITAKER HOUSE - GARAGE - NIGHT

-- Joe, Beth and Lara fight on the hood -- as the car accelerates and --

EXT. WHITAKER HOUSE - MORNING

-- SMASHES through the GARAGE DOOR -- into bright sunlight!

The crash drags Lara, Joe and Beth off the car --

-- Beth and Joe look up at the sun -- exploding into flames.

Lara manages to get up for a moment -- as the car bounces off the driveway -- skidding into the street.

Kathy and Derek watch in horror as their daughter bursts into flames --

Lara falls to her knees -- arms outstretched in horror --

-- reminiscent to the fallen angel from the "Sad Wings of Destiny" artwork.

Kathy grabs Derek's arm.

KATHY

LARA!!

Derek shifts gears and punches the gas again -- TIRES SCREECHING as they speed away from the cul-de-sac.

EXT. SUBURBAN ROADS - MORNING

Sobbing non-stop, Derek has several near miss crashes with other cars as they make their way to the freeway.

EXT. INTERSTATE FREEWAY - MORNING

Derek swerves into morning rush hour traffic. Cars all around him honk like crazy -- dodging out of his way.

The morning sun shines bright -- on a massive vista of smoggy gridlock -- for as far as the eye can see.

INT. SUV - MORNING

DEREK
Is he alive?!

Kathy weeps, cradling Evan in her arms.

KATHY
We have to get him to a hospital!

Derek sideswipes a car after he takes a glimpse of Evan --
tries to regain control -- accelerating --

DEREK
Everything's going to be all right!

Kathy glances down at Evan when -- his eyelids spring open --
bloodshot and angry!

His mouth springs open -- revealing tiny vampire fangs -- he
jumps up at Kathy's face.

She screams in terror -- Derek sees this -- freaks out and
loses control --

EXT. INTERSTATE FREEWAY - MORNING

-- they SMASH into one car, careen off another -- turning so
sharp it causes the SUV to rollover --

-- CRASHING and ROLLING down the freeway -- a cacophony of
screams --

CUT TO BLACK.

THE END