

THE STRANGERS

by

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EXT. STREET - DAY

The washed out sky hangs over the open fields in the middle of nowhere. It has rained recently and the ground is wet around the scattered mail boxes that line the old gravel road.

The street is deserted. Empty.

DETECTIVE (V.O.)

Okay. Let's try and do this all at once. (Coughs) Can you hear me alright? I'm just gonna start. Alright?

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

A large single story house sits a thousand yards from its closest neighbor. There is a long cement driveway that leads down the side of the property.

At the end, towards the house, sits a once blue four-door sedan. Smoke rises above the charred remains. The windows are smashed out and the tires are slashed. Broken pieces of glass surround the car as it sits flat against its metal rims.

The car is running.

Over the blackened hood stands a faded basketball goal. A net hangs on for its life from the rusty orange hoop.

DETECTIVE (V.O.)

1801 Clark Road. Stop. (Coughs)
1801 Clark Road as follows: 4
kitchen knives, varying sizes. 2
candle sticks. One large axe with
wooden handle.

EXT. STREET - DAY

TWO YOUNG BOYS, both in their early teens, walk side by side with their bicycles. They wear pressed white shirts and black slacks.

They are Mormons.

The taller boy, has a backpack slung over one shoulder. The other one holds a pile of pamphlets. They both have flat tops.

The boys make their way down the street and they huddle close together to attempt to shield themselves from the wind whipping across their skin.

They are two houses down from the basketball goal. So far, no one is home on the street. They take turns walking to each house, knocking and ringing the doorbells. When there is no answer, they leave the pamphlets on the mat or in the mailbox and walk back up to the road again.

The boys do not play around with each other as they walk the road between houses. They concentrate on the task at hand; each solemnly staring forward as they pass the overgrown yards.

DETECTIVE (V.O.)

Matches. One double barrel shot
gun. 5 empty shells. Baling wire.
A broken champagne bottle. Two
empty bottles of beer.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

Music drifts out to where the boys stand on the street from somewhere within the large house.

The boy with the backpack waits at the mailbox as the smaller one walks down the driveway towards the blue-black family car.

The smaller boy waves and calls out for his friend to come closer. The music grows louder so as to drown out all other sound.

Eventually, the boy with the backpack lays both the bikes down on the side of the street and walks towards the front porch, cutting across the grass.

The smaller boy stands near the car, staring at his reflection in the broken driver's side window. He calls out to the boy with the backpack again, then chases after him up towards the house.

EXT. PORCH - DAY

The boy with the backpack picks up a champagne cork as they walk along the sidewalk to the porch. The smaller boy laughs nervously as they get closer.

The boy with the backpack does not take his eyes off what is left of the front door.

Several pieces of wood lie at their feet as they stand under the eave of the house. The boy with the backpack nudges his friend towards the door, but neither one walks inside.

BOY

Hello?

Their bikes remain on the street.

DETECTIVE (V.O.)

A lot of blood. In several rooms.
We have some usable prints. We
need to get some people out into
the yard. We have to go out into
the field.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

Dark shadows still surround most of the living room ahead of them as the boys make their way down the front hall. The smashed pieces of a fire alarm lie on the ground near the entry way.

Inaudible beneath the sound of the music, the boys call out as they walk through the darkened room, the pamphlets hang at the younger boys' side.

DETECTIVE (V.O.)

(Coughs) No conformation yet on
names. We're working on it. We'll
be here all night. This is bad.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

The boys walk through the living room as the music grows louder. No one responds to their calls.

INT. PARLOR - DAY

A record spins on an old worn out player. The needle is close to the end as the volume steadily rises.

DETECTIVE (V.O.)

That's all we got right now. Let's
go. Turn this thing off.

The record slows and then stops leaving only the sound of static as the needle rides the edges before stopping.

The house is completely quiet.

One of the boys screams.

FADE TO BLACK.

KRISTEN MCKAY WAS BORN ON AUGUST 26TH,
1977.

JAMES HOTOPP WAS BORN ON OCTOBER 12TH,
1975.

ON THE NIGHT OF FEBRUARY 1ST, 2004,
THEY ATTENDED THE WEDDING AND
RECEPTION OF KRISTEN'S COLLEGE
ROOMMATE ELIZABETH BROOKHART BETWEEN
THE HOURS OF 5:30PM - 3:00AM. AFTER
SAYING THEIR GOOD-BYES, THEY RETURNED
TO THE SUMMER HOME OF PRESTON AND MARY
BETH HOTOPP, JAMES' PARENTS.

INT. ENTRY WAY - NIGHT

The doorway is dark as JAMES and KRISTEN walk in silently. The bags and the cramped hallway make for a less than graceful transition inside the house. They are tired and angry.

James walks ahead carrying the luggage. Kristen stands at the doorway finishing a cigarette in the warm light of the porch. She wipes tears from her face.

They are still dressed from this evening's wedding, but both look as if they have seen a battlefield. The stains of red wine cover Kristen's skin. James's white shirt is now more pink than anything else. One of his hands is scraped away at the knuckles. There is a small bit of blood.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

It is dark inside as James walks around the huge living room. He bumps into random pieces of furniture while he navigates his way around the crowded space in the shadows.

He tosses the bags down in disgust as he searches for a lamp.

INT. ENTRY WAY - NIGHT

Kristen flicks her cigarette into the grass and closes the door, blocking out the little light that was shining into the house, leaving them in total darkness.

James slams into the corner of a table.

JAMES

Thank you.

Kristen's high heels make their way over the tiled entry hall and onto the hardwood floors of the living room.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

KRISTEN

I'm sorry.

The sarcasm hangs in the air from both their voices as James finally gets a lamp on.

Kristen watches James' movements as he walks around flipping on switches with disgust. Her face reacts to what she sees being illuminated in front of her. Each pool of light reveals more of the surprise James had planned for her that night.

There are two place settings surrounded by candles on the dining room table. A bottle of champagne chills in an ice bucket. Many bright flower petals are scattered across the couch.

With each flick of a switch, James attempts to remain emotionless, but his hands tremble as he works.

Kristen reaches for support, accidentally leaning back against the piano keys. An abrupt burst of sound from the piano causes her to jump. Without trying to restrain herself, tears flow down her wine stained face.

INT. PARLOR - NIGHT

James turns on the light in the parlor and the record player starts up. There is a second of static and then the chords of an old country song slowly come up to speed. This hurts Kristen even more.

James is caught off guard by these breaks from the silence and he moves to shut down the record player, but he pauses for a second and they both listen to the familiar song.

KRISTEN

When did you do all this?

JAMES

Today. When you were with the girls. Mike came down with me this morning. You were gone a long time.

His back is turned to her. He watches the record swivel around in circles.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Kristen bends down and begins digging through one of her bags. She cannot find what she is looking for. Her movements are rushed, her hands violent.

JAMES

What is it? What do you need?

KRISTEN

I wanna take a bath. Where are my things?

JAMES

I brought everything, all your stuff. It's in the back.

She looks up at him and this time he looks back at her.

KRISTEN

I'm sorry. I just thought you forgot them.

JAMES

No.

INT. PARLOR - NIGHT

James turns back to the record player for a moment.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Then, he walks over to the dining room and takes out a small ring box from his coat pocket, placing it on the table.

JAMES

Come on.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

He walks past her without a look in her direction and she follows him towards the light pouring from underneath the door at the end of the hall.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

When James opens the door, more of his preparation for their romantic evening is revealed. More rose petals cover the bed, and what seems like a million or more candles wait to be lit around them.

He flips on the bathroom light and grabs another champagne bottle from near the bed. As he crosses back towards the door, he slowly brushes past Kristen. For a second, they stand close to each other, then he moves to the door.

JAMES

You can have this room. I'll get set up out there. I don't know about the tub. I put roses in there too. We didn't know if they can go in first.

Kristen almost wants to laugh, but she doesn't.

KRISTEN

I don't know, either.

He goes to leave, but turns back.

JAMES

Come here. Let me get this.

He reaches over and touches her back, unzipping her dress for her. She pulls it off with the ease of someone who has undressed in front of a person hundreds of times before.

KRISTEN

Thank you.

He leaves her standing near the doorway.

JAMES

I'll turn the heater on.

KRISTEN

It's okay. I know you hate it when it's hot.

JAMES

It's alright.

He walks away.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Kristen runs a bath, sitting on the edge of the tub while she takes off her jewelry. The water is rusty, and she watches it mix with the red rose petals for a few seconds before it becomes clear.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

James walks outside holding the champagne bottle. After a few seconds, he pops the cork and takes a long drink and then sets the bottle down on the sidewalk near the door.

In the quiet distance, the sound of knocking floats in the air past the trees. The noise is faint but it stands out on the empty country road.

He walks over to his car and opens the trunk, grabbing a 12 pack and a bag of ice.

On the way back, he sings one of the songs from the record and kicks the champagne into the grass on his way to the door. The bubbly liquid drizzles out into the ground.

The knocking has stopped. It is silent once again.

INT. PARLOR - NIGHT

The record has played through and now the static pops as a reminder it needs to be turned over. James lifts the needle off and places it on the stand. The house is quiet.

He can hear the clinking of the wind chimes that hang on the back porch just beyond the windows.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

James walks over to the dining room and flips off the overhead light. In the darkness he grabs a book of matches, lighting the candles he had set out before. He picks up the ring and sits down at the head of the table. He holds a carton of ice cream and a spoon. Alone in his tuxedo he sits, eating the ice cream straight from the box.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Kristen stands in front of the mirror looking at her face. Her eyes are red and puffy. A layer of mascara surrounds them. She drops the towel and slowly places the dress back on. This time, she zips it herself.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Kristen walks out into the living room.

KRISTEN

James?

She sees him and walks in, grabbing the second bottle of champagne.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

She sits down next to him unwrapping the foil from the top of the bottle.

KRISTEN

It's nice.

JAMES

Do you want to make a toast?

KRISTEN

No.

The cork pops over the table. The excess pouring onto the dress she has put back on.

JAMES

I put your clothes in there. In the dresser by the door.

KRISTEN

I wanted to wear this. I only get to wear it tonight. It makes me feel pretty.

JAMES

You are pretty.

She pulls her still damp hair up. Holding it with a rubber band from around her wrist.

James stares down at the ice cream. The light from the candles dances across his face.

She takes a long drink from the bottle and sits it down.

KRISTEN

You didn't do anything. You didn't do anything wrong.

JAMES

It doesn't feel like that.

KRISTEN

I don't know what you want me to say.

JAMES

What do we do now? Where do we go from here?

KRISTEN

I don't know.

JAMES

You should.

KRISTEN

Why?

Kristen scans the room tapping the cigarettes she holds in her hand against her knee. James takes a bite of ice cream as his eyes watch the pack move up and down on her skin.

JAMES

You can smoke if you want.

KRISTEN

Your dad won't get mad?

JAMES

I don't care. He won't after this.

She lights one and James gets up and grabs a saucer from the kitchen. He slides it over to her side of the table.

KRISTEN

I love you, okay?

He starts to speak, but catches himself.

They both take a second. James puts the spoon on the table.

He pushes the ring over to her.

KRISTEN (cont'd)

I don't want it.

JAMES

You should take it. I can't keep it. I can't take it back.

KRISTEN

Yes you can...

JAMES

...no, I can't.

KRISTEN

Oh...

The rings sits on the table between them.

KRISTEN (cont'd)

I didn't want this. That's all I'm saying. I was happy two hours ago.

James closes the lid of the ice cream, leaving it on the table. He picks up the ring again. For a moment, they just watch each other. James stares at her wavering eyes.

He opens the case and looks down at the ring. Then, he puts it back on the table and stands up. Kristen reaches out and grabs his hands as he walks past her towards the record player. She lets his hands slip through hers as he moves away from her.

JAMES

Jesus.

KRISTEN

I'm sorry.

JAMES

This is so embarrassing.

KRISTEN

I'm sorry!

INT. PARLOR - NIGHT

He slides his rented shoes across the dusty floor and stares at the candle clumsily placed on the record player earlier today.

JAMES

I honestly was gonna ask before
your mom died. That's funny
somehow.

He flips through the records he had laid out from the large collection.

After a few seconds, he puts on his selection and from the speakers comes a song they both obliviously know.

Kristen gets up and both of them stand close to each other. His hand slowly comes around behind her, starting on her ass, and moving up her back. They seem awkward at first.

The tension between them still hangs in the air, but gradually it begins to fade.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

The song does not seem right to dance to. It is too slow, a folk country song, but as her small arms wrap around his neck they begin to move slowly in a circle.

It is dark where they stand, between the rooms. Her bare feet rest slightly on top of his shiny rented shoes.

Eventually, they move in place, rocking back and forth without turning.

James and Kristen stop dancing all together and instead just hug as the song comes to a stop. For a few seconds, the only sound comes from the rustling of their clothes; his hands sliding down her dress, her small hands coming up his back, then squeezing his neck.

Another slow song follows and without any effort at all, James pulls Kristen up on his hips and slides her onto the table. Her dress rises up over her thighs as she unbuckles his pants.

They have not kissed. His face is buried inside her neck. Then, they both pause for a brief second before she moans lightly and one of her legs dangles to the side.

He leans her back further against the table. One of the unused place settings slides over against the candle.

Outside, the wind chimes rattle softly against each other.

INT. DINING ROOM - LATER

A loud knock on the front door echoes through the house.

The sound snaps the couple out of their trance and James breaks their embrace. He quickly buttons his pants as Kristen pushes herself off the table, pulling her dress down over her thighs. James tosses her underwear behind the couch.

They both take a second to calm their rapid breathing. James pulls his shirt all the way out and straightens his jacket while Kristen uncomfortably searches for somewhere to look.

James laughs to himself to break the tension that hangs between them.

JAMES
Who is that?

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

He walks into the light of the living room and Kristen follows him.

JAMES
It's like three in the morning.

KRISTEN
I don't know. Be careful.

INT. ENTRY WAY - NIGHT

James opens the door and a YOUNG WOMAN stands, shivering. She is in her 20's but in the right light, she could be 15. He looks up and down the street and sees nothing but darkness. He rubs his arms for warmth and looks her up and down.

JAMES
It's cold.

YOUNG WOMAN
Hi.

JAMES
Hey.

YOUNG WOMAN
Is Tamara here?

He looks at her, puzzled. Her face moves in and out of the darkness.

JAMES
No, no. Wrong house.

YOUNG WOMAN
Are you sure?

JAMES
Yeah. I'm sorry.

She shifts her attention to Kristen briefly.

YOUNG WOMAN
You look pretty.

KRISTEN
Yeah?

Kristen laughs uncomfortably.

KRISTEN (cont'd)
Sorry, thank you.

JAMES
Are you lost?

YOUNG WOMAN

No, I'm okay. See ya later.

She turns and walks out onto the grass towards the road, away from the glow of the porch and the street lights that still shine.

For a moment, James and Kristen stand staring after her into the darkness.

KRISTEN

That was weird.

JAMES

People get lost out here. Should I go get her?

KRISTEN

She said she was fine. She didn't seem scared or worried or anything.

JAMES

Where'd she go?

The street is empty.

KRISTEN

I can still hear her steps on the road. Listen. She's fine.

James shuts the door slowly, still looking out towards the road.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The moment is lost from before and as they return to the living room, both seem confused as to what to do now. Kristen gradually moves back to the dining room to grab her cigarettes.

She looks down at the empty pack sitting on the table.

KRISTEN

I'm out of cigarettes.

James walks in behind her. He stares at the records.

JAMES

I'll go get some more.

KRISTEN

That's not what I meant. You don't have to.

JAMES

I know, but I need to get out of here.

KRISTEN

It's okay. I'll just go to sleep.

JAMES

No you won't.

KRISTEN

I'll try.

JAMES

It's okay. I really need to drive for a while. Are you gonna be alright here?

KRISTEN

Yeah...Yeah it's fine. Thank you.

He grabs his keys off the table, but pauses for moment.

JAMES

Let me light you a fire.

He pulls some dusty wood from a stand near the couch. It takes a second, the fireplace door jams and he pulls it open roughly.

JAMES (cont'd)

I was thinking, when you were taking a bath. I want you to take the car back tomorrow. This is awkward enough as it is.

Kristen nods her head, watching him work.

JAMES (cont'd)

A road trip might kill us both. I'll fly back. We're not gonna decide anything on I-35, you know?

KRISTEN

Are you sure?

JAMES

Yeah.

They both watch as the fire builds, eventually grabbing hold of the old wood.

JAMES (cont'd)
I'll be back. If you want we can
talk more...or not.

He walks towards the front door as the wood cracks in the heat. He does not look back at her as he speaks.

JAMES (cont'd)
I love you. Okay?

KRISTEN
I love you, too.

JAMES
I'm really sorry.

He leans against the door frame to the hallway, his keys rattling in his hand.

KRISTEN
Did you talk to Mike?

JAMES
No. You know he's gonna be pissed
at you. He hates this kinda shit.

He motions to the room, scooping up a pile of rose petals near the door. Then, he leaves her.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

She pauses at the foot of the table, opening the small black box and pulling out the ring. It is nice but nothing extravagant.

She slides it on her finger but it does not fit. She laughs to herself. She picks up one of the cloth napkins from the table and blows her nose.

Then, she tries to pull the undersized ring off, but reconsiders and pushes and twists until finally, the band slips on.

INT. PARLOR - NIGHT

Kristen moves over to the record player. She scans through the albums James had picked out and then to the others, finding a different selection.

She places it on the turntable and drops the needle. After a few seconds, a voice comes from the speakers and she heads into the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

She stumbles a little from the champagne then steadies herself on the counter. Her hands dig into the sink, fishing through the ice that James had grabbed earlier from the car until she finds a beer.

She twists open the bottle and leans against the counter, absently tossing away the cap.

A knock comes again from the front door. She pauses, listening past the record. Two more knocks, then a third.

She puts down her beer and walks towards the entry way.

INT. ENTRY WAY - NIGHT

She stands in front of the wooden door, listening outside. Her hand squeezes the door knob, but she does not open it. Wind squeaks through the cracks, at times making it hard to hear the voice coming through.

Another knock, this one lighter than the others.

KRISTEN

Hello?

WOMAN

Is Tamara here?

KRISTEN

What?

WOMAN

Is Tamara here?

KRISTEN

You already came by here.

WOMAN

Are you sure?

KRISTEN

Yes. Are you're okay?

Silence.

KRISTEN (cont'd)

Hello?

Nothing.

KRISTEN (cont'd)

Are you still out there? Are you
lost?

She presses her ear against the wood. She can barely make out light footsteps as they walk away from the porch, moving from the concrete onto the grass.

She waits until they are completely gone and turns to walk back into the living room.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The record plays from the parlor and she seems caught between the sound inside the house and the silence outside of it. She wanders quietly between the spaces within the house.

A sound comes from the backyard that seems like a piece of patio furniture moving against the concrete.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Kristen pauses before taking a pull from her beer, holding it just beneath her lips. She does not react strongly, her shoulders tighten, but it is barely noticeable. After a few seconds, Kristen's face relaxes and she takes a sip of beer.

She walks over to her bags in the living room and digs through all of them, searching.

With a momentary smile, she finds what she is looking for, a cigarette pack with one remaining. She walks back over to the dining room table and uses one of James' matches.

There is a break between songs and she can hear the wind chimes outside the back window blowing in the breeze.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

She moves over to the couch and sits down, blowing a cloud of smoke into the air.

She takes another drag and watches the smoke pour over her face before realizing that there is way too much in the room for one cigarette. The vent is closed on the fireplace.

Kristen tries to open the vent, but it is jammed. It is hard for her to grab leverage in her dress as she has to climb up on the firewood in her bare feet to get high enough to drop the handle.

Just as she succeeds, the smoke alarm in the entry hall goes off, producing an ear splitting ring that almost causes her to fall.

She races to find a chair to reach the buzzing bomb on the ceiling. Her fingertips are just barely able to hit the button, but the sound continues. Finally, she pulls it off the wall and removes the battery.

As she steps off the chair, again, she hears a knock from the door. She turns and scans the room behind her, her eyes fall on the back door.

Again she hears a knock.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Kristen sits down on the chair in front of the entry way, listening. She can hear a hand sliding up and down the wooden door.

She rests on the chair, her knees rocking the four legs back and forth on the hard wood floors. After a couple more knocks on the door, it stops, and then nothing.

The record is finished.

The only sound comes from her rocking back and forth as the hardwood floors creak beneath her.

Outside, the wind chimes tap against each other near the windows.

Kristen stands up and digs through her bags by the door, eventually finding her cell phone. She pushes the power button and it immediately beeps and shuts back off again.

KRISTEN

Fuck.

She pushes the power button again; a beep, then it turns itself off.

After trying unsuccessfully to get it to work she unzips her bags and dumps most of their contents onto the ground below her. She digs through the folded skirts, her bras and underwear until she finds it. Her cell phone charger. Slamming it into the outlet on the wall near the fireplace Kristen frantically plugs in her phone, then moves for the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

She picks up the receiver off the old rotary phone on the counter before realizing that it is more a prop than anything else. There is no cord connecting it to the wall. The wall jack is taped over.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Kristen walks back into the living room, past the dead smoke alarm lying on the floor next to the wooden chair and goes into the bedroom. She stops and stares at the dark doorway.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Under a pile of rose petals on the night stand, she finds a cordless phone.

She picks it up and gets a dial tone. She gets up on the bed to reach the windows above it. She pulls back the curtains slightly with one hand, as the other dials the phone quickly.

She calls James as she studies the front yard.

KRISTEN

Where are you?

She climbs down from the bed and heads out of the room, peeking down the hall. All is quiet.

KRISTEN (cont'd)

It's nothing. It's just weird.
That girl came back. Tamara?

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

She walks into the hallway on the tips of her toes, each step slower than the last. The warm light from the living room wraps around her as her eyes dart back and forth scanning the space.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

The candles still glow, casting shadows on the empty walls.

She digs through the ashtray as she listens. She wipes away the ashes from her hands on her dress before salvaging a few drags left on one of her cigarettes.

KRISTEN

She just kept knocking. I heard her voice. No, I didn't open the door. 'Cause I didn't want to.

Outside, the wind chimes strike softly together in the breeze. As she listens to the other line she stares at the windows.

KRISTEN (cont'd)

How much longer till you get back?
No, I'm fine. It's just weird.
I'm charging it right now. Okay.
Just come back soon. Okay. Bye.
James...?

She sets the phone down on the table. The house is still. Kristen's breath is the loudest thing in the room.

The candles flicker on the table as she stands in silence.

INT. ENTRY WAY - NIGHT

By the entry way, the chair sits with the alarm on top of it.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Kristen walks back into the kitchen and grabs another beer.

For more than a minute, she stands with her back to the window, leaning against the counter and nursing her beer. She slides her bare feet back and forth across the tile floor as she drinks.

INT. ENTRY WAY - NIGHT

Across the room, near the front door and the chair, a MAN watches her. He is tall and slender. He wears a grey suit and a mask. It is a smiley face, like the buttons from the seventies, but the mask is white and the smile is a bit out of place.

He watches her drink but she never turns his way. His mask seems to flow in and out of the light of the room as he rocks back and forth. The pale white plastic seems to glow in the warmth of the lamps and fire and then just as quickly fades to gray then black.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Kristen is oblivious to his presence. Then, he is gone out the front door. It closes with a loud thud breaking Kristen of her trance.

KRISTEN

James?

There is only silence. She looks around the kitchen. Quietly, she begins opening drawers one by one until she finds the utensils. She pulls out a butcher knife half the size of her frail arm and turns around to face the empty room.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Kristen walks over to the candlelit table and picks up the phone. Lifting it to her ear, we hear the familiar beep of the cordless and then nothing. She laughs to herself and again the beep sounds.

KRISTEN

Hello?

She dials the numbers.

KRISTEN (cont'd)

Hello? Hello?

Nothing.

She quietly sets the phone down near her ashtray and the remainder of James' melting ice cream.

Again, she hears a knocking on the door. Her head whips in the direction of the noise. She picks up the phone and tries it again. It is dead.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Kristen walks to the living room and this time, as she passes the chair, she looks down at the alarm resting in the middle of the seat.

The knock on the door does not register on her face. For a few seconds, she just stares at the piece of plastic that she took from the ceiling and placed on the floor.

Without looking up, she moves towards the wall where only minutes ago she had plugged in her phone. The outlet is empty. The phone is gone.

Kristen backs away from the wall, then dives towards it, feeling for the phone behind her bag and in the scattered clothes that lay on top of it.

KRISTEN

This isn't happening.

Out of the pile she pulls out a pair of running shoes. She moves over by the fire and starts to untie the laces, but she keeps her eyes locked on the chair and beyond it to the door.

Silence.

Outside, she can hear the wind chimes softly bump together against the wind. The fireplace crackles behind her back.

Two knocks on the door. The cordless phone slips off the couch and, with a loud bang, hits the floor. Kristen's eyes dart back and forth between the phone and the door in front of her. She whispers to herself.

KRISTEN (cont'd)

Oh my god.

She grips the knife in her hand. The blade shines in the light from the fire. Her feet remain bare.

The wind chimes strike again, but this time they are much louder; a crash of metal rods slamming together and then silence. Then, gradually they begin to clang together again.

Kristen's eyes wander throughout the house behind her and into the dining room. Eventually, they rest on the curtains over the window to the wind chimes.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Slowly, she gets up, leaving the phone and her shoes on the ground and walks over to the waving light of the candles. She holds the knife at her side and stares directly ahead past the table, at the curtains.

She walks on her tip toes past the ice cream and the ring case and with her free hand, begins to feel around the wall behind the curtain until she flips on the porch light.

She very slightly jumps when she hears the sound of a chair bumped across the concrete, and then silence. She timidly peeks through the crack where the two sides of the curtain meet. The knife shakes at her side.

Kristen looks back over her shoulder at the entry way, but there is no knocking. Her hand slides up and down the edge of the curtain. The wind chimes are only a couple of feet away.

She leans back, throwing the curtain all the way open. Then, she sees him.

It is brighter outside than in the room, and for a moment, the glare is confusing to her, but the outline of his mask is clear. She can see the smile. The man stands still, his only movement a slight rocking on the balls of his feet as he stares back into the window.

Then, he touches the glass.

Kristen screams, her cry full of dread and fear. She runs towards the front door. As she passes the record player it slams to life, catching on the song from before. The same phrase begins repeating over and over in the quiet room.

She races down the hallway to the entry way towards the front door, and the music, the skipping voice, seems to follow her.

INT. DOORWAY - NIGHT

Kristen opens the large wooden door, but before she walks out, she stops and looks into the blackness of the surrounding area. It is eerily calm outside. James is still not home. The empty street is completely deserted.

She is confused. She hides behind the door, looking over her shoulder, back towards the living room, and then forward again to the outside.

She hears a slight movement from the yard but when she looks out she sees nothing.

She thrusts the door forward but then pushes it open again as she tries to get away from the voice of the record player behind her. She stares out into the darkness, her eyes trying to see into the night.

KRISTEN

Hello?

Nothing.

WOMAN (O.S.)

Shut the door!

This time, Kristen slams it closed and hears the champagne bottle James had left earlier burst against the wood. Again, she is surrounded by the skipping record, still blaring from the other room.

She twists the door handle until it won't turn any farther. The door creaks open and she peeks outside again.

She can see the legs of the girl from before. Her eyes raise higher and higher to where her face would be. There is just a crack, a small space to see outside and for a second Kristen can't see anything at all.

Then she sees the white plastic. The red painted lips. Kristen slams the door when she comes to the doll like eyes. The face seems familiar, like a cartoon. Strawberry Shortcake.

She falls to the ground, pushing against the door with all her might as the rug she is using for leverage slips away on the tile floor.

She slides up against the side wall and moves towards the living room, knocking over the chair and the fire alarm.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

She runs towards the living room, then to the parlor stopping in front of the record player, knocking the needle off the record. The house grows quiet.

She runs to the window, swinging the knife around towards the empty room, the windows, and the door. She waits.

Suddenly, there is a knock on the door and Kristen screams.

Without thinking, she breaks for the back hallway and the bedrooms.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

She runs into the room and collapses near the night stand, trying to force herself under the bed. She turns back, searching the hallway behind her for movement. Then she pushes her body against the bed.

James' candles fall on top of her from the night stand.

Outside, she hears screaming, it sounds like someone is being murdered outside the window, and then it is silent.

WOMEN (O.S.)

Pretty Girl...Pretty Girl....Pretty Girl.

Fingers begin tapping on the window. Fingernails scrape across the glass.

Kristen cannot squeeze under the bed and as she tries, her dress tears down the side.

WOMAN (O.S.)

Ssh, Ssh.

The glass stops vibrating.

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

We know where you are.

Kristen reaches up and pulls the lamp down from the table. It sits at her feet as she tries to turn off the light but there is no switch. She cuts into the shade needlessly with the knife until finally she reaches in and breaks the bulb with her hand. The room grows dark except for the light from the hallway.

Outside the window, she can hear the voices whispering and then silence.

There are knocks on the front door, once, then again. Then there is banging over and over, while Kristen starts moaning to herself, pushing the knife out in front of her body.

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

Who is it?

Kristen stares at the window, then towards the knocking. Then it stops.

She sits on the floor, her hands bleeding as she squeezes the knife unconsciously. She stares at the hallway and begins crawling towards it, the sound of crunching glass beneath her knees.

She hears a door open from the living room and freezes. She holds her breath as she listens to the movement in the other room. Her eyes are wide and she grips the knife even tighter. Her knuckles go white as her hand shakes sporadically.

The record player turns on again. This time there is no skip. Kristen inches forward shooting glances at the window and the hallway.

The glass crackles under her legs.

JAMES

Kristen!

KRISTEN

Jimmy! Jimmy! Come here!

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

She calls out in a scream whisper. Too afraid to commit one way or the other. She pulls her legs over the old wood into the hallway as more and more of the living room comes into view.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

James comes out holding the broken top of the champagne bottle and a plastic sack from the store. He sees Kristen on the ground and the bottle falls from his hands. The back door swings open through the curtain. The noise causes him to turn and look.

He focuses back on Kristen, confused by her appearance.

JAMES

What are you...

KRISTEN

... There is someone out there.

JAMES

What are you talking ab...

Kristen crawls over to him, grabbing desperately onto his jacket. He sees the blood on her hands and on the floor and suddenly, his eyes are as wide as hers.

KRISTEN

...Shut up! Shut up! Come on.

She pulls him toward the bedroom, trying to get him to follow her. He turns and goes with her, taking the knife from her bleeding hand. She sees the back door open and screams.

JAMES

Baby.

KRISTEN

They're in here!

JAMES

Kristen.

James has to pick her up, unsure as to what direction she now wants to go.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

They rush into the bedroom and James sits her on the bed. He picks up the lamp and sets it on the table.

JAMES

What happened?

KRISTEN

I don't know. The girl. She wouldn't stop knocking. There's somebody out there. I don't know what happened.

He leans down to her, wiping away the blood from her dress. She pushes past him and slams the door. She tries to lock it, and then grabs a chair and attempts to lodge it in the handle. The chair is too small.

KRISTEN (cont'd)

They might be in the house. Help me.

JAMES

It's okay. Stop. Stop! How do you know there's somebody out there?

KRISTEN

I saw them!

James stands up and walks towards the window. He looks outside the curtains but sees nothing.

JAMES

It's probably kids. You saw that girl. She couldn't have been more than 15.

KRISTEN

It was a man. I saw a man. At the window.

JAMES

You saw him?

KRISTEN

He was wearing a mask.

JAMES

Wait...

Kristen freezes, James' body tightens.

KRISTEN

What is it?!

JAMES

Be quiet. I see one. A girl. She's out there by the fence. You can see her outline. Look.

Outside, at the far end of the yard, a girl stands next to the fence. It is too dark outside to see her face.

Kristen rises from the bed and stands next to James at the window.

JAMES (cont'd)

What is she doing?

KRISTEN

She's watching us.

Kristen walks away. She lays back on the bed. James stays at the window, staring out.

JAMES

She's just standing there. She knows I can see her.

KRISTEN

James. You can't see the mask. She's wearing a goddamn mask.

JAMES

She looks like a ghost.

KRISTEN

Don't be stupid. This is real. I'm not scared of fucking ghosts.

JAMES

Maybe I should go and talk with them?

KRISTEN

They don't want to talk.

JAMES

Jesus, calm down. They want something.

James reaches inside his pocket. Something is missing.

KRISTEN

What is it?

JAMES

I left my phone in the car.

KRISTEN

Oh god.

JAMES

Calm down. You see what you're doing? Stop. I didn't know. I'm gonna go out there and get it.

KRISTEN

No.

JAMES

Come on. This is fucking crazy.

He walks to the window.

KRISTEN
Where's she at?

He scans back and forth, searching everywhere in his sight line.

KRISTEN (cont'd)
Where is she at?

JAMES
She's gone.

INT. ENTRY WAY - NIGHT

Kristen follows him but only to the foot of the door.

JAMES
Stay here.

She nods.

KRISTEN
Gimmie the knife back.

He goes to hand it to her, but stops.

JAMES
In a second.

EXT. PORCH - NIGHT

The front door creaks, sticking slightly on its hinges before James pulls it open. For a second, he pauses, looking around the empty yard.

Outside it is quiet, but a slow rumble fills the air.

James slowly walks out onto the porch and then pulls the door closed behind him. Kristen's face grows smaller and smaller behind the crack until it is gone.

He can hear the door lock behind him.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

James' feet splash gently in the puddle left from the champagne bottle and they leave a trail behind him as he walks onto the grass in front of the house.

His car sits a few feet away. The windows are broken out and the tires are slashed, but the engine purrs. The car is running.

James' keys jangle loosely beside him, his ignition key still in his hand.

JAMES
What?(Whispers)

James takes a few steps further out into the yard. He circles in the grass, checking all around him. The knife is extended out in his hand as he points it in all directions at once.

He walks closer to the car. The engine grows louder as he inches towards it. The headlights shine out onto the wooden fence beside the house.

It is hard to see inside. James crouches to his knees as he approaches, staring inside what is left of the side windows. The car is empty.

He reaches inside the broken window, feeling around for the ignition. The car is hot wired.

He hears laughter from the darkness.

WOMAN (O.S.)
Is Tamara home?

The woman calls out from the street. She is standing under a street light, 50 feet away. James turns to her cautiously. He can barely see her in the light. Her face is covered by her hair.

JAMES
What do you want?

WOMAN
Is Tamara home?

James takes a step closer. She laughs.

JAMES
Get the fuck away from here.

In the darkness he can hear laughter again. It is another woman's voice, somewhere behind him. James searches around, trying to find the source of the sound.

He turns back to where the woman stood, but she is gone. He can hear footsteps in the grass around him, and then it is silent.

The car hums.

INT. PORCH - NIGHT

Kristen peeks her head out the door. She sees James.

KRISTEN

James?

JAMES

Go back inside.

KRISTEN

Oh my god, James what happened?

JAMES

Go back inside!

WOMAN (O.S.)

Go back inside.

Kristen screams. James opens the car door and feels around the seats.

JAMES

Kristen, go. I'm gonna find my phone.

She reluctantly closes the door. James stares at the porch.

WOMAN (O.S.)

Go back inside.

He climbs inside the car. The glass cracks underneath the seats from the broken windshield. He searches for his phone, his hands pull back every few seconds when he gets cut by a piece of glass. He stares out in front of the car to the brightly lit fence in front of him. The net from the basketball goal is swinging in the wind.

He puts the car in gear and it begins to creak along the pavement. The car rocks back and forth over the loose rubber of the flat tires, but it does not move.

James struggles to put the car back in park. He searches again under the seats for his phone. Outside the car he can hear movement on the pavement.

James panics. He swings the knife out the window as his head ducks down by the gear shift.

He yells out to the house. There is no response.

JAMES

Kristen!

Only the sound of the engine.

He steps out of the car and leans down, honking the horn.

WOMAN (O.S.)

Go back inside!

He turns around but no one is there.

He honks again, but keeps his eyes focused on the shadows, scanning the empty yard. He looks back to the street where the girl had been standing.

James honks the horn one last time. Turning his attention back to the road, he walks towards the street light.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

The gravel under his feet crackles as he makes his way towards the pool of light.

He turns back to the porch every few steps to see if anyone has come close to the door. Then, he shoots a glance towards the car.

Finally, he reaches the street light.

JAMES

Let me see you!

Nothing. James holds the knife up in the air like a trophy.

JAMES (cont'd)

What do you want?

The car idles.

James looks down the long road towards the highway. It is at least a mile.

James walks across the yard towards the front porch. This time the door is unlocked.

INT. ENTRY WAY - NIGHT

Inside, the room is full of music. James is on edge as he walks towards the living room, the knife extended out in front of him.

JAMES

Kristen!

INT. PARLOR - NIGHT

Kristen sits next to the record player, her knees pulled up to her chest.

KRISTEN

James.

JAMES

What are you doing?

KRISTEN

I wanted to hear music. Baby, I'm so scared.

James drops the knife to his side, relaxing.

JAMES

I want you to get your things. Put your shoes on.

Kristen lowers her eyes. She stares out to the dining room. It is quiet. The candles flicker.

KRISTEN

They cut the phone lines.

JAMES

What? But, you called me?

KRISTEN

They cut the phones after.

JAMES

Why didn't you tell me?

KRISTEN

It just happened. All of it.

JAMES

Where's your phone.

KRISTEN
They took it.

JAMES
Are you fucking kidding me?

He reaches over her ripping the needle off the record.

JAMES (cont'd)
We have to get out of here!

KRISTEN
We can't go.

JAMES
The car works.

Outside, the horn honks and the couple both freeze, staring towards the wall.

KRISTEN
That's what they want. Do you hear that? They're waiting.

JAMES
I don't give a good goddamn what they want.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

James walks over and checks the back door behind him. His hands are shaking. He stares down to them while his back is turned to Kristen.

JAMES
Let's just go.

She nods her head.

EXT. PORCH - NIGHT

The door opens and in an instant the honking stops. James and Kristen run out towards the car, James swinging the knife in all directions in the darkness.

Silence.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

James reaches the driver's side and Kristen the passenger.

He throws the car in reverse and instantly the car lunges backwards, slowly moving towards the road. Kristen searches in each direction, looking for signs of the strangers. The metal rims squeal on the concrete driveway.

Then, she sees the headlights on the road.

KRISTEN

James. Look.

An old pickup truck speeds towards them as James continues to try and force the car backwards.

KRISTEN (cont'd)

James. Honk the horn, get their attention.

He sounds out the horn into the night again as the truck gets closer and closer to the house.

It slows to a stop in front of the driveway, then turns towards them.

The back windshield, still unbroken, suddenly fills with light and James throws the car in park.

JAMES

Fucking thank God.

He opens his door, but then Kristen sees it. She grips James shoulder and he turns and sees the Man in the Mask standing in the headlights a few feet in front of them.

The car is suddenly dark and when Kristen turns around, she can see the driver. She can see another mask.

KRISTEN

Get out of the car.

JAMES

What?

James reacts just as the pickup truck slams into their rear. The car is thrust forward, back to its original spot and Kristen and James throw open their doors and run towards the house.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Neither the Man in the Mask, nor the driver react. But as James enters the house he can hear the horn of the blue sedan ring out in the night.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Kristen collapses on the ground near their luggage. James falls against the wall. Neither speak, they are out of breath.

Kristen slides to the plastic bag James brought from the store. She pulls a cigarette from the bag and gets up, moving back into the dining room, to light it off the candle. Her hands are shaking, blood drips on the table cloth, but she does not notice.

INT. DINNING ROOM - NIGHT

James abruptly pulls a napkin from one of the place settings and the silverware slams against the plates he had laid out. He grabs her hand softly and wipes away the blood before wrapping the napkin around her wound.

KRISTEN

She wouldn't stop knocking! I should have left, I could have warned you.

JAMES

Ssh. This not your fault. Don't think about it.

For the next few minutes, there is no action, and for a while, there are no screams, but outside the car keeps honking. Then, it is silent.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

James walks over to the kitchen, bringing back a jug of water from the refrigerator. He pours a glass for Kristen, but he drinks from the gallon himself.

JAMES

Before, I saw one of them...near the highway. When I was going to get cigarettes, I saw one.

JAMES(cont'd)
Not the girl on the porch. She was under one of the street lights as I passed her. It wasn't the first girl. She was taller. She had a Halloween mask on. Something like a Pin Up girl.

KRISTEN
That was the one driving the truck.

JAMES
She was just on the road. I didn't even really see her, you know. She waved at me.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Kristen stares at the water in the glass as she thinks about what he has said. A thick haze of smoke rises above their heads.

KRISTEN
They're wearing masks.

They sit in silence, the situation sinking in.

JAMES
They're everywhere out there. I could hear them laughing.

James says this to himself more than to Kristen. They both sit staring at the walls of the house, listening.

KRISTEN
What do they want? Why are they doing this to us?

James looks out towards the windows. He does not hear her even though she is right in front of him.

KRISTEN (cont'd)
James? Jimmy?

JAMES
It doesn't matter.

KRISTEN
Yes it does.

He turns back to her. His eyes piercing her face.

JAMES

No it doesn't. Look at me. Not tonight. Look at me. Don't think about why, okay. They're bad. If they come through this door again, all I will be thinking about is how to get them the fuck out. They're not like you.

KRISTEN

That's not good enough. That's not a reason.

JAMES

You don't need a reason to be afraid. They won't give us a reason if they get inside.

James puts the bottle between his feet and stands up. At first, it seems like he is on a mission but then he trails off stopping a few feet from the entry way.

KRISTEN

What time is it?

James does not respond. He stares at the couch.

KRISTEN (cont'd)

What times is it? James?

He looks at the back door again.

He switches off the two lamps, then walks over to the parlor and the room goes dark.

KRISTEN (cont'd)

What?

JAMES

It's my phone.

KRISTEN

Where?

James walks over to the couch and picks it up. The battery is missing. He turns to Kristen.

JAMES

They were in here again.

KRISTEN

What are we going to do?

Kristen stands up, searching all around her. He does not answer her.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

They walk side by side down the hallway. Kristen softly tugs at James. He looks up at her.

JAMES
It's alright.

He squeezes her hand.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

They enter the room again. Moving along the sides of the wall, as far out of the light as possible. James flips off the ceiling light and they crouch down listening.

KRISTEN
We could climb out. Maybe the neighbors?

JAMES
No one's out here after the fall. The whole street is dead. Most people don't even come out here anymore.

Outside, they can hear the leaves crunching under the strangers' feet, but they do not speak. Then, just silence. James steals quick glances over the window ledge.

JAMES (cont'd)
I don't see them.

KRISTEN
Let's check the other rooms.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

James leads Kristen into the hall. He peeks into the living room. Nothing has changed.

Kristen opens the door to another bedroom and calls out to James in a whisper.

KRISTEN

I think I saw one. James they're watching us. They're out there.

JAMES

Close the door.

He kneels down in the hallway. She closes the door and leans down over him. He wraps his arm around her thigh.

KRISTEN

What is it?

JAMES

I haven't heard a dog bark. Or a car pass. They honked the horn for at least a couple of minutes. Nothing. Not since we've been here. It's just us and them.

She sits down close beside him. James does not let go of her leg.

They sit in silence listening to the quiet house.

JAMES (cont'd)

How's your hand?

She remembers her cuts and distractedly squeezes her homemade bandage.

KRISTEN

It hurts.

JAMES

We should get up.

KRISTEN

Okay.

Neither one of them moves.

KRISTEN (cont'd)

Wait. Just for a second. Just sit here. Please.

She puts her head on James' shoulder and closes her eyes. James rests his head back on the wall behind them, letting out a long, slow breath.

The wind picks up outside. It blows the wind chimes outside the windows.

After a little while, Kristen's breath grows deeper as she rests besides James. James stares forward listening to the house.

FLASHBACK:

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - LATE AFTERNOON

James walks back and forth between two rooms. His hands are full of fast-food bags and drinks. He stops himself from knocking on one of the doors. Unsure, he pauses, then presses his ear against the door. He backs away, surveying the two choices again.

Then, he knocks on both. Kristen opens the door.

JAMES

I couldn't remember which was ours.

KRISTEN

You're a retard.

She takes the drinks from him.

INT. HOTEL BATHROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

Kristen's painted toes twist on the bathroom mat as she goes to the bathroom. The sink fills with water beside her. She stares into the large mirror beside her. She looks beautiful.

Her high-heels rest on the ground in front of her.

INT. HOTEL - LATE AFTERNOON

James takes out the hamburgers and pours the french fries on top of the bags. The room is dark as the shades block out the bright sunlight from outside. Warm light mixes with the cool of the television.

James opens the closet and pulls out the rental bag for his tuxedo. He takes his shirt off and walks over to the bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

Kristen stands in front of the mirror touching up her makeup.

JAMES (O.S.)
Are you okay?

He calls through the door.

KRISTEN
Yeah. Just a second.

INT. HOTEL - LATE AFTERNOON

James walks over to the dresser, pulling open one of the drawers. He shoots a quick glance at the bathroom door again. His hands feel inside before Kristen can walk through the door. When she walks out, he is already on the bed.

KRISTEN
Were you waiting?

JAMES
Yeah.

KRISTEN
Thanks. You didn't have to.

They sit down in front of the TV on the edge of the bed. Kristen puts on a robe she brings from the closet.

INT. HOTEL - LATE AFTERNOON

They sit and watch television while they eat in silence.

INT. HOTEL - LATE AFTERNOON

James stands up and walks over to the window, peeking through a crack.

JAMES
Can I open them?

KRISTEN
Yeah.

JAMES
It's just that it is dark in here.

KRISTEN
It's okay. I don't care.

The room fills with bright, almost overwhelming, light. Kristen lays back on the bed. Reaching for her cigarettes. James changes clothes as they listen to the advertisements for PAY PER VIEW.

Kristen watches him as he stands in the mirror, slowly turning himself into a gentleman.

JAMES
Time to get up.

KRISTEN
I don't wanna.

She pouts like a little girl.

JAMES
We gotta.

KRISTEN
Fine.

She stands up next to him in front of the mirror and drops her robe.

JAMES
Good enough to eat.

Kristen walks away and James slaps her on the ass.

INT. HOTEL BATHROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

She does some last minute touch ups in the bathroom.

INT. HOTEL - LATE AFTERNOON

James makes his way to the dresser again.

He opens the drawer and pulls out a small ring case, shoving it in his pocket. Kristen walks in as he straightens the bed.

KRISTEN
Are you ready, Freddie?

JAMES
Yeah.

KRISTEN
Last chance to stay and get naked?

JAMES

Don't toy with me woman.

He turns off the TV, then switches it back on.

JAMES (cont'd)

I want to rent this sometime.

KRISTEN

Sure.

They both look at the mirror one last time. Then James turns and faces her. She straightens his tie.

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - LATE AFTERNOON

They walk down the empty hallway. Kristen grabs James' hand.

FLASHBACK ENDS:

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

James touches the side of Kristen's face but she remains still. His hand moves across her face, her lips, and eventually her breathing changes and she takes a deep gentle gasp. Her eyes flicker for a few seconds until she opens them.

JAMES

Baby.

Kristen nods, still out of it.

They both stare towards the ceiling. Neither one speaks nor looks in the others' direction.

Kristen reaches over and tugs at James' hand. He rolls his head over and they lock eyes. For a moment, they seem to communicate without words.

JAMES (cont'd)

Let's do it quick.

KRISTEN

I'm sorry.

JAMES

I have to go too.

They get up slowly, the weight of their bodies causing loud shifts on the hard wood floors. They crawl towards one of the open doorways.

Kristen enters first, James follows, the knife sliding on the ground in front of him.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Kristen does not bother to turn the light on as she approaches the toilet. James sits by the door, guarding it as Kristen finishes.

She kneels down by the sink. James does not rush her.

JAMES

I should have asked you a long time ago. It shouldn't have taken this long.

KRISTEN.

It doesn't matter.

JAMES

It matters to me. If I hadn't...I was scared. I liked your Mom.

KRISTEN

Why did you have to wait? I wanted...I needed you to ask me.

JAMES

You should have told me.

KRISTEN

James?

JAMES

I wish you would have told me.

He watches her bare feet slide across the tile. Her toe nails blood red against the smooth white ground.

Kristen stares up at the light on the ceiling. The faucet drips once, then again. A spider has made a web above them.

KRISTEN

I'm lying.

JAMES

What? What do you mean?

KRISTEN

James, I can't. I don't want to talk about this now.

James does not move. He does not say a word. The silence hangs above them. Eventually, Kristen speaks again.

KRISTEN (cont'd)

It was too late. Even then. I didn't think about it until now. I didn't think about it. But I know it was.

JAMES

What are you saying?

KRISTEN

That day when my mom...when she died. My dad called, remember. It was a Saturday. We were going to lunch. He called and I went into the bedroom and he told me. I remember falling to my knees and the way the weight felt against my bare skin. It burned. I was kneeling on the ground holding the phone in my right hand and looking at my knees.

Kristen's hand floats in the hair beside her face.

KRISTEN (cont'd)

But for a minute I didn't call for you.

She clears her throat. James is still.

KRISTEN (cont'd)

My dad was talking, telling me about a plane ticket. I can remember the sound of his voice, but not the words. You know? Just his voice. I just stared down at my knee. You came in after a few more seconds and when you put your arms around me it felt good. But I didn't need it the way I thought I would. I didn't call for you. The way I thought should.

James stares down the hallway. Then he locks eyes with Kristen.

JAMES

I don't know what to say.

KRISTEN

Neither do I.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

On the roof above them, they hear a footstep. At first, it almost sounds like thunder, but then as the second and third rattle the ceiling, the sound becomes clear to them both.

Kristen joins James in standing, as they both gape at the ceiling. Their eyes follow the footsteps as someone walks across the top of the house.

KRISTEN

How many are up there?

JAMES

It could be one. I don't know.
Maybe two.

A loud pounding begins to rumble on the roof. James ducks his head without thinking. It seems right above them.

JAMES (cont'd)

What do they want us to do?

KRISTEN

James, I don't want to wait for them to come through that door. I'm scared.

JAMES

It'll be bright outside soon.

KRISTEN

No, it won't. We have at least an hour. They know that.

JAMES

We could go for the car? Try and make it down the road. It might be our only chance.

KRISTEN

What if it's not?

JAMES

Then we're going to die in here.
Or there. Or maybe they'll go
away. Or maybe they won't. But
this way we have a chance to get
out.

Above them the footsteps rain down like a hail storm.

JAMES (cont'd)

We have to try. Can you run?

KRISTEN

I can make it.

JAMES

We just have to go. Whatever
happens, listen to me, just go.

She nods her head and they walk into the living room.

INT. ENTRY WAY - NIGHT

Then they move down the dark hall towards the door. James
cracks it open and looks outside. He can hear the engine
running but the car is out of view.

He closes the door softly and whispers to Kristen.

JAMES

I don't know if they're out there.

KRISTEN

We should try.

James' hand rests on the door handle. With a gentle nudge,
the door clicks closed.

KRISTEN (cont'd)

James?

JAMES

Yeah?

KRISTEN

They've stopped moving up there.

She looks towards the ceiling. The house is eerily quiet.

JAMES
I'm just gonna throw the door open.
Then, you run.

She stares at the ceiling. James turns the knob of the door.

JAMES (cont'd)
Kristen!

She snaps out of her trance and looks towards the door.

JAMES (cont'd)
Are you ready?

KRISTEN
No.

JAMES
We have to go.

KRISTEN
Give me a second. Just wait.

Her eyes wander around the house. She moves back towards the living room and searches the walls.

KRISTEN (cont'd)
They want us to come this way.
They know we'll try.

JAMES
Maybe we can make it.

She stares past him to the front door, almost looking past it.

KRISTEN
Does your father have a gun?

JAMES
No.

KRISTEN
He has to, he, he kills things.

She motions to the deer mounted on the wall in the living room.

JAMES
He bought those things. Those
heads. They came with the house.

KRISTEN

He has to.

She stares at the dead animals.

JAMES

Not since I was a boy.

KRISTEN

Where'd he keep it?

James walks past her into the living room.

JAMES

Fuck, maybe he does.

As James looks around at the walls, his tone changes.

JAMES (cont'd)

Holy shit, we could fucking
shoot'em.

KRISTEN

Think.

Again, footsteps pound above them and they both look up at the ceiling.

JAMES

Let's go to the bedroom. I think
he hid it in the bedroom.

They both move towards the back bedrooms. James picks the knife up from ground by the front door and casts a few glances over his shoulder as he follows Kristen out of the room.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

They move down the hall at a snail's pace, both now holding knives as they walk back into the darkness.

The steps on the roof resume, but have become more sporadic. They hit hard and fast, every few seconds, and then they are gone.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Broken glass cracks under the weight of James' rented shoes as he brushes away the shards so that Kristen can walk inside.

James opens the folding doors of the closet. Kristen stops him with her hand, motioning around the room.

KRISTEN

Listen. They're talking about us.
I bet they can see us through the
windows.

INT. CLOSET - NIGHT

He tugs at the cord inside the walk-in closet and the hanging bulb comes to life.

James digs through the clothes, pushing back boxes until he finds what he is searching for. He pulls the gun out from behind the clothes and shows it to Kristen like a prize.

JAMES

It's still here. He was gonna sell
it.

Kristen nods, moving over to the door of the room and looking down the hall.

James goes back to digging in the bottom of the closet, carelessly knocking things over.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

It is silent inside the house. Kristen looks down the hallway at the overturned chair lying on the ground. The fire alarm still resting beside it.

A loud slam rocks the ceiling and she almost lets out a scream, but she catches herself, covering her mouth with her hand. She runs back inside the room and finds James on his knees looking through shoe boxes.

INT. CLOSET - NIGHT

JAMES

What was it?

KRISTEN

Nothing. What are you doing?

JAMES

He used to hide the bullets. We always had to find them.

Finally, a pink box made for women's shoes rattles in James' hand.

He drops the top and pulls out a pile of remaining shells. He slides the gun into his lap and tries to load it, but he cannot open the barrel.

KRISTEN

What is it?

JAMES

I've never used this. I haven't even seen a gun in 5 years.

There is no sound from the roof above. James sits on his knees holding the shotgun in his lap. Kristen stands behind him. Her hand resting on his shoulder.

JAMES (cont'd)

I don't know how to use this.

KRISTEN

You said you used to hunt, with your dad.

JAMES

I didn't. It was just something I said. My dad hated hunting...killing things. I mean, I knew my way around when I used to go camping.

He squeezes the handle in his hands.

JAMES (cont'd)

My friends in college... It was just something I said. I just said I could, when we would talk.

KRISTEN

At least we have it.

JAMES

If I fire a shot, maybe they'll just go away.

James stands up, but his legs seem weak at first until he leans on the wall.

KRISTEN

James?

JAMES

It's a gun.

KRISTEN

What?

JAMES

It's a gun.

KRISTEN

James.

JAMES

Nothing. Nothing. I'm just tired.

They walk out, moving towards the living room, the shells still in James' hand.

INT. ENTRY WAY - NIGHT

He kneels in front of the living room trying to open the gun.

KRISTEN

We have to go.

JAMES

I know! Gimmie a second. Wait.

The first strike against the door sounds like little more than a knock.

James and Kristen slam against the wall. Staring at the door.

The second blow sends a small piece of wood the size of a roll of quarters past them onto the hard wood floor where it rattles against the couch.

With the third crash, James grabs Kristen by the shoulder, and moves her away from the entry way and the front door.

INT. ENTRY WAY - NIGHT

The door shakes again and again as an axe begins to slice through it. James can see the smiley face in the front porch light as the Man in the Mask winds over and over and strikes the front door.

He pauses, staring at James and Kristen, the mask filling the hole. They can hear him breathing through the door.

JAMES

We have to find something. We have to block the door.

KRISTEN

Get away from here! Go away!

JAMES

Kristen!

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

He tosses the gun on the ground and Kristen joins him at the piano as he begins pushing it towards the entry way.

JAMES

Push as hard as you can.

A side table near their bags gets knocked over and James picks it up in one motion and tosses it over the couch. It crashes down through the glass table, but neither one seems to notice.

JAMES (cont'd)

Keep going!

The piano scrapes against the wall as the ax slices into the front door.

JAMES (cont'd)

We have to get block it!

INT. ENTRY WAY - NIGHT

The thick door is torn to shreds by the time they get there. James slams the end of the piano against what is left as the Man in the Mask reaches for the lock.

KRISTEN

James!

The blade pushes through the door into the piano letting out a loud rumble that vibrates throughout the large instrument. James continues to push as the piano slides back and forth between the men. Finally, it stops moving.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

James returns to the living room, almost knocking Kristen down as he grabs an arm chair and throws it towards the entry way hall.

Again, the piano moans, but this time no sound follows. Kristen watches the hole in the front door, searching for the ghostly smile. James continues to grab random objects, tossing them past her towards the door.

He picks up the gun and slaps it like a child, trying to get it to work. Kristen moves in close beside him but he does not notice her. He is in a trance like state, his eyes never leaving the door.

She pulls the gun out of his hands and searches for a switch, anything that might make the gun accessible.

Finally, with the flip of a knob, the barrel opens and Kristen clumsily shoves two of the shells into the weapon, James turns to her and pulls the gun back into his own hands. He is shaking and Kristen retreats, shocked at his behavior.

KRISTEN

God? What are you doing!?

He sticks the remaining shells in his pocket and turns towards the door, tossing one last book towards the doorway.

KRISTEN (cont'd)

He's gone. James he's gone.

JAMES

No he's not.

KRISTEN

Stop it.

He fires a shot at the hole. Both he and Kristen stumble back from the force of the blast.

KRISTEN (cont'd)

Stop it!

She fights him momentarily as he tries to throw their bags down the hall. James hits both knees, gasping for air. Kristen falls back against the wall staring at the hole in the door. The gun tumbles out of his hand onto the ground.

James glances at the back door.

JAMES

This is real. This is real.

KRISTEN

Baby...

JAMES

Don't call me that!

For a second his attention comes back to her.

KRISTEN

I'm sorry.

James kicks the wall.

Then he grabs the gun and pushes her towards the back hallway.

KRISTEN (cont'd)

What are you doing?

JAMES

Fuck this.

He turns and yells towards the door.

JAMES (cont'd)

Fuck you!

INT. STUDY - NIGHT

James walks around in the dark and begins preparing. With a loud crash, he tosses a book shelf over and the ground is suddenly covered in books, broken picture frames and trophies.

Kristen climbs over the pile using James' arm as a guide and they both crouch down behind it. He slides the barrel of the gun back and forth along the shelf until finally resting it to aim directly at the door.

James has grown quiet. He seems distanced as he stares behind the barrel of the gun.

KRISTEN

Are you okay?

JAMES

I won't die here. We'll sit here till the fucking cops come, or whatever. But I won't fucking die.

A grandfather clock sits in the darkness, just beyond the light shining in from the hallway. The sound of ticking overshadows their nervous breathing as they wait for something to happen.

James opens the barrel, dropping in a shell and loading another one and closes it. He opens and closes it again, just double checking.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

At first, in the darkness, there are only footsteps and then a soft metallic clink.

Under a street light an OLD MAN walks in the early morning. He wears an old fishing cap deep on his brow, his pants hang just above his bright white tennis shoes.

He passes by mailboxes and streetlights and then nothing but the open fields between houses. He is half the distance to the house with blue Saturn. This part of the street is still quiet.

Every so often, there is the sound of the metal against the old ground. And footsteps.

In his hand, he carries a worn down putter. He uses it as a cane, but he does not need one. He is still strong. The metal bounces off the sidewalk every couple of feet or so as he walks, his pace quick and determined.

INT. STUDY - NIGHT

James lies on his stomach, his eyes focused on the doorway in front of him.

Kristen lies beside him staring at the wall in darkness. The only sound is the grandfather clock ticking in the corner.

KRISTEN

James?

He doesn't reply.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

The old man is about three houses down when he sees the battered four-door in the parking lot of the house. At first, it is too far to see clearly, but it has caught his attention.

When he gets to the same street light where the woman had stood, he can hear the car running. He stands under the light staring at the strange sight.

In the shadows next to the house, a white mask hovers near the windows. The old man does not see it as he approaches the house slowly. The putter is quiet now, the soft sound blending with the footsteps as he crosses the yard.

When he reaches the porch he can still see the footsteps James had left earlier in the grass. He gazes at the car for a few seconds and then reaches over and pushes the doorbell. He curiously investigates the damage on the wood in front of him.

He stands waiting for a response, but after a few seconds, he walks around the side of the house to the car and the bright head lights.

In the bright lights he pauses in front of the hood, the engine still humming.

He walks towards the fence and opens it with a slight tug, entering the back yard.

The back door is open and he walks in without hesitating.

In the field, another mask is watching.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

The old man walks past the table, the putter leading the way as the sound vibrates on the hardwood floor. Every few seconds he pauses, staring at the destroyed room.

He picks up the phone on the bar and listens to the dead air. Then he pulls a cell phone out of his pocket and holds it at his side.

INT. STUDY - NIGHT

James tightens as they listen to the sound of the putter slapping against the ground. Kristen squeezes the leg of James' pants.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

The old man walks past the spot on the floor where James and Kristen were a few minutes ago and then passes the bathroom.

He fades deeper and deeper into darkness as he moves to the bedrooms and the sound of the putter echoes louder and louder until finally, silence.

The sound of a grandfather clock ticks in the darkness as he stares into an open door.

OLD MAN

Hello?

A gunshot flickers in the room and the sound is deafening. The putter and the man hit the ground at the same time. Like that, it is over.

INT. STUDY - NIGHT

Kristen lies on her side, her head pressed tight against the overturned bookshelf. She holds her ringing ears as she stares at James' hand still squeezing the trigger.

Neither one of them moves. James stares forward at the feet that lay on the floor.

The wall behind the body seems wet, like it just rained a dark liquid.

JAMES

I hit someone.

He says this almost in a whisper.

JAMES (cont'd)

Kristen, I shot somebody.

She looks up at him from the ground.

JAMES (cont'd)

Do you hear me?

KRISTEN

I hear you.

JAMES

I shot the man.

KRISTEN

What's he doing?

JAMES

I think he's dead.

James rolls over, leaving the gun against the bookshelf. He lies back next to Kristen, trembling.

James coughs, almost gagging. He can't seem to stop.

The clock ticks on the wall beside them.

KRISTEN

They won't bother us anymore.

JAMES

I fuckin' shot him.

KRISTEN

We can just wait here now.

James nods his head over and over, his eyes closed.

JAMES

I hit him in the face. He walked right into it. Right where I was aiming. He just walked into...

KRISTEN

Did you see his mask?

JAMES

What?

He is still. His eyes are closed.

KRISTEN

Did you see his mask?

JAMES

Just shut up.

She rolls over and stares at the feet of the man. The golf club lies beside his legs.

KRISTEN

I'm so sorry.

JAMES

Be quiet.

James opens his eyes and stares at the wall. The room is quiet; the ticking clock the only sound.

The room suddenly fills with noise as the clock strikes 5 in the morning. James and Kristen both jump at the sound. James reaches for the gun on impulse and then they both just listen as the bells clamor five times.

Then, they stop and just the ticking echoes through the room again.

JAMES (cont'd)

I shot him.

KRISTEN

It's okay.

She reaches over to him and without thinking he slides away towards the wall.

JAMES

He didn't wear one.

He leans up and turns facing the man.

JAMES (cont'd)

He didn't have a mask.

KRISTEN

What?

James gets to his knees, then slowly he climbs past the bookshelf, leaving the gun as he heads towards the door.

A pool of blood has formed around the body and it rolls towards James. The floor is slanted.

James' hand slides out from underneath him and he catches himself on the door frame. He leaves a bloody hand print near the light switch.

KRISTEN (cont'd)

Come back.

James ignores her, leaning his head through the door frame. It is hard to see in the hallway, but as James hovers over the body it becomes clear to him that this is an old man.

KRISTEN (cont'd)

James?

JAMES

Just shut up.

His tone is cruel. Kristen crawls towards him. Her hand touching the back of his shoulder. He pushes her away without even looking her direction.

Instead, his eyes are focused on the body underneath him. The old man's hand grips the unseen phone, inches away from James' leg.

Kristen starts to cry behind him.

KRISTEN

Answer me!

JAMES

It's not him.

KRISTEN

How do you know?

JAMES

Give me the gun.

KRISTEN

How do you know!

On the roof above him they hear a footstep.

James turns back to her.

JAMES

Give me the gun!

KRISTEN

No!

He leaps upon her and throws her to the ground.

JAMES

I remember him. I've seen him before. Do you understand? Do you!?

He presses his weight against Kristen. She is crying, screaming. James cries as well.

KRISTEN

Get off me!

Her tone is unsympathetic. She is becoming angry.

JAMES

I killed a man.

KRISTEN

Don't touch me!

James pulls off of her and falls on the ground beside her. They both cry in the darkness. The clock ticks beside them. On the roof they hear another footstep.

KRISTEN (cont'd)

It is not your fault.

JAMES

I pulled the trigger.

KRISTEN

You...can't...Don't think...

JAMES

What do you want to say? There is nothing. I did it, they made me. Oh, fuck! I might go to jail.

Kristen reaches over to him.

KRISTEN

You won't go...

JAMES

There's no one here. I killed an old man. No one else. He lived on this street!

She tries to grab him, hug him.

JAMES (cont'd)

Don't touch me. I shouldn't be touched.

He pulls away from her and stands up. She follows him wiping her runny nose.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

There is a nervous energy building as they approach the dining room. The candles on the tables are now half melted. James runs his fingers through the flames over and over.

He walks towards the curtains.

JAMES

I have to find them.

KRISTEN

Don't leave me alone in here! What are you talking about?

JAMES

I don't know what to do. They're out there, fucking laughing. Goddamn it.

KRISTEN

What if somebody's in here?

He is red in the face. Sweat builds on his forehead.

JAMES

I want you to hide. I don't want to argue.

James reaches into the curtain and opens the door, then he pushes the gun barrel into the night sky. He fires a shot out the door. The force shoves him back a bit, but he holds his position.

His frustration builds as he attempts to open the gun and reload. Again, he slaps at the metal.

JAMES (cont'd)

Goddammit!

The barrel suddenly complies and clicks open. James slides two shells in and snaps the gun closed.

He pulls back the curtain and sees the window of the door clearly this time.

He stumbles back, running into the dining room table and then rolls off it onto the ground.

The gun crashes to the floor. Kristen screams as James picks up the gun and swings it towards the back door.

Written in lipstick, on the window pane is:

KILLER

James slams the door and pulls the curtain back over the window. Kristen screams again.

JAMES
Just go and hide.

He pulls the corner of the curtain aside and peeks out again.

KRISTEN
Don't leave me in here.

She grabs a hold of him, squeezing him in her arms, pleading with him.

KRISTEN (cont'd)
Don't go.

JAMES
Let go. Do it!

KRISTEN
Please.

JAMES
There's a barn outside. Do you see it? There's a barn. We used to have a 4 wheeler. Maybe it's still out there. If I'm not back...just go there if I don't come back.

He pulls away from her and she falls to the ground. He yanks the door open through the curtain and runs outside. Kristen follows him but stops on the porch.

KRISTEN
James!

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

She watches James run away from her and into the black night.

His feet are like bricks as he crosses the damp grass carrying the heavy gun. With each step away from the house, he falls further into darkness. He swings the barrel in every direction at once as he searches the shadows around him.

Only his feet on the grass give any perspective to where he is. He turns back, looking at the house, to where Kristen stands on the porch staring out at him.

Then, he turns the corner of the partial fence that separates the backyard from the acres surrounding the house, and disappears.

EXT. BACK PORCH - NIGHT

Kristen does not go any further.

It is cold outside and she shivers as she struggles to see any sign of James or the strangers. Her body dances from side to side, the concrete cold against her feet.

The wind chimes blow harder than ever before in the night breeze.

Off the side of the house, a ragged American flag swings in the darkness. It rattles against its cheap aluminium pole, trying to escape. Kristen's eyes are drawn to it. Then she looks towards the black field in front of her.

She can hear James' footsteps from behind the fence, she tries to whisper to him, but after a couple of tries, she just listens.

She hears a footstep on the roof and retreats, but her foot catches the edge of the doorway. She stumbles slightly, grabbing the curtain for support as she falls inside.

FLASHBACK:

INT. HOTEL - NIGHT

The curtains near the balcony blow in the gentle breeze, passing through the open window. A security light outside casts a green glow throughout the back of the room that slightly touches the edge to the bed.

James is asleep. His back faces Kristen, who stares at the ceiling above her.

KRISTEN

James?

She whispers. It is barely noticeable.

KRISTEN (cont'd)

James?

He opens his eyes, not sure of what he has heard. He stares at the window, listening.

KRISTEN (cont'd)

Are you awake?

JAMES

Yeah.

KRISTEN

I had a bad dream.

She sits up slightly and tries to see over his shoulder. His eyes are closed again.

KRISTEN (cont'd)

James.

JAMES

Yeah. Yes. Are you okay?

He can hear her hands moving around the night stand. A glass bumps into the base of the lamp. His keys slide across the wood, falling onto the carpet below.

Kristen lights a cigarette.

James turns over on his back and they both stare up at the ceiling.

JAMES (cont'd)

What time is it?

KRISTEN

5:00.

JAMES

You should sleep.

KRISTEN

I want to, but not now.

James is drifting, his eyes grow heavy and close, then he fights them back open.

JAMES

What was your dream about?

KRISTEN

I don't remember. I mean, I know you were in it. There was a monster.

JAMES

We should get you a dreamcatcher. Something to protect you.

KRISTEN

What's that?

JAMES

I don't know. I can't remember. Hippies keep them.

James takes a drink of his water, then reaches and grabs the cigarette from the ashtray she has rested on her chest.

KRISTEN

You shouldn't do that.

JAMES

I'm not.

He takes a drag.

KRISTEN

I'm a bad influence.

JAMES

You're the only influence. But it's fine. Just with you. That's the only time I smoke anymore.

She takes the cigarette back gently and takes a drag, exhaling slowly.

KRISTEN

It's so quiet here. No one is walking around.

JAMES

That's why I like hotels. At night, you walk around the halls and you can feel the world around you sleeping. Nobody moves.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

James and Kristen walk down the long hallway. James wears just his pants and carries the ice bucket loosely in his hand. Kristen wears a robe and has her hair pulled up on top of her head.

KRISTEN

It's so cold.

JAMES

Just think about the bed. It's warm in the bed.

KRISTEN

Can't this wait til tomorrow?

JAMES

I'm thirsty. I need ice. We could be sleeping.

They reach the ice machine. The silence is broken by the sound of ice knocking against the bottom of the bucket. The rumble of the machine fills the quiet halls around them.

Kristen gets a candy bar from the machine while she waits.

KRISTEN

I need to get fatter anyway.

JAMES

Shut up. Quit talking about my girlfriend.

James' tone is not sympathetic. It is more annoyed.

KRISTEN

I'm a fatty.

JAMES

Oh my god. Please. Shut up. I'm not going to argue with you at 5:30 in the morning. I won't do it.

KRISTEN

Fine.

JAMES

You're fucking beautiful.

They walk back towards their room. She clomps along next to him, wearing his oversized shoes.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

James sits on the floor near the window. Kristen eats her candy bar in the bed.

KRISTEN

Come back.

JAMES

I will. I just wanna see the sun.
It's about to come up over there.
I haven't seen a sunrise since
college.

Kristen grabs a cigarette. James watches the flame flicker as she lights it in the darkness. They both are content to sit for a moment, to wait for the sun.

Kristen watches the smoke rise above her and filter out the balcony door.

KRISTEN

Come back to bed.

JAMES

I will. Just a second.

James gazes at the light growing brighter on the horizon.

JAMES (cont'd)

Are you happy?

KRISTEN

Sometimes.

JAMES

That's not enough.

KRISTEN

I don't think I can try any harder.

JAMES

I'll help you.

KRISTEN

You can't.

JAMES

I will.

KRISTEN

You can't.

James' skin grows brighter every second now. Kristen remains in the darkness.

JAMES

I love you.

Kristen is silent.

KRISTEN

I know.

Kristen coughs, then takes a drag.

FLASHBACK ENDS:

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

From where Kristen sits, next to the doorway, she can see the outline of the barn through the curtain. A small light shines on the side of the tin building.

She turns back to the living room. The hole in the front door whistles in the wind.

Her hands reach across the table behind her until she grabs a hold of the cigarettes and James' matches. She lights one and breathes deeply, letting her smoke blow out onto the porch in front of her.

A cat sits a hundred feet away from her in the yard. She watches its glassy eyes stare back at her. It is calm, but its ears rotate around, taking in the little noises of the outdoors.

On the roof, Kristen hears the familiar pounding of footsteps, but her eyes never leave the cat. She unconsciously swivels the ring around her finger.

A scream from a woman is heard from the direction James ran earlier.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

The cat takes off for the fields and Kristen runs out after James. Her cigarette drops to the concrete as her bare feet slap across the pavement and then disappear in the tall grass.

She cannot see James, but in the distance, she can make out the shadow of the barn at the end of the property. She can hear someone behind the fence as she approaches. Then, she hears a man's voice that is not like James'. She turns for the barn.

The house grows smaller behind her as she pushes closer to the tin building. The sound of footsteps suddenly appear from the side of her as she runs.

Kristen turns around and sees the outline of someone backlit by the porch as they are fast approaching her.

She turns around and her feet catch on a hole in the earth. She slams into the ground.

The wind is knocked out of her and, for a moment, Kristen lies on the grass, gasping. She is still half way to the barn.

Kristen rolls over and tries to stand, but she collapses back down again. The footsteps behind her have stopped. She can only hear her own breathing. Kristen's hands reach for her ankle.

She faces back towards the house and sees a flash as a gunshot rings out in the night.

The shadow of one of the girls darts across the windows of the back porch. The girl runs towards the side of the house, where the gunshot appeared.

Kristen gets to her knees and frantically looks around for signs of someone chasing her. She begins crawling slowly towards the barn.

Pits in the earth, the size of hoof prints, tear at her skin as she pulls her body towards the barn door. She is hurt and with her every move her face grimaces in pain.

Behind her, the other woman walks fifty feet away. As they approach the light on the barn, it reveals her mask, a fifties PIN UP GIRL.

She makes no effort to catch Kristen. She pauses with Kristen's every stop, and then walks when Kristen moves forward.

EXT. BARN - NIGHT

Kristen reaches the barn door as the woman trails behind her. Kristen glances back and sees her, but before Kristen can open her mouth the Pin Up Girl screams for her.

She comes closer and closer, the dead eyes staring into Kristen, a shrieking voice coming from a mouth that does not move.

When she is a foot away from Kristen, she stops. Kristen is turned on her back, her hands covering her face and body. Her dress is in rags. For a second, they both just stop, waiting.

The Pin Up Girl turns back, listening towards the house. She is excited, her chest heaving with every quick breath. She runs back towards the house, disappearing out of the circle of light from the barn.

Kristen turns toward the door. The handle is high and she has to lean up against the metal walls to reach it. Both her hands grab the rust covered door and with all her might she attempts to wedge it open.

After a few pulls, the door has budged just enough for her to slide her torso through the hole. By kicking her legs, she drags the rest of her body through.

INT. BARN - NIGHT

Inside it is pitch black. Kristen finds a flashlight and shines it along the cobwebbed covered walls. The space is more like a storage closet than anything else. Stacks of boxes and broken down equipment litter the floors. She finds the 4 wheeler, but it has long since died a slow death.

The wheels are flat and the engine is stolen. It lies in a heap. Even the steering wheel is gone.

She slides back to the door searching the area around the house.

Everything is still and quiet.

She leans against the metal door and turns the flashlight to the back of the barn. As the light passes around the room, she discovers an orange glow coming from the back wall. She gets to her knees and slowly hoists herself to her feet, making her way past an old riding lawn mower and some weed-eaters as she shuffles to the faint light.

Against the wall is a small work table. On top of it, sits an old HAM radio.

Kristen picks up the receiver and adjusts the volume. The room fills with static and she turns back to the barn door, afraid that someone has heard her.

KRISTEN

Hello. Is anyone there?

She presses the button this time.

KRISTEN (cont'd)

Hello. Somebody?

The room fills with static.

KRISTEN (cont'd)

Hello! Help me!

She drops the receiver, moving so she can see through the door.

RADIO

Hello?

Kristen is startled by the sound and she slams into various pieces of metal and trash, desperately reaching for the receiver.

KRISTEN

Hello! Wait, wait!

She hobbles back to the radio pulling the cord from the ground. The static halts.

KRISTEN (cont'd)

Hello! Can you hear me? There's people here. They're trying to kill us. You have to help me.

RADIO

Where are you located?

KRISTEN
I'm at my boyfriend's house. I'm
in the barn.

RADIO
What's your name?

KRISTEN
Kristen. You have to help me.

RADIO
Okay Kristen, where are you
located?

Kristen rocks back and forth as she listens. Her knees are weak and she leans her arms out against the table for support.

KRISTEN
Where are you?

RADIO
I'm in Oklahoma.

KRISTEN
Oh god!

RADIO
These things can pick up people
from all over.

KRISTEN
There's no time!

She turns to the barn door again.

RADIO
What city are you in? You have to
give me more than this. I can call
the cops. Someone can help you.

KRISTEN
I don't know. I've never been here
before.

RADIO
What street? Did you see a sign?
Think.

KRISTEN
No!

Her voice cracks.

KRISTEN (cont'd)
I've never been here before!

RADIO
Okay Kristen, calm down. Listen to
me. Where are you at?

KRISTEN
I'm in a barn.

RADIO
Are you sure you're okay?

KRISTEN
There's people outside.

RADIO
What kinda people?

KRISTEN
Bad people.

RADIO
Your boyfriend. You said it was
his house. What's his name?
Where's he at?

The man's voice is calm.

KRISTEN
James.

RADIO
James what, sweetie?

KRISTEN
It doesn't matter.

RADIO
Yes it does.

KRISTEN
Hotopp!

The room fills with static as Kristen starts crying. Her hands are shaking as she continues to hold the microphone to her face.

KRISTEN (cont'd)
I'm gonna die here. I don't even
know where I am.

RADIO
You better not be messing around
out there.

Silence.

KRISTEN
I don't...

Static.

RADIO
Come back. I couldn't make that
out,

Silence.

KRISTEN
I don't know. I've never been here
before. I'm in the country.

Static.

RADIO
Sweetheart, I want you to think.
You gotta know where you are.

Outside the barn she can hear screams from the house. A woman's voice. Kristen stares at the doorway. The beam of the flashlight shakes against the wall near the door. The static goes in waves from loud to softer, but continues in jarring bursts, breaking the silence.

Kristen pulls at her hair, her body convulsing. She says James' name over and over to herself.

RADIO (cont'd)
I can help you.

KRISTEN
I'm gonna go. There's no time.
I'm gonna go.

She slams her hands against the wooden table. The radio bounces up and down on the warped wood.

RADIO
Are you there? Kristen?

She hears a scream again, then, nothing.

KRISTEN

I'm sorry.

RADIO

I can help you!

Kristen flips the radio off. Silence fills the barn.

She collides with an old air conditioner and falls forward losing the flashlight. The light fades and she is left in the darkness.

KRISTEN

James.

She gropes her way to the barn door. She grips the side of it as she makes her way outside again, crawling back towards the house.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Kristen inches away from the light and away from the path that leads to the house. The brush is high and her body disappears into the thorns and weeds.

She sees James for a moment as he leaves the porch heading back into the yard. He is limping and he seems disoriented, but he still holds the gun. He calls out into the night air.

JAMES

Kristen!

She tries to scream but no words form. Just over the high grass, a hundred yards away, she can see the Pin Up Girl searching near the trees. She lowers her head, trying to hide.

James does not see the light reflecting off the white mask as it seemingly floats in the blackness. Kristen is frozen.

He runs back into the house and after a few moments, he emerges with a red gas can in one hand and the gun in the other. Without a glance in Kristen's direction, he kicks open the gate and moves towards the blue Saturn.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

His movements are rushed and chaotic as he rips the cap off the can and begins pouring the gas over the car.

JAMES

You know what I did! All of you!

He opens the car door and searches for matches.

JAMES (cont'd)

Just leave us alone!

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Kristen tries to crawl towards him but her eyes continue to fall back to the Pin Up Girl. The stranger's body becomes more visible as she walks slowly towards the house. Kristen can see the reflection of the blade in her hand as the knife hits the light.

The Pin Up Girl sees James through the gate. She is moving towards him.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

James finds a Bic lighter and scrapes it over and over with his thumb, trying to produce a flame. He moves to the trunk and then suddenly the lighter strikes.

He is shaky as he holds it against the blue metallic paint, but after his second attempt the gasoline catches and the body of the car is devoured by orange and gold.

EXT. BACKYARD - NIGHT

Kristen spots the Man in the Mask as he appears from the shadows near the opposite side of the house. She scans the darkness, searching for another stranger somewhere around her.

Just out of her view, Strawberry watches her.

Pin Up Girl and the Man walk slowly and cautiously towards each other as they move nearer to James. They speak to each other in a whisper that Kristen cannot make out across the yard.

Soon, they connect near the porch, both heading for James as he watches the car burn. He is in his own world.

KRISTEN

James!

She screams, her body lifting up over the grass.

The Man in the Mask never takes his eyes off the opening in the gate as he walks closer and closer towards James.

Kristen watches him disappear behind the wooden fence. She hears the gas can slam against the pavement, but both James and the Man are out of sight.

The Pin Up Girl turns around.

Her plastic eyes scan the open field. She walks back out into the grass, past the patio. A small rubber ball squishes underneath her worn down shoes, letting out a small squeak.

Kristen buries her face in the grass and the mud and listens. She tries to hold her breath as she hears the grass around her beaten down by the Pin Up Girl's footsteps. With every other one, there is a swoosh of the blade against the tall grass.

A gunshot rings out but she doesn't look up. There is no sound of the stranger now. Kristen waits.

The Pin Up Girl rushes past her and then disappears inside the barn.

Kristen listens to her footsteps grow fainter and then hears something slam against the metal of the barn's walls. She searches the yard and then looks through the barn door.

It is dark, like a black hole. She cannot make out anything going on inside, so she shifts her focus back to the burning car.

She pulls herself up and moves towards the fire. Strawberry continues to watch her.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Kristen is weak and every attempt to slide her body forward produces little to no movement. Eventually, she enters the grassy area of the yard and finally, her hands touch the concrete of the porch.

She stares at the fire, but it will not last. The flames are dying out. The car will not burn much longer.

Her skin and the fabric of the dress are worn away by the harshness of the ground beneath her. She is almost unrecognizable and her frail body is drained of all its energy.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Kristen throws herself through the doorway, falling on the wood floor, coughing and crying as the sweat drips from her forehead.

She lies on her back, one hand swinging to grab the curtain.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

She pushes the curtain open, straining to see outside. She can see the silhouette of the Pin Up Girl moving away from the barn and then the woman disappears.

Strawberry is gone.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Kristen lays back on the ground, staring at the ceiling, watching the candlelight flicker above her. All of a sudden, she is sobbing. Her hair is covered in thorns and weeds.

Kristen wrestles with herself. She claws and rips at her hair, trying to remove every piece of the yard from her body. She slams back and forth on the floor as she flips and twists, fighting no one.

JAMES (O.S.)

Kristen!

She can hear James' screams coming from outside. She rolls over, pushing her head out the door.

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

Kristen!

She searches the backyard for a sign of him but he is nowhere to be found.

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

Are you okay?

She tries to yell, but her voice does not come out. Her eyes show her fear. She cannot find his voice.

JAMES (O.S.) (cont'd)
Tell me where you are!

Somewhere around the corner, the flag pole rattles as the cloth twists in the wind.

She backpedals, forcing the door closed. The blood from her legs stains the wood and the curtains. Her head whips around the room as she tries to see if someone is inside with her.

She forces herself to her feet, hobbling to the wall of the dining room until she finds the switch that controls the overhead light. She turns it on.

Her hands slam against the table and she pulls herself to the candles. They are almost gone and she blows each one out. She searches the walls where there were once shadows.

Satisfied, she slides her body off the table and crawls towards the living room. The silver spoon slides onto the hardwood floor. She listens to it rattle and when it stops, she pulls her body forward again.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Kristen checks the hallway as she makes her way to the back bedrooms. She is shaking uncontrollably as she pauses in front of every closed door, throwing them open and switching on all the lights.

She stands over the old man, She has to force herself to cross him. Her foot bumps him and she almost falls trying to grab a hold of the wall. The phone shakes free from the man's hand, but she does not notice.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

She walks into a side bathroom and with a violent thrust tears down the shower curtain from it's rod, but there is no one behind it.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

She checks underneath the bed and inside the closet, pulling the string from the hanging bulb and pushing her hands into the wall of hanging clothes.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Rose petals still rest at the bottom of the tub as she makes her way into the bathroom. Her high heels lie near the toilet. For a few seconds she rests on the bathroom mat.

Outside, she hears James scream.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Kristen crawls on top of the bed and looks outside the window, but she cannot see James anywhere. She now holds a knife, pressing the metal blade pressed against the window. She holds it in such a way as to display it for all those outside to see.

She turns around, sitting on the bed. The light from the bathroom casts a soft glow that catches in her eyes as they lock upon the door and the darkened hall outside it.

Her bloody hand squeezes the knife as her knees tap the bedpost over and over in a nervous twitch. In a quiet voice she sings.

KRISTEN

I don't care if it rains or
freezes.

She coughs. Her throat is congested making it hard for her to breathe.

All of a sudden, the lights shut down inside the entire house. Instantly, she is surrounded by darkness. She attempts to jump off the bed, but her damaged body cannot support itself and she falls to the ground.

The knife clatters to the floor, under the bed.

KRISTEN (cont'd)

No, no, no...

She roughly scrapes around underneath the bed for the knife, and finally gives up, on the verge of tears. She pulls herself back and drags her body towards the hall.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

She edges along the darkened hallway. The only light left in the house comes from the glowing embers of what remains of the almost dead fire.

KRISTEN

James?

Her voice trails off as she reaches the end of the hall.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The open door leading to the back porch brushes against the curtains gently in the breeze.

The shattered fire alarm lies scattered on the floor, inches in front of Kristen's face. The pieces are brushed to the side of the room, near the wall, deliberately smashed.

INT. ENTRY WAY - NIGHT

She turns and looks down the entry way. The strangers have forced open the front door. The piano leans against the wall and the door hangs open, barely left on its hinges.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Kristen nears the dining room table when she hears someone's footsteps down the entry way behind her. A finger drags along the piano keys, many of them now out of tune.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

She crawls quickly through the room towards the kitchen. She gets to her feet and then makes her way in, frantically searching for a place to hide.

She opens a door and turns to see the Man in the Mask walking down the back hallway.

She pushes her way inside the pantry. She yanks the door closed, squeezing herself into the tight space.

INT. PANTRY - NIGHT

Her hand grips the doorknob as she stands pressed in between the wooden shelves and the thin door.

Wooden blinds cut into the door give her a way to see out. She focuses on the outside door and the dining room table.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

The Man in the Mask walks into the kitchen, pausing with his back to Kristen and the pantry. On his neck, there are scratches, evidence of finger scrapes against his flesh.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

He moves back over to the dining room table, where he sits down in the place James occupied an hour ago. He holds the old man's hat in his hand.

He pulls off his mask and sets it down next to the case for her ring. Sweat drips off his face. He is about the same age as James.

He is tired, exhausted by the physical exertion of the night's events. He lights a cigarette from her pack and leans back in the chair. The smoke rises above him in the moonlight.

After a few seconds, he slides over the soggy carton of ice cream from the table and opens the top. Cherry flavored cream drips into his beard as he eats the half melted dessert.

He closes the lid, setting the spoon on top of the box and places it back in the center of the table. His eyes continue to rest on the ice cream as he softly sings.

MAN

As long as I got my Plastic
Jesus...

He sings to himself the same song Kristen sang minutes ago. He slowly puts the mask back on and then turns on a flashlight, scanning the beam around the room. The light dances over the furniture as he searches.

After a couple of quick drags, he stubs out his cigarette and stands up. Then he walks out the door.

INT. PANTRY - NIGHT

The door handle to the pantry twists as Kristen attempts to open it.

She is breathing hard as she builds the courage to open the door. It is an inch from her face and the sound of her breath against it is almost deafening.

She is too frightened to push herself out. Her feet press against an old bag of cat food at the bottom of the pantry.

She can hear the click of the door as it crosses the wooden notch and it begins to open, but suddenly stops. She pushes again, but the door does not move. The sound of her breath pounds in her ears as Kristen struggles more and more.

Then she stops, holding her quivering hand in front of her mouth. Her eyes are wide as she stares out the door. She holds her breath, but the breathing sound continues.

Two plastic eyes appear in the small slits directly in front of Kristen face. Strawberry Shortcake's plastic mask glares back at her.

STRAWBERRY

I see you!

The door slams against Kristen's head, pushing her back into the cans and paper bags on the shelves behind her. Kristen screams as the door shakes back and forth. She kicks at it, crying with pain as she fights the wood in front of her.

Then, a gunshot fires from outside the house and the door stops. It drifts open and a can of corn rolls out onto the linoleum floor of the kitchen.

Kristen squeezes out onto the kitchen, limping. Her toes are bloody from kicking. Her ankle is horribly swollen.

She pulls open drawers and they fall to the ground spilling their contents onto the floor. She finds a knife, a much smaller one, and points it out in front of her.

STRAWBERRY (cont'd)

Hello.

Kristen screams, turning to face Strawberry, who stands near the table. She holds the ring case in her hands.

STRAWBERRY (cont'd)
Did you say yes?

KRISTEN
What do you want?

Strawberry is still, calm. Kristen's knife does not seem to frighten her.

KRISTEN (cont'd)
Where's James?

Strawberry shrugs her shoulders. Her plastic face smiling at Kristen's fear. She puts down the case next to the ice cream.

STRAWBERRY
You're so scared. Did you know the man you killed?

KRISTEN
You did that. Leave us alone.

Strawberry shakes her head "No" very slowly.

STRAWBERRY
You're gonna die.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

One of the drawers Kristen had left hanging in its slot, falls loose and clatters to the ground. Kristen shields herself from scattering contents and scoots sideways, but she keeps her knife shakily pointing towards Strawberry.

KRISTEN
Why did you come here? Why us!

STRAWBERRY
Because you were home. You answered the door.

Kristen shakes her head back and forth, the horrible realization sinking in.

STRAWBERRY (cont'd)
I don't even know you.

She moves towards Kristen but Kristen does not retreat any further.

Outside, there is a gunshot. Kristen turns towards the windows. The wind chimes blow in the breeze.

KRISTEN
He's going to kill you.

Strawberry shakes her head again.

STRAWBERRY
What's your name?

KRISTEN
I don't want to tell you.

STRAWBERRY
I heard him say it. But I don't remember. Did you say yes?

KRISTEN
He's going to kill you.

STRAWBERRY
No... he's not.

For a few moments neither woman speaks nor moves. Kristen sobs to herself, then the knife slowly lowers to the ground beside her.

Strawberry continues to inch forward until she is only inches away. Kristen seems oblivious to her. Underneath the plastic mask, she can hear the stranger's breathing growing faster.

In an instant it happens, one swipe of the blade and Strawberry falls back. Kristen holds the knife out and it is covered in blood from the young girl.

Strawberry is in pain. She holds her forearm, but her mask remains emotionless. Kristen watches her, waiting for a reaction.

Then she hears the stranger laugh.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

The back door opens through the curtains and James stumbles inside. He is badly beaten, his face already swollen around the eyes and mouth.

Kristen yanks herself up but quickly sees that he is not alone.

The Man in the Mask and the Pin Up Girl walk in behind him. The man holds the gun, shoving it into James' back.

STRAWBERRY

You were wrong.

James locks Kristen's gaze with half closed eyes. His will to fight has been beaten from him.

MAN

Put on a record.

Kristen hobbles past them from the dining room into the hallway, then to the back bedrooms.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Kristen slams the door behind her as she falls against side of the bed in the dark room, sobbing. The power returns to the house and the bathroom light turns on. Near the bed, the overturned clock radio beeps 12'oclock on the floor.

Kristen stands up staring at the closed door. From the living room, the sound of the record player starts up, the volume cranked high so that song bleeds into the Kristen's ears. Her feet crunch the broken glass beneath her but she seems unfazed.

STRAWBERRY (O.S.)

Kristen...Kristen...Kristen.

Strawberry's voice floats in from the other side of the door. Her fingers tap the wood methodically.

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

He told me. You said no.

From the living room Kristen can hear the furniture moving; a loud crash, broken glass.

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

You're gonna die!

Kristen stands, shaking and crying and facing the door. She wets herself and it pours down her legs, but she does not care.

KRISTEN

Go away!

STRAWBERRY (O.S.)

Kristen!

KRISTEN

Leave me alone.

Her voice is like a child. She is begging, pleading.

The door opens in front of her, but no one is there. In the hallway she can hear James screaming over the record.

JAMES (O.S.)

Kristen!

Kristen yells out towards him. She forms no words, just a cry, but she lets it out at the top of her lungs. She is frozen by his calls.

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

Kristen!

Finally, she moves towards the blaring music. She whispers to herself to build up confidence, her mouth moving over and over but it makes no sound. Tears stream down her cheeks.

KRISTEN

It's okay, it's okay, it's okay.

As she approaches the door frame, she stops and looks at the large mirror hanging on the wall over the dresser. The music continues to pound and James' screams almost become part of the melody.

Suddenly the screams fall silent.

Kristen turns and sprints for the door, but the Man in the Mask is waiting. He tosses her like a rag doll against the wall and she collapses.

He grabs her by her hair and pulls her down the hallway, past the old man, to the dining room. She does not fight. She has the old man's blood in her hair.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The Man in the Mask pauses half way through the room, struggling with her weight and his exhaustion. She stares up at the blank eyes of the mask as he breathes. His hands tighten around the shoulders of her dress and she slides behind him.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

The table has been overturned and James is seated in the middle of room, tied to a chair. Beside him is an empty seat, and the man and the Pin Up Girl lift her into it.

The music is incredibly loud now, making it impossible to hear anything else.

Strawberry ties Kristen's body to the chair using rusted baling wire. Then, she wires her hands together tightly in front of her while the Man in the Mask whispers in James' ear.

Kristen twists her wrists, but finds that only causes the wire to dig in deeper, cutting into her skin.

James is crying. His pale face contorts with the understanding of the words coming from the plastic mouth. He whispers back, begging and shaking his head.

Neither he nor Kristen scream anymore.

The Pinup Girl begins opening the curtains around the room. It is almost dawn and the sky behind the barn is beginning to grow pink.

INT. DINING ROOM - SUNRISE

The strangers take their time, turning off every light inside the house one by one. The room is dark at first, but over the next few minutes, a warmth begins to grab the walls.

The three of them stand in front of James and Kristen, watching them cry.

When the record is over, the house grows quiet. Pin Up goes to change it and James and Kristen sit in silence.

Their knees are almost touching and he slides his leg over, grazing her bruised and bloody skin with his own.

He can see her ring and she knows.

KRISTEN

I love you.

The words come out so soft that only James can hear her.

James hums the song they danced to that night. His leg shakes against hers. Kristen's face is too wet from tears to see she still cries.

Strawberry takes off her mask and lays it on the ground near the table. Soon, the others follow and, for the first time, they are exposed for who they are.

The warm light now fills the room as the five of them stare at each other, waiting.

MAN

It's time.

Strawberry nods her head in agreement.

He pulls out Kristen's knife and kneels down before James. The Man all of a sudden seems nervous. The knife shakes in one hand while he places the other on his knee for balance.

Kristen tries to pull herself free, then she rips at the wire that holds James down.

KRISTEN

You can stop. Do you hear me? It can stop now.

The Man's eyes shift slightly for a moment, staring into Kristen's.

KRISTEN (cont'd)

I don't care if it rains or freezes. Long as I have my Plastic Jesus, sitting on the dashboard of my car.

She sings softly to her self and the Man watches her lips say the words they both remember.

James screams over and over as the Man leans in closer. He brings the knife towards James' body slowly.

MAN

Be quiet.

His words are not demands. He is almost asking her to stop singing.

The blade shakes in his loose grip, but then, his fingers tighten around the handle.

When the knife pushes in, neither James nor the man seem to know what will happen next. James squeals, pushing a scream through his teeth as he grinds his jaw. His muscles flex in pain.

Then he is silent, and Kristen grows still.

The music explodes from the parlor, but Pin Up runs and turns it off.

KRISTEN

James, James...look at me. James,
look at me.

The man stabs him again. This time he does it quickly and James watches the blade go inside him. Then, he tilts his head up towards Kristen, the veins in his neck about to burst.

KRISTEN (cont'd)

Look at me. Look at my face.

The two women stand behind the man. Both seem pale and frightened. Pin Up bites her lip nervously, but Strawberry is energized, a very faint smile on the edges of her mouth.

The Pin Up Girl walks over behind James and strokes his hair.

KRISTEN (cont'd)

Don't touch him.

At first, he fights her but then he lets go. He is calm. The Pin Up Girl's hand rests on his neck.

Strawberry takes the knife, and without taking her eyes off James' face drives it into his chest.

James coughs, his head whipping around. He does not fight anymore. He just cries.

Strawberry raises her face up to the Pin Up Girl and their eyes lock for a moment. Pin Up slowly moves around in front of Kristen, but Kristen does not seem to notice.

Kristen's eyes fall to the ring case lying on the ground near the table. She does not even react when blade goes in her.

KRISTEN (cont'd)

James. James. James.

She repeats his name over and over as the three strangers begin to cut her.

James sits doubled over beside her, unable to watch. His breathing becomes more and more clouded as he begins to choke.

KRISTEN (cont'd)

James.

FLASHBACK:

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Kristen leans against the door of the car for support. She holds the ring in front of her. Tears form in her eyes.

The sound of James' rental shoes against the gravel seems to echo throughout the empty cars that surround them.

James stares at his hands nervously, he has not seen her face.

JAMES

I thought you would like this one.
I know how much you liked it when
we saw it. At that store, you
remember.

KRISTEN

I remember.

The door to the building bursts open and a GROUP OF WEDDING GUESTS comes out laughing. Kristen and James turn towards the crowd. Everyone has had too much to drink.

As Kristen turns around, James sees her eyes, her face. The hope begins to drain from his expression.

KRISTEN (cont'd)

James, I...

JAMES

What?

KRISTEN

James...

JAMES

Oh.

A car alarm goes off in the parking lot a few spaces down. The group cannot seem to work their clicker.

ONE OF THE GROOMSMEN passes the couple as he makes his way towards his friends. He stops and smiles at both of them. For a second, it seems as if he plans to stay.

He hands James his glass of wine after he begins to feel the awkwardness.

James does not take his eyes off Kristen as she looks uncomfortably at the commotion around them.

FLASHBACK ENDS:

The stabbing stops and they drop the knife on the ground at Kristen's feet. Strawberry reaches out and touches her wounds. Kristen twists towards James. She tries to touch him once again.

KRISTEN

I need you now. James. I need
you.

James' gasps for air at the moment of her words. For just a second, he is back again from the darkness. There is no sound of the blood that is filling his throat and lungs. His face turns towards her briefly before sinking again to his chest.

JAMES

(Whispering) I know.

INT. DINING ROOM - SUNRISE

The sun peeks over the barn. It is hard for James to see because of the glare from the window.

The man picks up his mask and the others'. The women stare at Kristen's dress as it turns red in front of them.

STRAWBERRY

You are so pretty.

INT. KITCHEN - SUNRISE

The Pin Up Girl goes into the kitchen behind them and washes her hands. The man follows her and Strawberry goes last. They scrub until the blood is gone. They wash their faces and their arms.

Strawberry takes the knife and runs water over the blade until it is clean again. Then she lays it down on the counter.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

They slowly take off their clothes until they each stand in their underwear before the couple. They put their clothes in a trash bag that the Pin Up Girl found under the sink.

Strawberry hands out clean clothes from a bag she brings from the door.

James and Kristen are still alive.

INT. DINING ROOM - MORNING

The man walks over with the pile of records, holding them out to the couple.

MAN

You can choose.

Kristen's eyes rise from James' twitching leg. After he goes through a few selections, her eyes rest on one of them and she nods. Blood pours from her mouth onto her thigh.

Strawberry unties them both precisely so as to keep from cutting them as the man puts the record on.

INT. HOUSE - MORNING

The Pin Up Girl helps the man move the piano back into its original position. Then, they begin to straighten up the house. They start in the living room, working their way into the entry way.

INT. DINING ROOM - MORNING

James collapses onto the ground and Kristen does the same. They seem like dolls. Their limbs disjointed like mannequins. Their arms and legs grow limp as the life drains from their bodies.

James is barely breathing under the weight of his body.

The three strangers walk out of the house one at a time. No one looks back at James and Kristen and soon, the house is still.

Kristen slides her hand across the floor until it rests on James' back. Her hand moves up underneath his clothes until she touches his skin. She grabs his gaze as she watches his eyes begin to falter.

James breathes slower and slower until finally, he stops.

INT. HOUSE - MORNING

Kristen stares out along the hardwood floor listening to the song spinning on the record player. She is no longer crying.

The music fades and the record player hums, waiting for the next song.

Kristen's eyes glass over. For a moment, her breathing is the only sound in the room.

The next song begins. Her hands slides down next to James' body, one finger still reaching towards him.

The wind chimes rattle against each other in the morning breeze.

Then, the phone rings.

Kristen does not react at first but on the second ring, it is like her eyes come alive again. She begins to move towards the sound.

The zipper on the back of her dress scratches the floor as she begins to push herself along the ground on her back. It is slow at first. By the third ring, it seems like she has barely moved at all.

Her hands scratch at the floor as she forces her body over. Her arms, her entire body, are now covered in blood.

Kristen struggles into the living room and by the fourth ring, the old man is within her sight. The ringing comes from him. Beside her the Smiley face rests, having fallen from the strangers' bag.

She loses her balance, and her wrist gives way. Her face slams against the hardwood floor. The dull thud of her head colliding against the wood is sickening, but Kristen continues.

She grabs the old man-her hands searching over his bloody body. The damage James has done to him begins to cover her as Kristen's hands caress every inch of his body. Finally, she hears the ring once again. The phone is on the ground, inches away from her face.

Her hand reaches out just as the last ring escapes the small handheld piece of plastic. She forces herself on top of the his remains, stretching her body out to grab the phone before it stops ringing.

She slides it to her ear, but there is no one there.

KRISTEN

Hello? Hello!

Kristen's eyes close. There is just a dial tone. She falls back to the ground.

The Man stands behind her.

Kristen begins dialing the phone. Her fingers slip across the small keys. First she dials 9, then two 1's.

MAN

How do you know that song?

A scream explodes in the hallway as Kristen turns. She forces her body over again, this time to face her attacker.

Her small hands rises above her head like a shield, but the Man does not seem to notice. His young face hovers above her.

The phone lies beside Kristen, still silent. The send key untouched. The Man finally kneels by her side, taking the mask that rested beside her.

MAN (cont'd)

It makes me happy.

He turns his back on her and walks towards the door. Soon, he is gone. Kristen is alone.

EXT. STREET - DAY

The washed out sky hangs over the open fields in the middle of nowhere. It has rained recently and the ground is wet around the scattered mail boxes that line the old gravel road.

The street is deserted. Empty.

DETECTIVE (V.O.)

Okay. Let's try and do this all at once. (Coughs) Can you hear me alright? I'm just gonna start. Alright?

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

The large single story house sits a thousand yards from its closest neighbor. There is a long cement driveway that leads down the side of the property.

At the end, towards the house, sits a once blue four-door sedan. Smoke rises above the charred remains. The windows are smashed out and the tires are slashed. Broken pieces of glass surround the car as it sits flat against its metal rims.

The car is running.

Over the blackened hood stands a faded basketball goal. A net hangs on for its life from the rusty orange hoop.

DETECTIVE (V.O.)

1801 Clark Road. Stop. (Coughs)
1801 Clark Road as follows. 4
kitchen knives, varying sizes. 2
candle sticks. One large axe with
wooden handle.

The pick up truck idles in the street as the Man looks at the rear tire. The Pin Up Girl sits in the back, a cigarette weighing her hand down over the side.

The Man gets back inside the cab and the truck rumbles back to life and begins the journey down the long road.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Two young boys, both in their early teens, walk side by side with their bicycles. They wear pressed white shirts and black slacks.

They are Mormons.

The taller boy, has a backpack slung over one shoulder. The other one holds a pile of pamphlets. They both have flat tops.

The boys make their way down the street and they huddle close together to attempt to shield themselves from the wind whipping across their skin.

The truck pulls to a noisy stop and Strawberry gets out of the passenger side. She is crying a little as she walks around the back of the truck. Her door still hanging open.

She approaches the boys, she is not much larger than they are.

STRAWBERRY

Can I have one?

The smaller boy hands her the yellow piece of paper. It struggles in the wind, but Strawberry catches it.

BOY

Are you a sinner?

STRAWBERRY

Sometimes.

She turns back towards the truck and without a look back climbs inside. The truck and the three strangers soon disappear onto the highway.

A few of the pamphlets get away from the small one and he chases after them but then soon returns, empty-handed.

They are two houses down from the basketball goal. They take turns walking to each house, knocking and ringing the doorbells. When there is no answer, they leave the pamphlets on the mat or in the mailbox and walk back up to the road again.

The boys do not play around with each other as they walk the road between houses. They concentrate on the task at hand; each solemnly staring forward as they pass the overgrown yards.

DETECTIVE (V.O.)

Matches. One double barrel shot
gun. 5 empty shells. Baling wire.
A broken champagne bottle. Two
empty bottles of beer.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

Music drifts out to where they stand on the street from somewhere within the large house.

The boy with the backpack waits at the mailbox as the smaller one walks down the driveway towards the blue Saturn.

The smaller boy waves and calls out for his friend to come closer. The music grows louder so as to drown out all other sound.

Eventually, the boy with the backpack lays both the bikes down on the side of the street and walks towards the front porch, cutting across the grass.

The smaller boy stands near the car, staring at his reflection in the broken driver's side window. He calls out to the boy with the backpack again, then chases after him up towards the house.

EXT. PORCH - DAY

The boy with the backpack picks up a champagne cork as they walk along the sidewalk to the porch. The smaller boy laughs nervously as they get closer.

The boy with the backpack does not take his eyes off what is left of the front door.

Several pieces of wood lie at their feet as they stand under the eave of the house. The boy with the backpack nudges his friend towards the door, but neither one walks inside.

BOY

Hello?

Their bikes remain on the street.

DETECTIVE (V.O.)

A lot of blood. In several rooms.
We have some usable prints.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

Dark shadows still surround most of the living room ahead of them as the boys make their way down the entry way hall. The smashed pieces of a fire alarm lie on the ground.

Inaudible beneath the sound of the music, the boys call out as they walk through the darkened room, the pamphlets hanging at the younger boys' side.

DETECTIVE (V.O.)
(Coughs) No conformation yet on
names. We're working on it. We'll
be here all night.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

The boys walk through the living room as the music grows
louder.

No one responds to their calls.

INT. PARLOR - DAY

A record spins on an old worn out player. The needle is
close to the end as the volume steadily rises.

DETECTIVE (V.O.)
That's all we got right now. Let's
go. Turn this thing off. Fuck.
This is horrible. I think he might
have proposed. (Rattling sounds,
then a burst of sirens. The tape
shuts off.)

The record slows and then stops leaving only the sound of
static as the needle rides the edges before stopping.

The house is completely quiet.

The younger boy sees her first and approaches her body
tentatively. His movements show his fear as he kneels before
her and softly his touches her face.

He turns to call to his friend and Kristen bolts up, her
hands ripping at his shirt.

One of the boys screams.

CUT TO BLACK.

KRISTEN MCKAY WAS BORN ON AUGUST 26TH,
1977.

JAMES HOTOPP WAS BORN ON OCTOBER 12TH,
1975.

ON THE NIGHT OF FEBRUARY 1ST, 2004,
THEY ATTENDED THE WEDDING AND
RECEPTION OF KRISTEN'S COLLEGE
ROOMMATE ELIZABETH BROOKHART BETWEEN
THE HOURS OF 5:30PM - 3:00AM. AFTER
SAYING THEIR GOOD-BYES, THEY RETURNED
TO THE SUMMER HOME OF PRESTON AND MARY
BETH WALKER, JAMES' PARENTS.

THE END