FEAR OF CLOWNS

by

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For more information see:
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INT. BEDROOM - DAY
LYNN, asleep, squirms on the bed. She's early thirties, very pretty, thin-bodied. She MUMBLES in discomfort.

IN HER DREAM

is A YOUNG GIRL in the back seat of a station wagon. She plays with a Barbie, shows it toward CAMERA at the people O.S.

Someone SHOUTS, high-pitched but distorted in a dream-like fashion.

    WOMAN
    Henry, watch out--!

The young girl's eyes move up from her Barbie toward the front of the car--slow, too slow.

EVERYTHING SPEEDS UP, the frame shaking like an epileptic suddenly got hold of the camera.

Only a half-second has passed, but the young girl is now lying sideways on the back seat and her forehead is smeared with blood.

She sits up slowly, dazed. Whatever she sees in the front seat disturbs her. Her lip begins to shake, tears welling in her eyes.

Something pops into her peripheral vision. She turns.

A CLOWN has appeared in the window next to her. He SHOUTS something unintelligible to her, and then RIPS HIS CLOWN FACE OFF to reveal a bloody skull--

The little girl SCREAMS--

--and Lynn bolts upright on her bed, screaming. She stops immediately as she realizes where she is, but it takes her a moment to calm down.

She turns to the clock--it's 5:38.

    LYNN
    Shit.

She jumps up and heads for the shower.

INT. RESTAURANT - EVENING

Small neighborhood diner. Wooden chairs and small tables. Lynn rushes in and spots JULIE sitting alone. She rushes over to join her friend.

    LYNN
    I am so sorry--

    JULIE
(friendly ribbing)
Sure, whatever it is is so important that you don't want to tell me on the phone, but it's not so important you can't be--
(checks watch)--a half hour late.

LYNN
I fell asleep--

JULIE
(pointing at an empty plate)
Look! I finished all the chicken fingers. I'm going to have to go to the bathroom and make myself throw up.

Lynn smirks at her friend and sits down.

LYNN
I need a drink.

She motions for the waitress and orders a glass of red wine.

JULIE
So spill.

LYNN
(swallows, takes a breath)
I'm getting a divorce, Julie.

JULIE
Shut up.

She sees that Lynn's not kidding and her smiles lowers like a draw-bridge.

JULIE
What? Since when?

LYNN
Things have been bad for...about a year now. I guess things have never been that great.

JULIE
Well...I just...why didn't you tell me?

LYNN
You know...you're--

JULIE
Don't even. I'm your friend first.
Lynn
I thought we could work it out. Bert kept making promises and I kept waiting for him to keep them. Guess what I just found out. (doesn't give her a chance)
His ex-wife's name is still on the deed to the house. The house I'm living in. He said as soon as I sold my house and moved in, he'd have it taken off. And you know how I found out her name's still on it?

Julie shakes her head.
Lynn
The internet. I had to find out on the goddamn internet.

She realizes her voice has started to rise in volume, so she takes a sip of her recently-delivered wine, and calms herself.
Lynn
I don't know if that was the final straw. It was everything. Julie, I don't know anything about him. I don't know how much money he makes because he didn't want us to have a joint checking account. He always says he's working late at night but he won't give me a number to call other than his cell phone. And that place...it gives me the creeps.

Julie
It's a sanitarium. They do that.

Lynn
(shrugs, moot point)
I told him I was leaving and that I was taking Nicky. He hit me.

Julie is shocked.
Julie
He...hit you?

Lynn
(nods)
I was packing some things. I said I was taking Nicky and I'd be filing for a divorce. He hit me in
the back of the head.

JULIE
Did you call the police?

LYNN
No. I just wanted to get out of there. That was a month ago.

JULIE
You separated a month ago and didn't tell me?

LYNN
I didn't want to bother you, what with all the stuff you've already got on your plate...

She stops as she sees the look on Julie's face; How Ridiculous.

JULIE
So what are you going to do?

LYNN
Get the divorce. Once I get full custody of Nicky, I'll start trying to reassemble what's left of my life. In California.

JULIE
You're going to move?

LYNN
I told Phillip yesterday. I didn't tell him why.

JULIE
How'd he take it?

LYNN
He was shocked, you know, at first. But he was very supportive as always.

Julie pulls out her cel phone and starts dialing.

JULIE
Okay, the first thing I'm going to do is cancel the exhibit tomorrow night--

LYNN
Nononononono, please Julie.

Julie reluctantly hangs up.
LYNN
You've worked so hard, and to tell you the truth, it'll be good to meet some new people. Take my mind off.

JULIE
Lynn. We'll just postpone it. I don't think it's a good idea for you to be doing an exhibit when you've got this much on your mind.

LYNN
It'll be good. No, great.

JULIE
You sure? Really sure?

LYNN
Really.

JULIE
Where are you staying?

LYNN
A friend of mine is out of the country for a couple months. She said I could stay at her house until I find someplace of my own.

JULIE
What about Nicholas?

LYNN
Every other day. The lawyers had a temporary agreement drawn up.

JULIE
In this state, you'll have no trouble getting sole custody.

LYNN
(nods)
I'm not worried about that. It's just...this can't be my life, Julie. I can't be a divorced mother. I just, I can't.

JULIE
People change, Lynn.

LYNN
(wistful)
I don't think I ever really knew him in the first place...

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT
The moon casts a faint light through the window. Lynn is asleep in her bed, this time without the nightmares.

OUR VIEW

looks down upon her, and for a moment there's the impression that someone is in the bedroom standing over her. But then we

MOVE slowly across the bed toward the window, passing the nightlight plugged into the wall panel, right up to the window and

THROUGH IT

into the dark night. We get a nice bird's eye view of the street.

Pools of black shadow lie everywhere. The houses along the street are all dark grey shapes set against a starless sky. Each house appears very middle-class suburban.

All is quiet. Still.

Across the street from Lynn's, SOMETHING MOVES FROM UNDER THE SHADOW OF A TREE.

Still hidden in the darkness under the leaves, it's impossible to tell what it is. Then THE CLOWN moves into the light and we can see he's got some sort of bag in his hand. The streetlight above catches him in total silhouette, so it's impossible to tell much about him.

And yet, there's something definitely sinister about him. Is it the peculiar sight of a clown standing in a deserted street in the dead of night? Or something else...?

The clown scans the houses across the street and his gaze stops at the house two doors up from Lynn.

He turns to look directly at Lynn's house, and makes a shrugging motion, very much like, "What can I do? My hands are tied."

He moves across the street, taking a new grip on whatever's in the bag, and the bag falls into the street.

He holds a giant axe. Even in the dim light, the silver axe-blade gleams like mercury.

Silently, the house awaits his entrance. Taking his time, he moves toward the door.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

Lynn rushes out of her house, clearly late for something. She stops in confusion as she sees five cop cars and an ambulance
in front of the house two doors down.

A good bunch of the neighbors--moms and kids--stand about in
groups, pointing and asking questions. Lynn goes over to a
neighbor, GALE, a chubby motherly type who's shaking her head
without realizing it.

LYNN
Excuse me...I'm house-sitting for
Margaret. Could you tell me what's
going on?

GALE
(tsks)
Oh it's just awful. If we're not
safe here, where on earth can we
possibly move to?

She tsks again, but otherwise isn't forthcoming.

LYNN
Do you know what happened?

GALE
The Olsons. All of them. Killed
while they slept.

LYNN
Killed?

GALE
Butchered, from what I hear.
(off Lynn's look)
I know. How could something like
that happen here? While we slept?
This is a nice neighborhood.

LYNN
My god...

She breaks it off and shakes her head.

DETECTIVE PETERS, a young guy who looks more like a rock star
incognito, wanders over with a pad of paper.

DETECTIVE PETERS
Morning folks. You all know the
Olsons?

GALE
Of course. Who are you?

DETECTIVE PETERS
Sorry.
(flashes the badge)
Detective Peters. Homicide, of
course. Either of you happen to
hear or see anything unusual last night?

GALE
Why yes.
(Peters is interested)
There was a carfull of raving psychopaths parked in front of the house about midnight, but I figured if we left them alone, they'd go away.

Detective Peters is put off by the sarcasm coming from someone who appears so motherly. He looks to Lynn, who smiles uncomfortably.

DETECTIVE PETERS
Maam. I need to know if you saw anything out of the ordinary last night, or heard anything.

GALE
Don't you think I'd have called the police in that case?

DETECTIVE PETERS
Maybe. Maybe not. It might not have struck you as strange at the time, but maybe now, with what's happened...

LYNN
What exactly happened?

DETECTIVE PETERS
(not particularly sympathetic)
Your neighbors have been murdered. I can't tell you any more than that right now.

He hands them both a card.

DETECTIVE PETERS
If something comes to you, give me a ring huh?

GALE
That's all? That's all the questions you're going to ask?

DETECTIVE PETERS
Oh hey. Sorry. Did either of you happen to kill the Olsons?

Gale is not amused. Lynn's watching them carry a bodybag on a stretcher out of the Olsons' house. Something about the
sight has trapped her gaze.

DETECTIVE PETERS
(didn't really need
an answer anyway)
Okay. Thanks. One of my guys will
be over to take your names.

LYNN
Detective? I'm sorry, I'm already
late.

(she digs in her
purse and pulls out
a card)
This has my name and cel phone
number on it. I'm...house sitting
here for the next couple of weeks.

DETECTIVE PETERS
(looking at the card)
An artist, huh? You don't much
look like an artist.

GALE
Says the rock-star detective.

Peters spares her a glance, but ignores her. The way Lynn
stumbled over the half-lie seems to have caught the
detective's attention.

DETECTIVE PETERS
How long you been...house sitting?

LYNN
About four, no, five nights.

DETECTIVE PETERS
(nods his head)
I may have to come by later and
ask you a few questions, Miss...
(checks the card
again)
Blodgett.

LYNN
Sure, I understand.

(beat)
Oh, no! I'm sorry, I've got an
exhibit tonight, so I won't be
back at all today. Tomorrow should
be fine though.

GALE
Why don't you leave her alone? Do
you think she did it? Is that what
your keen detective mind is
telling you?
The detective turns a bemused smile on Gale.

DETECTIVE PETERS
Wow. You're Miss Cleaver on the outside, but the inside's a real bitch, ain't it?

GALE
Ex-cuse me?

DETECTIVE PETERS
I guess I'm not so good with the sarcastic reh-par-tee.

He stumbles over the word like it's too hard to wrap his tongue around, but there's a quiet intelligence in his eyes. An intelligence that just filed Gale under "B" for bitch.

He wanders off shaking his head.

GALE
His superior's going to hear about this.

LYNN
(rushing off)
Well, it was nice meeting you, I'm really really late now.

GALE
(calls after her)
I'm Gale. Gale Wroten.

Lynn waves back without looking and hightails it to the car.

INT. GALLERY - DAY

The gallery looks new. Shiny hardwood floors. Small rooms showcase paintings on the wall, with new wave furniture awaiting the pretentious ass of some wannabe art critic.

Lynn rushes in. AMANDA, 23, steps out with a clipboard. She's cute in a mousy, Lisa Loeb kind of way.

AMANDA
Lynn, hey.

LYNN
Sorry I'm late. You'll never believe the morning I'm having.

AMANDA
No worries. Everything's going pretty hokay. OOPS still hasn't delivered two of the pieces, but everything else is here.
LYNN
Phil around?

AMANDA
Yup.

As if he heard, PHILLIP REID rounds the corner. He's kind-faced, late thirties, dressed in an old-fashioned brown suit-and-vest. He's got the makings of a slight gut.

PHILLIP
Lynn, some of these new pieces are amazing! You've been doing great work lately. Fabulous stuff.

LYNN
Thanks, Phil. And thank you so much for this.

PHILLIP
It's my pleasure.
(takes on an aristocratic air)
You know how prestigious it is to once again be showcasing the great Lynn Blodgett at my gallery.

LYNN
Oh, please.

PHILLIP
If Picasso were still alive, I'd turn him down to get you.

AMANDA
Ass kisser.

LYNN
Well, thanks. It means a lot to me.

PHILLIP
What do you think? Should we expect a crowd tonight?

AMANDA
I think you'll be pleasantly surprised...

On Lynn's questioning look...

INT. GALLERY - NIGHT

Same place, plus a hundred people. No one speaks loud. It's all QUIET MURMURS over wine or mixed drinks.

Lynn's standing against a back wall with Amanda. She looks
LYNN
(quiet)
How...on earth...did you get all these people here?

AMANDA
WWW dot I hate clowns dot com. I posted it on their message board.

LYNN
But...if they hate clowns, why would they come?

AMANDA
It's a love-hate thing.

Lynn shakes her head; she doesn't understand, but who's complaining?

She touches Amanda's arm to signal that she's moving. She begins to weave aimlessly among the people, pausing just long enough to catch whether they like her stuff or not. Most seem to.

INTO ANOTHER ROOM

not as crowded as the main room. A COUPLE murmurs about the painting in front of them, while across the room is TUCK, 28. He's dark-skinned Latino, dressed like a model. He's staring deeply at one of Lynn's clown paintings.

She sidles up, trying to be sly.

LYNN
So what do you think?

TUCK
(sparres her a quick look, then back to the painting)
I'm not an art critic or anything...

LYNN
Who is?

TUCK
(nods, then back to the painting)
It's okay. I don't know what the clown fetish is all about--I think the artist has issues.

Lynn smiles. Not what she expected to hear.
LYNN
(good-natured)
Oh?

TUCK
Well...they're clowns, for chrissakes.

But hers are all so...scary. Did you see the one where you walk in? I think I remember that one from Stephen King's It.

Lynn smiles. She's looking forward to embarrassing him when she introduces herself.

LYNN
But you're no art critic.

TUCK
No. Tucker Flynn. My friends call me Tuck.

He extends his hand.

LYNN
Lynn--

TUCK
--Blodgett, I know.
 (mischievous smile)
 I saw your picture in the program.

She smiles and reappraises him.

TUCK
I didn't want to blow your cover. Not right away anyway.

LYNN
So what do you really think?

TUCK
They're good. I mean...they're great.
 (the smile returns)
 You've still got issues, but...I think they're phenomenal.

She can tell he's sincere about his appreciation. She's touched.

LYNN
Thanks. You from the web site?

TUCK
Web site?

LYNN
Oh, nothing. What made you stop by tonight?

TUCK
This is the best gallery in Baltimore. I've bought a couple of pieces here.

LYNN
Anything of mine?

TUCK
No. Honestly, I never noticed your stuff before, but I'll definitely be keeping my eye out now.

There are serious looks going on between them, a quick chemistry that seems to be catching Lynn off guard.

LYNN
Well...I hope you have a good time.

She starts to move off.

TUCK
Hey. You wanna--
(shrugs)
--maybe go out and get a drink later?

LYNN
Uh---

Is she searching for an excuse or thinking about accepting? She's married, she can't be going out on dates.

LYNN
It's just a bad time.

He smiles his understanding.

TUCK
Sure. No problem.

She turns to move off.

TUCK
How 'bout tomorrow?

She stops.

LYNN
It's complicated.
TUCK
Oh.

LYNN
I'm married.

TUCK
(sudden understanding)
Oooh...

LYNN
I mean, I'm separated.

TUCK
(no problem then)
Oh. Great. I mean, not great like I'm happy about it---
(realizes he's screwing up)
Hi. I'm Tuck. I'll be right back.

He heads over to the nearest tuxedo's waiter and grabs a champagne glass. He holds it up to toast Lynn, then downs it in one swallows.

Then he grabs two others off the tray and returns to Lynn.

TUCK
I thought if it didn't cost too much, I could get a guided tour of your work.

Lynn smiles at his persistance. There's something immaturity endearing about him. His smile is contagious.

She takes the drink.

LYNN
I could probably put it on your tab.

Tuck's glad she's going along for the ride. He steps up to the painting in front of them.

TUCK
Take this one. I notice that this clown seems to be in a lot of your paintings. What's the significance?

The more astute viewers will recognize the clown as the one from the dream in the beginning. In the painting, he's staring out at us with a look of sinister intent. He's in a stark white hallway with strange objects on the wall.

She stares at it intently, as if she's never seen it before,
as if she's falling into it.

An excited Amanda pops up behind her, saving her from answering.

AMANDA
Boss. The mayor is here.

LYNN
The mayor? Of the city?

AMANDA
No, of Sesame Street.
(notices Tuck)
Who's the hunk?

Lynn's still shocked about the mayor thing, but not so much that she can't be embarrassed too.

LYNN
Sorry. Tuck, this is my number one cheerleader, Amanda. She created my web site and does all my other promotion for me.

Tuck smiles at her ga-ga expression.

TUCK
Nice to meet you.

AMANDA
Um hmmm. I'd like to shake my bon bons all over your--

LYNN
Amanda. Go tell Phillip I'll be right over.

AMANDA
Okay.

She gives Tuck one last lascivious look, and then she's off.

LYNN
Sorry about that.

TUCK
It's flattering.

LYNN
I guess I should go say hi to the mayor.

TUCK
Is he really here, or is that just a ploy you two use to impress people?
LYNN
I think he's really here.

TUCK
Impressive. Can I get your autograph later?

LYNN
Sure. Hang around. I'll be back.

She gives him a fleeting smile and walks away. As soon as her back is turned to him, she makes a face. What the hell is she doing?

And then her expression turns to dismayed shock.

BERT, her soon-to-be ex-husband, rounds the corner, a wine glass in hand.

BERT
Lynn! There you are.

LYNN
(quiet)
What the hell are you doing here?

BERT
What? What's the matter?

LYNN
Who's watching Nicky?

BERT
He's in great hands, don't worry.

LYNN
So why are you here, Bert?

BERT
I came to see your new exhibit, of course.

LYNN
Bert. What the hell is wrong with you? We're not friends.
(as if he's forgotten)
You filed for divorce.

BERT
Only because you were going to.

LYNN
We're not doing this here. Please leave.

BERT
Don't get all apoplectic on me. I didn't realize you'd get so upset.

LYNN
Why wouldn't I? This is an important night for me.

BERT
All right. I'll go.

LYNN
Thanks.

He takes a final sip of his drink before putting it down.

BERT
I'll call you later.

He's gone before he can see the look of disgust that crosses Lynn's face.

She takes a calming breath before she goes looking for the mayor.

INT. GALLERY - LATER

The crowd is mostly gone. Lynn's walking through room after room. She's looking for Tuck, but trying not to act like it.

Room after room (and blank spaces reveal that the gallery was successful in moving some of her paintings) and no Tuck. She's starting to get discouraged.

She comes back around to the front counter and there he is talking with Phil. Lynn suppresses a smile.

PHILLIP
Here she comes!

TUCK
Can I get that autograph now?

He lifts something from the counter that was hidden behind his body. It's one of Lynn's paintings.

LYNN
But...that's...

PHILLIP
Your new admirer just purchased your most expensive piece, my dear.

LYNN
That's eight thousand dollars...

TUCK
And worth every penny. When it's
worth two-hundred grand, you'll beg to buy it back.
(to Phillip)
Go ahead and wrap it up. I'll get her to autograph it once it's hanging up in my house.

Phillip doesn't get it for a moment. Then he sees the blush on Lynn's cheek. He gets it.

PHILLIP
Oh. Oh...of course.

He begins wrapping as Lynn and Tuck exchange looks.

LYNN
Do you mind me asking what you do, Tuck?

TUCK
Wanna see?

LYNN
(playful flirting)
I think that would depend on what it is you do.

PHILLIP
I'm just, uh, I've got to get some tape from the other room.

Clearly uncomfortable with their flirting, he goes into another room.

TUCK
Seriously. You want to see what I do, my office isn't very far away.

LYNN
Okay. But only because you just paid my rent for three months.
(louder toward the other room)
Phillip, I'll be back soon. I'm going to see Mr. Flynn's office.

EXT. GALLERY

Tuck escorts Lynn outside and opens the passenger door of his Porsche. He shuts the door after she pulls her legs in.

ACROSS THE STREET

in the shadows of an alley stands a man. He watches as Tuck gets in the Porsche, starts it and drives away.
As it exits the scene, the man steps forward to watch its progress. We see it's Bert, a menacing scowl on his face.

INT. TUCK'S OFFICE - LATER

Tuck lets Lynn into the office. She takes a look around as he goes to the alarm and turns it off. The office is very nice. Clean, well-organized, tastefully decorated.

TUCK
This is my office.

It's big. She walks down the hall, Tuck following behind her, indulging her whim to lead.

LYNN
So...what do you do?

TUCK
Look at the pictures.

She's been walking by the pictures on the wall, but now she stops to take a better look. The pictures seem to be of elaborate roller coasters at various theme parks.

LYNN
I still don't get it.

TUCK
My company designs roller coasters. Disney, King's Dominion, Busch Gardens, you name it. I've got a coaster there.

Lynn's impressed.

LYNN
How old are you?

TUCK
Old enough to pick touch football over tackle.

LYNN
Why don't you want to tell me?

TUCK
How old are you?

LYNN
(smiles)
Touche.

She's peering close to one picture. It shows some crazy sumbitch standing on the highest point of a tall roller coaster, no car.
TUCK
That's me.

LYNN
No.

She looks closer. It's a far off shot, but it sure looks like it could be him.

TUCK
Every time they finish a new coaster of mine, I like to stand at the highest point.

LYNN
You're out of your mind.

TUCK
(shrugs)
I'm a thrill seeker, what can I say?

The playful smile never leaves his face. She's clearly amazed at the guts it takes to do what he does.

Tuck leans in close over her shoulder as she stares at another picture.

TUCK
Impressed?

She's not spooked by how close he is. She doesn't want to let on that she's impressed though.

LYNN
I don't really like roller coasters.

He's non-plussed. He moves past her down the hall toward an exit door.

TUCK
How do you feel about...

He opens the door and flips on the light. It's a giant game room. A pool table in the center. A twenty foot shuffleboard game to the side. A big screen TV in the corner with a sofa in front of it. A refrigerator, the works.

TUCK
...shuffleboard?

She follows him into the room. It's getting harder and harder to hide being impressed.

TUCK
Can I get you a beer?
He's at the fridge. Lynn has a moment. Put a halt to it right now, before it all gets out of hand. The reasons are many: In the middle of a divorce, Tuck is younger than she is, she's got a kid. She doesn't even really know this guy.

LYNN
Sure.

TUCK
(as he's getting them)
So how'd you get set up at the gallery?

LYNN
Oh, Phillip owns it.

TUCK
Seems awfully young to own an art gallery, doesn't he? I picture gallery owners as, you know, over fifty.

LYNN
He inherited it when his parents died.

(sheepish)
It seems funny now, but I actually met him...on the internet. An art forum.

When he found out I was in the same city, and a painter...he offered to take a look at my stuff.

TUCK
I guess he liked it.

LYNN
(nods)
We've had a bunch of showings, but none went like tonight.

For a second she looks like she thinks she shouldn't have said that. She breaks eye contact, but quickly looks back and smiles.

TUCK
So how about a game of pool?

EXT. TUCK'S OFFICE - LATER
Tuck locks up the office behind them as they leave.

TUCK
Not to sound sexist, but for a girl, you're pretty good at pool.
LYNN
Not to sound sexist?

TUCK
Yeah, that's why I prefaced it that way.

From around a bush steps a MUGGER. He's mean-faced and alert.
All business.

MUGGER
Gimme your money.

Tuck moves protectively in front of Lynn. The mugger's not intimidated, more interested in Lynn.

MUGGER
Gimme the purse and there won't be no trouble.

Tuck eyes the mugger for a moment, then holds his hand out to Lynn. She gives him the purse.

He tosses it to the mugger, who catches it in his knifeless hand. The mugger reaches in, pulls out the wallet and pockets it. He smiles a little more confidently.

MUGGER
What else she got?

TUCK
You got the money. Get out of here.

MUGGER
I think you best run off, loverboy. I'll see her home.

TUCK
Take the easy score. It's all downhill from here.

The mugger edges in. Tuck pushes Lynn back farther.

TUCK
(never taking his eyes off the mugger)
When you get the chance Lynn, throw a rock at my office window.

The mugger rushes. He feints and slashes across Tuck's stomach. Tuck jumps back, but there's a rip across his shirt now.

Holding the knife up, the mugger admires the thin red coat now along one side.
MUGGER
Wanna reconsider, loverboy?

Nothing from Tuck. Still riveted on the mugger.

The mugger takes two steps and jabs the knife. Tuck steps to the side, grabs the mugger's hand and jams an elbow into his side.

The instant Tuck grabs the mugger's arm, LYNN HURLS HER KEYCHAIN, five pounds of keys, at the office door. It doesn't shatter the window, but spider-web cracks appear and a LOUD ALARM BEGINS GOING OFF inside.

When Tuck elbows the mugger, he drops the knife. Tuck uses his weight to whirl the mugger away from him, causing him to tumble off balance and fall. A METALLIC CLATTER as a gun falls out of the mugger's waistband.

The mugger snatches the gun.

    TUCK
Run!

Lynn and Tuck run off toward the end of the building.

The mugger briefly points his gun at the fleeing couple, but something keeps him from firing. He's pissed. He spares one irritated glance toward where the alarm is WAILING, and he runs off in the other direction.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CAR - LATER

Tuck's car pulls up in front of the house Lynn's staying in. Lynn, exhausted, doesn't move to open the door right away. She stares at the house.

    TUCK
You sure you're all right? I can take you to a friend's house...

    LYNN
I'm okay. You're the one who got stabbed.

    TUCK
Slashed, not stabbed. I've done worse shaving.

Lynn nods absently as if she's not even listening. She reaches for the door handle.

    LYNN
Well...good night.
Hey.

He grabs her arm gently.

I'll call you tomorrow.

She barely nods, gets out of the car and walks to her house. Tuck waits until she's in the house before he pulls away.

INT. HOUSE

Lynn leans back against the front door and closes her eyes. Exhausted. With the mugging on top of her exhibit, it's just too much. She's ready to drop.

She trudges into the kitchen and pours herself a glass of wine. The PHONE RINGS.

She spares a look at the clock--pretty late for a call--and picks up the phone.

Hello?

Behind her, something outside moves past the kitchen windows.

You've had me worried sick. I've called ten times since eleven o'clock.

But...why?

You leave the exhibit with some strange man you don't even know, and you wonder why I'm worrying?

You're right. I'm sorry.

Where have you been all this time?
Lynn notices the tapping. She moves into the television room. The tapping seems to be coming from outside the sliding glass door.

LYNN
Long story. Long long story.

She can't see anything outside the window, it's so dark.

LYNN
You'll never believe what happened.

She flicks on the lightswitch next to the door.

The clown stands there revealed in the light. Like Lynn's worst nightmare, like the clown in the painting Tuck pointed out, the one that Lynn paints often, the one from her dream.

His pupil-less eyes, however, are black as night. The soulless eyes of a shark.

He's staring right at Lynn.

PHILLIP (PHONE)
What? What happened?

The clown cocks his head and leans closer, his breath fogging the glass. Lynn faints, the phone dropping uselessly to the rug.

With a rumble, the sliding glass door opens to the clown's pull. He steps inside the house.

PHILLIP (PHONE)
Lynn? Hello?

FADE OUT:

From the BLACK comes voices. Echoes, distant and distorted.

VOICE
(coming into focus)
Can you hear me? Miss Blodgett, can you open your eyes?

LYNN'S POV
as she opens her eyes. Someone's leaning over her waving something under her nose. It's a MEDIC.

MEDIC
You with me now?

LYNN
Yes...
She sits up with his help.

**MEDIC**
Do you feel okay? Does anything hurt?

**LYNN**
No. I don't think so.

**MEDIC**
Did you hit your head when you fell?

Lynn sees there's a COP standing behind the medic listening. His presence distracts her for a moment.

**LYNN**
Uh...no. I don't think so.

**MEDIC**
Do you want to go to the hospital?

**LYNN**
No. I'm all right.

The medic nods and begins to pack up his things as Lynn moves to a chair. The cop steps forward.

**COP**
So what happened?

**LYNN**
I--

(the remembrance floods back)

--there was someone standing outside my back door.

**COP**
Right here?

He points to the sliding glass door which is open about two inches.

**LYNN**
Yes.

**COP**
It was open when we got here.

Lynn's eyes widen. It was open? It--the clown--came into the house?

**COP**
We'll search the house. I don't think anyone else is here though.
LYNN
How did you know to come?

COP
A friend of yours called. Said he was talking to you on the phone and it sounded like you collapsed. Can you describe the guy that was outside your door?

LYNN
He was dressed like a clown.

COP
What? A what?

There's a TAP on the front screen door. They look to see Detective Peters letting himself in.

COP
(to Lynn)
'Scuse me a minute.

He intercepts Peters before he can make it over. There's HUSHED CONVERSATION between them ending in a questioning glance to the cop, who shrugs.

Detective Peters comes over and sits down across from Lynn.

LYNN
Don't you ever sleep?

DETECTIVE PETERS
Not so much. You say you saw someone outside?

LYNN
Yes. Right outside the glass when I turned on the light.

DETECTIVE PETERS
And was he black or white?

LYNN
He was a clown.

DETECTIVE PETERS
A clown?

LYNN
Yes.

DETECTIVE PETERS
There was a clown standing outside your window at one a.m.?
(knowing how it sounds)
Yes.

DETECTIVE PETERS
Was he lost? Wandered away from Barnum & Bailey's and got trapped in suburbia?

She says nothing, just glares back at him. He purses his lips thoughtfully.

DETECTIVE PETERS
This a P.R. stunt?

LYNN
(confused)
What?

DETECTIVE PETERS
I know what you do, Miss Blodgett. (off of her "so what?" look)
You paint pictures. Of clowns. This some kind of publicity stunt?

LYNN
Does it look like a publicity stunt?

DETECTIVE PETERS
No. But looks can be deceiving.

LYNN
(getting mad)
That's great. How profound. I'd like you to leave.

DETECTIVE PETERS
No need to be rude.

The cop catches his eye.

COP
The house is all clear.

Peters nods.

DETECTIVE PETERS
I'm just saying, if this is some stunt, it's a serious crime to call the police.

LYNN
I didn't call the police.

DETECTIVE PETERS
I know, I know. Your friend did. The guy that owns a gallery full of your clown paintings.

He stands up.

DETECTIVE PETERS
I'll be talking to you soon. I've got some other questions.

Lynn doesn't say anything. She follows them to the door.

DETECTIVE PETERS
'Night.

Lynn shuts the door without a word. She stands there, the thoughts running wild through her exhausted head.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. GALLERY - DAY

Lynn walks in, holding hands with her son NICHOLAS, aka Nicky. He's about five years old.

Phillip, Amanda, and MR. PARRISH turn from one of Lynn's paintings toward her. Mr. Parrish is a distinguished older man, dressed very well and holding a cane, though he doesn't appear to need it.

LYNN
Hey...what's going on?

MR. PARRISH
Have you ever been spanked by a clown, Miss Blodgett?

Lynn doesn't know whether to laugh or be offended.

LYNN
Excuse me?

Mr. Parrish hands her a photograph. In the photo is a clown mugging for the camera with a bunch of kids at a birthday party.

MR. PARRISH
My father. He used to be a clown for neighborhood birthday parties. A very strange thing. This man who brings joy and smiles to everyone around him...is also the man who comes home and spanks you...hits you with his hand or his belt. Not happy to do it, mind you, but doing his duty as a father punishing a son.
Lynn's listening patiently, but can't see where he's going.

MR. PARRISH
You paint magnificently. I don't like the ones with the frightening clowns though. I don't know why you waste your time with those. But the ones like this...

He points to the one they were all admiring when Lynn came in. The clown in the painting gazes sadly on the wilted flower in his hand.

MR. PARRISH
Incredible. Perfect. His expression...I want you to capture that for me.

LYNN
I'm sorry, Mr...

MR. PARRISH
Parrish. Endle Parrish.

LYNN
I'm sorry, Mr. Parrish, I don't know what you're talking about.

MR. PARRISH
I want you to paint a picture of my father. I want you to show me a clown saddened that he has to spank his son.

Lynn's expression says it all. How strange. Lynn looks to Phillip or Amanda for support. Neither says anything, but they're smiling. Like something else is coming.

LYNN
Mr. Parrish, I'm sorry but I don't do commission pieces. I'm not even sure I could--

MR. PARRISH
Ten thousand dollars. Cash if you'd like.

She's speechless for a moment. Even Phillip and Amanda are shocked. They knew the guy was loaded, but that's more than even they expected.

LYNN
I don't, I mean, I could sell you that one for a lot less.

MR. PARRISH
No. It has to look like my father. I want an original painting of my father and I need it in three days.

LYNN
That's just impossible. I can recommend a number of excellent painters--

MR. PARRISH
No. It must be you.

LYNN
I'm sorry, I can't do it.

MR. PARRISH
Twenty thousand dollars. That's my final offer.

LYNN
You don't understand--

PHILLIP
Lynn, could we speak to you for a moment?

LYNN
(to Amanda regarding Nick)
Can you keep an eye on him?

Amanda nods. Nicky's happy playing with his action figures on a bench.

Phillip pulls her into the other room, leaving Mr. Parrish to gaze at her paintings.

LYNN
I can't, Phillip. I don't have the time right now.

PHILLIP
Make the time. You can't be too busy for that kind of money.

LYNN
I am. I'm getting divorced. That's why I'm going to move. Get away, get a new start.

He doesn't act surprised. Either that, or he doesn't think it matters.

PHILLIP
You've got to think this through, Lynn. Can you imagine what this is going to do for your other
paintings? For your reputation? Once people hear Mr. Parrish paid twenty thousand for one of your paintings, it will open the flood gates. You won't be consigned to showing your paintings in my gallery...you'll be all over the country.

Lynn's starting to see the picture.

LYNN
I'm not sure I can do it.

PHILLIP
Of course you can.

She's not so sure. She gives him one more unsure look before going back into the other room.

MR. PARRISH
You'll do it?

LYNN
I can't promise you I'll get it done.

He ignores her.

MR. PARRISH
(handing her the photo again)
Excellent. My phone number is on the back. Call me when you've finished and let me know how you'd like the payment.

She takes it. Mr. Parrish hangs the cane on the crook of his arm, and if he had a hat, he'd probably doff it.

MR. PARRISH
Good day.

He swaggers out.

AMANDA
(in awe)
Twenty thousand dollars...that'll buy a lot of bandwidth.

Neither Phillip nor Lynn know what she's talking about.

AMANDA
Tres geek, huh?

LYNN
Yeah.
PHILLIP
What happened last night? I called the police but wouldn't tell me anything.

LYNN
I'm sorry. I don't even know where to start.

AMANDA
(totally in the dark)
What? What happened?

LYNN
You'll never believe it...get me some coffee and I'll tell you about it.

EXT. BASEMENT - DAY

The backyard of a run-down house. Concrete stairs lead down the back to a basement door.

A noise. Like a MUFFLED SHOUT followed by a dull THWACK. It's coming from inside the house.

INT. BASEMENT

The basement is dark and bare, undecorated cinderblock walls. The concrete floor is uncarpeted. A thin mattress sits in the corner surrounded by opened soda cans and other trash. The windows are covered so that the only light is from a bulb in the ceiling.

A simple wooden table stands in the center of the room, an answering machine sitting on top of it. Next to the table is a wooden stump.

The clown, breathing heavily, holds an axe.

No warning. He swings the axe into the stump as hard as he can, YELLING like a savage.

CLOWN
GEEEEEENNHHHHHT!

He pulls the axe out, mumbling as he exhales from the effort.

CLOWN
--better.

Again he swings the axe, again the YELL.

CLOWN
GET!
Pulls it out.

CLOWN

Better.

Over and over again, reciting the litany, a cruel smile on his face.

INT. GALLERY - LATER

Lynn and her friends have retired to the more comfortable reception area. Nick has his action figures battling underneath the magazine table.

LYNN
The police took our statements, but it didn't seem like they thought they'd catch him.

AMANDA
That's a really nice area. I can't believe someone mugged you.

PHILLIP
What happened when I called you?

Lynn has an internal debate. She decides to spare herself the embarrassment of the clown story.

LYNN
I don't know. I guess it all just caught up to me. I must have passed out.

AMANDA
You passed out? What's that like?

LYNN
It felt a lot like hitting the floor.

PHILLIP
You need to take it easy, Lynn. And I don't think that includes leaving with strange men at night.

LYNN
Is that you, dad?

AMANDA
He's right. You should stay away from that guy.

(beat)
Give me his phone number and I'll pass him the message.

Lynn smirks at her.
LYNN
Anyway. I have to get going to the mediation. You're sure you're all right with watching Nicky for an hour?

AMANDA
Not a problem. I don't have class until four.

LYNN
Great. Thanks a lot.

AMANDA
Don't thank me. I'm billing you.

PHILLIP
What exactly is supposed to happen at this mediation?

LYNN
(shrugs)
I'm not sure. I think we have to sit down and decide who gets what, and what his visitation rights are going to be.

INT. MEDIATION ROOM - DAY
A sterile meeting room with a lacquered table and office chairs. There's a sweating metal pitcher of water at the center of the table.

LYNN
Are you out of your fucking mind?

Lynn and her lawyer MARTY are on one side, Bert and his lawyer OSBOURNE across from them. The MEDIATOR, a man with a wooden face, sits at the head of the table.

MEDIATOR
Mind the language please.

OSBOURNE
That's what we want. Sole custody of Nicholas. Half of the ownership of every painting you've created since you married, or half the price if you've sold them already. You can keep your car. Bert won't ask for any palimony, but you'll have to pay child support.
Lynn looks at Marty in disbelief, then back at Bert.

LYNN
You can kiss my ass.

MEDIATOR
Miss Blodgett, that's not helpful.

OSBOURNE
And please direct your comments to me.

LYNN
Why? Is he too chickenshit to talk to me?

(shakes her head)
I can't believe I'm hearing this. Marty?

Marty seems like more of your public defender type attorney.

MARTY
That's not going to fly, guys. Lynn gets sole custody. Full alimony and child support. Bert can keep his house--

OSBOURNE
The house was his before the marriage. It's not in her name at all. Our terms aren't negotiable, Marty.

Your client has no home--very unstable for the child. If she tries to buy one before the divorce goes through, we'll pursue half of it.

LYNN
(to Bert)
Oh my God...

Osbourne tries a sympathetic smile and fails.

OSBOURNE
(to Marty)
You don't want to play hardball with me. I'm short stop in the majors, and you couldn't play outfield in the minors.

Marty knows he's outclassed.

MARTY
We just want a fair deal,
Osbourne. That's all we're looking for.

OSBOURNE
We're offering you a fair deal.

MARTY
He wants her to pay child support? He's a doctor, for godsakes.

OSBOURNE
He's been unemployed for over six months.

LYNN
What? What's he been doing?

OSBOURNE
It's not your business.

LYNN
It's not my business? He's still my husband, you son of a bitch. Where has he been going everyday?

MEDIATOR
Please, Miss--

LYNN
No! I want an answer. Where the hell has my husband been going everyday for the past six months if he wasn't going to work?

MEDIATOR
Okay, let's call it a day.

Lynn slams her hand on the table.

LYNN
Bullshit!

Marty touches her arm and raises his eyebrows to let her know she's getting out of line. She takes a moment to calm down.

MEDIATOR
Let's meet Monday after everyone's had a chance to cool down.

MARTY
(before Lynn can speak)
Sounds good.

He reaches across to shake Osbourne's hand, but Osbourne only nods and begins packing his papers into his briefcase.
OSBOURNE
I'll fax our terms to your office.
You do have a fax machine?

MARTY
Of course.

Osbourne nods and guides Bert out of the office. Neither meet Lynn's smoldering gaze.

LYNN
You really stuck it to him, Marty.

He's surprised by her attack.

MARTY
What? What do you mean?

Lynn doesn't respond. She fights back tears.

LYNN
I'm not losing Nicholas. I can't lose him.

MARTY
It'll be all right. We'll get him.

She doesn't look reassured.

INT. BASEMENT - DAY

It's the dark basement again. Same table. Same answering machine on the table, but the red light is blinking now.

The clown stands in front of the table staring at the light. The red casts a dull reflection in his black eyes.

He pushes the button. The voice that issues from the machine is deep and electronically altered.

VOICE (FROM MACHINE)
You want to get better, don't you?

The clown nods imperceptibly.

VOICE (FROM MACHINE)
You are getting better. Not much longer and you'll be cured. But first...take the van.

CLOWN
The murder van...

There's a pause as the voice seems to consider this. Is it an answering machine or some kind of intercom?
VOICE (FROM MACHINE)
Do not kill her. Follow her. Frighten her. Make her doubt her own sanity. But do not harm her...yet. Let no one else see you. Go.

The clown turns and leaves.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

Lynn walks in, her cell phone to her ear.

LYNN
I'm not kidding you. He's going for full custody, Julie. He wants me to pay him.

JULIE (PHONE)
That bastard.

LYNN
God, I feel like I'm having a nervous breakdown. I'm telling you...there was a clown outside my door last night.

JULIE (PHONE)
You said that. You were probably just exhausted.

LYNN
I feel like I'm living in a nightmare, Julie.

JULIE (PHONE)
Just take some deep breaths. So what are you going to do?

LYNN
I'm going to paint that picture for Mr. Parrish. Then I'm going to use that money to hire the best attorney in town to kick his lawyer's ass!

JULIE (PHONE)
That a girl!

LYNN
Hey, I got someone calling on the other line, could be my lawyer. Can I call you back later?

JULIE (PHONE)
Sure thing. Talk to you soon.
LYNN
Bye.
(clicks a button)
Hello?

TUCK (PHONE)
Lynn. It's Tuck.

Lynn smiles. Even with the events of the day, Tuck can bring a smile to her face. She's got it bad for him.

LYNN
Hi. How are you?

TUCK (PHONE)
I was gonna ask you the same thing.

LYNN
I'm okay. I mean, about last night. It's just, well there's other stuff--

TUCK (PHONE)
Wanna go get a bite to eat?

She's tempted, but there's so much to do.

LYNN
I'd like to, but--

There's a KNOCK on the door.

LYNN
Hold on a minute.

She goes to the door and opens it. Tuck's standing there, his cel phone to his ear. He's got his mischievous smile in place.

TUCK
(into phone)
Hey Lynn, can I call you back?

Lynn smiles and plays his game.

LYNN
(into phone)
Sure.

They both hang up. Lynn opens the screen door for him.

TUCK
So I was thinking...the circus is in town and if you wanted to go see some friendly clowns for once...

That idea doesn't thrill Lynn.
LYNN
I don't think so.

TUCK
Why are you so afraid of clowns?

LYNN
I'm not afraid of them.

TUCK
You are too.

LYNN
I am not. Just because I paint them--

TUCK
Just because you paint scary clowns. Only scary clowns.

Lynn walks away, picks her mail off the table and busies herself sorting it.

LYNN
That doesn't mean I'm scared of them.

TUCK
What does it mean then?

That stumps Lynn.

TUCK
It's okay. There's even a word for it. Coulrophobia.

LYNN
Coulrophobia?

TUCK
Fear of clowns. Lot of people have it.

LYNN
Really?

TUCK
I'm not smart enough to make up a word like that.

LYNN
So what are you afraid of?

He takes a moment. A playful smile on his face. Weighing the moment; to tell the truth or lie?
TUCK
Silence. Being alone.

He's still smiling. But something in his eyes is daring her to understand his words.

LYNN
Lots of people feel that way. So how could you possibly be alone?

He doesn't answer.

TUCK
Want to do something strange?

LYNN
That's a loaded question.

TUCK
You like to take pictures?

LYNN
Sure. I do a lot of photo-referencing.

TUCK
Grab your camera. Come on.

Again, she knows she shouldn't be doing it. There's something about him that draws her though. Like a moth to the flame.

LYNN
Okay. Just let me call Amanda first...

EXT. HOUSE

Today, Tuck has his motorcycle, a sleek black machine that looks built for speed.

LYNN
On that?

TUCK
Perfectly safe.

He hands her a helmet. He hops on and helps her mount the bike behind him.

TUCK
Hold on.

He starts the motorcycle and ROARS off, Lynn gripping him tightly around the waist.

Behind them, a van with tinted-black windows starts up and pulls out.
EXT. WOODS - DAY

Tuck pulls his cycle into a cul-de-sac off of the main road. A high fence runs the entire length of the road, but there's a hole in it where it curves for the cul-de-sac.

He helps Lynn off and stacks the helmets on the back.

TUCK
Come on.

He leads her to the hole and helps her climb through.

Once through, they're in a wooded area. Lots of trees and ivy and overgrowth.

Tuck takes her hand and leads her.

EXT. LAND OF MYTH

They emerge from the woods into a huge clear area. Everywhere you look is the remnants of what used to be a theme park devoted to fairy tales.

A plastic statue of Jack (no sign of Jill) lies on the ground covered by weeds. A tall beanstalk like the one Jack might have climbed (had his been made of metal) creeps up to the sky but doesn't go as far as it used to. A castle that was once pristine is falling to ruin and ivy threatens to pull down its every wall.

LYNN
Where are we?

TUCK
It was called The Land Of Myth. They closed it down about fifteen years ago.

LYNN
Oh my God...I've been here. As a kid.

TUCK
Me too. It was popular for a while.

As they talk, they're walking through what's left of the displays. Lynn begins taking pictures.

TUCK
Kind of creepy now, isn't it?

LYNN
Tell you the truth, I thought it was kind of creepy back then.
TUCK
You did?

LYNN
Something about it gave me the willies. But now, to see it like this...why did they leave everything here?

TUCK
Don't know. Maybe it was hard to move. Maybe no one wanted it.

She keeps snapping pics.

TUCK
We'll have to compare pictures sometime.

LYNN
You take pictures?

TUCK
Yep. I took a lot of photography classes in college.

LYNN
I wish I'd brought some black and white film.

TUCK
It's okay, you can make them black and white with a computer.

LYNN
Really?

TUCK
Sure. You can do just about anything with a computer.

There is movement behind them as the clown peers from around one of the exhibits.

Lynn says nothing. She's mulling over something in her mind. Tuck senses it and gives her time, just keeps checking out all the relics.

LYNN
Listen. I have to level with you. My life is kind of a train wreck right now.

TUCK
So?

LYNN
Well...what are we doing?

TUCK
(shrugs)
Getting to know each other.

LYNN
Why?

Tuck's playing stupid.

TUCK
What do you mean, why?

LYNN
Come on. I'm attracted to you and I think you're attracted to me. But this is...it's just a bad time.

TUCK
(playing stupid)
You're attracted to me?

Lynn stops walking and smirks at him until he gives.

TUCK
Okay okay. So we're past the subtext. What's the problem?

LYNN
It's really complicated.

TUCK
You said that already. You're getting divorced. What's complicated?

LYNN
You asked for it.

TUCK
Give it to me.

CLOWN POV

He's stalking them. They continue to talk, oblivious of the fact that there's a psychotic clown standing fifty feet behind them.

He moves closer still.

RESUME

LYNN
--and he's trying to take my son away from me.
TUCK
Why is the house still in his ex-wife's name? How long's it been since he was married to her?

LYNN
Ten years.

TUCK
That's...strange.

LYNN
That's not even the half of it. Now I find out that he hasn't been working for the better part of a year. He'd leave the house everyday, but where he went...?

TUCK
Jesus.

LYNN
See, I have a lot of stuff to work out before I can even...you know.

Tuck only smiles.

LYNN
I should have known, I mean he's a man with a cat. Single men with cats are bad news. At least, that's what the magazines say.

TUCK
(laughs)
Did you get enough pictures?

LYNN
Ready to go?

He nods. They head back the way they came, not seeing the clown as he circles around a structure to keep out of their sight. At one point, he's close enough to reach out and touch them.

BACK AT THE MOTORCYCLE

Lynn climbs on back as Tuck pulls on his driving gloves. He straightens the motorcycle, and in the side mirror the clown ducks back into the bushes.

TUCK
Ready?

She grabs him around the stomach.

LYNN
Yeah.

He takes off.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HOUSE - LATER

Tuck pulls his cycle up to the curb and turns it off. She hops off just as Detective Peters gets out of his car across the street. He looks like he's been waiting for a while.

DETECTIVE PETERS
Miss Blodgett?

Lynn turns and sees him. Tuck does too, and something passes across his face. He can tell Peters is a cop, and there's instant friction. Like two alpha males trying to stake out their territory.

DETECTIVE PETERS
How you doing?

LYNN
Fine.

There's the briefest moment where the detective waits for Lynn to introduce him to Tuck. She doesn't, so he takes the initiative.

DETECTIVE PETERS
Detective Peters, homicide.

TUCK
Homicide?

DETECTIVE PETERS
Yeah, that's when somebody dies.

TUCK
(no shit)
Thanks.

DETECTIVE PETERS
There was a murder yesterday a few doors down.

(looks to Lynn then back to Tuck)
Now Miss Blodgett is seeing clowns in her backyard.

Tuck shoots Lynn a questioning look. She rolls her eyes, like she's tired of this guy. Tuck turns his attention back to Peters.

TUCK
Takes a clown to catch a clown, huh?

He laughs like he's kidding, but Peters gets the jibe. He gives a little laugh, makes a show of examining Tuck's motorcycle.

**DETECTIVE PETERS**
You know what us cops call these?

**TUCK**
No.

**DETECTIVE PETERS**
A donorcycle. Whenever there's an accident with one of them, we pick up the rider and his brain's all scrambled but the rest of him is A-okay. Perfect organ donor.

Tuck's not impressed.

**TUCK**
You know what we call cops where I come from?

**DETECTIVE PETERS**
No, what?

**TUCK**
We don't.

He kick-starts the motorcycle and drives off, giving a wink to Lynn.

**DETECTIVE PETERS**
Who's your friend?

**LYNN**
Can I help you with something?

**DETECTIVE PETERS**
I don't know yet.

**LYNN**
Why are you here then?

**DETECTIVE PETERS**
I'm a detective. I'm...detecting.

**LYNN**
(tiring of it)
And what are you detecting?

**DETECTIVE PETERS**
...I've got a funny feeling about you, Miss Blodgett.
LYNN
Well. Try and keep it in your pants, would you?

She turns on her heel and heads to her door. The detective watches her ass the entire way but makes no attempt to follow.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HOUSE - EVENING

Lynn's sketching from the picture of Parrish's father. Nothing fancy, just some concept sketches to get the look down.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. AMANDA'S HOUSE - SAME TIME

Amanda's at the computer. She types something, reads, smirks, types something again.

She tries again.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HOUSE - LATER

Lynn's got about ten pages of sketches next to her. Outside her window, night has fallen.

But the sketch she's working on now is different. She's got colored pencils and charcoal, and is pencilling the clown she seems to be obsessed with.

Except now his eyes are exactly like the one she saw outside her sliding-glass door the previous night. Black, reflecting a pinprick of light.

She stops and takes a good look at her handiwork. Then realizes that she's put off her paying project to do more sketches of her obsession.

LYNN
For God's sake...

She pushes it to the side and begins setting up her easel to paint.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. AMANDA'S HOUSE - SAME TIME

Amanda scrolls down, clicks. A new page pops up. Amanda begins reading, but suddenly sits back.
AMANDA
Woah.
She reads some more, scrolls down.

AMANDA
Woah.
She grabs the phone, casting a glance at the clock. Ten forty. Might be a little late with Lynn having Nicky. Disappointed, she hangs up the phone.

With a click of the mouse, she opens up her email and begins writing. Just a quick note. She clicks SEND.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HOUSE - SAME TIME

Lynn paints. Broad strokes, getting a feel for the paper, for the piece.

NICHOLAS (O.S.)
Mom-meeeee!

She's instantly broken out of her artist trance. She rushes up the stairs.

LYNN
You thirsty, Nicky?

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. AMANDA'S HOUSE/BATHROOM -SAME TIME

The bathroom is steamy as Amanda steps out, one towel around her body as she uses another to dry her hair.

She moves into her bedroom. The head towel gets tossed onto the bed. She begins blow-drying her hair with the electric hair dryer on her dresser.

Casually. No hurry. She spares a glance at herself in the mirror as she blows her hair back. She notices the curtains of her room move gently in the breeze behind her.

She frowns and switches off the dryer. She goes to the window. She has to climb onto the bed to get to it, and immediately there's a slight TINKLING of glass.

Behind the bed lies broken glass. There doesn't seem to be any of it on the bedsheets.

Amanda frowns even more. What the--?

She pushes the curtain out of the way. There's a hole in her window about the size of a baseball. Or a fist.
For a moment it really doesn't bother her. Some kid must have thrown something through her window.

Then she sees her window screen lying in the grass outside, partially bent. She pushes curtains aside to look at the top of the window. It's unlocked.

Her eyes go wide. She's frightened but not the kind prone to panic. She goes for the portable phone by her bed...it's not there. Just an empty cradle.

She curses almost silently. Where did she put it?

She takes a quick look around her bedroom but doesn't see it. Looking at the doorway leading into the dark hallway, she seems to have a hard time swallowing.

She creeps to the doorway and listens for the sounds of an intruder.

Silence. For one moment she's in indecision. Maybe it's nothing (she forgot to lock the window), could have been a baseball. If someone broke into her house he would have fled when he heard someone was home...

INTO THE HALLWAY

She moves slowly, one hand held to the towel around her body. She passes the living room (no one there) and gets to the kitchen. She quickly moves to the wall. Stops.

Another empty cradle. No phone.

That's strange. That's wrong. Sensing something in her peripheral vision she turns her head slightly.

The clown stands in the opening between the kitchen and dining room.

Amanda's startled, but only for a moment. And then, rather then being scared, she scoffs.

AMANDA

What the hell are you supposed to be?

The axe, which had been hanging out of sight by his leg, THWACKS into the kitchen wall.

CLOWN

Better.

That does it. Amanda runs for the front door. The clown doesn't bother pulling his axe out of the wall. He moves quickly around the other side, intercepting her before she gets to the door.
He grabs for her--only gets the towel--it comes loose. A now naked Amanda stumbles as the towel is jerked from her. The clown tosses it to the side and grabs her by the hair before she can scramble more than a few feet.

He drags her struggling form back into the kitchen. He grabs her by the neck and SLAMS her back into the wall so her feet aren't touching the ground anymore.

She’s choking. Has to use both hands to keep from suffocating completely.

The clown is suddenly aware of her nakedness. He runs a finger down from her shoulder to the curve of her breast. He studies her like he’s never seen a naked women before.

She makes a desperate grab at his face, raking her nails down one side of his cheek. The gashes aren't deep, but they take off some of his paint. He SLAMS her head against the wall.

Casually he tosses her to the floor.

She’s choking, trying to get her air back. Weakly crawling backward away from him.

He wrenches the axe from the wall.

She tries to beg--can't talk, her larynx is crushed--puts an arm up.

The clown takes a two handed grip on the axe. Getting ready to chop wood.

He swings.

INT. HOUSE - LATER

Lynn's finished a painting. Very nice, but not as clean as her paintings on display. And it's missing something...some emotion. She's looking at the photo closely then looking back at the picture.

LYNN
What are you missing...?

She can't figure it out and she's too tired to try. She covers the painting and goes to bed.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HOUSE - DAY

Lynn enters from the front door. The PHONE IS RINGING. She rushes to get it, leaving the front door open.

The phone stops ringing the moment her hand touches it. She
curses silently.

        TUCK (O.S.)
            Knock knock.

            LYN
            Hi.

Tuck's standing right outside her screen door.

        TUCK
            You're probably getting sick of me, aren't you?

Lynn pretends like she is, gives him a sympathetic smile.

            LYN
            Now that you mention it...

        TUCK
            I called earlier...

            LYN
            I was dropping Nicky off with his father.

        TUCK
            Oh. Well, did you want to do lunch?

            LYN
            Where?

        TUCK
            At La Casa Tucker.

            LYN
            I should be painting...and do you really have a job?

        TUCK
            Come on. Best food in the state.

Indecision again. Again, what she wants to do beats out what she should do.

            LYN
            All right. I can spare an hour or so.

He gives her his winningest smile.

            TUCK
            Excellent.

EXT. TUCK'S HOUSE - LATER

Lynn pulls her mini-van up behind Tuck's motorcycle. The
house is huge. Tuck gets off his cycle and leads her into the house.

INT. TUCK'S HOUSE

Lynn follows him in and WHISTLES appreciatively. Two spiral staircases run on both sides of the foyer to the second level. Expensive art adorns the walls.

TUCK
(trying to be modest)
I got a good deal.

LYNN
(not buying it)
Hm-hmm.

TUCK
It ain't much, but I call it home. What's your pleasure? Chinese, Italian, you name it.

LYNN
Is your maid going to cook it?

He flashes a reproachful smile.

TUCK
I don't have a maid.

An orange cat strolls out from a side room.

TUCK
Hey Tiggs, we have a guest.

Lynn sees the cat, sees Tuck squat down to pet it, and she smiles sardonically as she remembers what she said about men and cats.

LYNN
Do you have a bathroom? I have to pull my foot out of my mouth.

TUCK
It's okay. Tiggs is no ordinary cat. He's a wolf at heart.
(stands up)
So what would you like to see on the menu?

LYNN
Surprise me.

EXT. HOUSE - SAME TIME

Detective Peters, OFFICER PATRICK and another cop stand at the door, having already knocked. Peters knocks again, loud
and insistent.

No answer. Peters turns to the cop.

**DETECTIVE PETERS**
See if any of the windows are broken.

The cop heads around the side of the house.

**DETECTIVE PETERS**
(into his radio)
Dispatch, this is four-oh-one.

**DISPATCH (RADIO)**
Go four-oh-one.

**DETECTIVE PETERS**
I need info on a three-twenty-two that happened in Queen Anne's County two nights ago. I need addresses on both victims.

**DISPATCH (RADIO)**
Copy.

Officer Patrick--behind him--clears his throat.

**OFFICER PATRICK**
Assault and battery, huh?

**DETECTIVE PETERS**
Huh? No, attempted robbery.

**OFFICER PATRICK**
That's three-twenty-one.

**DETECTIVE PETERS**
Nuh-uh.

**OFFICER PATRICK**
Yeah.

**DETECTIVE PETERS**
Did they change it?

**OFFICER PATRICK**
No. Always been three-twenty-one.

Peters is miffed. This is the kind of shit that ruins his day.

**DETECTIVE PETERS**
(into radio)
Dispatch, this is four-oh-one again.

**DISPATCH (RADIO)**
Go four-oh-one.

DETECTIVE PETERS
(into radio)
That three-twenty-two may be a three-twenty-one.

DISPATCH (WALKIE-TALKIE)
Say again?

DETECTIVE PETERS
(into radio)
I need info on an attempted robbery. Whatever the number is.
One of the victims is named Lynn Blodgett. I need the name and
address of the other.

DISPATCH (RADIO)
Copy. Hold on.

DETECTIVE PETERS
(to Patrick, frustrated)
Fuckin' codes.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. TUCK'S HOUSE - LATER

Tuck and Lynn sit at the table, having just finished a lunch
that probably should have been a dinner. Lynn leans back, patting her stomach.

LYNN
Wow. I have to tell you, I'm surprised.

TUCK
Why?

LYNN
You really don't strike me as the kind of guy who can cook.

TUCK
Ouch.
(picks up his plate and hers)
Do I strike you as the kind who can wash dishes?

LYNN
Maybe with a dishwasher.

TUCK
Make yourself at home while I
clean up.

LYNN
Sure you don't want help?

TUCK
I'll be all right.

She wanders into what passes as a living room, but is more like a small museum. Bookshelves line one side, and a huge plush couch separates the entertainment center from it. A family of four could live in his big-screen T.V.

She peruses his books while they talk back and forth between rooms.

TUCK
You said you should be painting. What are you working on? Wait, let me guess: A clown.

LYNN
Ha ha. Stick to cooking. I've got a commission piece to do. Has to be done in...well, two days now.

TUCK
Not much time for a painting.

LYNN
The money's supposed to make up for it.

TUCK
Can I ask what your going rate is?

LYNN
For this piece, I'm getting twenty thousand.

TUCK
Ha! I told you that painting I bought from you was a steal.

Lynn's been flipping through occasional books. Tuck's interests are wide-ranging. There are a bunch of art books. On a lower shelf sits a stack of magazines. Lynn sees one she recognizes and pulls it out.

LYNN
We'll see. I'm really not sure I can do what the guy is asking.

TUCK
What's he asking?

Lynn flips through the magazine called "MODERN PAINTER" and
sees a page which has been bent in to save the place.

LYNN
A picture of his father.

The page opens to reveal a large photo of Lynn, followed by an article about her.

TUCK
Doesn't sound that tough.

Lynn frowns. She was under the impression that Tuck knew nothing about her when they met.

She flips to the front and notes that the magazine is months old and has a subscription label on it with Tuck's name and address. Not a recent buy.

LYNN
His father was a clown and he wants him to look a certain way.

She grabs another magazine out of the stack. One called "ART GALLERY". There are two pages folded in. The first is a painting of hers with its name (MARY'S CLOWN) and her name under it. The second page shows a picture of her with a short biography next to it.

Now she's alarmed.

TUCK
I meant to ask you. You think it's strange that guy tried to mug us with a knife when he's got a gun in his coat?

She's doesn't want to panic. Ask him about it? Was their meeting just a chance thing, or has he been...stalking her?

LYNN
Maybe it wasn't loaded.

TUCK
We wouldn't have known that--

He's interrupted by THE DOORBELL. Lynn hastily drops the Art Gallery mag on top of a pile of magazines next to the fireplace, then goes toward the front door as Tuck answers it.

Detective Peters stands on the front stoop.

DETECTIVE PETERS
Lynn Blodgett here?

Clearly, Tuck's not pleased that Peters has stopped by.

TUCK
Yeah.

LYNN
(steps into his line of sight)
What is it, detective?

DETECTIVE PETERS
Could you come with me?

TUCK
What's going on?

DETECTIVE PETERS
I need to talk to you, Miss Blodgett. Let's go back to your house.

Since Peters is ignoring him, Tuck physically steps between Peters and Lynn.

TUCK
What's going on?

DETECTIVE PETERS
You want to step out of the way?

TUCK
You want to talk to my lawyer?

Lynn puts a hand on his arm.

LYNN
It's okay.
(to Peters)
I take it this is important?

DETECTIVE PETERS
Very.

Tuck doesn't seem to notice that Lynn's a bit relieved to be getting away.

LYNN
Thanks for a great lunch.

TUCK
My pleasure. Give me a call later, huh?

LYNN
I will.

OUTSIDE
Detective Peters sees her to her car.
LYNN
Can you tell me what's going on?

DETECTIVE PETERS
Not here.

LYNN
Nicholas--my son--nothing's--

DETECTIVE PETERS
It's not about your son. Please follow me back to your house.

He heads to his car.

INT. HOUSE - LATER

Lynn and the detective enter. As they shut the door we can see Officer Patrick right outside the door.

LYNN
Well?

DETECTIVE PETERS
Sit down. Please.

He escorts her into the living room and gets her to sit on the couch.

DETECTIVE PETERS
Amanda Greene was murdered last night.

Her head jerks back like she was punched.

LYNN
What?

DETECTIVE PETERS
I'm sorry, I know she worked for you.

She's a strong woman. Doesn't want to show her tears, so she fights them back.

LYNN
She was my friend.

It's the only thing she can get out. The tears course down her cheeks.

DETECTIVE PETERS
There's more. I wish I were better with the tact, but I'm not.

LYNN
What?
DETECTIVE PETERS
The scene of--where she died...I mean, it's not just that. We don't have the coroner's report yet, but I'd bet my shield that...
(licks his lips, probably shouldn't say anything)
...well, I think the person that killed your friend is the same person that killed the family three doors down from you.

LYNN
What?

She's having a hard time dealing with it. Any of it. Amanda...dead, killed...same as the neighbors...

DETECTIVE PETERS
I don't think it's a coincidence. I think someone is zeroing in on you.

Lynn's too surprised to speak.

DETECTIVE PETERS
I've already said more than I should. But there's more. I need to know I have your complete confidence, that you won't repeat what I'm about to tell you. To anyone.

She nods, afraid to trust her voice.

DETECTIVE PETERS
Amanda fought back against the person. We've recovered blood and tissue from under her fingernails. And...grease paint.

LYNN
Paint?

She's glancing at her paints next to her easel.

DETECTIVE PETERS
Grease paint. Like you'd buy in any Halloween or costume shop.

LYNN
I'm sorry, I just, I don't understand.

Peters take a photo out of his jacket pocket, not showing it
to her yet.

DETECTIVE PETERS
The window that he entered from...

He's not sure how to say it...he shrugs and hands her the photo.

She looks at it, not comprehending what she's looking at. A window with a hole in it. But below that, smudged white and a red dot centered below it. Then it hits her. Her eyes widen in shock.

She stands up and moves to her sketch pad. She flips it open to the clown--her clown--that she drew the night before. She holds the picture next to the sketch.

It's pretty obvious that if her clown were real, and he pushed his face against a window, it would leave those marks. White forehead, red nose. Evil. Peering in Amanda's window. Just like he peered in her window.

She holds the sketch and the photo out to Peters. He takes them, but it's like he already thought.

DETECTIVE PETERS
I admit that I didn't take you seriously with your clown story the other night.

LYNN
To tell you the truth...I'd convinced myself it was some hallucination, or shock from being mugged.

DETECTIVE PETERS
Well, you have my assurance that I'm taking you deadly serious now.

LYNN
Thank you.

DETECTIVE PETERS
This what he looked like when you saw him?

LYNN
Yes.

DETECTIVE PETERS
His eyes are black like that?

LYNN
Yes.

DETECTIVE PETERS

Huh. Can I have this?

LYNN

Yes.

He stands, starts backing his way to the door.

DETECTIVE PETERS

Whoever this guy is...we'll get him. You need to watch yourself until we do though. I'll have someone out in front of your house at all times.

Lynn stays strong, nods.

DETECTIVE PETERS

I'll call you if I come up with anything.

Once he's gone though, the tears flow. She weeps almost silently for her friend.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

A car is parked under the shade of a tree. Bert's SAAB pulls in next to it, but during the conversation, the person in the other car can't be seen.

Bert rolls his window down. He tries to act like he's watching something in front of him while he talks.

BERT

What the hell is taking so long?

HESTON

You don't want to take that tone with me.

The man's got a dangerous voice. Bert backs off.

BERT

It was--you were supposed to have done it by now.

HESTON

Clearly, there's been a problem.

BERT

And what is that?

HESTON

First, the guy she's been hanging out with. I could go around that. Other problem, well, it's a clown.

BERT
What?

HESTON
There's a clown been following her.

BERT
A clown?

HESTON
For a shrink you don't hear so good.

BERT
Tell me about this...clown.

HESTON
Only saw him once. Your wife and her new beau went sightseeing at an abandoned amusement park. The clown followed them.

BERT
What did he look like?

HESTON
He looked like a clown. Face paint. Frizzy thing around the neck.

Bert knows something. He stares forward for a moment, debating, but doesn't address it.

BERT
So what's the problem?

HESTON
People are getting killed all around your soon-to-be-ex. The cops are swarming.

BERT
What are you talking about?

HESTON
A family, couple doors down. Then last night, a girl that works for her.

BERT
Amanda?

HESTON
Whatever. My source in the department says they got grease paint off the window the perp came in.

(on Bert's clueless
Look)
Like clown makeup. This is gonna take more money.

BERT
I don't think so.

HESTON
Your choice. I'll just take what you've given me as a deposit for services rendered. Have a nice life.

His car starts.

BERT
Wait! How much more?

HESTON
Hmmmm...psychotic clowns, cops galore. Another ten.

Bert winces. He's not happy about it.

BERT
All right, but that's it. I can't pay you any more.

WE COME AROUND SO WE FINALLY SEE HESTON

HESTON
The whole make-it-look-like-a-mugging is out. Get your alibi ready, doc. They're gonna question you.

Heston is the "mugger" who tried to rob Lynn and Tuck.

HESTON
I'll do it when the money's transferred. She's as good as dead.

His car pulls away. Bert watches him drive off, but his mind is on something else. Something nagging at his brain like a name on the tip of your tongue.

INT. GALLERY - LATER

Lynn enters. All the make up in the world can't disguise the fact that she's been crying.

Phillip's at the front desk doing paperwork. He sees her and rushes over.

PHILLIP
Oh Lynn, I'm so sorry.
He hugs her. She takes a couple of deep breaths, fights off the urge to cry again.

LYNN
I'm okay.

PHILLIP
You sure?

LYNN
(wan smile)
Yeah. When did you find out?

PHILLIP
About an hour ago. Some detective came by to ask questions.

LYNN
Detective Peters?

PHILLIP
Yes. That was him.

She shakes her head at his persistance.

LYNN
(kidding)
I think he's been following me.

Phillip's concerned.

PHILLIP
Why would a detective be following you?

LYNN
I was joking. At least, a little. He seems to pop up all the time.

PHILLIP
That's strange...Oh, hey.

He retrieves some papers from behind the counter.

PHILLIP
I didn't show this to the detective. I hope I won't get in any trouble.

LYNN
What is it?

PHILLIP
Amanda sent us all an email last night.

Lynn looks at it.
PHILLIP
It's about Mr. Parrish. His father wasn't just a clown; he was a convicted child molester. One of the children disappeared, but they could never prove he had anything to do with it.

LYNN
Oh my God...

PHILLIP
The second page has some pictures.

Lynn looks. The pictures are from the trial. One picture in particular sticks out: Mr. Parrish's father sitting behind the defendant's desk with a deep look of remorse on his face.

Feeling overwhelmed, Lynn backs herself onto a bench.

PHILLIP
I'm sorry, I should have waited to show you--

LYNN
No, it's all right Phillip. I have to give this to the police. Amanda sent this to us last night sometime before...
(can't bring herself to say it)
I have to give this to the detective.

PHILLIP
If you don't want to paint for him, I understand.

LYNN
I have to. I need the money.
(off his look)
I have to get a new lawyer. Bert's trying to take Nicky away from me.

PHILLIP
He can't do that...

LYNN
He can.
(overwhelmed)
I just don't feel like I could paint anything right now. I've got cops in front of my house--

The PHONE RINGING interrupts her. Phillip answers it.
PHILLIP
Flinner Gallery. Oh, hello Mr. Flynn...

Lynn shakes her head: She's not here.

PHILLIP
No, I haven't seen her today.
(beat)
I'll tell her you called when I see her. Bye bye.

He hangs up.

PHILLIP
What's that all about?

LYNN
(doesn't feel like going into it)
I don't feel like talking to anyone right now.
(occurs to her)
Hey, did he ever buy anything from the gallery before?

PHILLIP
Well...I don't think so.

Her cell phone picks that moment to RING. She looks at the number: it's Tuck. She doesn't want to talk to him, but she doesn't want her phone to keep ringing.

She puts up a finger to Phillip to give her a minute, and she moves off to talk.

INTERCUT LYNN/TUCK

Tuck's leaning against his car.

LYNN
Hello.

TUCK
Hey, there you are. I tried to reach you at home and at the gallery.

LYNN
Yeah, I'm running around...

TUCK
So, is everything okay? What did that detective want?

LYNN
Amanda, my assistant...she was
murdered last night.

TUCK
...what?

LYNN
Someone attacked her in her house.

TUCK
My God...Did they catch whoever did it?

LYNN
No.

TUCK
Is there anything I can do? Do you need anything?

LYNN
No. No.

TUCK
Jesus. Why would anyone do that? Do you want me to come by--

LYNN
No, it's...listen Tuck.
(deep breath)
I think we uh, I need some time to deal with all this...alone?

He's disappointed, but hides it in his voice.

TUCK
Sure, I understand. I'm here for you, okay?

LYNN
Thanks.

TUCK
You watch yourself, huh? Where are you now?

LYNN
I'm...outside the police station.

TUCK
Okay. Give me a call if you need anything. Anything at all.

LYNN
Okay. I'll talk to you soon.

TUCK
Okay. Bye.
LYNN

Bye.

COME AROUND TUCK

to see he's been standing in front of the gallery looking at
Lynn's car. He knows she's lying. His expression is hard to
read.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BASEMENT - LATER

White cement steps lead down to the basement door. Bert,
doing his best to be covert, creeps to the window looking
into the basement.

From his vantage through a crack in the curtains, he can see
THE CLOWN sitting in a chair. The room is very dark, but his
shape is there.

Bert creeps down the steps and tries the knob. It opens and
he slips in. INSIDE, he keeps his back to the door.

BERT
(whispered hiss)
What are you doing?

The clown's head turns slowly. He looks back to the answering
machine on the table, then again to Bert. He stands.

CLOWN
Doc-tor?

BERT
Yes. What are you doing, Doug?

The clown cocks his head at an angle. He talks very slow,
very stilted.

CLOWN
My name is Shivers. Shivers the
clown.

Bert's edgy and uncomfortable. The darkness is pervasive, and
oh yeah, there's a homicidal clown twenty feet away.

BERT
All right. Shivers. What are you
doing?

CLOWN
What you told me. Getting better.

BERT
(confused)
What? No. What you did--Amanda had nothing to do with getting better.

CLOWN
A-man-da?

BERT
Yes. The girl you killed. This, what you're doing, I thought we'd talked about it. You've got to stop this. You should come back and start therapy with me again.

CLOWN
You're...confusing me.

He takes a step up toward Bert, who instantly recoils.

BERT
Wait. Just...just wait until you hear from me. I'll call you. I'll help you.

CLOWN
Help me get better?

BERT
Yes. Just wait for me. Okay?

The clown's breathing heavily.

CLOWN
Yes.

Bert doesn't take his eyes off the clown as he opens the door and backs out. The clown watches him go, then sits back down.

The phone begins RINGING.

AT BERT'S CAR

Bert rushes to his car, jumps in and locks the door. He fumbles with his cel phone and dials from his phone book. BUSY.

BERT
Damnit!
(redials, it's ringing)
What the hell do you think you're doing? I thought we agreed using Doug was a bad idea.
(beat)
Why? Because he's nuts! Yes, that's my professional opinion!
(beat)
Come on Shane. This, this isn't
going to work. I've got--look, this could come back and bite me on the ass. Can you come by my house tonight? Okay.

He hangs up, starts the car and drives off.

INT. HOUSE - EVENING

Lynn's got her easel set up in front of her while she sketches. There are a number of sketches already set out on the floor, but she's not happy with them.

She's got the newspaper clipping of Mr. Parrish's father in front of her, referencing it.

EXT. HOUSE

Officer Patrick's sitting on the front bench reading Stephen King's IT. He looks up as a car passes, watches it drive by, then goes back to his book.

HESTON'S POV

He's parked five houses down across the street. A canvas bag is on the seat next to him.

INT. TUCK'S HOUSE

Tuck enters, tossing his keys onto a table in the foyer. He heads into the living room, picks up the remote from the table and turns to drop back into the couch--

--and he sees the Art Gallery sitting on top of the pile of magazines. He goes to it, picks it up, confused. Definitely not where he left it.

He flips it open to the marker and Lynn's face stares out at him. Then the next magazine below it with another page-marked at Lynn.

He puts two and two together immediately. Mentally curses himself. He grabs the phone and dials Lynn's number.

INT. LYNN'S HOUSE

Lynn paints. Pages of sketches are strewn about her. All forgotten. Her mind is now on one thing, the painting in front of her.

The PHONE RINGS but Lynn pays no attention. She's so focused that she probably doesn't even hear it.

She's immersed in the work. Paying no attention to anything around her. In the zone.
EXT. HOUSE

Officer Patrick zips up as he walks around from the backyard where he was apparently taking a piss. A van pulls up in front of the house with PARTY-PLUS on the side.

A HAPPY CLOWN gets out and walks up the sidewalk.

IN HESTON'S CAR

Heston leans forward, very interested in what's going on. He wasn't expecting this, but maybe there'll be an opening...

PATRICK

can't believe it--a clown walking up the sidewalk--he fumbles out his gun and points it at the clown, who doesn't notice it because he's reading from a clipboard.

OFFICER PATRICK
Stop right there!

The clown's startled, just about drops his clipboard.

HAPPY CLOWN
WOAH! What the hell?

OFFICER PATRICK
Get over here, get on the ground!

HAPPY CLOWN
All right, okay--

OFFICER PATRICK
NOW!

The clown lays down on the ground. Officer Patrick gets on top and handcuffs him.

HAPPY CLOWN
I didn't do nothin', I was called out here.

OFFICER PATRICK
Sure you were. You got ID on you?

HAPPY CLOWN
Inside the suit. You gotta zip down the zipper, in my back pocket there.

From around the back of the house creeps SHIVERS THE CLOWN. He grips the strings from a dozen floating helium balloons. He sees the cop working to get the other clown's ID.

He walks out more confidently, coming up behind the two. The
cop's got the happy clown's ID out and is looking at it.

Shivers shifts hands, releasing the balloons to reveal that he's been holding his axe, hidden by the balloons the whole time.

INT. TUCK'S HOUSE

Through the foyer window, Tuck can be seen starting his motorcycle and PEELING off.

EXT. LYNN'S HOUSE

The happy clown, looking over his shoulder back at the cop is the first to see Shivers. A giant axe in his hands.

HAPPY CLOWN

Hey...

Patrick turns just in time to see the descending axe blade. It takes him in the back of the neck, almost decapitating him. His body falls onto the happy clown who starts hyperventilating.

Shivers spares him a look, then starts to turn toward the front door. As if he has some sixth sense though, his gaze is caught on Heston's car.

HESTON

has his mouth wide open. He's trying to sit very still.

HESTON

Holy shit...

The clown seems disturbed. From this distance it's hard to tell if he can see Heston, but he seems to be staring right at him.

Shivers turns suddenly, stalking back the way he came.

The happy clown has his eyes closed, must be going into shock or something. Hyperventilating still.

Heston's surprised by the sudden turn and takes a look up and down the street. Doesn't see any witnesses. He reaches into his canvas bag and grabs out a cheap rubber clown mask, pulls it over his head.

He quickly pulls his car in front of Lynn's house. He gets out of the car--one hand inside his jacket conceals the gun from earlier--and hurried up the front walk.

Past the dead cop and the pinned clown. He runs smack into the front door which surprises him by being locked. He SLAMS his shoulder into it.
INSIDE

Lynn's startled from her work by the BANG against her front door. She puts the brush down as there's another BANG.

She bolts to her feet just as the third SLAM shatters the lock and blows the door open. Heston moves in fast, kicking the door shut behind him, and stops to listen.

From Lynn's POV, she saw the clown-masked intruder move past the room she's in. She's terrified, but stifles her scream. The man is not in her sight now.

She looks around for a weapon, anything, but there's nothing, no help at all.

Heston doesn't wait long. Not hearing anything, he assumes she's upstairs asleep. He quickly creeps up the stairs toward her bedroom.

Lynn didn't hear him go up the carpeted steps. Quietly she creeps to the edge of the wall, peers around the corner. He's not in sight.

Did he go to the kitchen or up the stairs? She eyes the door. Ten feet away and closed.

She creeps out quietly, reaching for doorknob, keeping her eyes darting back and forth between the upstairs and the kitchen.

Her hand's on the knob when Heston comes out from the bedroom. His eyes widen inside the mask as he sees her at the door.

He FIRES without aiming.

The bullet splinters a chunk out of the door but misses its mark. Lynn SCREAMS and runs toward the back of the house, toward the glass door.

EXT. LYNN'S HOUSE

Tuck pulls up on his motorcycle and gets off. He sees the dead cop, the clown pinned underneath him, and leaps off his motorcycle.

As he runs to the house there's a GUNSHOT.

INT. LYNN'S HOUSE

Heston FIRES AGAIN and rushes down the stairs after her.

Lynn runs into the sliding glass door, pulls it, but it's locked, she fiddles with the lock--both ways, still won't budge--she sees the stick wedged to keep it shut, grabs it--
HESTON

HEY!

She turns, holding the stick in front of her like a sword. She's terrified.

Heston's there, made all the more menacing by his clown mask.

HESTON

Nothin' personal, lady. Just delivering a message from your husband. He says goodbye.

He raises the gun level to her head.

TUCK dives into Heston's back, bearing him to the ground. Heston drops the gun to keep from slamming headfirst into the carpet.

Tuck struggles to keep control, keep Heston down, but Heston's trying to get up, get some leverage. They're grappling for control, rolling and sliding across the floor like a couple of high-school wrestlers.

Neither one sees Lynn pick up the gun.

INT. BERT'S HOUSE/BEDROOM

In the background RUNNING WATER can be heard. Bert pulls off his shirt, then massages his trapezius like his neck is bothering him.

He looks up at the KNOCK on his front door.

He leaves his bedroom and heads for the front door. He looks through the peephole, sees no one, then opens the door.

There's no one there. There is a van with tinted windows in front of his next door neighbor's house. He looks at it, but it doesn't register.

He goes back inside and shuts the door, rubbing at his aching neck some more.

IN HIS BATHROOM

He steps into the steaming hot water, lies back. It's a little cramped, but he doesn't seem to mind. He takes a second to let the heat soak into his muscles.

Then he reaches over the side of the bathtub and grabs his book. We can see that he left the bathroom door cracked open slightly.

He relaxes, getting into the book. There's a CREAK from right outside the bathroom door. Bert lowers the book and looks toward it.
It must be his imagination, but the door looks like it's open a little farther. He goes back to reading. Turns the page.

There's another creak, but this time there's something different. Without lowering the book, Bert can feel it.

There's a pregnant moment where he looks like he's not going to lower the book and look. But he finally does.

The clown stands in the bathroom doorway, the axe in hand. Bert looks like he's just run into a bear and doesn't know whether to run or play dead.

BERT
Now, hold on a minute--

The clown rushes him, jabbing the axe point viciously into Bert as he tries to get up.

Blood mixes into the water as the clown continues to stab, stab, stab.

INT. LYNN'S HOUSE

Heston jabs an elbow at Tuck's head. Tuck turns his head but still takes it in the cheek hard. It's enough to let him slip out of Tuck's grasp. He turns to run--

--Lynn, a distant look in her eye, stands there pointing the gun at him.

Tuck stands up.

HESTON
Lady...you don't know how to use that.

Famous last words. Lynn pulls the trigger. Glass shatters behind Heston. He turns to look and sees a ruined picture featuring a bullet hole.

He turns back to her and smiles but the smile dies as he feels something on his chest. Blood is soaking his T-shirt.

Heston has enough time to realize he's in a direct line between the picture and the gun, then the life fades from his eyes. He collapses sideways.

Tuck is shocked. Lynn can't seem to get her eyes off of Heston's body.

TUCK
Lynn. Give me the gun.

She turns her eyes from the dying man to Tuck. Their strange lack of depth gives Tuck cause for concern.
TUCK
(reassuring)
Lynn.

He holds his hand out. After a moment, she hands him the gun.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. LYNN'S HOUSE - LATER

Police cars are clustered in front of the house. Lynn and Tuck stand off to the side trying to stay out of the way. There's an uncomfortable distance between them that Tuck's trying to figure a way into.

TUCK
Hey...listen, I wanted to explain about the magazines.

He hopes she'll say forget about it, but she doesn't. He goes on.

TUCK
I've been a big art fan for years, all kinds, and I first saw your art in those mags. When I heard about the showing downtown, I thought it would be neat to see some of your paintings up close.

LYNN
You said you saw my picture in the program.

TUCK
I did. That's just not the only place I saw your picture. I didn't want you to flip out and think I was a stalker, which...is probably what you're thinking right about now.

Lynn's noncommittal. Detective Peters comes out of the house and heads over to them. He pulls Lynn away from Tuck so he can talk to her privately.

DETECTIVE PETERS
Well. Helluva shot, Miss Blodgett. He's pretty dead.

LYNN
Good.

DETECTIVE PETERS
Remorse. I like that. It seems your husband paid that guy to kill
LYNN
For a detective, you have the shittiest people skills I've ever seen.

DETECTIVE PETERS
Thanks, I've taken classes.

LYNN
Why would Bert do that? He's divorcing me, he's taking everything--

DETECTIVE PETERS
I'll make a wild guess and say he's got a sizeable life insurance policy out on you.

LYNN
Oh. Oh my God...

DETECTIVE PETERS
Yeah. We found a tape recorder in Mr. Hitman's car. He'd taped a few conversations with your husband, conversations where your husband hired him to kill you.

LYNN
No...

DETECTIVE PETERS
Yep. Plain old greed. I guess getting the hitman to dress up as a clown must have been him being creative. Hell, it's as good a disguise as any.

LYNN
But he wasn't the clown I saw--

DETECTIVE PETERS
He probably changed outfits.

LYNN
I don't think so.

DETECTIVE PETERS
Are you positive?

She thinks. That night on the porch, it happened to so fast, it was dark and she fainted...she just can't be sure.

LYNN
He had makeup on when I saw him.
DETECTIVE PETERS
Probably figured out a mask was much less work. Easier to take off.

He's got his mind made up and he's starting to convince her.

LYNN
Why didn't he kill me that night then? After I fainted?

DETECTIVE PETERS
Maybe he got scared off by your friend on the phone. We'll never know for sure.

(waves it off)
You just take it easy. We're looking for your husband now.

LYNN
You don't know where he is?

DETECTIVE PETERS
We think he's on the run. No sign of him at his house. Don't worry about it, we'll get him soon. Whatever you were asking for in this divorce thing...ask for more. You'll get it.

She nods, realizing the implications for her and Nicholas. No way will they give custody to Bert now.

DETECTIVE PETERS
If you have any other questions, give me a call.

(hands her a card)
My home numbers is on the back. Night or day, doesn't matter.

LYNN
Okay. Thanks.

He smiles reassuringly and leaves. Tuck comes over.

TUCK
I heard. I think you should try and get some sleep.

Lynn nods, but looks doubtful.

TUCK
Can I give you a call tomorrow? When everything's more normal again?

She thinks it over, decides she wants him to.
LYNN
Okay. I guess I could give you a second chance, seeing that you saved my life and all.

TUCK
(his smile's back)
Great.

He gives her a quick hug, gets on his cycle, and rides off. Lynn turns back toward her house and watches the cops, waiting for them to finish their work.

CUT TO:

INT. LYNN'S HOUSE

Lynn's in bed again, tossing and turning.

IN HER DREAM
A sterile, white hall, infinitely long. People move in and out of our sight, all blurry, out of focus. As they clear out we see a YOUNG BOY sitting on a bench.

He looks at us sadly.

YOUNG BOY
Dead. They're all dead.

He stands up and points a finger at us accusingly.

YOUNG BOY
They're all dead!

THE CLOWN's face pops into view staring right at us, smiling like a demon.

LYNN
sits up in bed, her heart racing. Looks around, starting to get her bearings.

She sees a clown doll sitting on her dresser that wasn't there before. Who could have put that there...?

All at once, it begins to turn its head, its eyes glaring a malevolent red--

LYNN
sits up in bed for real this time, looking immediately to her dresser. No clown doll there.

She looks out the window; the sun is coming up on a new day.
INT. GALLERY - DAY

Lynn, Phillip and Mr. Parrish are staring at a painting that is propped on an easel in the middle of the room. Mr. Parrish stares in wonder.

MR. PARRISH
It's amazing. Simply amazing.

We see the painting. It's the one Lynn was working on of Mr. Parrish's father, and it captures the look he wanted, to perfection. Tears appear in his eyes.

MR. PARRISH
It's even better than I could have imagined. I can't thank you enough.
(to Phillip)
Please. Wrap it up.

Phillip takes the painting off to wrap it. Mr. Parrish pulls his checkbook out and begins writing. He finishes, signing his name with a flourish.

MR. PARRISH
What was the final price agreed upon?

LYNN
Twenty thousand.

Mr. Parrish nods, he knew. He hands her the check. She takes it without looking at it.

MR. PARRISH
I'll spread the word about your talent, Miss Blodgett. You have quite a future before you.

LYNN
Thank you.

Mr. Parrish walks to the front door to where Phillip is waiting with his painting.

MR. PARRISH
Good day.

He takes his painting and leaves.

PHILLIP
Wow. Home run, Lynn.

She smiles, looking at the check.

LYNN
I can sure put this to--
(frowns, then blinks)
Oh my God.

PHILLIP
What?

LYNN
This check is made out for a hundred thousand dollars. He gave me a hundred grand.

The PHONE RINGS. Phillip gets it.

PHILLIP
Hello? Mr. Flynn?

He shoots a questioning look to Lynn. She nods and reaches for the phone.

PHILLIP
Hold on please.

LYNN
Hello? Pretty good actually. A hundred thousand dollars good.
(beat)
I'll tell you later.
(laughs)
Thanks. Uh...well, convince me.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. PHILLIP'S - NIGHT

Phillip is busy in the kitchen making what looks to be an elaborate meal. He checks in one of his cabinets for noodles--none there.

He begins to go downstairs to get some but something in his backyard catches his eye. There's someone out there standing in the shadow of a tree.

Phillip frowns. From his vantage it's hard to see anything.

He goes back the way he came, through his hall, into his bedroom. Looks out the back window.

He's got a slightly better view, but it's still not great. The person almost looks like...a clown. Phillip draws back away from the window, frowning.

He walks back into the hall and turns into the guest room on the corner of his house. One window faces the backyard while another next to it faces the side of his house. He looks out the backyard window.
Has to blink once. The clown is gone. Unless...Phillip tries to peer around to see if the clown is behind the tree, but it doesn't look like it.

Phillip leans back again and doesn't see the clown staring in the side window at him.

He turns to leave as the clown raises the axe, swings it at the window. On the axe crashing through glass:

CUT TO:

INT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

Tuck escorts Lynn into the theater. It's huge, covered wall to wall in advertisements for movies.

LYNN
Nice theater.

TUCK
Only the best for you.

LYNN
Will we be able to get popcorn?

TUCK
With butter. And a Coke.

He winks like, I got the hook-up.

JEFF appears at the top of the stairs leading to the second level.

JEFF
Hey Tuck! I'm about ready. You're gonna be in theater eight.

TUCK
Great. Thanks. We're gonna grab some concessions.

JEFF
I can send Bobby down to do that.

TUCK
No, that's cool. I know where everything is.

JEFF
Help yourself.

He jogs back to the projection booth, punching the code to get through the door.

Tuck motions Lynn to follow him behind the concession booth.
INT. STAIRWELL

A thin set of concrete steps runs down to a steel door, all bathed dimly yellow by the auxiliary lights.

The clown makes his way slowly up the steps. The giant axe in one hand. A canvas bag in his other hand, THUMP THUMPING with every step.

Something short and thin is inside the bag, and it's not moving. Something that looks like a small body...

INT. MOVIE THEATER/CONCESSION

A bucket of popcorn sits on the counter next to the soda fountain. Tuck is filling two cups at the same time.

LYNN
You're like an expert. If I didn't know better, I'd swear you've done that before.

TUCK
Burger King when I was in high school. It's a lost art.

LYNN
You know, I worked at a theater when I was in high school. Didn't last two months.

TUCK
They don't know what they lost.

He lets off of the taps at the same time. Both sodas are identically filled. He waits until the foam goes away and finishes filling them.

He pops a top on them and hands her one.

TUCK
Ready?

LYNN
(suddenly occurs to her)
What are we seeing?

TUCK
I was thinking some scary horror movie where you'd have to snuggle close to me, but given the past couple of days...
(shrugs)
I opted for a sappy love movie instead.
LYNN
Good choice.

They head toward the auditorium.

INT. PROJECTION ROOM

Jeff is carrying the reel of film—it's the entire movie rolled together, and it's so big he can't even see around it. He slides it onto a platter and threads it through the projector.

BOBBY, a pimply teen, pops out of the bathroom and shouts down.

BOBBY
I'm gonna go make sure the doors are all locked up.

JEFF
Okay!

Bobby disappears out the door as Jeff finishes threading the film.

As he stands up, movement at the far end of the projection booth catches his eye.

He squints. It's hard to tell. Small pools of light at each projector are the only illumination. Most of the room is in darkness.

Still...something's off. The shape isn't right at the far end.

Jeff makes his way slowly toward the end.

He's twenty feet away from the spot when the clown steps out of the shadow. The only thing in his hand is the axe, but it's shadowed in the darkness behind a film platter.

JEFF
(jumps)
Hey!
(relieved for a moment)
Scared the shit out of me.

Then he realizes—it's late at night and there's a clown in his projection booth. It dawns on him: Someone's playing a joke.

JEFF
Did Bobby put you up to this?

The clown takes a step toward him.

CLOWN
She'll pay.

JEFF
This ain't cool, man. You can't be up here. This is--

The clown takes another step, splashing a shaft of light onto the axe blade.

JEFF
Woah.
(steps back)
I'll get Bobby for you.

He takes another step. The clown raises the axe. Jeff turns to run, panic growing on his face.

The clown hurls the axe. It spins twice and smacks solidly into the back of Jeff's head. He drops.

The clown moves to him and grasps the haft of his axe. He tugs at it, pulling Jeff's head from the ground, but the axe doesn't come out.

He has to put one foot on Jeff's head, and with a vicious yank, rips it free. He doesn't bother wiping it off as he moves toward the door.

The clown moves to the small window that looks down into the theater. He can see Tuck and Lynn seated in the middle of the auditorium.

INT. AUDITORIUM

Tuck picks that moment to look back. From his vantage point, the shape is too dark behind the window for him to recognize. Thinking it's Jeff, he waves.

The clown backs away from the window.

TUCK
I think he's getting ready to start it.

LYNN
Good. This is a little past my bedtime.

TUCK
I'm glad you came out. I wasn't sure you would, you know, given...

LYNN
(nods)
Might be good for me to see a movie, forget it all for a couple of hours.
TUCK
(nods)
That's the right attitude. Who's got Nicholas?

LYNN
Julie. She's been dying to take him for a while anyway.

CUT TO:

INT. JULIE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The kitchen's a wreck. The table is flipped on its side, and papers and a bowl of fruit are scattered on the floor.

MOVING
to the phone jack, a wire plugged into it. FOLLOWING the cord we see the cradle of the phone, and a spiral-cord trailing off...

...to the phone. A hand clutches it limply. We follow the hand past the bracelet up the arm to where it ends at the shoulder. The arm is no longer attached to a body, but cut cleanly at the top.

MOVING

across the floor now marred with puddles of blood to where Julie lies butchered. Her face, other than spatters of blood, is untouched, but her body is in pieces.

CUT TO:

INT. MOVIE THEATER - CONTINUOUS

Bobby's testing the doors to make sure they're all locked and won't open without a key, even from the inside.

That taken care of, he hops the concession counter and turns off the frozen drink machines. He heads through the back and comes out at the rear concession entrance.

He takes a step toward the stairs, but stops and makes a sudden decision to head into the bathroom.

WHISTLING no particular tune, he enters a stall and unzips, not bothering to shut the door.

The clown's boots on the tile floor don't make enough noise to alert Bobby.

Bobby's done pissing and shakes.

The clown stands right behind him outside of the stall.
Bobby tucks himself back in his pants and is about to turn when the clown RAMS the axe point through his back, throwing the helpless teen against the wall in front of him. Something major's been hit; blood is running out of his chest like a river.

His strength leaving, Bobby falls to one knee over the toilet. The clown JERKS the axe out of him, and without the support, Bobby collapses completely.

The clown turns. Listens.

INT. AUDITORIUM

Tuck and Lynn are getting a little antsy.

TUCK
If this takes much longer, I'm gonna demand my money back.

She smiles.

LYNN
What do you think the hold up is?

Tuck shrugs that he doesn't know.

A HOLLOW SOUND, muffled, seems to come from the entrance to the auditorium.

TUCK
What's he doing now?

The clown walks slowly into the auditorium. He's completely out of sight of Lynn and Tuck; until he rounds about the third row of seats, he'll be out of sight behind the concrete wall that supports the stadium seating.

TUCK
(joking)
I'm gonna have to speak to a manager if you don't start the movie, Jeff!

No expression from the clown.

Tuck is looking at Lynn when the clown rounds the first row of seats. She's looking right at the clown, and the look on her face is enough to wipe the smile off of his.

The question forms on his face, but he turns to look, and sees.

The clown has stopped at the foot of the first stair. He holds the bloody axe in both hands.
LYNN
No...

CLOWN
You're gonna pay.

Tuck stands, pulling a terrified Lynn to her feet. Tuck grabs his soda, but keeps an eye on the clown.

The clown mounts the stairway, one at a time. No hurry.

Tuck pushes Lynn behind him, backing her down the aisle away from the clown. By the time the clown is on the same aisle level as they are, he's at one end and they're at the other.

The clown considers this. He takes a step forward. Tuck pushes Lynn down a step. The clown backs up. Tuck doesn't move.

TUCK
Move slowly down the stairs.

Lynn, almost dazed, does. Instead of following, Tuck moves up a stair. The clown doesn't even look at him. Focused entirely on Lynn, watching her like a cat about to pounce.

TUCK
Hey!

Tuck doesn't even exist to the clown.

TUCK
(to Lynn)
Wait.

She stops. The moment hangs, all three staring at one another. Lynn and the clown as if in a trance, Tuck's mind racing with indecision.

TUCK
RUN!

He throws his soda at the clown and runs down the stairs toward Lynn. The soda's a great throw. It gets the clown's attention, something coming at him from his peripheral vision. He bats it away with his axe, then crosses through the aisle in pursuit of the fleeing couple.

Lynn and Tuck burst out the auditorium door. Tuck, thinking quickly, overturns the large trash can in front to block the door.

TUCK
Come on!

He grabs her hand and pulls her toward the front doors. They smack into them and can't understand why they don't open.
They're just push-lever doors, but they don't realize Bobby has locked them with a key.

THE CLOWN

has run into the auditorium door, which is jammed shut by the trash can. He kicks at the door.

TUCK

runs to the single door to the side of the main entrances and tries to open it. No joy there either.

LYNN

Break them!

TUCK

With what? It's reinforced safety glass.

Tuck hears the sound of the DOOR hitting the TRASHCAN as the clown kicks it.

TUCK

Come on!

He grabs her hand and heads down the side corridor leading back toward the theaters.

THE CLOWN

has kicked the door enough that the trash can no longer jams it. He slides out and strides toward the front.

Tuck and Lynn emerge through the corridor door, right back in front of the auditorium entrances. Tuck cautiously goes right back to the theater they came from.

He opens the door as wide as he can without hitting the trash can, lets Lynn slide in, and he follows.

THE CLOWN

stands in the lobby where Tuck and Lynn were moments before. He's listening, but there's no sound.

His gaze travels from the glass doors to the concession stand. Considering. Back to the doors.

A table next to the concession stand has paper and pens for entering a contest. The clown goes to it, propping his bloody axe on top while he grabs a sheet of paper and a pen.

He begins writing.

INT. DETECTIVE PETERS' HOUSE - SAME TIME
Peters is in shorts, T-shirt and socks. He's putting together a puzzle at his kitchen table. It looks to be about 10,000 pieces, but he's doing pretty good.

COMPUTER (O.S.)
Thrill me!

Peters puts down the puzzle piece he's holding and goes to his computer. He clicks a couple of buttons and his email pops up, displaying the message "NEW EMAIL".

It reads "BLOOD SAMPLE #4990345 DIC: PETERS". The second line reads "DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE KNOWN SEX OFFENDER DOUG RICHARDSON".

Peters is getting interested now. He reads on and something catches his eye.

DETECTIVE PETERS
Oh shit...

Under WHEREABOUTS next to a list of dates it says "COMMITTED: ROUNDSVILLE MENTAL INSTITUTION, DOCTOR: BERT TOKYO".

Peters grabs his cell phone and dials a number.

DETECTIVE PETERS
Vic, it's Peters. Yeah, I'm up late. Look, we got a problem. That blood sample from the girl's fingertips--came back a match to a DOJ sex offender named Doug Richardson.

Something from the other end.

DETECTIVE PETERS
Yeah, not Heston and get this: He's got Leber's congenital amaurosis. No I didn't make that up. It's a rare disease, normally causes blindness, but in some cases it can cause the sclera of the eye to turn black. And to top it off, this guy was a psych case over at Roundsville and you'll never guess who his doctor was. (smiles as Vic guesses)

Right. I think he had two people trying to kill her. Send some uniforms over to her house, have them wake her up and secure it. Call me when that's done.

Vic says something on his end.
DETECTIVE PETERS
Right. Hey, see if we can get some pics of this guy. Yeah.

He hangs up, but looks worried.

IN THE AUDITORIUM

Tuck rushes Lynn up the stairs to the door at the top. He peers through the small window—coast looks clear—then leads the way through.

They're on the second floor, a small level overlooking the front lobby. A stairway leads down the front.

Tuck moves to the projection-room door and pulls on it. It's locked; a numeric keypad is set into the wall.

LYNN
(whisper)
Knock on it.

TUCK
Too loud. He's got his radio on in there anyway.

Tuck tries a combination, pulls gently. Still locked. He tries another, pulls again. Locked.

Lynn takes a look at the keypad. Five numbers.

LYNN
Are you kidding? There's a hundred and twenty combinations.

TUCK
You have another idea?

He keeps trying.

DOWNSTAIRS

The clown stands in the center of the lobby. Whatever he did with the paper, there's no sign of it now.

He's listening. The sound of Tuck trying combinations can barely be heard, and from the lobby it's hard to know where it's coming from.

The clown hefts his axe and walks back toward the auditoriums, passing the stairwell to the second floor. He suddenly stops though, realizing the sound is coming from above him.

He backtracks and begins climbing the stairs.

ABOVE
Lynn has moved to the top of the stairs and is peering down them. Suddenly, the top of the clown's head comes into her sightline, but because of the angle, he doesn't see her.

She rushes back to Tuck.

LYNN
(harsh whisper)
He's coming!


TUCK
If he gets to the top, run back into the theater.

He keeps going.

THE CLOWN
is halfway up the stairs. He can definitely hear them now. The paint smile on his face seems to widen. His stride, however, doesn't quicken.

AT THE TOP
Lynn's petrified, watching the stairs with her back against the wall. Anticipating the appearance of her deepest fear brought to life.

And appear he does. Slowly, inevitably, his head appears, then his axe. Step by step he's almost to the top.

LYNN
He's here...

Tuck looks quickly, goes back to the codes. As the clown gets to the top step, the door surprises all three of them by opening to Tuck's pull.

They dart in to the projection room as the clown rushes at them. Tuck pulls the door shut just in time as the clown slams into it.

The clown pulls on the door, but it's locked again.

INT. PROJECTION ROOM
Lynn and Tuck take a breather. Safe for the moment.

TUCK
Jeff!

There's no one in sight.

TUCK
He may be on the second level.
(points to the phone)
Call the police. I'll go find him.

She goes to the phone and picks it up. For a moment you can see that she thinks it's going to be dead, but it's not. Like a prayer answered, she's got a dial tone.

She hits 911.

INT. DETECTIVE PETERS' HOUSE - SAME TIME

Peters is dressed now and heading for the door. He forgets his keys, goes back for them on the counter, and his radio CRACKLES to life, scaring the crap out of him.

DETECTIVE PETERS
Peters.

COP (RADIO)
She's not at the house. It's empty.

DETECTIVE PETERS
No sign of a break in?

COP (RADIO)
Nope. However, dispatch just got a 911 from a woman who says she's, uh, being chased by a killer clown. At the Columbia Golden Arts theater.

DETECTIVE PETERS
They have units on the way?

COP (RADIO)
Yeah.

DETECTIVE PETERS
Tell the supervising sergeant I'm ten minutes away.

He rushes out the door.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - SAME TIME

Tuck comes down the stairs. Lynn's running his way.

TUCK
Did you get through?

LYNN
Yes. I left the phone off the hook. They say they're on the way.

TUCK
(nods)
Good. Jeff isn't up there.

LYNN
You don't think he's...

TUCK
I hope not. Come on, let's see if the back door's open.

He leads her toward the door the clown originally came in. He stops suddenly.

TUCK
Wait here.

LYNN
What?

TUCK
He's been here.

He tries to block her view, but she sees anyway. Jeff sits, his back against the door. Blood glistens all over him and his eyes are wide open, forever staring at nothing.

LYNN
Is the door open?

Tuck gently moves Jeff's body out of the way, then tries the door. Doesn't move. He throws himself against it, but it still doesn't budge.

Lynn begins searching through Jeff's pants.

TUCK
What are you doing?

LYNN
Looking for keys.

Tuck's surprised by her initiative; you don't see him going through the dead guy's pants. She finishes, coming up empty.

TUCK
Nothing?

She shakes her head, hopeless.

EXT. MOVIE THEATER

Four patrol cars with flashing lights are parked in front of the theater as Detective Peters pulls up in his unmarked.

One OLDER COP hurries over to intercept Peters.

DETECTIVE PETERS
Detective Peters, homicide.
Where's your sarge?

OLDER COP
Hasn't shown up yet. All the doors are locked, I got guys on perimeter around the building.

DETECTIVE PETERS
Why haven't you gone in? There's a woman trapped in there with—well, a murderer.

OLDER COP
Can't go in.

DETECTIVE PETERS
Why not?
The cop motions him over, they go to the front door. A piece of paper is taped on the glass door facing out. Written in child-like scrawl are the words "COME IN THEY DIE".

Peters sees it, refrains from cursing.

OLDER COP
I've called in the tac team.

DETECTIVE PETERS
This guy's not taking hostages.
The older cops shrugs. Nothing he can do. Peters knows it too.

DETECTIVE PETERS
Dammit.

He stares in through the glass impotently.

INT. MOVIE THEATER
Tuck and Lynn rush back to the phone.

TUCK
Tell them we're trapped in the projection room.

Lynn picks up the phone, which she left off the hook. Tuck's looking around for a weapon. The best he finds is a broom with detachable end. He unscrews it and is left with a five-foot pole.

LYNN
Hello? Hello?

She clicks the hang-up button a couple of times.

LYNN
The line's dead.

INTERCUT

The junction box where all the phone lines come in and go out. They're hanging out of the box like stray hair, having been ripped out.

BACK TO SCENE

TUCK
You have your cel phone?

LYNN
(shakes her head)
It's in my car. You?

TUCK
Didn't want anyone to get in touch with me tonight. Okay, no problem. We can wait it out here. The cops should be here any minute. We'll just wait.

Lynn moves to a group of doors, if only to keep herself busy. The one on the left has a restroom sign on it. The other two doors have nothing on them.

LYNN
Where do these go?

Tuck comes over and shrugs. Then he KICKS one door, shattering the lock and throwing it open. He reaches in and flicks on the light.

TUCK
(answering her question)
Manager's office.

They check out the room. Lynn confirms the phones don't work in this room either. Tuck's interested in a giant monitor with buttons on it.

The monitor shows different parts of the theater; every camera in the building is patched into it.

Tuck pushes a button and the view switches to one particular camera. He pushes another and it moves to another camera.

TUCK
Take a look at this.
(she does)
Security cameras.

Tuck pushes button after button, searching for any sign of the clown. He doesn't seem to be on any of the cameras.
LYNN
Where is he?
Tuck hits the button that shows all sixteen cameras at one time. Two of the monitors show the outside parking lot which has police cars and officers all around.

TUCK
Look. The cops are here.
Lynn smiles with relief, but the smile dies as she realizes something.

LYNN
What are they waiting for? Why aren't they coming in?
Tuck sees what she means. The cops seem to be taking up siege positions.

TUCK
Uh...I don't know. Unless they think he's got us hostage...

LYNN
So we're on our own.
Now that it's been said out loud, it starts to sink in. Tuck tries to be optimistic.

TUCK
Don't worry. We're safe here.
The sound of METAL HITTING PLEXIGLASS makes Lynn jump. It happens AGAIN.

TUCK
Oh shit. He can reach the projection window from the smaller theaters.

LYNN
Can he get through?

TUCK
...I don't know.
WHACK! Then silence. Lynn and Tuck move out of the room and wait in the center of the aisle, staring down past the projectors into the darkness. Expecting the clown to appear.

Then WHACK!
After a moment of silence, Tuck leads Lynn slowly toward where the sound came from. Bracing for the next slam, but the silence drags.
They approach the window looking down into the theater. Very slow. Like the clown's face is going to appear suddenly.

It doesn't, but what they see in the theater takes Lynn's breath away. Shock. Fear. Hopelessness. It's all reflected in her expression.

TUCK
(sotto voce)
Oh shit...

The clown stands in front of the theater screen, his axe gripped in his left hand. His right hand rests on the shoulder of Nicholas, who stands there in a daze. For some reason the boy doesn't seem to be afraid.

The clown sees them in the window. He looks at Nicholas, then back to Lynn and Tuck. His look says everything: The boy for you.

TUCK
I'll distract him. You get Nicky out of there.

The shock seems to have focused Lynn.

LYNN
No. He'll kill you.

Lynn's sudden calmness worries Tuck.

TUCK
Hey. I'm not gonna let anything happen to either of you.

LYNN
I'm okay. I'm okay.
(reassuring smile)
I'm going out there but I need you to do something for me.

TUCK
(can't believe it)
You're what?

LYNN
I'm tired...I'm tired of being scared. And I won't let him hurt my son. Now listen to me.

INT. AUDITORIUM

The clown stares at the now-empty window into the projection room. Nicky's having a hard time keeping his eyes open.

LYNN (O.S.)
All right.
The clown turns. Lynn stands at the foot of the theater. Defiant and angry, but it's impossible for her to completely conceal her fear.

LYNN
I'm here. Let him go.

The clown turns. Sees her. He smiles, but it's a gruesome, sadistic smile made even more hideous by his makeup. He releases the boy.

LYNN
Come here, Nicky.

He does. Lynn kneels down in front of him, keeping her eyes on the clown.

LYNN
(quiet)
Nicky, I want you to go outside and wait for me. Understand?

He nods.

LYNN
Go on.

He walks out, casting one glance back at his mother.

When he's gone, the clown takes a step toward Lynn.

LYNN
Wait!
(the clown stops)
Why are you doing this? What do you want?

CLOWN
To get...better.

He moves to the aisle. Lynn moves into a row of seats to keep as much distance as possible between them.

LYNN
But why me?

CLOWN
It was your fault.

One step at a time the clown comes up. Lynn backs up until she's at the foot of the other aisle. She backs her way farther up the stairs as the clown begins to cross the row.

She's half-way up when he gets to the foot of the aisle leading up to her. Gaining ground even though he's not
rushing.

He puts a foot on the stair. Lynn's not moving. Too petrified to move...or waiting?

The clown takes another step, his grip on the axe tightening.

LYNN

Wait!

The clown stops. Lynn's terrified, trying to hide it. Desperate. Hoping this works.

Without turning her own head, she points back toward the projection booth.

LYNN

Look!

Instinctually, the clown does.

A blinding BEAM OF LIGHT streaks out of the projector redirected at the clown. It's a broad beam, 30,000 candle-watts of power, full in the face.

He YELLS IN PAIN, turning away, but too late. He's blinded, maybe permanently. Lynn shields her eyes and slides her way across the row of seats.

Still averting her eyes from the light, she accidentally kicks over a soda. The clown hears it, YELLS ANGRILY. He climbs the stairs to her level and moves in her direction, trying to hone in on the sound. He swings the axe in front of him, even though he's not close to her.

The projector light is no longer following him. Lynn's frozen, watching as the clown feels his way across the seats.

Coming closer. Lynn moves away, accidentally kicking ice from the soda she just knocked down. The ice makes TIC TIC sounds as it falls to the next level.

The clown, now knowing he's on the right track, starts to move quickly toward her through the row.

Lynn turns and runs. The clown follows, stumbling against the seats in his blind chase.

Her shoes now wet, Lynn slips as she tries to cut out of the aisle, crashes against the wall. She turns--the clown stands above her, his axe raised to deliver the killing blow--

TUCK (O.S.)

Hey.

The clown turns toward the voice. He can't see it, but Tuck's holding a broom handle like a baseball bat.
Tuck swings for the fences. The pole splinters in half as it THWACKS into the clown's forehead. He falls back against the stairs.

Tuck pulls Lynn to her feet and pushes her ahead of him. He turns to look back at the clown.

Amazingly, the clown is already standing, the axe raised over his head for a huge swipe at Tuck. Tuck's got nowhere to go. In desperation, he lunges at the clown and grasps the axe handle as it starts its downward arc.

He manages to stop it, but he has to hold on for dear life. The clown is much stronger than he is, and now can feel him. The clown releases one hand from the axe and grasps Tuck by the throat.

With an iron grip, the clown begins to choke him. Tuck desperately grasps out like the clown, his hand grabbing at the clown's throat.

He squeezes, but the clown doesn't seem bothered. Just cocks his head slightly and continues to choke the life out of Tuck.

Tuck pushes the axe to the side and SLUGS the clown in the face. The clown is stunned for a second. Tuck PUNCHES him again. It seems to have the opposite effect, and brings the clown out of his daze.

The clown swings the axe with his left hand in a swipe meant to cut Tuck in half at the stomach.

Tuck barely catches it again. The clown's getting pissed. He's still got a grip on Tuck's neck, and he uses it to throw Tuck to the ground.

He takes his wood-chopping grip and raises the axe for a massive swing.

**DETECTIVE PETERS (O.S.)**
DROP IT OR YOU'RE DEAD!

The clown turns his head to the new threat. Detective Peters and two cops stand at the entry to the auditorium, and every one of them has a gun pointed at him.

The clown turns back to Tuck, a hateful sneer on his face. He looks like he's gonna chop him anyway. Peters' finger tightens on the trigger.

**DETECTIVE PETERS**
DON'T!

The clown looks back to the cops. The tension finally relaxes from his grip. He throws the axe to the ground.
Peters motions the cops over to the clown, and doesn't take his sights off until he's securely cuffed. He goes over to Tuck.

DETECTIVE PETERS
Jesus...

He extends a hand to Tuck and helps him up.

DETECTIVE PETERS
That is the biggest fucking clown I have ever seen.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MOVIE THEATER - LATER

Lynn, hugging Nicky protectively, and Tuck are in the lobby of the theater, again strobed by flashing red and blue lights from the police cars outside.

Detective Peters finishes talking to some of the cops and joins them, a grim look on his face.

DETECTIVE PETERS
How you holding up?

LYNN
We're okay. What about Julie?

DETECTIVE PETERS
She's dead. I'm sorry.

Tuck tries to comfort Lynn by putting his arm around her. For a moment, the three almost look like a family. Peters notices this and seems to feel a little awkward, shifts uncomfortably.

DETECTIVE PETERS
The paramedics are going to need to take Nicholas to the hospital for a while. Just do a few tests. You can ride in the ambulance if you want.

She nods, shock setting in.

TUCK
I'll follow you.

They follow Peters outside toward the flashing lights.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LYNN'S CAR - NIGHT

Lynn, dead tired, on her way home from the hospital. Nicholas is asleep in the passenger seat. There's a BEEP from the back
At first Lynn doesn't notice it. It BEEPS again, and she remembers her cel phone in the back seat. She grabs it and sees she has a message.

She dials her voice mail and listens.

VOICE MAIL OPERATOR
Today, two thirty-four a.m.

PHILLIP (PHONE)
(weak, barely audible)
Lynn...Lynn...

The line goes dead. Lynn looks at her car clock: 3:32

Lynn has a terrible thought. What if the clown went to Phillip's like he did to Julie's? She dials the phone, gets a BUSY signal.

LYNN
Oh no...Phillip.

She turns down a side street, headed toward Phillip's.

EXT. PHILLIP'S – NIGHT

Not many lights on at Phillip's house. Lynn looks at Nicky, still asleep, then back to Phillip's. Nothing looks amiss. Phillip could be asleep. Maybe it was nothing...

She locks the car doors and heads up the walkway. At the front door she pauses. It's open a crack.

LYNN
Oh no...

She pushes the door open, dreading what she's about to see, while dialing 911 on her cel phone.

INSIDE

The place is trashed. Chairs and tables overturned. Pictures ripped from the walls.

Lynn makes herself go in.

LYNN
Phillip...? Please...

She moves in, completely expecting to find Phillip's body, the phone in her hand forgotten. Bracing herself for what she's about to find.

PHILLIP (O.S.)

Lynn?
She can't believe it. She starts to move toward his voice, but stops when she sees him. He's standing in the hall, his back to her. Something's not right though...

PHILLIP
I heard it on the police scanner.

LYNN
Phillip, what...?

Phillip turns, but the face that meets her is nightmarish.

His face is roughly painted, like he did it himself. He looks like the shark-toothed clown from one of her paintings. Lynn recoils, confused.

Not really scared. Yet.

PHILLIP
He didn't kill you. I had my doubts; he wasn't the brightest bulb, was he? I think he actually believed it was his parents that your dad drove off the road.

LYNN
What...what are you talking about?

Phillip strolls into the kitchen.

PHILLIP
I'm not one for long explanations. Suffice it to say I've been keeping my eye on you for a long time now. Over twenty years. There was a time I thought I could simply forget what you did...

He pulls a large butcher knife out of the drawer and holds it up, inspecting its edge.

PHILLIP
Of course, that didn't last. And now...now, you're going to move away? You think you can get away from me now?

He's moving slowly around the room. Discretely putting himself closer to the door.

LYNN
I don't understand...what--why are you dressed like that?

PHILLIP
I see it like it was yesterday. I
was twelve. Sitting on the bench in the waiting area. Doctors rushing around...hurt, sick people everywhere. That awful smell...

He's rambling, staring at the blade, mesmerized by his reflection maybe, but now he's closer to the front door than Lynn is.

PHILLIP
And what I keep remembering--it haunts me in my sleep--was those policemen who walked by.

(mimics one)
"The little girl, she distracted him. Drove right into them."

Then his gaze locks on her. She doesn't know what he's talking about.

PHILLIP
I knew Bert, you know. He treated me for years. That's how I met Doug--the clown. He was so nuts that it didn't take much to convince him that killing you would make him all better. Of course, he was a loaded gun. He came after me tonight, but...I straightened him out.

His expression goes grim. Lynn can't absorb it, doesn't understand any of it.

PHILLIP
Don't worry, you can ask your dad what I'm talking about when you visit him in hell.

He raises the blade and rushes at her. She stumbles back, shoving a tall lamp in his way. He trips over it and falls, catching himself at the last second. He regains a measure of his dignity, brushing at his pants as he stands.

It might be funny if it weren't for the huge knife in his hand.

Lynn's trying to stay cool even though she's deathly frightened of the way Phillip looks, the clown makeup covering his face.

LYNN
Phillip. Listen to me. I'm your friend. I want to help you.

PHILLIP
Do you?
LYNN
Yes.

PHILLIP
Then please...let me stab you.

He feints her way her again. She dodges around the side of the sofa.

LYNN
Phillip--

PHILLIP
Stop calling me that. My name is Shane.

They are circling each other, the sofa a barrier between them.

PHILLIP
Would you like to know why you're so afraid of clowns?

She does, but she says nothing.

PHILLIP
At the hospital, some vapid nurse told you your parents were never coming back so you started crying. There was a clown at the hospital trying to cheer up the kids that day and...he came up behind you and touched your shoulder. I guess he was trying to make you smile. But...you saw him and wouldn't stop screaming bloody murder.

(beat)
Isn't it interesting how that one moment has shaped the rest of your life?

LYNN
And you've been...following me all these years?

PHILLIP
Yes.

Lynn's expression says just how nuts that is.

LYNN
And Amanda? Julie? Even Nicky?

PHILLIP
FUCK you, Lynn! What about my parents? What about ME?
LYNN
What about you?

She surprises him by moving a little closer, her face showing sympathy and kindness.

LYNN
Phillip...you're nuts.

She punches him square in the face. He's shocked, and hurt, falls back on his ass as blood starts to gush from his nose.

Lynn turns and runs.

OUTSIDE

She rushes to the car, fumbling at her keyring for the car key. She gets to her door, still sorting through her keys and naturally, she drops them.

Phillip bursts out the door, furious. He sees her car, that she's not in it. He turns to look the other direction as she stands up with the right key in her hand.

He hears, turns toward her. Too late--she's unlocked the door and slid in. He rushes over as the car starts, leaping on the hood as if he can stop her from getting away.

In reverse, she guns it.

Phillip slides off and hits the driveway painfully. Lynn has braked her car short of the road. She puts it in park. Stares at Phillip as he slowly stands up.

She looks at Nicky in the back seat, still asleep. Something's going through her mind but it's hard to tell what it is.

Phillip is walking toward the car now. Twenty feet away.

Lynn puts her hand on the shift lever. Takes a good look at the letters. R D N 1 2 3. Reverse takes her away from the nightmare walking toward her.

Phillip is fifteen feet away and closing.

Lynn pulls the lever down. Was it one click or two?

She stomps on a pedal and her car surges forward. Phillip has time to raise the knife before the car hits him, tossing him back into the yard like a rag doll.

She checks on Nicky--still buckled up and unbelievably still asleep. Back to front where Phillip lies in an unmoving heap.

Lynn lays her head on the steering wheel in utter exhaustion as SIRENS can be heard approaching.
FADE TO BLACK

FADE IN:

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

The PHONE RINGS, and Lynn bolts upright in bed. She snatches it off the hook.

LYNN
Hello?

DETECTIVE PETERS (PHONE)
Lynn? Thank God you answered. I don't want you to panic--

LYNN
What? What's happened?

DETECTIVE PETERS
Look, I've got men on the way, they'll be there any second.

LYNN
What is it?

DETECTIVE PETERS
(exhales)
Doug Richardson--the clown...he escaped from the prison. I'm sure he's headed out of state as fast as he can go, but I'm sending men over there just to be safe. I want you to stay calm...

LYNN
When?

DETECTIVE PETERS
We're not sure, we--

She's already put the phone down and is moving down the hall toward Nicholas' room. Detective Peters keeps talking, but his voice soon fades away to nothing.

She passes Nicholas' room and goes to the front door. Checks the locks. Still locked, the security chain latched.

Relieved, she moves back to Nicholas' room. His door is half-closed, and pitch dark inside.

She pushes the door open, but it's still too dark to see Nicholas' bed.

Lynn flicks on the light.
The light comes on for an instant and immediately blows out. But in the snapshot flash Lynn sees the clown standing in front of her son's bed looking down on him, and at the flick of the switch, the clown begins to turn her way.

The room is pitch-black before their eyes can meet.

Lynn's fear is all-consuming. She unwittingly moves back against the wall, staring into the dark gaping hole into her son's room, so suddenly a mouth into madness.

Too paralyzed to scream, Lynn stares into the darkness, waiting for the clown to appear.

CLOSE ON THE DOORWAY

At any second, the clown's horrid face will loom out of the black, like a floating head, leering at her.

CLOSE ON LYNN

Lynn's lip trembles. She can't blink. Fear grips her every muscle.

CLOSER ON THE DOORWAY

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