

WISH UPON

Written by

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SMASH UP ON...

EXT. SHANNON HOUSE - DAY (ESTABLISHING)

Red brick. Green roof. Distinct storybook charm in a quiet working class neighborhood.

SAXOPHONE MUSIC can be heard within.

Clutching a BABY DOLL to her chest, pigtailed adorable CLARE SHANNON (5), barrels out the front door. All spirit and energy.

She retrieves her PINK TRICYCLE from the yard, tosses her doll in the basket, and hops on, ready for an adventure.

CLARE
Momma! How far can I go?!

Her mother, JOHANNA SHANNON (30s) appears in the doorway. Barefoot. Casual. An easy smile.

JOHANNA
Not too far. Just down the street and back.

CLARE
Awww.

Next door, MRS. DE LUCA (50s), a tough independent old bird, looks up from weeding her flower bed.

MRS. DE LUCA
I'll keep an eye on her, Jo!

Johanna nods and turns back to the house. As she goes, we catch a glimpse, the faintest flash, of a heaviness. A sorrow fathoms deep.

But she disappears inside before we can ponder it further.

And WE RETURN TO--

CLARE

Pedalling down the driveway and out to the sidewalk. High on the deliciousness of her imagination.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD SIDEWALK - DAY (LATER)

TRING TRING! Clare's tricycle plows through fallen leaves.

TRING TRING! Clare hits a bump and bounces high in the seat, but that doesn't slow her.

If anything, she pedals harder. Faster.

She comes to the end of the street, U-TURNS, and races back.

Faster. Faster. *

TRING TRING! She takes a sharp turn and intentionally CRASHES into the front lawn of the--

EXT. SHANNON HOUSE - DAY *

Uninjured and thoroughly pleased with herself, Clare snatches her BABY DOLL out of the bike basket and waves to Mrs. De Luca. *
*
*

CLARE

Mrs. Luca! I crashed! Did you see it?!

MRS. DE LUCA

It was excellent, honey!

She claps merrily as Clare skips inside. *

INT. SHANNON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Neat. Eclectic. As charming on the inside as it is on the outside. Welcome to a home where artists dwell.

With a SAXOPHONE to his lips, recklessly handsome LOUIS SHANNON (30s), the quintessential jazz musician, looks up with a smile when Clare tumbles in. *

CLARE

Daddy, I crashed and it was cool beans!

Louis plays a JAUNTY LITTLE TUNE in acknowledgment and Clare scampers off. Daddy's little girl.

INT. SHANNON HOUSE - STAIRS - DAY

Breathless and red-cheeked, Clare pounds up.

CLARE

Momma!

INT. SHANNON HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

Clare runs in and looks around.

CLARE

Momma?

But it's empty and Clare promptly trots out. Enthusiasm still high.

INT. SHANNON HOUSE - STUDIO - DAY

Oils, chalk, and paint litter every surface. SKETCHES crowd the wall, but they're turbulent. Dark. A hint of instability evident in the swirling chaotic lines.

Clare peers in, excitement waning.

CLARE
Momma? Where are you?!

INT. SHANNON HOUSE - ATTIC STAIRWELL - DAY

Clare stands at the bottom. A gaping chasm of blackness looms above her. She's scared - no, *terrified* - to ascend, but--

CLARE
Momma?

Clutching her doll close, she makes her way up. Step by tremulous step. But it's already beginning to dawn on her child's mind...

Something's not quite right.

INT. SHANNON HOUSE - ATTIC - DAY

Clare enters and looks around. Beyond a few boxes, a table, and a TOPPLED OVER CHAIR, there's nothing in here.

CLARE
Momma?

CREAK above her. Clare looks up. A tight GASP.

HER DOLL CLATTERS TO THE FLOOR.

INT. SHANNON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Clare's SCREAM drifts down from above.

LOUIS
Clare?!

No answer. He drops his sax and runs out.

INT. SHANNON HOUSE - ATTIC - DAY

Louis hurries in and kneels in front of his daughter who just stares upward. Eyes wide and unblinking.

LOUIS
Hey. Hey, big girl. What's wrong?
Did a spider getcha?

Wearing oversized dark clothing - her camouflage and armor - CLARE SHANNON (17) stands at the window grimly watching her father drive off.

The exuberant little daredevil she once was is a long forgotten memory. There's a sadness to her now. Deep and enduring. She's tough but insecure.

Content to disappear and happiest when no one notices her at all. The problem is that people ALWAYS notice.

Max nudges at her ankles. She picks him up and sighs.

Welcome to fucking Monday.

INT. SHANNON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

With a backpack thrown over her shoulder, Clare retrieves several sprung RAT TRAPS along with their stiff, unlucky occupants, as she heads to the door.

EXT. SHANNON HOUSE - DAY

Disgusted, but used to it, Clare dumps the traps into a garbage can and drags it to the curb.

Next door, Mrs. De Luca waves through her kitchen window.

MRS. DE LUCA
Smile, honey! You're young!

With effort, Clare smiles and waves back. But the moment she turns, the smile fades. She hella hates her life.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - DAY

Beneath a cold, gray sky, Clare coasts downhill on her hipster bike, the nicest thing she owns.

EXT. RAILROAD CROSSING - DAY

Clare waits behind a line of cars as a TRAIN thunders by. As soon as it passes, CAUTION LIGHTS go dim, the BOOM GATE rises, and she crosses into the affluent part of town.

EXT. UPSCALE NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Stately homes line the street. Clare drinks each one in as she passes, envious of the implied stability within.

But she stops when she sees--

HER FATHER'S TRUCK PARKED CURBSIDE.

Just beyond it, Louis diligently PICKS THROUGH VARIOUS TRASHCANS and RECYCLE BINS.

Embarrassed, Clare quickly scans the area -- the coast is clear. She might still have time to avert disaster.

She hurries over to him.

CLARE
Dad!

Louis glances up and grunts. The tenderness between them has vanished. These days, she's the parent and he's the recalcitrant teenager.

CLARE (CONT'D)
What're you doing?

LOUIS
What's it look like?

Out of the corner of her eye, Clare catches sight of a CAR FILLED WITH TEENAGE POPULARS approaching. She tenses and tries to hurry things along.

CLARE
Dad, come on. It's gonna rain.
Look.

LOUIS
But I got a good feeling.

CLARE
The house is full of your good feelings and most of them smell terrible.

Suddenly, THE CAR ACCELERATES with DARCIÉ CHAPMAN (17), reigning queen bee hella bitch, at the wheel.

Her bestie, out and proud TYLER DUNLOP (17) hangs out the shotgun window, brandishing a venti frap.

CLARE (CONT'D)
Watch out!

And Tyler THROWS THE FRAP. Clare ducks but--

KA-WHAP! THE DRINK NAILS LOUIS RIGHT IN THE CHEST. Iced caramel SPLASHES ALL OVER HIS SHIRT and PANTS.

Populars WHOOP and LAUGH.

TYLER
Bulls-eye, bitches!

CLARE
(after them)
Assholes! Douchebag assholes!

Companionably, the girls link arms and head to class.

EXT. HART ESTATE - DAY

A recent fire has reduced this multi-million dollar mansion to a burned out shell. Only the barest hint of its former grandeur remains.

And it's also a crime scene.

POLICE LINE DO NOT CROSS TAPE snaps in the wind. It's eerie here. Grim. Remnants of an unspeakable act hang heavy. An unspoken presence. Ominous. Sinister.

Black clad and clearly trespassing, a YOUNG MAN picks his way through the debris. With a flashlight, he combs through the water-drenched ruins, meticulously searching every charred corner.

Meet RYAN JOHNS (18). Beneath his dark hoodie, he's intense and driven. Humorless and haunted. Hardened by tragedy and singular purpose.

HEADLIGHTS approach as Louis pulls up to the main gates.

Ryan ducks behind a crumbling pillar, grabs a METAL PIPE, and holds it close. Ready to use it if he has to.

EXT. HART ESTATE - OUTSIDE THE MAIN GATES - DAY

A half dozen DUMPSTERS overflow with BLACKENED ODDS AND ENDS.

Whistling, Louis sifts through this Scrapper/Picker paradise.

A GLINT OF SILVER at the bottom catches his eye. He reaches in, digs deep, and discovers--

A SMALL SILVER MUSIC BOX.

It's filthy, but heavy. Ornate. Expensive. He wipes off a layer of soot revealing the inscription:

WISH UPON

He wonders over this. Clearly, he's found something valuable. *Hot damn!*

He tucks The Box under his arm and hurries back to his truck with the rest of his loot. Ryan chases after him.

RYAN
Hey! Hey!

LOUIS
Mind your business, pal! Finders keepers!

He hops into his truck and squeals off.

Pissed, Ryan watches him go.

HIS POV -- Louis' LICENSE PLATE.

Ryan commits it to memory.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - ART ROOM - DAY

Filled with paint. Brushes. Welcome to the one place Clare truly fits in. The one place she feels comfortable.

She busily sketches away while MIKE STANLEY (30s, hip, pony-tailed, adored by his students) nods approvingly at her drawing.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - MATH CLASS - DAY

Clare sits in the back and tries not to stare at Paul who chats with a FRIEND a few rows ahead of her.

Frustrated for even daring to hope, she turns her attentions back to her homework.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - CAFETERIA - DAY

Loud and crowded. Clare, June, and Meredith search in vain for a place to sit.

VOICE (O.S.)
Hey, Clare!

Clare turns to see Darcie sitting at a nearby table with her minions -- Tyler, Paul, and Beth among them.

DARCIE
Saw your dad shopping this morning.
Is that where you got that sweater?

TYLER
(daps with Darcie)
Fi-yah!

JUNE
(whispers to Clare)
So extra.

Meredith jumps to Clare's defense.

MEREDITH
(to Darcie)
Did it take you all morning to come
up with that, Proactive?

DARCIE
Why are you talking to me,
Adderall?

MEREDITH
Because I pity the less fortunate,
Thalidomide.

Darcie just rolls her eyes and turns back to her friends.

DARCIE
I almost feel bad for them. I
mean, what's it like being
completely and totally irrelevant?

Clare simmers. Today's the day. The day when she's had
friggin' enough. Done with the bullshit, she marches up to
Darcie.

JUNE
(whispers)
Clare, don't!

MEREDITH
Do! Drop her like a red-headed
baby fresh out the v--

June clamps her hand over Meredith's mouth.

CLARE
(to Darcie)
In a few years, you'll find out.

Oohs from the Populars.

The cafeteria goes dead silent.

Meredith and June are so thrilled they might just shit.

DARCIE
Find out what, winner?

CLARE
What it's like to be completely and
totally irrelevant.

Darcie's mouth works, but nothing comes out. This is her
world and no one ever talks to her that way. Ev. Ver. She
rises.

DARCIE
What?

CLARE
Do you want me to spell it?

Darcie just blinks. Still trying to understand this
unexpected insubordination.

CLARE (CONT'D)
I-N space--

And *KA-WHAP!* Darcie SLAPS Clare. Right across the face.

Without missing a beat--

KA-WHAP! Clare slaps her right back.

And DARCIE CHARGES CLARE.

In the next instant, the two are PUNCHING and PULLING EACH OTHER'S HAIR. Students swarm.

Clare gives as good as she gets before TEACHERS finally pull them apart.

INT. DE LUCA HOUSE - KITCHEN - EVENING

Cozy and comforting. Pouting over milk and cookies, Clare accepts an ice pack from Mrs. De Luca and places it on her bruised cheek. Mrs. De Luca just looks on sympathetically.

MRS. DE LUCA

I wish I knew how to help you. In my day, I think people were a little nicer to each other. You always look like you're going to war.

CLARE

Most of the time, that's exactly what it feels like.

MRS. DE LUCA

You know what you need?

CLARE

Don't say it.

MRS. DE LUCA

A nice boy.

CLARE

You said it.

MRS. DE LUCA

There has to be at least one you like.

CLARE

There isn't.

MRS. DE LUCA

Not even one?

CLARE

No.

MRS. DE LUCA

Is there a nice girl?

CLARE

No!

MRS. DE LUCA
That's nothing to be ashamed of. I think it's wonderful. Young people are so free these days.

CLARE
There's a boy... Sorta.

MRS. DE LUCA
And?

CLARE
I think he said hi to me once.

MRS. DE LUCA
That's something.

CLARE
In the fifth grade.

Mrs. De Luca lets that settle.

MRS. DE LUCA
Maybe you could try to change up your look a little bit.

CLARE
What's wrong with my look?

MRS. DE LUCA
Well...

To be honest would be unkind, so--

MRS. DE LUCA (CONT'D)
You know, I have all of these cute little dresses from when I was in my twenties. They're yours if you want them. A dress and some color never hurt anyone. They might even cheer you up.

Doubtful. Clare just sighs, the weight of the universe on her narrow shoulders.

MRS. DE LUCA (CONT'D)
Things really do get easier. You'll grow up, get your own place, and these awkward years... It'll be like they never happened.

Off Clare, resigned, miserable, not buyin' what she's sellin'...

INT. SHANNON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Louis snores on the cramped sofa. Sitting on the end table, is a PHOTOGRAPH OF THE SHANNON FAMILY before Jo's suicide.

Clare glances at it as she sets out a fast food dinner for her father, her longing's palpable.

LOUIS
(rouses, grunts)
What's that green stuff?

CLARE
Salad, dad. Eat it. Or don't.
Who knows? The scurv might be in
next year.

LOUIS
School called.

CLARE
And?

LOUIS
They said you got into a fight.

CLARE
So?

LOUIS
Did you?

CLARE
Maybe. Are you mad?

LOUIS
No. Did you win?

CLARE
Do I ever?

Even Louis doesn't have an answer for that. After a moment, he reaches out. Makes a rare attempt to be fatherly.

LOUIS
Got somethin' for you. Put it on
your bed.

CLARE
I thought we talked about this.
Your space. My space--

LOUIS
(bristles)
If you don't like it, give it back.
I got it at a nice place. Just
tryin' to do somethin' nice is all.
Consider it an early birthday
present.

With a sigh, Clare heads upstairs.

INT. SHANNON HOUSE - CLARE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Clare enters to find THE MUSIC BOX sitting on her immaculately made bed.

She grimaces at it. She doesn't like junk. Or dirty things. Especially not in her sanctuary. Aggravated, she picks it up and brushes off the soot.

An INSCRIPTION on the lid catches her attention.

CLARE
*'Lay thy hands upon me.
 Close thy eyes and wish.
 Seven wishes will I grant thee,
 If thou remembers this.*

*Keep me in the darkness
 Hide me from the sun.
 Abandon, lose, or open me,
 And all will be undone.'*

She shakes The Box. Nothing can be heard within.

CLARE (CONT'D)
 Yeah, right.

Over it, she tosses The Box aside. In the next moment--

Her CELLPHONE BLIPS. INCOMING TEXT FROM MEREDITH.

Meredith: U ok?

Clare: :)

Meredith: Chk Darcie's INSTGRM. BTCH MAJ!

Frowning, Clare goes over to her computer and CLICKS over to DARCIE'S INSTAGRAM PAGE.

INSERT - COMPUTER

FOOTAGE OF CLARE AND DARCIE'S FIGHT plays on a GIF loop.

BACK TO SCENE

Defeated, Clare sighs and wanders into the bathroom. A hot bath looms.

(LATER)

Wrapped in a bathrobe, Clare emerges from the bathroom and *THUMP!* She stubs her toe.

Ow!
 CLARE (CONT'D)

She looks down to see what she stubbed it on and--

It's THE MUSIC BOX.

That's odd. She could've sworn she left it on her bed.

Or maybe she didn't.

Whatever. With her foot, she shoves it beneath the dust ruffle.

NIGHT

Dressed for bed, Clare paces as she brushes her teeth, but her gaze is constantly drawn back to--

THE BOX

Sitting primly beneath the bed. It's oddly seductive. Beckoning. She can't take her eyes off of it. *

(LATER)

Clare sits at her computer, absently clicking through websites. Then she notices--

THE BOX

Reflected in the screen. Her gaze locks onto it. She regards it for a long, long time, then--

CLARE (CONT'D)

Why not?

She retrieves The Box and turns it over, wondering over its intricate inlay.

Then she sets it down, tentatively places both hands atop it, and closes her eyes.

CLARE (CONT'D)

I wish... I wish Darcie Chapman would just leave me the hell alone.

She rolls her eyes - *God, she can't even believe she did that* - and shoves The Box underneath the bed.

Then she lays back. A moment of reflection. *Rough day.* Her breath hitches, but she refuses to let any tears fall.

EXT. SHANNON HOUSE - THAT NIGHT

Darkness. A bright moon overhead.

INT. SHANNON HOUSE - CLARE'S BEDROOM - LATE NIGHT

Clare sleeps deeply. All is eerily silent except for a steady *DRIP... DRIP... DRIP...* coming from her bathroom sink.

Beneath her bed, THE MUSIC BOX just sits. Unremarkable. Deceptively innocuous. But then--

A SPIDER CREEPS IN FROM A CRACK IN THE WINDOW.

A CENTIPEDE SCURRIES OUT OF A HOLE IN THE FLOORBOARDS.

COCKROACHES SKITTER IN FROM UNDERNEATH THE DOOR.

TOGETHER, THIS PARADE OF LOW CREATURES CONVERGES ON THE BOX. Inexplicably drawn to it. Servants of something sinister.

But an exhausted Clare doesn't notice. She just sleeps on.

EXT. SHANNON HOUSE - MORNING

A perfect sunrise on the horizon.

INT. SHANNON HOUSE - CLARE'S BEDROOM - MORNING

CLARE'S ALARM SPARKS TO LIFE. It's 6:00am. Clare's eyes open, but she doesn't move. Sooo not looking forward to starting her day.

INT. RYAN'S CAR (PARKED) - DAY

Inconspicuously parked around the corner from the Shannon house. Ryan sits behind the wheel, gaze locked on the home.

HIS POV -- Downcast as always, Clare hops onto her bike and rides off. He curiously watches her go.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY

Dreading the ridicule that's sure to come, Clare enters apprehensively and looks around.

For a moment, she's confused.

Then perplexed.

Then positively fucking FLUMMOXED.

Students huddle in groups. Gossiping and texting, everyone's distracted. No one seems to notice Clare at all. It's like yesterday's fight never happened.

Bewildered, Clare joins June and Meredith at their lockers. *

CLARE
What's going on?

JUNE
You haven't heard?

CLARE
Heard what?

MEREDITH
 (delighted)
 Bitchface-Since-Birth, otherwise
 known as Darcie Chapman, got
 pinched last night.

CLARE
 For what?

MEREDITH
 Trying to get into a 21 and over
 with a fakie. So guess who got a
 one way ticket to boarding school?

JUNE
 An All Girl's Boarding School.

MEREDITH
 In frigging France!
 #karmajustgotreal. I'm so happy,
 my tits itch!

CLARE
 Seriously?

MEREDITH
 About my tits?

CLARE
 About Darcie.

MEREDITH
 Yes! She's Gone Girl. Adios
 Muchacha. Buh-Bye Bitch!
 Celebratory selfie!

Meredith holds up her cellphone and the three girls grin.

CLICK.

INT. SHANNON HOUSE - CLARE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

MATCH CUT TO -- THE SELIFE on MEREDITH'S INSTAGRAM PAGE.

Clad in cute pjs, Clare sits at her desk, grinning at it.

Then she TYPES INTO THE COMMENTS SECTION. #bestdayever!

After a thought, she CLICKS OVER TO PAUL'S INSTAGRAM ACCOUNT.

She scrolls through PHOTOS OF PAUL WITH BETH and studies
 them. In every single one, they look young, happy, in love.

She then goes to her bed, pulls The Box out from underneath,
 and regards it curiously. She's not a believer yet, but--

CLARE
 You def have my attention, lucky
 box.

She notices INITIALS carved onto the side. **AG.**

Interesting.

She considers flipping open the latch, but--

CLARE (CONT'D)
Not gonna jinx it.

Instead, she neatly sets The Box down in front of her, places both hands atop it, and closes her eyes.

CLARE (CONT'D)
My second wish is that Paul
Middlebrook would fall madly in
love with me.

Once again, a roll of the eyes. An embarrassed smile.

But hey, you can't blame a girl for trying.

She shoves The Box back under the bed. A dust ruffle hides it from sight.

(LATE NIGHT)

The witching hour. Clare sleeps. Lost in a perfect dream.

WE PULL DOWN beneath the bed and, after a moment--

THE MUSIC BOX OPENS!

A soft, haunting MELODY begins to play.

MEOWRRRR! Alarmed, Max HISSES, leaps off the bed, and books it out of the room in a hurry.

A moment passes. Outside, AN AGONIZED FELINE YOWL can be heard and--

Clare wakes abruptly. She sits up.

CLICK. The Box closes and goes silent.

She looks around, uncertain of what woke her. She notices the empty depression in the bed where Max slept.

CLARE (CONT'D)
Max?!

No answer.

CLARE (CONT'D)
Stupid cat.

Unconcerned, she rolls over and drops back off to sleep almost instantly.

INT. SHANNON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NEXT MORNING

Clare picks her way down the stairs. Louis munches on breakfast in front of the tv.

CLARE
Max? Max, where are you?!

But there's no answer. No Max.

CLARE (CONT'D)
Dad, have you seen Max?

LOUIS
I never see Max. He's always in your room.

CLARE
Well, I can't find him.

LOUIS
(unconcerned)
He's probably sowin' his wild oats.

CLARE
He's neutered. No oats to sow.

LOUIS
Can't blame a guy for tryin'.

CLARE
Or the ladies for being disappointed.

She snags a sprung rat trap and ducks out.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - ART ROOM - DAY

CLOSE ON -- CLARE'S SKETCHBOOK. Beneath Clare's steady hand, The Box takes form. A masterful study in charcoal lines and shadows. * *

MR. STANLEY
All right, class. Listen up!
Listen up!

Clare looks up to see Mr. Stanley and Ryan standing at the front of the room.

MR. STANLEY (CONT'D)
This is Ryan Johns. He just transferred in from Westridge. I'm sure you'll all make him feel welcome. But for those of you who plan on making his life hell, please do so outside of my classroom. Thank you. * * *
(to Ryan)
Have a seat.

Ryan sits and tries to make eye contact with Clare, but she returns to her sketchbook.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - CAFETERIA - DAY

Clare, June, and Meredith pick at their lunches. Both Clare and Meredith study the table full of Populars. These days, Tyler holds court, laughing at the center of the group.

Clare's gaze lingers on Paul and Beth. At first, neither seems to notice her, but then--

PAUL LOOKS HER WAY AND WINKS.

Say. *WHAT?!*

Clare's so stunned, she snorts coke through her nose.

MEREDITH
That was special.

JUNE
(re: Ryan)
Hey, Clare. You know that guy?

CLARE
What guy?

Clare looks over to see--

RYAN

SITTING IN A CORNER BY HIMSELF and staring unabashedly at her. It's intense. Unnerving.

CLARE (CONT'D)
He's in my art class. Transfer.

JUNE
Why's he staring at you like he wants to Amber Alert you?

MEREDITH
He could Amber Alert me any day of the week. And twice on Sunday.

CLARE
Shhh!

JUNE
(to Meredith)
I swear, the dramz and your mouth have an unholy union. Like Peanut Butter and Ketchup.

CLARE
Or barbecued snot. Truth.

MEREDITH
 (cheerfully undeterred)
 He's, like, no-carbs-for-life hot.
 Like have-his-triplets-without-an-
 epidural hot. Like wax-my-crack-
 right-now hot.

JUNE
 I think he looks like he steals.

MEREDITH
 (scoffs)
 Like that's a bad thing.

Clare just shakes her head and surreptitiously turns her attentions back to Paul and Beth.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY

Clare SLAMS HER LOCKER CLOSED and--

PAUL
 S'up?

Paul stands on the other side.

Startled, Clare yelps and DROPS HER BOOKS.

PAUL (CONT'D)
 My bad. Sorry.

He's quick to help her pick them up. Clare, however, is struck stupid.

PAUL (CONT'D)
 Clare, right?

CLARE
 Yeah... Erghm.

Wow. That wasn't even English.

But Paul doesn't seem to notice that her IQ is plummeting by the second.

PAUL
 I'm Paul.

CLARE
 Right. I know. We have History together.

PAUL
 (genuinely surprised)
 Yeah?

CLARE
 And Pre-Cal. And English. I uh...
 I sit right behind you.

PAUL
You on your way to class?

CLARE
I... No.

PAUL
You what?

CLARE
I... Yes.

Oh, dear Christ.

CLARE (CONT'D)
I mean I'm on my way to the library. In school suspension.

PAUL
Right. Cuz you went straight beast mode on Darcie Chapman.

CLARE
Well, she started it.

PAUL
And you finished it.

CLARE
I did?

PAUL
Yeah. Go you, Tyson. And between the two of us, she's had something like that coming for years. Can I walk with you?

She tries not to blush. *Ermagawd!*

CLARE
Sure.

The ONE MINUTE BELL RINGS.

PAUL
Let's bounce.

He casually throws an arm around her as they head to the library. As they go, Clare passes Meredith and June whose mouths drop.

Ermagawd!

Clare doesn't see Ryan watching her from a short distance away. She's much too happy. Grinning like an idiot on cloud frigging nine.

EXT. SHANNON HOUSE - BACKYARD - THAT EVENING

Clare's glow from earlier has faded. Concerned, she picks her way through the overgrowth.

CLARE
Max?! MAX!

And then she sees--

MAX'S COLLAR on the ground by the porch. Blood stains the BELL.

CLARE (CONT'D)
Max?!

Clare pulls her cellphone and shines the light through the lattice work. A black chasm gapes.

Steeling herself, she drops to her knees. Squeezes through.

INT. BENEATH THE SHANNON HOUSE - EVENING

Guided by the light of her cellphone, Clare creeps through garbage and mulch a foot deep.

CLARE
Max?!

SKITTERING behind her. She WHIRLS.

CLARE (CONT'D)
Max?

But it's not Max. It's RATS.

Ugh.

She shudders and presses on. But then her gaze falls onto--
A SMEAR OF REDNESS on the leaves.

Dreading what she's going to find, she creeps toward it.

MORE BLOOD SURROUNDS HER.

And just ahead of her, is a HUMP.

A still, unmoving hump.

CLARE (CONT'D)
(whispers)
Max?

Her CELLPHONE LIGHT SETTLES ON THE HUMP.

She takes one look and SCREAMS.

EXT. SHANNON HOUSE - BACKYARD - NIGHT

CHUCK. CHUCK. CHUCK. A lonely shovel strikes dirt.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL -- Louis digging a small grave.

A stoic Clare lingers nearby. At her feet is a SHOE BOX containing Max's remains.

LOUIS
That should do it, I guess.

Clare gently places the shoebox into the hole. A moment, then--

LOUIS (CONT'D)
Should we say something?

CLARE
No.

Resigned, he begins to refill the hole.

CLARE (CONT'D)
What do you think happened to him?

LOUIS
Rats probably.

Clare's lower lip trembles, but she bites back her tears.

This big girl don't cry.

INT. SHANNON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Louis dozes while Clare looks around the room.

It's gross in here. Oppressive. Miserable.

Aggravated, she grabs some CURTAIN RODS and drags them outside. Intent on throwing a few things away.

EXT. SHANNON HOUSE - NIGHT

Clare sets the rods out by the fence.

LOUIS (O.S.)
Hey! What the hell you doin'?!

Clare turns to see her father glaring at her from the porch.

CLARE
Clearing some space.

LOUIS
Bring 'em back in.

CLARE
No.

LOUIS
I'm gonna use those.

CLARE
For what?

Louis marches out to the fence.

CLARE (CONT'D)
Dad, seriously? You can't throw
anything away? Not even for me?

He grabs the rods and carries them back into the house.

CLARE (CONT'D)
What would mom say?
(still no answer)
Dad! DAD?!

Louis slams the door behind him leaving Clare fuming where she stands. This isn't the first time they've had this argument. Probably won't be the last.

BUT THEN AN IDEA SPARKS and she hurries back inside.

INT. SHANNON HOUSE - CLARE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Clare yanks The Music Box out from underneath the bed. She still doesn't really believe, but--

CLARE
Why not?

She places her hands on The Box and closes her eyes.

CLARE (CONT'D)
Come on, lucky box. For my third
wish, I wish...

And we FADE TO...

INT. SHANNON HOUSE - CLARE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Sleeping comfortably, Clare rouses. For a moment, she just listens, uncertain of what woke her.

But then she hears activity - HONKING and VOICES outside.

She rolls over and peers down into the front yard. Her breath catches and she races out.

INT. SHANNON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Clare throws open the front door and GAPES at the GARAGE SALE IN PROGRESS. PILES OF JUNK glut the lawn and dozens of SHOPPERS claim items and pay up.

Reinvigorated and damn near cheerful, Louis catcalls at a makeshift register.

LOUIS
 Make me an offer! Everything must go! Everything must go! No offer's too low! Don't be shy!

He catches sight of Clare, still in her pajamas, staring at him. Floored.

LOUIS (CONT'D)
 Clare! Put some clothes on, girl! I need help out here!

Biting back a wave of emotion, Clare nods.

CLARE
 Just a second!

She closes the door and slumps against it. Overwhelmed. There's no doubt about it, HER WISH JUST CAME TRUE. She runs back upstairs.

INT. SHANNON HOUSE - CLARE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Reverently and a little awestruck, Clare picks up The Music Box and wonders over it, studying it intently.

CLARE
 (whispers)
 How is this possible?

Suddenly, a SPIDER CRAWLS OVER HER FINGERS.

Clare stifles a SCREAM and DROPS THE BOX.

It falls onto its side and IMMEDIATELY RIGHTS ITSELF with a resounding *THUMP!*

Then it just sits there.

Silent.

Waiting.

Holy. Friggin'. *Shitballs*.

Frozen and freaked out, Clare doesn't move.

SOMETHING SUPERNATURAL IS CLEARLY AT WORK HERE.

CLARE (CONT'D)
 (whispers)
 What just happened?

She crouches down in front of The Box.

CLARE (CONT'D)
 What are you?

But there's no movement. No answer.

Clare regards The Box for a long moment. Her fingertips flutter towards the LATCH AND SHE SLOWLY BEGINS TO OPEN IT--

LOUIS (O.S.)
 CLARE!

Startled, her hand falls away and she looks out the window. Louis waves up at her.

LOUIS (CONT'D)
 Hurry up! We got money to make!
 Get down here, kiddo!

CLARE
 Coming!

She returns to The Box and her gaze falls onto its inscription.

CLARE (CONT'D)
*Abandon, lose or open me and all
 will be undone.*

No way. She can't do that. Not yet.

Instead, she shoves The Box back underneath her bed and begins to get dressed.

EXT. SHANNON HOUSE - DAY

Welcome to the Garage Sale of the Century!

Clare stands in front of a plastic tub accepting wads of cash as Louis' clutter dwindles by the second.

She sells her old BABY DOLL to a WOMAN and her DAUGHTER.

A moment later, Mrs. De Luca presents her with a few KNICK-KNACKS.

CLARE
 Your money's no good here. Take whatever you want. Better yet, take two. Or ten.

MRS. DE LUCA
 So happy for you, sweetheart. This is long overdue.

She and Clare share a laugh.

In the b.g., Ryan moves through the crowd, picking through the junk, and STUDYING LOUIS AND CLARE out of the corner of his eye.

Sensing this, Clare glances in his direction, but a BOY (9) shoves a ratty SAXOPHONE CASE into her face.

BOY
How much?

CLARE
How about five--

LOUIS (O.S.)
Wait!

Louis rushes over and grabs the case.

LOUIS (CONT'D)
Sorry, son. This is the one thing.
The one thing that's not for sale.

Disappointed, the Boy sulks off and Louis hides the case under the table.

LOUIS (CONT'D)
(to Clare)
Don't let anyone touch it, 'kay?

CLARE
But you haven't played in since mom-

LOUIS
Never say never.

He looks around. Almost as thrilled as she is.

LOUIS (CONT'D)
Well? Whaddaya think?

CLARE
I think this is incredible.

LOUIS
High five.

CLARE
Dad, no. No one does that anymore.
It's like reading a book or something.

LOUIS
What? Don't leave me hang--

VOICE (O.S.)
Excuse me?

CLARE
 You get her number?
 (off his look)
 Why not?

LOUIS
 (shrugs, embarrassed)
 It's been a long time. I never was
 very good at that kind of stuff.

CLARE
 Next time.

LOUIS
 Yeah.
 (beat)
 Oh, while I was cleaning, I found
 something that I thought you might
 like. It's upstairs.
 (off her dubious look)
 Your space. My space. I *know*.
 Just trust me.

Off his wink--

INT. SHANNON HOUSE - CLARE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Clare enters and gasps when she sees A PILE OF HER MOTHER'S
 DRAWINGS sitting on her bed.

Breathless, she takes a seat and touches them with trembling
 fingertips. Here's a window into the soul of a woman she
 never really got a chance to know.

She drinks each one in. Some are dark and violent. But
 others are bright. Colorful. Happy.

Louis appears in the doorway.

CLARE
 (hard to talk)
 I forgot... I forgot how good mom
 was.

LOUIS
 That was her thing. Went to school
 for it and everything. Anyway, I
 put them away awhile back cause I
 thought you might want them. Then
 I forgot where I put them. It's a
 miracle the mice didn't crap all
 over them.

CLARE
 They're all so... happy.

LOUIS
 And so was she.
 (a touch of sorrow)
 Until she wasn't.
 (MORE)

LOUIS (CONT'D)
 (pause)
 Anyway, I'll leave you to it.

Louis departs and Clare sorts through a few more sketches.

She lands on a heartwrenchingly sweet WATERCOLOR OF A YOUNG CLARE in her father's arms.

And then it begins.

SAXOPHONE MUSIC.

Tremulous jazz drifts up from downstairs. Its been more than a decade since Louis has played and his technique is rusty, but the passion's still there. That raw talent. The soul.

Bit by bit, Louis finds his long lost groove.

And Clare begins to cry happy/sad tears. But mostly happy. Years of misery suddenly lifted off her narrow shoulders.

We're watching the rebirth of Clare Shannon.

A girl who is beginning to realize fates can change. That miracles do happen. And it's all thanks to--

THE MUSIC BOX

She pulls it out and holds it close. Rocking it. Resting her cheek against it.

CLARE
 (whispers)
 I believe.

HER ALLEGIANCE TO THE BOX IS SEALED.

EXT. RYAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT (ESTABLISHING)

A modest little place set far back from the road.

INT. RYAN'S HOUSE - BASEMENT APARTMENT - NIGHT

Dark. Neat. Furnished with only the basics.

WE PAN OVER -- A SERIES OF GRUESOME PHOTOGRAPHS AND NEWSPAPER ARTICLES THUMB-TACKED TO THE WALL.

All of them feature the victims of FREAK ACCIDENTS, SPONTANEOUS AILMENTS, and VIOLENT DEATHS.

Grim-faced, Ryan studies this terrifying chronicle.

It's his waking nightmare. His obsession.

He tacks a PHOTOGRAPH OF LOUIS AND CLARE to the end. Clearly, in this accursed, unholy sequence of events--

THEY'RE NEXT.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - DAY

Clare coasts downhill. Roses blossom in her cheeks. She looks happy. Free.

Our little daredevil is back.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY

A glowing Clare joins June and Meredith at their lockers.

Meredith scrutinizes her.

MEREDITH
You look different. What's up?

CLARE
Nothing's up.

MEREDITH
Something's up.

CLARE
(to June)
What's she talking about?

JUNE
You look happy. You're never happy.

CLARE
Yes, I am.

JUNE
Nope. Never.

MEREDITH
Maybe once. Like at my birthday party in the second grade. But not since then.
(a mischievous whisper)
Did someone peep your precious?

CLARE
What? No!

MEREDITH
Who was it?

CLARE
No one!

MEREDITH
More than one?

CLARE

Ew!

MEREDITH

You let someone all up in your naughty business! Who buttered your biscuit? Tell!

CLARE

Just stop, okay? Moment of silence, please!

MEREDITH

For what?

CLARE

My brain, cuz you just killed it.

MEREDITH

You're welcome.

JUNE

Well, *something* happened, Clare. We're your friends. You can tell us anything. Well, you can tell *me* anything.

Clare hesitates. *Should she tell them?* She considers this, but--

*
*

THE BELL RINGS.

*

CLARE

You wouldn't believe me if I told you.

Nope. Today's not the day.

*

Meredith slams her locker and they book it to class.

*

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - ART ROOM - DAY

Impressed, Mr. Stanley studies Clare's sketch of The Box.

MR. STANLEY

Very nice. What's this?

CLARE

Just something my dad got me.

He leans closer to study it. INTERCUT WITH...

INT. SHANNON HOUSE - CLARE'S BEDROOM - DAY

BENEATH CLARE'S BED -- THE BOX OPENS.

HAUNTING MUSIC begins to play.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - ART ROOM - DAY

CLOSE ON -- CLARE'S SKETCH.

Suddenly, BLOOD DROPLETS SPLATTER THE PAPER.

CLARE
(alarmed)
Mr. Stanley? You okay?

Mr. Stanley staggers. His NOSE HAS BEGUN TO BLEED, NO GUSH, from both nostrils. He tries to speak and can't.

CLARE (CONT'D)
Mr. Stanley!

He TOPPLES OVER and HITS THE GROUND.

HIS FEET DRUM.

HIS MOUTH FOAMS.

Students gather and gasp.

Ryan races over and turns Mr. Stanley onto his side.

RYAN
Someone call 911!

Horror-struck, Clare backs away.

INT. SHANNON HOUSE - CLARE'S BEDROOM - DAY

THE MUSIC BOX closes and slips into silence.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY

Clare watches EMTs wheel Mr. Stanley down the hallway. Judging by the grim expressions on their faces, it doesn't look good.

An arm wraps around Clare's shoulders. She turns to see--

PAUL

Just offering comfort.

Something real and sweet blossoming between them.

INT. SHANNON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Clare enters to find Louis practicing and he sounds pretty damn fantastic. He PLAYS THAT JAUNTY LITTLE TUNE in greeting, but she doesn't smile.

LOUIS
You all right, kiddo?

CLARE
Yeah, just... Mr. Stanley had a stroke today. Like, *maj*. Right in the middle of class.

LOUIS
I heard. He okay?

CLARE
I don't know. It looked really bad.

She shrugs off her unease.

CLARE (CONT'D)
You sound amazing.

LOUIS
Too bad I only have an audience of one, hunh?

Clare considers this.

Yeah, it is too bad.

She pulls out her sketchbook and flips through it as Louis resumes practicing. She lands on--

HER DRAWING OF THE MUSIC BOX now streaked with Mr. Stanley's blood.

She shudders and turns the page.

CLARE
(after a thought)
Hey, dad. That Box you got me.

LOUIS
What about it?

CLARE
Where'd you get it?

LOUIS
Found it. Picked it up in a dumpster outside this fancy place up on Old Mill Road. Why?

CLARE
No reason. Just curious.

And she trots upstairs. She's got some wishing to do.

INT. SHANNON HOUSE - CLARE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Clare yanks out the Music Box out from underneath her bed, places both hands atop of it, and closes her eyes.

CLARE
My fourth wish is...

EXT. OLD MILL ROAD - NEXT DAY

A winding, tree-line private road.

Clare pedals up towards the remains of the Hart estate.

EXT. HART ESTATE - DAY

Clare surveys the area. The dumpsters are gone and the debris cleared away. No clues to be found.

Disappointed, she turns to go and--

VOICE
S'up?

She gasps in surprise when she sees Ryan leaning against his car behind her.

CLARE
(uncertain)
Um... Hi?

RYAN
I'm in your art class. You want to know what happened here?

CLARE
I... Wait, did you follow me up here?

RYAN
The owner of this house was a man named Lawrence Hart. For most of his life, he was an underemployed alcoholic. And then, one day, everything changed. He won the lotto, married a beautiful woman, started a successful company, and had a baby girl. Out of nowhere, this nobody became a somebody.

CLARE
(off-balanced)
Okay. And I should care because...?

RYAN
One by one, people around him -- friends, family, people he cared about -- started dying.

(MORE)

RYAN (CONT'D)
 Freak accidents mostly. A falling
 pane of glass decapitated his wife.
 His daughter choked on a--

CLARE
 What's wrong with you? Why are you
 telling me this?

RYAN
 Because Mr. Hart owned the same
 silver Music Box your father stole
 from here a week ago.

Clare's mouth goes dry. Her next words are a whisper.

CLARE
 How do you know that?

RYAN
 Because I saw him do it. He stole
 something he can't control. He's
 in danger. And so are you.

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

Freaked out, she hops onto her bike and pedals off.

RYAN
 I'm just trying to help! Clare,
 wait! CLARE!

But Clare doesn't turn. She just keeps pedalling. *

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - LIBRARY - DAY

Clare flops down in front of one of the computers and pulls
 up a GOOGLE SEARCH. She types in.

"HART OLD MILL ROAD"

And presses ENTER.

THOUSANDS OF RESULTS POP UP.

Clare clicks on a PHOTOGRAPH OF LAWRENCE HART (late 40s). A
 soft, sweet looking man. Warm smile. Kind.

But in the background, on a low shelf, SITS THE MUSIC BOX.
 Clare doubletakes when she sees it.

There's absolutely no doubt. It's HER BOX.

Clare has no idea what to make of this. *

Noise behind her. She turns to see--

RYAN WATCHING HER from the other side of the room.

LOUIS

Course not. You wouldn't. You were just a kid the last time you saw him and your mother couldn't stand him. I used to jam with Marty back in the day. Marty. Karl. Jazz Man Pete. An hour ago, outta the blue, guess who called?

CLARE

Marty who I don't remember?

LOUIS

Marty who you don't remember says he's in town. Got a gig at this reception downtown, but get this. His sax girl, Brenda something or other, is a no show so he asks me if I would be available? I mean, the timing. It's unbelievable. It's been more than ten years. I told him I was rusty, but--

CLARE

You'll be great. Can I come?

LOUIS

Are you kiddin'? You gotta come. Invite friends if you want.

And then Clare sees it. AN OLD DRY CLEANING BAG tucked deep within the closet depths. She pulls it out, rips away the plastic, and ta da! SHIRTS untouched by time or critters.

CLARE

Found it!

A moment later, Louis emerges from the bathroom, freshly shaved. Hair combed. He not only looks human, but handsome.

Clare doubletakes.

LOUIS

What do you think?

CLARE

(means it)
You look really nice.

She hands him a shirt and tie.

CLARE (CONT'D)

Wear these.

LOUIS

Well, hurry up. Get dressed.

CLARE

I don't have anything to wear.

But then she reconsiders. *Hmmm. Maybe she does.*

INT. DE LUCA HOUSE - BEDROOM - EVENING

Mrs. De Luca stands back to admire her work.

MRS. DE LUCA
Look at you!

PULL BACK TO REVEAL -- CLARE. Transformed and gorgeous. Her oversized flannel and jeans have been replaced by a short, sassy vintage dress.

MRS. DE LUCA (CONT'D)
Well? Say something. What do you think?

CLARE
I look... Good?

MRS. DE LUCA
You look like a million bucks!
Give it a twirl! Work it, sister!

Embarrassed, Clare spins. The skirt flares.

MRS. DE LUCA (CONT'D)
See? A cute dress. A little color. Was I right or was I right?

CLARE
You were right.

HONKING outside. Mrs. De Luca embraces her.

MRS. DE LUCA
Have fun tonight. You deserve it.

PRELAP -- JAZZ.

INT. RECEPTION HALL - NIGHT

A fancy shmancy place crowded with WELL DRESSED PATRONS.

ON STAGE -- Louis rocks out with his BANDMATES. And he's in his element. Bopping his head to the rhythm. Happier than we've ever seen him.

COUPLES groove it up on the dance floor. Meredith and June swish and sway to the beat.

JUNE
(to Clare)
Can I say something that might, like, make you really uncomfortable?!

MEREDITH
I totally know what you're gonna say!

JUNE
Your dad is, like, serious
hotsauce!

MEREDITH
He's sriracha sauce!

JUNE
He can get it--

MEREDITH
--twice on Sunday!

Before Clare's brain explodes where she stands, a YOUNG MAN -- earnest, harmless -- offers her his hand.

YOUNG MAN
Do you dance?

CLARE
No, I--

JUNE
Yes, she does!

June gives Clare a shove and the next thing Clare knows, she's being whirled out onto the dance floor.

EXT. SHANNON HOUSE - BACKYARD - NIGHT

Dressed entirely in black with a knapsack draped over his back, Ryan hops the fence. Keeping low, he hustles over to the back-door, jimmies the lock open, and enters the house.

INT. SHANNON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Ryan looks around. He briefly picks up the SHANNON FAMILY PHOTO on the end table and studies it.

Then he hurries to the stairwell.

His search for The Music Box has begun.

INT. RECEPTION HALL - NIGHT

Clare dances, really getting the hang of it. Letting go. Having fun.

Beside her, June and Meredith have also found PARTNERS who spin them around. A good time is being held by all.

And then Clare sees a WOMAN standing by the buffet table. Her profile looks familiar.

IT'S KATE!

*

Clare can barely contain herself.

She gestures excitedly to Louis and manages to catch his attention. She mouths. '*It's Kate!*' and points to the buffet. *

Without breaking his musical stride, Louis looks.

Clare mouths. '*Talk to her! Get her number! Please?!'*

Louis nods. This time, he's going to make it happen.

INT. SHANNON HOUSE - LOUIS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ryan frantically searches the room -- through dresser drawers, under the mattress, in the closet -- but he comes up empty.

Shit!

INT. RECEPTION HALL - NIGHT

The band is on break. Clare searches the crowd for her father.

CLARE'S POV -- Louis stands in a quiet corner flirting with Kate Stern who flirts right back. *

And who could blame her?

Newly cleaned up with a sax on his shoulder, Louis looks downright dashing.

June and Meredith approach and flank Clare. The three observe in silence for a moment.

JUNE

Your dad is so gonna get some later. *

MEREDITH

Like some serious *boomchicka waa* waa. You cool with that? *

Clare doesn't answer. She's more than cool with it. Life is working itself out.

INT. SHANNON HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Frustrated beyond reason, Ryan slams the cabinets closed. Still no sign of The Box. Time's ticking away and he's getting desperate.

But then he realizes, there's one last place left to search.

INT. SHANNON HOUSE - CLARE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ryan throws open the door, looks around, and his search resumes in earnest.

INT. RECEPTION HALL - NIGHT

Most of the paying patrons are gone, but it doesn't matter.

JAZZ MAN PETE tears it up on the piano for the WAITSTAFF, JANITORS, and remaining band members.

Clare and Louis jam to the beat. This is father/daughter bonding time. A rare thing. Sweet. Precious. Fun.

The final note is played and Louis dips Clare. She giggles. Adores him.

It's great to have him back.

INT. SHANNON HOUSE - CLARE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ryan slams Clare's last dresser drawer shut.

RYAN

Shit!

He takes a seat on Clare's bed and takes a moment to compose himself. Clearly, he's missing something. Then he notices--

A ROACH SKITTERING ACROSS THE FLOOR. It disappears beneath the floorboards.

Eureka! Ryan drops to his hands and knees and SHINES HIS FLASHLIGHT INTO THE CRACKS. He knows where The Box is.

INT. LOUIS' TRUCK (MOVING) - NIGHT

A content Louis drives. Clare rides shotgun.

LOUIS

Did you and your friends have a good time?

CLARE

Yeah. Did you have fun?

LOUIS

Best night I've had in awhile. Marty even said we might make it a regular thing.

Clare glances knowingly at him.

CLARE

You get her number this time?

LOUIS
 (perplexed)
 Hunh. Thought I locked it. Guess
 I didn't.

With sudden realization, a panicked Clare runs out.

INT. SHANNON HOUSE - CLARE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ryan heaves and strains, but THE BOX WON'T BUDGE. It's suddenly as HEAVY AS AN ANVIL.

INT. SHANNON HOUSE - STAIRS - NIGHT

Clare hurries up.

INT. SHANNON HOUSE - CLARE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Clare's FOOTSTEPS APPROACH. Ryan's outta time.

As quickly as he can, he returns the boards, the rug, and the chair to their places.

The doorknob turns. Clare's right outside.

Clutching his injured finger to his chest, Ryan looks around for an escape route.

EXT. SHANNON HOUSE - UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Clare throws her bedroom door open and--

INT. SHANNON HOUSE - CLARE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

THE ROOM'S EMPTY. *

All appears to be as she left it except for--

CURTAINS BILLOWING IN THE OPEN WINDOW.

Frowning, Clare moves over and peers out, but nothing seems to be amiss. Satisfied, she closes the window. Locks it.

She never sees--

RYAN

Hiding on the first story roof, just out of sight.

CLARE

Retreats back into her room and pulls the rug aside. She peers beneath the floorboards.

Her Music Box is safe and sound.

She lets out a long sigh. Relieved, she pulls it out.

This time, The Box goes willingly -- its normal weight restored.

Clare holds it close, resting her cheek upon it, as the night gets on.

EXT. SHANNON HOUSE - THE NEXT DAY

A perfect day dawns.

INT. SHANNON HOUSE - CLARE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Clare models another one of Mrs. De Luca's dresses in the mirror. This is a change for her.

She looks stylish. Young. Hip. It makes her uncomfortable, but it's also thrilling. Then, out of nowhere--

THE MUSIC BOX BEGINS TO PLAY.

CLARE
What the hell?

She drops to her knees and pulls aside the floorboards.

INT. DE LUCA HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Humming to herself, Mrs. De Luca rinses out the sink.

She switches on the garbage disposal.

SOMETHING METAL RATTLES within.

She switches it off and peers inside.

INT. SHANNON HOUSE - CLARE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Clare kneels in front of The Box.

CLARE
(whispers)
What's going on? What's wrong with
you?

But there's no answer beyond that strange haunting melody.

INT. DE LUCA HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Mrs. De Luca sticks her hand into the drain to clear the clog. Abruptly--

WHIRRRRRRRR! THE DISPOSAL REVS TO LIFE!

Mrs. De Luca SCREAMS.

INT. SHANNON HOUSE - CLARE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Clare hears the scream, but it's distant. Unfocused.

After a few moments, THE BOX GOES SILENT.

Clare studies it for a second.

Hunh? That was friggin' weird.

With nothing else to do, she returns The Box to its hiding place underneath the floorboards.

EXT. SHANNON HOUSE - DAY

Still puzzled by The Box's activity, Clare hops onto her bike and throws a glance over to Mrs. De Luca's kitchen window. But it's deserted. No sign of Mrs. De Luca.

She shrugs it off. It's probably nothing.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY

In fine spirits, Clare laughs it up with June and Meredith.

With Tyler leading the way (a new Queen Bee has ascended), the Populars pass by.

But Tyler STOPS and DOUBLE-TAKES Clare's new outfit.

TYLER

I have three words.

Clare tenses, bracing for insult.

TYLER (CONT'D)

YASSSS! *Lurve (love)!* And fi-yah!

These are Tyler's highest compliments and Clare can't help it. She grins.

CLARE

Thanks.

MEREDITH

(whispers, betrayed)
Seriously?

TYLER

(to Clare)
You're trying. I like. Werk dat!

And he parades off. Paul lingers for a moment.

PAUL
You do look really nice.

He returns to his friends and Clare turns back to her own. They're not happy with her.

JUNE
Um. Rewind. What just happened?

CLARE
Nothing.

MEREDITH
Something. What is *wrong* with you?

CLARE
What are you talking about? He was being nice so I was being nice back.

MEREDITH
But he's never nice to you. Or me. Or June.

CLARE
Well, I just... I mean... What was I supposed to say? Die, bitch, die?

MEREDITH & JUNE
(after a thought)
YES!

The BELL RINGS.

CLARE
Whatever.

MEREDITH
Don't minimize. And America's Most Wanted wants to talk to you. *

Meredith and June stomp off.

Stung, Clare looks after them. Then--

RYAN
Clare?

Clare turns to see Ryan behind her. He hides his bandaged hand beneath his books. He smiles. Trying his best to be approachable. Non-threatening.

CLARE
What?

RYAN
We didn't get off on the right foot. That's probably my fault.
(MORE)

RYAN (CONT'D)

I'm not so good at... You know.
This stuff.

CLARE

What stuff? Being normal stuff?

RYAN

Something like that. Look, Clare.
I'm not trying to scare you, but I
know you have--

CLARE

You don't know anything.

RYAN

(re: her clothes)

I know what's going on with you. I
know your dad gave you the Music
Box. And I get it. But the first
one's always free.

CLARE

The first what?

RYAN

Wish. But after that, someone pays
the price. You don't want that.
Believe me. You don't. You have
to get rid of it!

CLARE

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

The ONE MINUTE BELL RINGS.

RYAN

You will.

CLARE

I gotta get to class. *

She tries to storm past him, but he grabs her arm.

CLARE (CONT'D)

GET OFF!

Embarrassed, he releases her and tries to keep cool.

RYAN

Has it played for you yet?

CLARE

So what if it has?

RYAN

(sadly)

That's how you know.

CLARE

For Godssake, know what?

RYAN
That's how you know the debt's been
paid.

Uncomprehending, Clare hurries away.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - DAY

Clare chats it up with Paul. Tyler saunters over.

TYLER
(to Clare)
Can I just do one thing?

CLARE
Sure.

Tyler whips out a brush and begins to style Clare's hair. He's got mad skillz. Bewildered, she just submits to it. Then she glances over and sees--

MEREDITH

Who watches the entire affair and pretends to vomit into her textbook. June nudges her. *Be nice.*

*

Clare sighs.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - CAFETERIA - DAY

Rocking her brand new hair do compliments of Tyler, Clare prepares to join June and Meredith, but Paul and Tyler wave her over to the popular table.

Torn, Clare hesitates. She motions June and Meredith over, too, but Meredith FLIPS HER THE HAPPY FINGER.

Hurt, Clare joins the Populars.

Pissed and betrayed, Meredith turns to June.

MEREDITH
Did that just happen?

JUNE
It soo just happened.

MEREDITH
Fi-yah my flat ass.

*

Clare settles in beside Paul and smiles, fitting in for the first time in her life.

And it's glorious.

Across the way, Ryan watches this. He's pained. The Box clearly has its claws deep in her.

INT. SHANNON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Clare enters to find Louis sitting on the couch, staring at nothing. He perks up when he sees her.

LOUIS
How was school, kiddo?

Clare hesitates. She's never said this before.

CLARE
Good. It was actually really,
really good.
(then)
What's wrong?

LOUIS
Nothin'. It's just... It's stupid.

She scrutinizes him for a beat.

CLARE
She hasn't returned your call?

LOUIS
(embarrassed)
I dunno what happened. Maybe I
said the wrong thing and screwed
up. I just... I don't know.

And he looks damn miserable about it.

CLARE
She'll call.

LOUIS
You think?

CLARE
I know. Just trust me.

Off her certain smile--

INT. SHANNON HOUSE - CLARE'S BEDROOM - EVENING

Clare kneels before The Box.

CLARE
Three wishes left.

She closes her eyes and places both hands on The Box.

CLARE (CONT'D)
For my fifth wish... I want my dad
and Kate to fall in love. He
deserves to be happy.

*

A moment, then--

THE PHONE RINGS downstairs.

Clare grins.

CLARE (CONT'D)
(whispers)
Thank you.

INT. SHANNON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Louis is on the phone and his mood has improved considerably.

LOUIS
Friday? Sure... Sure, I'm around
on Friday.

Clare appears on the stairs. He winks at her and mouths,
'It's Kate!' Clare nods. Of course it is. *Hells yeah.* *

EXT. SHANNON HOUSE - A FEW DAYS LATER

Clare glances over at the De Luca kitchen window. It's still
deserted. No sign of Mrs. De Luca.

Clare frowns. This is distinctly abnormal.

EXT. DE LUCA HOUSE - DAY

Clare KNOCKS on the front door.

CLARE
Mrs. De Luca? It's Clare. Are you
home?

No answer.

Clare makes her way around to the back.

EXT. DE LUCA HOUSE - BACKYARD - DAY

Clare KNOCKS on the back-door. No answer.

And then SHE SMELLS IT.

A FOUL ODOR.

She winces and covers her nose with her hand.

CLARE
(sotto)
Please don't be dead.

She retrieves a HIDE-A-KEY from a flower pot and, dreading
what she's going to find, she enters the home.

INT. DE LUCA HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

The smell is even worse in here. Clare tries not to gag.

CLARE
Mrs. De Luca?
(whispers)
Please be okay. Please be okay.
Please be okay.

Hoping against hope, she rounds the corner and follows the smell into the--

INT. DE LUCA HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

And she stops. Stunned. SCREAMS.

CLARE'S POV -- Mrs. De Luca is slumped against the kitchen sink. Stiff.

ONE ARM WEDGED DEEP INTO THE DISPOSAL WHERE SHE BLED OUT.

Her mouth is still open wide. Frozen in a silent, agonized scream.

INT. SHANNON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

A shell-shocked Clare accepts a mug of hot chocolate from Louis. The flashing lights of COP CARS and LOCAL NEWS VANS throw shadows.

LOUIS
(at a loss)
I'm sorry you had to see that.

CLARE
What do they think happened to her?

LOUIS
Freak accident. Medical examiner said he's never seen anything like it before.

CLARE
Do they know when it happened?

LOUIS
A few days ago.

Clare stifles a sob. Louis moves to embrace her, but the PHONE RINGS. Louis picks it up.

LOUIS (CONT'D)
Hello?...
(to Clare)
For you.

He hands her the phone.

CLARE
(into phone)
Hello?

RYAN (O.S.)
(filtered)
Clare?

CLARE
Who is this?

RYAN (O.S.)
(filtered)
You know who this is. Remember
what I told you? You have to get
rid of it, Clare. You have to--

CLICK. Clare slams the phone down. DIAL TONE.

LOUIS
Who was it?

CLARE
No one. Just a kid from school.
(a moment)
That box you got me.

LOUIS
What about it?

CLARE
I don't think I want it anymore.

Off this...

EXT. SHANNON HOUSE - NIGHT

A determined Clare marches outside with The Box in her arms. She rips the lid off a trashcan and prepares to throw The Box inside, but she stops when she hears-- *

SAXOPHONE MUSIC drifting out of the home. Lonely. Lovely.
She hesitates. Her gaze falls onto The Box's inscription.

CLARE
*'Abandon, lose, or open me and all
will be undone.'*

Shit. She's torn. *

INT. SHANNON HOUSE - CLARE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Clare stares at The Box on the floor.

She can't give it up.

Not yet.

Suddenly, The Box lid opens with a sinister *CREAK*.

CLARE
(breathless)
What are you doing?

MUSIC BEGINS TO PLAY.

CLARE (CONT'D)
No! Don't! Don't!

The twisted, haunting melody fills the room.

Panicked, Clare SLAMS THE LID SHUT.

The MUSIC CUTS OUT.

Frantically, Clare looks around the room and grabs socks and stockings.

She TIES THEM AROUND THE MUSIC BOX, trying to make it impossible for it to open.

She secures the final knot and sits back to study her work.

The Box is covered in A MISHMASH OF CLUMSY KNOTS.

Satisfied, she returns it to its hiding place beneath the floorboards.

Then she grabs her pillows and blankets and books it out of there in a hurry. Secure or not, there's no way in hell she's sleeping in there tonight.

INT. SHANNON HOUSE - STUDIO - NIGHT

Within a nest of blankets on the floor, Clare tosses and turns. Unable to get comfortable.

Haunted by a guilty conscience, sleep is a long way away.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY

Clare practically sleepwalks through. She looks beaten. Exhausted. Ahead of her--

JUNE AND MEREDITH giggle at their lockers.

Clare waves to them.

June waves back. Openly hostile, Meredith doesn't.

Crushed, Clare turns away and nearly bumps into--

RYAN!

He reaches out. She sidesteps around him.

RYAN
Clare, I know what you're going
through. Let me help.

CLARE
Don't. Just don't!

And she hurries away.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - LIBRARY - DAY

Troubled, Clare types in a new google search.

"LAWRENCE HART FREAK ACCIDENT"

She clicks ENTER and thousands of results pop up.

She begins to scroll through them. Various headlines catch
her eye.

"HART GARDENER IMPALED IN FREAK FALL..."

*

"NATALIA HART BEHEADED IN BIZARRE ACCIDENT..."

*

"CHILD CHOKES IN NURSERY DAYS AFTER MOTHER'S DEATH..."

Horrified, Clare gapes at this. Then--

THUMP! beside her.

She jumps and looks up.

But it's just PAUL. Cute and casual.

PAUL
S'up?

Clare quickly CLICKS OVER TO ANOTHER SCREEN before he can see
what she's looking at.

CLARE
Nothing.

PAUL
Can I ask you something or is now a
bad time?

CLARE
No. Now's...um. Now's a great
time.

PAUL
(too fast)
Cause-I-can-ask-you-out-later-if
you-promise-to-say-yes.

Clare blinks. It takes her a moment to realize--

CLARE
Did you just ask me out?

PAUL
I did, but badly. Sooo badly. I have swag, I swear I do. It just goes away when I'm nervous.

CLARE
You're nervous?

PAUL
Well, yeah. Course.

And that's just plain adorable. Clare has no words.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Wow, I am sucking at this, aren't I? Awk. Ward. Let's try again.
(deep breath)
Carnival's in town this weekend. A bunch of us are heading out there Saturday and I thought you might want to come. Be my date. It'll be fun.

A long moment.

PAUL (CONT'D)
(prompts)
Sooo?

CLARE
Sorry. Sorry. Yes.

PAUL
(relieved)
Great. So I'll pick you up. Say Saturday afternoon? And I'll have my swag back by then. Maybe. Don't count on it.

He heads off. She should be happy, but isn't quite. Torn, she watches him go.

INT. HARDWARE STORE - DAY

Looking drawn and miserable, Clare studies a long line of chains and padlocks.

INT. SHANNON HOUSE - CLARE'S BEDROOM - EVENING

Clare finishes wrapping The Box in heavy chains and secures the massive PADLOCK.

CLARE
Try opening now, you little shit.

INT. SHANNON HOUSE - STUDIO - LATE NIGHT

Clare sits up. Wide awake. Can't sleep. The weight of keeping The Box is taking a visible toll on her psyche.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - CAFETERIA - DAY

Clare tries to engage with the Populars, but can't quite manage it.

At a table across the way, Meredith and June exchange concerned looks. Something's clearly up with their friend.

INT. SHANNON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Clare watches Louis talk avidly on the phone. He mouths to her, "*It's Kate*" and looks genuinely happy. She tries to smile back, but it's forced. Difficult. *

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY

At the far end of the hallway, Clare watches June and Meredith talk. She waits until Meredith has moved away before tentatively approaching June.

CLARE
Can I talk to you?

INT. ACOSTA HOUSE - JUNE'S BEDROOM - DAY

June studies a morose, dazed Clare. After a moment, Meredith enters and stops, betrayed.

MEREDITH
What's *she* doing here?

JUNE
Bitch much? I invited her.

MEREDITH
Why?

JUNE
Because she wanted to talk to us about something important.

MEREDITH
Why doesn't she just talk to her cool *new* friends. *Fi-yah!*

JUNE
Behave or bounce.

MEREDITH
I'll behave-ish.

Meredith takes a seat and glares at Clare.

MEREDITH (CONT'D)
Talk, traitor. Your *loyal* friends
are listening.

Clare debates a moment. She takes a deep breath and begins.

(LATER)

Clare has finished her tale. June and Meredith just blink at her. A long silence ensues.

CLARE
What? You guys believe me, right?

No one answers.

CLARE (CONT'D)
Say something.

MEREDITH
Did your brain just exit your body?

JUNE
Bitch much?!

MEREDITH
But everything she just said is
batshit crazy. Clare, have you
ever heard of *coincidence*? Let's
look at this logically. First
wish. What was it?

CLARE
That Darcie would leave me the hell
alone and she did!

MEREDITH
Cause she got pinched for being a
dumbshit! That has nothing to do
with you. Second wish?

CLARE
That Paul Middlebrook would fall
madly in love with me.

JUNE
Clare, you have a date to a
carnival that everyone's going to
including us.

MEREDITH
Yeah. It's not like you're getting
married and trying to decide who
not to invite. It's not like
you're paying a mortgage. It's not
like you're trying to send your
slacker kids off to an Ivy League
they don't want to go to. It's not-

JUNE

Shut. Up.

CLARE

But he started talking to me the day after I wished it. The very next day! The same day I found my cat ripped to pieces beneath my porch!

MEREDITH

Coincidence! Third wish?

CLARE

That my dad would clean the house.

MEREDITH

And let me guess, he did?

CLARE

Out of the blue. Just happened. He had this big garage sale and got rid of everything. A day before that I tried to throw away a curtain rod and he bit my head off.

JUNE

Maybe he just figured it was time.

CLARE

But only *after* I wished it. And then Mr. Stanley had that stroke right in front of me!

MEREDITH

Coincidence! Four?

CLARE

That my dad would get a gig. And he did. A friend of his who hasn't called in years, called him out of the blue. I mean, this is more than just coincidence!

JUNE

Clare, I don't think so.

MEREDITH

You want to know what I think?

CLARE

Dazzle.

MEREDITH

I think you're a selfish bowl of bitchsaUCE.

*

CLARE

Excuse me?

MEREDITH

Even if I did believe you, which I don't, if I had seven wishes, I'd cure cancer or wish for world peace. Hell, you're supposed to be my best friend. You've used up four whole wishes and you didn't wish for me to grow some boobies or for June to lose fifty pounds?

JUNE

I'd wish for more wishes.

CLARE

I don't think it works that way. I mean, hell, if I believed this was real in the beginning and would've wished for my mom to...

*
*
*
*

JUNE

(gently)
To what, Clare?

*
*
*

CLARE

Nothing. Nevermind. I just... I don't think I should be wishing anymore.

*
*

MEREDITH

Selfish. Bitchsaucе. Truth.

CLARE

Sorry. But Mrs. De Luca died and--

MEREDITH

Old ladies die all the time. That's what happens when you're old. You die!

*

CLARE

Not like this. And you didn't see her. And I wished again, but...

JUNE

But?

*

Clare knuckles away frustrated tears.

CLARE

I think... I think something else bad might happen to someone I really care about.

MEREDITH

Like who?

JUNE

Like us?

Clare nods.

JUNE (CONT'D)
So not cool!

MEREDITH
Oh, come on! You're paranoid!

JUNE
Well... Can we see The Box?

Off Clare deliberating--

INT. SHANNON HOUSE - CLARE'S BEDROOM - EVENING

Clare, Meredith, and June study the Music Box at their feet.

MEREDITH
(skeptically)
This is it?

She kicks it. *THUMP!*

CLARE
Don't!

MEREDITH
Sorry.

JUNE
What's the combo?

CLARE
My birthday.

MEREDITH
So let's open it.

CLARE
I don't think that's a good idea.

MEREDITH
Why not? What could happen?

JUNE
Shut up, Meredith. She's scared of
it and you are *extra* today!

Meredith flops down in front of The Box and begins to work the combo. Clare tenses. June also looks uneasy. Meredith glances up.

MEREDITH
Quit it! You guys are freaking me
out! There's nothing to be worried
about!

She opens the lock and chains fall away. Then she takes a deep breath, begins **BEGINS TO LIFT THE BOX'S LATCH** and--

BRRRRRRINNNGGGG!!!! HER CELLPHONE SPARKS TO LIFE!

Meredith practically jumps out of her skin. Annoyed, she pulls out her phone.

MEREDITH (CONT'D)
 (into cell)
 Hello?... Hey, mom. I'm at Clare's house... Yeah, I know. Something came up.

While Meredith talks, Clare quietly returns The Box to its place beneath the floorboards.

MEREDITH (CONT'D)
 Okay! Fine, bye!

Aggravated, Meredith hangs up and looks around.

MEREDITH (CONT'D)
 (to Clare)
 What'd you do with it?

CLARE
 I changed my mind.

MEREDITH
 You're seriously not going to let me open it?

CLARE
 Sorry.

MEREDITH
 Wow. Just wow. I can't even... I can't even deal. June, you're taking me home, right?
 (off June's nod)
 I'll be in the car. And just between us, you look terrible, Clare. Like asscheese on a moldy cracker. Truth.

*
 *

JUNE
 Meredith!

MEREDITH
 Just sayin'.

*

She exits in a huff. A sympathetic June turns to Clare.

JUNE
 I think you should just throw it away.

CLARE
 Can't.

JUNE
 Why not?

CLARE

Cause it says if you get rid of it, everything will 'be undone.' It's stupid, I know, I just can't toss it yet.

JUNE

So what are you going to do?

Off Clare -- She has no idea.

INT. SHANNON HOUSE - STUDIO - NIGHT

Brow furrowed, Clare tries to get comfortable on the floor. Louis KNOCKS briefly and sticks his head in.

LOUIS

Hey. Everything all right?

CLARE

(light)

Sure. Why wouldn't it be?

Louis cocks a brow. Sleeping on the floor ain't normal.

CLARE (CONT'D)

My back. My back's been bugging me a lot lately.

LOUIS

(doesn't buy it)

You'd tell me if something was--

CLARE

--wrong? Sure.

Louis lets it go. No point in pushing her.

LOUIS

Funeral's on Saturday if you still want to go.

She nods. A moment, then--

CLARE

How's Kate?

*

LOUIS

She's good. We're good. That's not weird for you, is it?

CLARE

It's not weird for me at all. Night, dad.

LOUIS

Night.

Louis closes the door as he departs. Clare just sighs.

INT. SHANNON HOUSE - CLARE'S BEDROOM - LATE NIGHT

WE PUSH IN ON -- THE MUSIC BOX. Still padlocked and wrapped in chains beneath the floor.

A moment passes.

Then THE PADLOCK'S DIAL BEGINS TO SPIN.

CLICK... CLICK... CLICK... KA-CHINK!

THE PADLOCK SPRINGS OPEN. CHAINS SLIDE AWAY.

INT. SHANNON HOUSE - STUDIO - MORNING

Clare wakes and right away, she senses something's off. Strange. Abruptly, she sits up and sees--

THE PADLOCK ON THE FLOOR BESIDE HER PILLOW.

Clare jams her hand into her mouth to stifle a scream.

It's like The Box said in no uncertain terms --

Don't fuck with me.

And Clare runs out.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY (ESTABLISHING)

A quaint little place.

Dressed in their Sunday best, Clare and Louis head inside.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Mostly empty.

Clare and Louis sit quietly, waiting for the funeral service to begin.

Noise at the back of the church. Clare turns to see--

Ryan enter and take a seat. He nods to her.

After a moment, she nods solemnly back.

INT. SHANNON HOUSE - CLARE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Numb, Clare just sits on her bed staring at nothing and she's been like this for hours.

She looks exhausted. Diminished. Wearing thin.

KNOCK KNOCK. Clare doesn't move.

KNOCK KNOCK. Still nothing from Clare.

After a moment, Louis enters.

 LOUIS
Clare? Hey, kiddo.

Concerned, Louis rubs her back. Clare's lackluster gaze shifts towards him.

 LOUIS (CONT'D)
Someone's here to see you.

 CLARE
I don't want to see him.

 LOUIS
I think you might.

 CLARE
Dad, no! I--

 LOUIS
He brought flowers.

Off Clare's bewilderment--

INT. SHANNON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Clare enters to find--

PAUL.

He rises and presents her with a daisy bouquet.

 PAUL
You didn't forget our date, did you?

 CLARE
(yes)
No.

 PAUL
It kinda looks like you did.

 CLARE
I didn't. I just don't think I should go.

 PAUL
Why not? Your dad's cool with it. He likes me.

 LOUIS (O.S.)
(from the next room)
As long as you keep your hands to yourself!

Despite everything she's been through in the last 24 hours, Clare almost smiles.

PAUL
Come out with me. It'll be fun, I swear.

Torn, Clare deliberates. Then--

PRE-LAP -- SCREAMS.

The happy kind.

EXT. CARNIVAL - ROLLERCOASTER - NIGHT

With Paul beside her, Clare HOLLERS as a rollercoaster twists and turns her.

INT. CARNIVAL - FUNHOUSE - NIGHT

Clare and Paul take a selfie of their distorted reflections.

EXT. CARNIVAL - BOOTHS - NIGHT

Paul wins Clare a ridiculously huge, fluorescent green, stuffed DOG. He hands it to her.

Ermagawd!

She never sees Ryan keeping a close, protective eye on her from a distance.

EXT. CARNIVAL - FOOD TRUCKS - NIGHT

Carrying her giant green dog, Clare waits off to the side while Paul buys cotton candy.

Meredith and June approach.

MEREDITH
Oh my gawd, can you believe it? June and I are still alive. No one's been killed by a little wish box. Go figure.

JUNE
Ignore her. Rainbow Not-So-Bright's phone fell out during a ride and they won't get for her until tomorrow.

MEREDITH
Like I don't have people to call!

JUNE

You have two people to call. Me and Clare. And we're right here. We get it. We understand.

MEREDITH

Whatev. You know how sometimes you forget to put on your panties and you feel like you're missing something for the rest day?

CLARE

No.

JUNE

Absolutely not.

MEREDITH

Oh come on, it happens to everyone.

JUNE

Not me.

MEREDITH

Well, use your imagination cuz that's how I feel. Like my cooch is out and catching breezes. #vagcold. I need my phone. Period!

*
*

June just rolls her eyes.

JUNE

(to Clare)
You okay?

CLARE

(nods)
Trying to forget about everything.

Paul returns with cotton candy.

JUNE

Have fun, Clare.

And she drags Meredith away. The perfect date resumes.

EXT. CARNIVAL - FERRIS WHEEL - NIGHT

The place all great dates must end. Paul and Clare ride up with the green dog between them.

Clare's mood has improved considerably; the Music Box is a million mental miles away.

They hit the apex and drink in a spectacular panoramic view.

A moment.

Clare catches Paul looking at her.

CLARE
What?

PAUL
I was trying to think of something
dope to say before I kissed you.
(pause, then a laugh)
That wasn't it.

A moment and THEY KISS. It's one of *those* kisses. Her first. Long. Chaste. Sweet. Bliss.

EXT. CARNIVAL - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Paul's car is parked in a semi-secluded area near the trees.

INT. PAUL'S CAR (PARKED) - NIGHT

Clare and Paul make out in the backseat. It's getting hot and heavy. He's really into it, but she's not. She pulls away.

CLARE
Stop.

PAUL
What? What's wrong?

CLARE
Nothing, it's just--

And Paul moves in again, trying to kiss her.

CLARE (CONT'D)
Paul, quit!

PAUL
But I love you!

Whafuck!? Those words hang in the air and they sound absolutely crazy. And Paul knows it. But he can't help himself.

PAUL (CONT'D)
(sheepish)
I do. I love you. I think about you all the time. I can't stop thinking about you. I think... I think I want to marry you.
(off her incredulous look)
What?

CLARE
You don't think that's like, beyond effed up?

PAUL
No.

CLARE
I've been in the same class as you
for years and we've never spoken
once. Not before a few weeks ago
and now you want to marry me.

PAUL
Yes. Because I'm in love with you.

CLARE
Stop saying that!

PAUL
I can't help how I feel. Don't you
love me?

CLARE
Are you kidding? No!

PAUL
You will. And in the meantime, I
have enough love for us both.

*Dear God, he sounds like a moron. And she's beginning to
like him a whole lot less.*

CLARE
Take me home.

PAUL
Oh, come on, Clare.

*

He moves in again.

CLARE
I said, no! Take me home!

But this time, he's on top of her. Aggressive. Scary.

CLARE (CONT'D)
Get off, Paul! Get--

WFFFT! The CAR ROCKS as AIR SUDDENLY DEFLATES FROM A POPPED
TIRE.

PAUL
What the hell?

Paul jumps out of the car. Clare straightens up her clothes
and follows.

EXT. CARNIVAL - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

With a switchblade in hand, Ryan casually moves around to the
other side of Paul's car.

PAUL
What the fuck you think you're
doin', man?

RYAN
I was just about to ask you the
same thing. No means no,
goatprick.

And he PLUNGES THE KNIFE INTO ANOTHER TIRE. *WFFFT!*

PAUL
Hey! You can't do that!

RYAN
Just did. Two down. Two to go.
Unless you plan on stopping me.

Intimidated, Paul hesitates.

RYAN (CONT'D)
Didn't think so.

WFFFTF! WFFFTF! Ryan deflates Paul's last two tires, then
to Clare--

RYAN (CONT'D)
Looks like you need a ride.

Clare hurries over to Ryan.

PAUL
Clare?

RYAN
Dude, take a hint and bounce out.

Fuck it. Paul gets back into his car and pulls out on four
flat tires. A sorry sight.

A moment. Ryan and Clare just study each other.

CLARE
You were--

RYAN
Following you? Yeah.

CLARE
Why?

RYAN
Thought you might need me. I'm
just trying to help. That's all
I've been trying to do from the
beginning. Just help.

CLARE
Thanks, but--

Both turn when they hear SCREAMING.

Carnival PATRONS surge towards the gates.

Something BIG just happened.

Dreading what she might find, Clare follows the crowd.

RYAN
(after her)
Clare?!

But she doesn't hear. She thinks she might know exactly what's happening.

EXT. CARNIVAL - RESTRICTED AREA - NIGHT

SKELETAL ROLLERCOASTER TRACKS spiral and twist into the night.

SECURITY GUARDS try to keep the crowd at bay, but Clare slips through the SECURITY GATE and cautiously approaches EMTs who cluster around a BODY.

Off to the side, Security Officers comfort a weepy hysterical June.

JUNE
She was just... She was just trying
to get her phone!

June spots Clare.

JUNE (CONT'D)
(points)
It's her! It's her fault! She
knew this would happen! It's her
fault!

SECURITY GUARD #1
(to Clare)
Hey! You're not supposed to be
here!

Security moves towards Clare, but Clare's frozen. Rooted to the spot. She has to see what happened.

HER POV -- An EMT moves aside revealing--

MEREDITH

Clearly dead. Eyes wide.

BODY TWISTED. Limbs askew. A gruesome high impact fatality.

CLARE
(a whisper)
No.

RYAN
Come on, Clare. Come on, let's go.

And Ryan gently pulls her away.

INT. COFFEESHOP - NIGHT

Ryan and Clare sit at a backbooth, sharing a pot of coffee. He pours Clare a cup.

She takes it with shaky hands. Tears flow freely. Overwhelmed by guilt, she just can't make them stop.

He regards her sympathetically.

RYAN
You have to get rid of it.

CLARE
I know. I know.

RYAN
But?

CLARE
(beat, embarrassed)
It was just really nice to be normal.
(then)
I'm so stupid.

RYAN
You're not stupid.

CLARE
People are dead because of me. My best friend is dead because of me.

RYAN
People are dead because The Box is evil.

CLARE
I could've wished for world peace or a cure for cancer or--

RYAN
It doesn't work that way, Clare. The Box chooses its owner and tempts them. It feeds on their insecurities. Their selfishness. It can't do good without doing harm. That's its nature.

CLARE
And the thing I wanted most of all, I never got to wish for.

RYAN
What thing?
(then he realizes)
Your mom?

CLARE
I never go to say good-bye.
(pause)
(MORE)

*

CLARE (CONT'D)
I didn't mean for any of this to happen.

RYAN
No one ever does.

CLARE
(a moment)
What is it? Where'd it come from?

Ryan rises and tosses a few bills on the table.

RYAN
Come with me.

CLARE
Where are we going?

RYAN
My place. There's something you need to see.

He offers his hand. She takes it and notes his broken finger.

CLARE
What happened?

RYAN
Your rat trap. Clever.

CLARE
So someone did try to break in the other night. It was you!
(then)
You tried to take The Box?

RYAN
Tried. It wouldn't let me.

They exit.

INT. RYAN'S HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT

Clare follows Ryan over to his wall of PHOTOGRAPHS. Overwhelmed, she gapes at this sinister menagerie.

RYAN
From what I can tell, this all started in 1918 with a young woman named Annabeth Gilles. She lost her entire family to the influenza epidemic.

CLARE
(sotto)
AG. Annabeth Gilles.

*

RYAN

She was studying to be a nun at the time. Convinced that God had abandoned her, she went into the woods with the only thing she had of value, a silver music box. For seven days and seven nights she prayed and offered her soul to the darkness. On the seventh night, something came to her. It took up residence in The Box and a pact was struck. One wish for every day of prayer. Annabeth Gilles married Harold Grayson in 1921 and had two children.

*

He points to a PHOTO OF A WELL DRESSED BUT UNSMILING FAMILY. A rigid, stern-faced ANNABETH GILLES (20s) sits with the MUSIC BOX in her lap.

RYAN (CONT'D)

They were exceedingly wealthy, but haunted by tragedies. The family milk cow was found ripped to pieces.

He points to a PHOTO of a YOUNG WOMAN, pretty. Smiling.

RYAN (CONT'D)

Their maid was trampled by a horse and she lost both legs.

*
*

He comes to a PHOTO of a CHILD.

RYAN (CONT'D)

Her youngest drowned in a bath.

And finally, a CRIME SCENE PHOTOGRAPH OF ANNABETH taken postmortem. She's crouched in a corner. Fetal position. HANDS OUTSTRETCHED AS THOUGH PUSHING SOMETHING AWAY.

Her eyes and mouth are wide open. She was screaming when she died. And THE BOX IS JUST A FEW FEET AWAY.

RYAN (CONT'D)

This is Annabeth a few years later. She died from a massive heart attack. It basically exploded in her chest. But I think it was something more. I think whatever's in that Box came to take its last payment.

CLARE

Which was?

RYAN

Her soul.

Ryan points to a PHOTO of a handsome GI.

RYAN (CONT'D)

In 1944, a soldier named Arthur Sands brought The Box back to America at the end of the second world war. This is him a year later.

He nods to a PHOTO of the same GI, crouched in a corner, in the same position as Annabeth Gilles. Dead.

And Ryan comes to another pair of PHOTOS. One features a BEAUTIFUL YOUNG WOMAN WEARING A MISS DELAWARE CROWN.

RYAN (CONT'D)

In 1962, Edwina Haggard was just an overweight country girl with a dream. In 1963, she became Mrs. Delaware. She was found in her apartment closet in 1964.

Wincing, Clare turns away from a PHOTO of EDWINA, dead in her closet, mouth open. Screaming for eternity.

They come to another PHOTO CLUSTER. A handsome MAN IN A WHEELCHAIR holds prominence.

RYAN (CONT'D)

Daniel Johns. Long distance ski champ paralyzed from the waist down. One day, he just got up and started walking. Doctors said it was a miracle. It wasn't. It was The Box. He married. Had two sons. I survived. My older brother didn't.

CLARE

Daniel Johns was your father?

RYAN

This is all his research. My brother died. Freak accident on a playground. He broke his neck. Not long after, my mother was impaled. Two knitting needles right through the chest. And then whatever's in The Box came for my father.

He points to a PHOTO OF DANIEL JOHNS. In the same position as the rest.

RYAN (CONT'D)

I found his files a few years ago. Found Lawrence Hart on my own. I think he must have known what was coming for him because he tried to burn down the house.

Clare studies a PHOTO OF LAWRENCE HART in the fetal position but CHARRED. BLACKENED.

RYAN (CONT'D)

But he wasn't hard to find if you know what to look for. Anyone down on their luck who hits a winning streak. Like Lawrence Hart. Like my dad. Like you. And your Music Box isn't the only one.

He points to another line of PHOTOGRAPHS featuring PEOPLE FROM ACROSS THE GLOBE - China, Africa, Brazil.

All are in the same position. Fetal. Hands outstretched. Screaming. Various different vessels - boxes, jars, oil lamps - in front of them.

CLARE

What *is* it?

RYAN

There are dark things in this world, Clare. Evil things that exist somewhere between the living and the dead. Demons. Shedu. Jinn. The Belial. They shun the light and embrace darkness. But the thing they want most of all is the thing most sacred to all of us.

Clare thinks about this.

CLARE

Our souls.

RYAN

The wishes are The Box's greatest manipulation. Its unholy bargain. One day, after the final wish is granted, it'll claim your soul. It's time to let go.

Clare nods. This time, she's ready.

INT/EXT. RYAN'S CAR - LATE NIGHT

With Clare in the passenger seat, Ryan pulls up to the Shannon House and parks.

RYAN

You ready? *

CLARE

(nods)
How do we, you know, destroy it? *

RYAN

Well, burning didn't work for Lawrence Hart. I say, we dig a hole. Bury it so deep that no one will ever find it. *

Clare lets that settle. Sounds like a plan to her. Then,
embarrassed--

*
*

CLARE
About what happened earlier with
Paul, thanks, but I wished... I
wished for him to like me.

*
*
*
*

RYAN
I'm not judging the fact that you
have a thing for douchebags.

*
*

CLARE
He's not... Well, yeah, he kinda
is. He didn't know I was alive
before a few weeks ago.

RYAN
Why would you want to be with
someone like that anyway?

Their eyes meet. This moment, suspended in time, could
possibly develop into a lot more.

And they both know it.

RYAN (CONT'D)
Come on.

They get out.

INT. SHANNON HOUSE - CLARE'S BEDROOM - LATE NIGHT

*

Together, Ryan and Clare pull away the floorboards and peer
down into the hidden space, but...

THE BOX IS GONE!

Stunned, Clare just gapes.

*

RYAN
Where is it?

*
*

CLARE
I don't... I don't know.

*
*

Briefly, they search the room -- under the bed, in the
closet, etc... -- but they come up empty.

*
*

CLARE (CONT'D)
It's not here.

*
*

She tries to process this.

*

CLARE (CONT'D)
What does that mean?

*
*

RYAN *
 It chooses its owner carefully. *
 Maybe... Maybe it knew we were *
 coming. Maybe someone broke in and *
 stole it. Maybe it's done with *
 you. *

CLARE *
 Does that mean that it's over? *

RYAN *
 (thinks) *
 I guess so. *

Relieved, Clare embraces him. *

CLARE *
 Now what? *

RYAN *
 You move on with your life and I *
 try to track it down again. It'll *
 turn up. *
 (grim) *
 It always does. *

CLARE *
 Thank you. *

A moment. Their eyes meet. Heat. He moves in for a kiss, *
 but stops himself. *

RYAN *
 I shouldn't. It's not fair. *
 You've had a pretty messed up day. *

CLARE *
 Yeah. *

Another moment. Their eyes meet again. This time, there's *
 no pulling away. No guilt. Just a kiss. Simple. Sweet. *

A perfect end to the nightmare. *

EXT. SHANNON HOUSE - A FEW DAYS LATER

A garbage truck rumbles by. *

Welcome to Monday. A new week without The Box has begun. *

INT. SHANNON HOUSE - CLARE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Dressed for school, Clare stands in front of her mirror. She *
 takes a deep breath. Uncertain of what may come, but ready *
 to face it head on. *

INT. SHANNON HOUSE - STAIRS - DAY

Clare heads down and looks around. *

CLARE

Dad?!

No answer. He's not home. Odd. Then--

SCRIT... SCRIT... SCRIT... Clare jumps as a RAT SKITTERS BY. She watches it go. *What the hell?*

IT'S THE FIRST SIGN.

THINGS ARE GOING BACK TO THE WAY THEY WERE BEFORE SHE GOT THE BOX.

EXT. UPSCALE NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY *

Clare coasts downhill and squints at something ahead of her. Her mouth drops.

CLARE'S POV -- Her father's RED TRUCK is parked curbside. And just beyond it, Louis digs through trash bins.

Crushed, Clare pulls up beside him.

HIS AWFUL HOARDING HABIT HAS RETURNED.

CLARE

Dad? What're you doing?

LOUIS

I said you could stay home for a few days. No one expects you to be at school after what happened.

CLARE

What are you *doing*?!

LOUIS

(shrugs)
I gotta good feeling.

CLARE

But... But I thought we were done with this!

LOUIS

Calm down! A couple little things won't hurt anyone.

Clare struggles to understand this. She never sees the CAR filled with Populars creeping up behind them.

CLARE

What's wrong with you?! Did something happen?

LOUIS
Yeah, something happened. I lost
my gig. Kate dumped me. I--

*

And then a massive SODA HURTLES towards them.

LOUIS (CONT'D)
Watch out!

Too late.

The SODA FINDS ITS TARGET AND CLARE IS DRENCHED IN ORANGE
CRUSH. And guess who's at the wheel?

It's DARCIÉ.

DARCIÉ
That's right! I'm back, bitch!

TYLER
Fi-yah! Cute stunt you pulled on
my boy Saturday! Tires are
expensive, ho!

Whooping the Populars drive away. In the backseat, Paul
wraps his arm around Beth. Clearly, they're back together.

Shocked, Clare just stands there dripping, trying to fully
comprehend this new reality.

CLARE
(sotto)
*'Abandon, lose, or open me and all
will be undone.'*

Shit!

LOUIS
Clare?

CLARE
(stammers)
I'm fine. It's fine. I'm just
gonna go home and change. I'm
fine.

But she's not fine.

Not by a long shot.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY

Now wearing her dowdy old clothes, Clare cautiously moves
through.

The Populars pass by - Darcie, Tyler, Paul, and Beth. They
giggle at her.

DARCIE
About the soda, sorry not sorry.

PAUL
We all thought it was an
improvement.

Cut, Clare's struck speechless.

DARCIE
(to friends)
Look, she's got nothing clever to
say. Probably because she lost her
back-up.

TYLER
Traj.
(after a thought)
Ish.

DARCIE
Darwin just got real.

Pleased with themselves, Darcie and friends saunter off.

Clare withers against the onslaught of ridicule.

SHE'S A TARGET ONCE AGAIN.

Students point and giggle at her. The ORANGE CRUSH INCIDENT
plays on every cellphone.

And Clare crumbles. After a few weeks of normal, she's back
to being a human punching bag.

And it's devastating.

Then she spots June down the hall near a MEMORIAL FOR
MEREDITH cluttered with cards, candles, and stuffed animals.
June glares at her and she realizes--

*
*
*

CLARE
(a whisper)
It was you.

She marches over.

CLARE (CONT'D)
You stole it, didn't you?!

A hush falls. Everyone turns to look.

JUNE
(hisses)
You saw what it did to Meredith!
I'm trying to help you!

*
*
*

CLARE
Give it back! GIVE IT BACK!

She charges June, but before she makes contact, Ryan wraps an arm around her middle and pulls her back. *

RYAN
Clare?! What the hell is wrong with you?!

CLARE
It was her! She stole it! She's supposed to be my friend!

JUNE
I am your friend!
(pointed)
And so was Meredith!

RYAN
Clare, calm down! I thought we were done with this?!

Yeah, she thought so, too. Shaking, Clare backs away and hurries off. *

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - GIRL'S BATHROOM - DAY *

Hyperventilating, Clare slams into a stall and slumps on the ground. She's crying. Shaking.

In the midst of an epic panic attack.

CLARE
I can't do this.

She takes deep breaths.

Bit by bit, she calms. A new resolve surfaces.

SHE HAS TO GET THE MUSIC BOX BACK.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY

Newly energized, Clare hurries through. Ryan intercepts her.

RYAN
Where are you going?

CLARE
Just leave me alone!

She runs out of the building.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Clouds gather. A storm is on the way.

On her bike, Clare zooms downhill.

EXT. ACOSTA HOUSE - DAY

A determined Clare sneaks around to the living room window. *

INT. ACOSTA HOUSE - STAIRWELL - DAY

Clare runs up. *

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - DAY

Frowning, June notices Clare's empty seat. She considers this. Suddenly alarmed, she raises her hand. *

INT. ACOSTA HOUSE - JUNE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Clare barges in and begins her search for the Music Box. *

She picks through June's closet.

Underneath her bed.

Through her dresser drawers.

And comes up empty.

CLARE

Dammit, June! Where is it?

She kicks her search into high gear. *

CLARE (CONT'D)

Come on!

She wipes sweat off her forehead and tries to think. Then she notices--

A LOOSE PANEL IN THE WALL.

She races over and moves it aside.

It's filled with comforters.

She digs through them and pulls out--

THE BOX! *

Victorious, Clare tucks it under her arm and goes to the door. *

INT. ACOSTA HOUSE - STAIRWELL - DAY

As Clare emerges from the bedroom, she runs right into June. The two girls face off. *

JUNE *
What is wrong with you?! *

CLARE *
It's mine. Get out of my way! *

JUNE *
Clare-- *

CLARE *
MOVE! *

June grabs The Box. At the top of the stairs, she and Clare *
wrestle viciously over it. For a moment, it appears that *
June has the upperhand, but then Clare shoves her. Hard. *

AND JUNE GOES TUMBLING BACKWARDS DOWN THE STEPS. *

She hits the floor with a LOUD CRACK as SEVERAL BONES SNAP. *

Horrified, Clare studies her unmoving friend at the bottom of *
the stairwell. Then-- *

Fuck it. Fully succumbing to The Box's spell, Clare steps *
over her and darts out. *

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - DAY

Balancing The Box on the handlebars, Clare pedals furiously *
through the pouring rain. *

INT. ACOSTA HOUSE - ENTRY - DAY *

Ryan enters to find June on the floor. He quickly checks her *
pulse. She's still alive. He pulls out his cellphone. *

RYAN *
June? You're gonna be okay. *

He dials 911. *

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - DAY *

Clare zooms towards home. *

She doesn't see Ryan's car gaining behind her.

INT/EXT. RYAN'S CAR (MOVING) - DAY

Ryan pulls up beside Clare.

RYAN
Clare!

CLARE
Go away!

RYAN
You can't keep it! You know that!
You have to get rid of it!

CLARE
I can't!

RYAN
Why not?

CLARE
I'm not ready yet!

RYAN
You'll never be ready! No one's
ever ready!

CLARE
I can figure this out! I can fix
this! I need more time. JUST
LEAVE ME ALONE!

She SWERVES HARD AND FALLS TO THE GROUND.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Aggravated to the point of irrationality, Clare struggles to return The Box to the basket. Ryan parks behind her and gets out.

RYAN
Clare! Please?!

CLARE
No! I have one more thing I have
to do! One more thing I need to
do!

RYAN
Do you hear yourself right now?
You can't control it! It's
controlling you.

CLARE
GO AWAY!

Not playing around, she places BOTH HANDS ON THE BOX and GLARES AT HIM. He freezes.

RYAN
What are you doing?

CLARE
I have two wishes left! Go away or
I'll use one on you, I swear!

INT. SHANNON HOUSE - CLARE'S BEDROOM - DAY

CLOSE ON -- A peacefully sleeping Clare.

Someone tries to nudge her awake, but Clare buries her head beneath the pillows.

CLARE
(mumbles)
No.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)
Come on, kiddo. You really want to
sleep your birthday away?

A beat. *Birthday? Hunh?*

Clare peers cautiously out from under her pillow and sees--
JOHANNA SHANNON seated on her bed. Lovely. An easy smile.
Clare's mouth drops.

CLARE
MOMMA?!

She sits up and embraces her. Holds her close. Tight. Like she'll never let go.

She doesn't want to cry, but dammit, tears come anyway.

HER GREATEST WISH HAS JUST COME TRUE.

CLARE (CONT'D)
Momma, I missed you so much.

JOHANNA
(bewildered)
You missed me?

CLARE
Yeah, I--

VOICES
HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

In the next moment, the TWINS (5), a girl and a boy, never without the other, tumble in like human tornadoes. They pounce on Clare's bed.

TWIN 1
We got you cake!

TWIN 2
And presents!

Gobsmacked, Clare tries to keep it together.

In a world where her mother never died, she has siblings.

The twins CHEER.

TWINS
Can we sing?

*

Johanna takes the cake as he fumbles out his sax.

LOUIS
Now, you can sing.

The Twins belt out Happy Birthday with their father.

Clare just basks in the glow of the candles. The wonder of this life. Of what could and should have been.

Finally, the tune ends.

LOUIS (CONT'D)
Happy birthday, kiddo.

JOHANNA
Make a wish.

Clare leans in and prepares to blow, but she stops when she hears--

THE BOX'S TWISTED MELODY. It's faint, but ominous. Deliberate.

*

Clare's face goes ashen.

CLARE
(a whisper)
No...

She runs out.

LOUIS
(after her)
Clare?!

INT. SHANNON HOUSE - CLARE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Clare rips the floorboards aside and drags The Box into the light. It continues to play its HAUNTING MELODY.

CLARE
Stop it! Stop! IT'S TOO SOON!

Above her, THE CEILING FAN WHIPS AROUND. Then--

PLOP! A SCREW detaches and falls to the ground, but Clare doesn't notice.

CLARE (CONT'D)
I said, STOP IT!

A moment later, Louis enters.

LOUIS
Clare, what's wrong?

 CLARE
Go away!

Concerned, Louis closes the door and steps farther into the room -- directly below the ceiling fan.

 LOUIS
Clare?

 CLARE
 (to herself)
It's happening too soon. It's too soon! STOP IT!

PLOP! Another SCREW COMES LOOSE.

The FAN SAGS on its mount.

 CLARE (CONT'D)
 (to The Box)
Please! I need more time. I just wanted to say good-bye.

PLOP! Another SCREW FALLS. The fan drops a precarious inch.

 LOUIS
Clare, come on. You're scaring your mother.

He places a hand on her shoulder. She turns and--

-- IN SLOW MOTION --

PLOP! The FINAL SCREW FALLS AND ROLLS AWAY.

Then the FAN PLUMMETS, BLADES WHIRRING, RIGHT BEHIND LOUIS.

Clare realizes what's about to happen a milisecond before it does. She opens her mouth to scream. But before she can--

THE CIRCLING BLADES CONNECT WITH LOUIS' HEAD.

BLOOD FLIES AND SPLASHES CLARE'S FACE.

The FAN CRASHES TO THE GROUND.

LOUIS' TWITCHING BODY HITS A MERE SECOND LATER.

AND THE BOX GOES SILENT.

-- RESUME NORMAL SPEED --

Stunned and shaking, Clare looks around.

There's BLOOD EVERYWHERE. ON HER FACE. HER HANDS. POOLING BENEATH LOUIS' BODY.

After a moment, Louis limps down the front steps and climbs into his busted out truck. With effort, he settles in behind the wheel and the engine sputters to life.

INT. SHANNON HOUSE - STAIRS - DAY

WE FOLLOW - MAX up the stairs and into--

INT. SHANNON HOUSE - CLARE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Clare sleeps deeply. MAX pounces on her and she wakes with a start.

CLARE
(confused, then)
Max? MAX!

She embraces him and looks around.

HER ROOM HAS BEEN RESTORED. No blood on the wall and floors.

Clare rolls out of bed and checks beneath the floorboards.

No Music Box.

Then she looks out the window. Louis' truck is gone.

She hurriedly grabs her clothes.

There might still be time to fix everything. To avert disaster.

INT. SHANNON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Clare races downstairs.

The living room is still a hoarded out nightmare. But this isn't half as bad as the alternative.

She ignores the dead rat in a trap and exits in a hurry.

EXT. SHANNON HOUSE - DAY

Clare hops onto her bike and rips outta there.

Next door, MRS. DE LUCA WAVES TO CLARE. Not dead at all.

Relieved, Clare waves back.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - DAY

Clare zooms down the street. She pulls out her cellphone. Clicks MEREDITH'S NUMBER. A moment, then--

*

CLARE
Meredith?! Hi!

*

MEREDITH (O.S.)
(filtered)
I'm not awake. I'm sleeping. What
do you want?

CLARE
Nothing. Just hi. It's good to
hear your voice.

MEREDITH (O.S.)
(filtered)
Seriously? Aliens haven't invaded?
You don't need a kidney? Or a
ride? I'm still sleeping. Bye.

*

CLICK. DIAL TONE. *Typical Meredith.* Clare smiles and keeps
pedalling. Determined to stop her father from ever getting
The Music Box.

*

EXT. RAILROAD CROSSING - DAY

Clare charges across. Cheeks flushed. Breathing hard.
On a mission.

EXT. UPSCALE NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Clare spots Louis' truck and just beyond it, she sees her
father digging through TRASH CANS and RECYCLE BINS.

Louis is back to his old self. Unkempt and pathetic. But
Clare could give a damn. He's alive.

CLARE
Dad!

She jumps off her bike and embraces him. Relieved.

LOUIS
What the hell you doin'?

CLARE
Nothing.

Out of the corner of her eye, Clare catches sight of a CAR
FILLED WITH TEENAGE POPULARS approaching. She tenses and
thinks hard.

Has does she change everything? Then--

CLARE (CONT'D)
Can I help?

Louis looks up with surprise.

For a moment, she's torn. TEMPTED. *

She could keep it, but... She glances into the skeletal remains of the home and sees A SILHOUETTE moving in the darkness. It's Ryan. *

Clare cautiously makes her way over. *

EXT. HART ESTATE - DAY *

Ryan withdraws deeper into the ruins. Clare approaches. Within moments, just a crumbling pillar separates them. For a moment, they simply stand there divided by stone, then-- *

CLARE
Ryan Johns? *

Startled, he looks up. *How the hell does she know his name?* *

CLARE (CONT'D)
I know this is gonna sound crazy,
but I know what you're looking for.
And it's in that dumpster right
over there. *

She hesitates. She'd like to say more, but-- *

LOUIS (O.S.)
Clare? You find anything? *

CLARE
Yeah! *

She grabs some curtain rods and brings them over to her father. *

CLARE (CONT'D)
(to Louis)
Whaddaya think? *

LOUIS
I could do something with these. *

Thrilled, he takes them and tosses them in the back of his truck. He pulls Clare's bike off with a smile. *

LOUIS (CONT'D)
You always were my good luck charm.
You should come with me more. *

CLARE
Maybe I will. *

She glances back at Ryan who's still hidden in the shadows. *

CLARE (CONT'D)
Well, I better get to school. *

She hops onto her bike and he gets into his truck. He HONKS cheerfully at her as they go their separate ways. *
*

A moment later, Ryan emerges from his hiding place and goes to the dumpster. He peers in and sees... *

THE MUSIC BOX.

Off Ryan, just taking this in. A lifelong quest has just come to an end.

INT. RYAN'S CAR (MOVING) - DAY

Ryan drives. The Box sits in his passenger seat.

He comes to a STOP SIGN and stops.

Beside him, Clare pulls up on her bike. Satisfied, Clare views The Box in Ryan's passenger seat. *

Mission Accomplished.

Ryan pulls out.

Clare watches him go. Then, suddenly-- *

THE BOX OPENS. A TWISTED MELODY DRIFTS OUT. *

Ryan frowns at this. Doesn't know what it means. And drives on.

EXT. INTERSECTION - DAY

Clare smiles to herself. She did it. She beat The Box. She won.

A bright and brilliant future lays ahead and she's ready for it.

She takes a deep breath, pushes off and--

HONKING.

BRAKES SQUEAL.

Clare looks up.

A MOVING TRUCK SWERVES, NARROWLY AVOIDING HER, but then--

A COMPACT SLAMS INTO HER.

CRUSHING HER BETWEEN BOTH CARS.

It's fast.

Painless.

Fatal.

Horrible.

But unlike the other dead owners of The Box, Clare dies with a slight smile on her face. Her soul is still her own.

Despite her death, she won.

She saved her soul.

INT. RYAN'S CAR (MOVING) - DAY

Beside Ryan, The Box GOES SILENT.

PAYMENT FOR CLARE'S FINAL WISH HAS BEEN COLLECTED.

And we FADE TO...

EXT. FIELD - EVENING

CHUCK! CHUCK! CHUCK! Hot and sweaty, Ryan finishes digging a deep hole. He prepares to place The Music Box inside and hesitates. *

He tries again, but the sun winks off The Box. It's beautiful. He's enthralled. *

He shakes it off and tries for the third time... And stops. He just can't do it. *

INT. RYAN'S HOUSE - BASEMENT APARTMENT - NIGHT

Ryan studies The Box sitting on his table. His expression is grim. Haunted. Conflicted. *

RYAN

(soft)
*'Lay thy hands upon me.
Close thy eyes and wish.
Seven wishes will I grant thee,
If thou remembers this.*

*Keep me in the darkness,
Hide me from the sun.
Abandon, lose, or open me,
And all will be undone.'*

He considers this.

Then slowly, hating himself for doing it, but unable to stop, he places his hands on The Box, closes his eyes and--

RYAN (CONT'D)

I wish...

Off this, we... **SMASH BLACK.**