

ALLISON ADAMS

Written by

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EXT. SOMEWHERE - DUSK

The back of a LITTLE GIRL'S HEAD. Part down the middle, golden pigtails on each side. She's on a bicycle. Riding fast. We see her breath drift ahead in a vapor. She PANTS.

It's magic hour--crisp; different shades of wintery blues. The girl rides on. A neighborhood sinks on the horizon, tips of roofs and chimneys. We stay LOCKED on the back of her head. Through the tall grass, over a small bridge, into a park with bare trees. The FOG is just beginning to descend.

A path stretches out before her. She pedals onward. Past benches and water fountains and more naked trees. No one else in sight. Then suddenly, she SLOWS...

The path breaks off into a fork, each side identical to the other. She BREATHES HARD. Little head turns from one direction to the next. She BREATHES HARDER. Which way to go?

Finally, she makes her choice. Veers off to the right. We are no longer locked to the back of her head. We stay still. Let her go on without us. Watch as she shrinks into a small speck in the distance, engulfed by wood and fog.

Long, lonely beat.

FADE TO BLACK.

Then, AGONIZING SCREAMS--

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

A WOMAN in the throws of childbirth. Her SCREAMS are near unbearable. DOCTOR and NURSES rally around her. One nurse right at her side: ALLISON ADAMS, but we'll call her NURSE ALLISON (34), sharp, plain-pretty.

NURSE ALLISON

I want you to give me another big push, Holly. On three, okay? One, two...THREE.

The woman GROANS, gives another agonizing push. Holds Allison's hand for dear life.

NURSE ALLISON (CONT'D)

Come on, Holly. You can do this. You're right there.

DOCTOR

She's crowning.

The woman locks eyes with Allison. Pleads with her. Allison holds her gaze, gives a firm nod. Another giant push. She SCREAMS, PANTS. That WET EXPELLING SOUND. It's finally over. But then...an unwelcome silence.

Allison looks to the doctor. He's gone pale as powder. She looks from his face to his hands as he lifts--

a limp, BLOODY FETUS. Several months premature. Dead.

PREGNANT WOMAN

What's wrong? My baby! What's wrong!?

She WAILS. Grief stricken, the doctor hands the fetus to one of the nurses. She wraps it like a burrito; pink alien head disappearing under a towel. More unbearable SCREAMS.

PUSH IN ON ALLISON, ill, pure horror--

CUT TO:

SAME

Only this time: REALITY. The doctor places a perfectly crying baby in the arms of the new mother.

DOCTOR

You have a beautiful, healthy little boy.

Nurse Allison leans in, bright smile.

NURSE ALLISON

Congratulations.

INT. HOSPITAL, LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

Nurse Allison gathers her things from her locker. Another nurse, PATTI, does the same.

PATTI

Erwin? That's just child abuse right there. I mean, *Erwin*?

NURSE ALLISON

"Er" for short?

Patti cracks up.

PATTI

I'd invite you down to the cantina with us, but I already know what the answer is.

NURSE ALLISON

Good night, Patti. Have fun.

PATTI

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Allison sets her nurses badge in her locker. It reads: ALLISON ADAMS. She closes the door. Pensive beat.

OFF HER FACE, depressed; troubled--

EXT. SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

Fog rolls through a Michael Myers-y street. Few lights on.

INT. CHEERLEADER ALLISON'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - NIGHT

It's dark. Quiet. Still. A water droplet falls from the tap.

The back door opens, PANIC arriving in the form of ALLISON ADAMS. *Another* Allison. We'll call her CHEERLEADER ALLISON (16), gorgeous, brink of womanhood. She vibrates, rushes to the sink. Fills her mouth with water from the tap. Spits. She's crying. Shaking. Whole body chilled to the bone.

INT. CHEERLEADER ALLISON'S HOUSE, STAIRWELL - NIGHT

Cheerleader Allison quivers her way up the darkened stairs.

INT. CHEERLEADER ALLISON'S HOUSE, UPSTAIRS HALL - NIGHT

She tip-toes past a room, light streaming out under the door.

INT. CHEERLEADER ALLISON'S HOUSE, HER BEDROOM - NIGHT

She enters, flips on the light. Still very much the room of a little-girl-fairy-princess. She rushes into--

INT. CHEERLEADER ALLISON'S HOUSE, ADJOINED BATHROOM - NIGHT

Dry-heaves over the toilet. Long trail of spit. She cries.

Fumbles with the shower tap. Runs a hand along her bare leg.

She sits fetal position on the shower floor as the hot water consumes her. SOBS like a small, terrified child.

A KNOCK on the bathroom door.

WENDY (ALLISON'S MOM) (O.S.)
Allison? Honey? Are you okay?

More SOBS. Deeper, guttural.

WENDY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Allison? What's wrong?

The door knob JIGGLES. Locked.

WENDY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Allison, let me in. Allison!

But she can't move. She's frozen--catatonic. STEAM envelops as she can't quite seem to get warm. Knob JIGGLES violently.

INT. DINER - NIGHT

A trail of smoke from the toaster. Something BURNS. We see the quintessential 50's diner in its silvery reflection.

DINER ALLISON (O.S.)
Ah, shit.

Another ALLISON ADAMS: DINER ALLISON (49), large-and-in-charge black woman, stands up from her gossip mag. Goes to the toaster, hits eject as charred toast POPS.

DINER ALLISON (O.S.) (CONT'D)
What'd I say, Allison? This is exactly why you don't read none of that shit, Allison. Go on lose your goddamn mind, Alli--

She stops dead. Noticing something on the toaster.

DINER ALLISON (CONT'D)
What the hell?

She leans down for closer inspection. DING. She spins to the front door--

a flustered BUSINESS MAN stands in the doorway. Blood on his shirt and hands.

BUSINESS MAN
I think I just hit an animal.

EXT. ROADSIDE - NIGHT

Diner Allison follows the business man out to his car. Headlights glow on the body of a small deer wriggling in a bloody heap. It's alive. Barely.

BUSINESS MAN

It just came out of nowhere. It's a baby one, right? Is there someone we should call?

BANG! Allison shoots the deer in the head.

BUSINESS MAN (CONT'D)

Jesus!

DINER ALLISON

Watch where you're going now on.

She brushes past him, back up the road to the diner.

DINER ALLISON (CONT'D)

Always fixing other people's problems, Allison. Goddamn blood all over your nice new shoes.

INT. NURSE ALLISON'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The TV plays quietly. KIM (60's), sits on the sofa, little boy fast asleep on her lap: HARRY (6). She strokes his hair. The front door opens and Nurse Allison enters, deflated.

NURSE ALLISON

Why isn't he in bed?

KIM

He was scared. Thought there was a bad guy outside. He watches too much TV, Allie.

NURSE ALLISON

(re: the playing TV)
Yeah. Right.

She goes into the kitchen, washes her hands.

KIM

I did that pile of dishes in the sink. You're almost out of soap.

NURSE ALLISON

Mom, you can go. I'll put him to bed.

KIM

Oh, I don't mind. Really. How was work?

NURSE ALLISON

Mom. I'm exhausted.

KIM

Okay. Alright. I'll get out of your hair.

She starts to gather her things. A snippet of news broadcast suddenly catches our attention:

NEWS ANCHOR

...where 9 year-old Allison Adams disappeared on Thursday. The young girl was on a bike-ride to a friend's house, but never arrived.

The smiling face of a BRIGHT-EYED BLONDE GIRL fills the screen. Title underneath reads: MISSING! ALLISON ADAMS.

NEWS ANCHOR (CONT'D)

Police are seeking anyone who may have seen Allison after...

KIM

Well, that's weird. That just sent a chill through my spine.

Nurse Allison stands in the doorway, eyes on the TV.

NURSE ALLISON

That's so crazy.

KIM

My mommy heart is racing.

ON NURSE ALLISON studying the little girl's face.

INT. HERMIT ALLISON'S DUPLEX, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Blue light flickers from the TV. Same News Broadcast plays in the B.G. We PAN through the room across neat stacks of recycling: bottles, take-out boxes, piles of mail. We catch the name on several envelopes: ALLISON ADAMS, water and power. ALLISON ADAMS, cable bill. ALLISON ADAMS, disability check. We PAN away from the wall to--

a single armchair in the center of the room. A woman sits watching TV.

This is, yet, another ALLISON ADAMS: HERMIT ALLISON (68), bug-eyed and ghost-white. She eats peaches out of a can. Long, black branches stretch out on the wall behind her--a home-made mural of some kind of tree.

The face of 9 year-old Allison Adams flashes across the TV.

NEWS ANCHOR

...bicycle was found in a park not far from the girl's home. Police are urging parents in the area to keep an extra eye on their children as it is not yet clear if Adams was, in fact, abducted...

Hermit Allison cranes to look at the front door behind her: four additional locks, all bolted shut. She turns back to the TV, eats another slice of peach. Slow, careful chews.

MISSING ALLISON'S MOM (30's) appeals to the camera now:

MISSING ALLISON'S MOM

Please, if you have our little girl, give her back. She's a very sweet and loving little girl. Please. Just drop her off somewhere even. We won't come after you. We just really want her to come home.

INT. NURSE ALLISON'S APARTMENT, HARRY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Nurse Allison tucks her sleeping son under the covers. Plugs in a smiley face night-light. She sits edge of the bed, watches him sleep; his little chest moving up and down.

Her eyes drift up to the window above the bed. Blackness looks back in. Allison stares out, searching.

A beat. She switches off the bedside lamp.

DARKNESS.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

A school right out of the movies. Bundled up kids pour out after a long day. Somewhere, cheerleaders are CHANTING...

INT. HIGH SCHOOL, GYMNASIUM - DAY

Cheerleader practice. A dozen or so GIRLS mid-cheer routine. Perfectly choreographed. Cheerleader Allison is among them.

CHEERLEADERS

Hop Left, Hop Right, who's the team
with all that might? Hop Up, Hop
Down, you're the boys who rule this
town. Goooooooooooo Rabbits!

Cheerleader Allison notices a cute boy in a basket ball
jersey standing in the gym doorway. This is MICHAEL (16). She
smiles, shyly. Returns to her cheer. He's smitten.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL, QUAD - DAY

Cheerleader Allison fusses with things in her locker. Michael
lingers beside her.

MICHAEL

You bailed pretty fast last night.

CHEERLEADER ALLISON

Yeah, sorry.

MICHAEL

It's okay. I mean, I was bummed,
but...

(beat)

So. What are you doing after
school?

CHEERLEADER ALLISON

As in...after school right now
or...?

MICHAEL

Yeah. Right now.

His hand awkwardly brushes her's on the locker door. She
looks at him. Smiles.

CHEERLEADER ALLISON

Hmmm. Tough question. A) I could go
home, help my mom with dinner.

MICHAEL

Uh-huh...

CHEERLEADER ALLISON

B) I could go to Marissa's, work on
T-shirts for the game.

MICHAEL

Okay. And C?

CHEERLEADER ALLISON
Finish homework. I have a lot of
homework that needs finishing.

MICHAEL
And what about D? I vote for D.

CHEERLEADER ALLISON
D.
(flirty beat)
None of the above.

He laughs. Loops a finger through her's. Real cute.

MICHAEL
I think you're pretty cool, Allison
Adams.

She smiles, butterflies. Both more scared than they let on.

INT. DINER - DAY

Diner Allison stands behind the counter on the land-line. A
handful of customers eat at tables.

DINER ALLISON
Mhmm, yeah, I know. I've been on
the line with Animal Control all
morning. Yeah, that's what I'm
saying. No, no, you're not
listening to me. I've got a dead
animal carcass on my hands and
I've...no I will not hold. Are you
kidding me?

She hangs up, exasperated.

DINER ALLISON (CONT'D)
What'd I say, Allison? I don't know
why you bother. *What did I say?*

She grabs a pot of coffee and busies herself refilling
customer's mugs.

DING. A woman enters, perm, string of pearls: AUNT SARAH
(40's), lingers in the entry.

DINER ALLISON (CONT'D)
Sit anywhere you like, baby. Menus
are on the table.

AUNT SARAH

Oh, no. I'm...I was wondering if I could speak with the manager.

DINER ALLISON

You from Animal Services? I've been waiting all day for you to show up.

AUNT SARAH

Uh, no. I'm here with these.

She holds up a sheet of paper--the MISSING POSTER for 9 year-old Allison Adams.

DINER ALLISON

What is that? Lemme see that.

She comes over, looks at the poster.

DINER ALLISON (CONT'D)

This some kinda joke?

AUNT SARAH

What? No. I wish it was. That's my niece. She's been missing since last night.

Her voice quivers. Diner Allison takes her in.

AUNT SARAH (CONT'D)

I thought maybe...

DINER ALLISON

Absolutely. I'll put it up myself.

AUNT SARAH

Thank you.

Diner Allison goes behind the counter, retrieves some tape.

AUNT SARAH (CONT'D)

Cute place here. I've always wanted to try it.

DINER ALLISON

You want some coffee? Pie? On the house.

AUNT SARAH

Oh, no. I need to be going.

Diner Allison tapes the sign to one of the front glass doors.

DINER ALLISON

You sure?

AUNT SARAH

Yeah. No, I'm fine. Thank you.

DINER ALLISON

Someone take her?

AUNT SARAH

I don't know. We don't know. Just trying to get the word out.

DINER ALLISON

Beautiful little girl.

AUNT SARAH

She is. She's very special. Very loved.

Aunt Sarah starts to cry. Diner Allison watches, uncomfortable. A beat. She goes in to give an awkward hug.

DINER ALLISON

There, there. It's okay. Let it out.

AUNT SARAH

I'm sorry.

DINER ALLISON

Don't you be sorry. You just gotta cry. You won't be any help to her with all that bottled up inside.

Aunt Sarah cries even harder. Diner Allison holds her.

DINER ALLISON (CONT'D)

There, there. You let it out, now.

(beat)

She's got my name, you know?

AUNT SARAH

What?

DINER ALLISON

Allison Adams. First and last.

AUNT SARAH

Really? Are you serious?

DINER ALLISON

Bet she's a little fighter.

AUNT SARAH
That's so...weird. Cosmic.

DINER ALLISON
That's why I thought it was a joke
when you...anyway, you sure you
don't want any coffee?

Aunt Sarah pulls away. Heads for the door.

AUNT SARAH
No. I have to put up more posters.
Thank you. Thank you, you've been
very kind.

DINER ALLISON
Alright.

AUNT SARAH
Thanks again. Allison.

She leaves. Diner Allison steps up to the poster. Studies it
backwards through the light. Heavy heart. OFF HER FACE--

INT/EXT. NURSE ALLISON'S CAR, MOVING - DAY

Nurse Allison drives to work. Listens to a MEDITATION TAPE:

*SOOTHING MALE VOICE (V.O.)
...pure visualization. Embrace
clarity of mind. Release all
tension. Experience what is your
natural state of being. Breathe in
through your nose and release a
slow, steady stream through the
mouth. Aaaaaah.*

Nurse Allison obeys. Big inhale and exhale.

*SOOTHING MALE VOICE (V.O.)
I want you to picture yourself in a
boat. On a river. With tangerine
trees and marmalade skies.*

Allison stops. Leans in: *what the...*

*SOOTHING MALE VOICE (V.O.)
Somebody calls you. You answer,
quite slowly.*

Suddenly, she looks up. SLAMS ON HER BREAKS! Inches away from
colliding with a POLICEMAN. She gasps. He's right in front of
her car, redirecting traffic into a different lane.

Outside, traffic's jammed. POLICE CARS block off several lanes, including the entrance to the PARK. Up the wooded embankment, VOLUNTEERS and OFFICERS are combing through the area. Yellow tape, squad cars; A SEARCH PARTY underway.

Allison practices breathing. She pulls slowly past, eyes a lamp-post transformed into a shrine for the missing girl: candles, flowers, hand-made cards. WORRIED CITIZENS huddle around it.

Allison watches as a THIN MAN in a CHECKERED JACKET sets a PURPLE TEDDY-BEAR against the post. The teddy has a big smile and one winking eye. The man continues on his way.

An officer waves for Allison to keep moving and she drives on, spooked.

*SOOTHING MALE VOICE (V.O.)
Look for the girl with the sun in
her eyes. And she's gone.*

INT. HOSPITAL, NURSES STATION - DAY

A quieter day on the floor. Nurse Allison sits behind the counter flipping through a gossip magazine. A MALE NURSE arrives.

MALE NURSE
How's Ms. Bloomberg doing in two?

NURSE ALLISON
(doesn't look up)
Fast asleep, finally. And don't you dare wake her up.

MALE NURSE
Good. When you get a chance, Mr. Ivers needs a change over in seven.

NURSE ALLISON
Already? I just changed it.

MALE NURSE
Well, it's full again. I just checked.

NURSE ALLISON
Okay. I'll get to it in a minute.

MALE NURSE
I'm going downstairs. You want anything?

NURSE ALLISON

No, thanks.

MALE NURSE

Don't forget, okay?

She looks up, annoyed. He gives a cheeky smile; heads down the hall. Allison returns to her magazine. Sighs. Flips through several more pages.

A SHADOW moves in over her. Someone hovering above the counter.

NURSE ALLISON

I'm gonna do it, just give me--

She looks up. But it's not the male nurse--

A THIN MAN, (50's) looks down on her, piercing eyes, harelip scar. He fidgets, odd energy. Familiar checkered jacket.

NURSE ALLISON (CONT'D)

Oh. Sorry. Can I help you?

THIN MAN

I hope so.

His eye contact is severe; unwavering.

NURSE ALLISON

What can I do for you?

THIN MAN

I think I might need to see a doctor.

NURSE ALLISON

Okay. Can I have your name?

THIN MAN

Are you a doctor?

NURSE ALLISON

No. I'm a nurse. I'll need to take down your name so...

He sets a large plastic water bottle on the counter--dark, orangey liquid slushing inside. She eyes it, warily.

NURSE ALLISON (CONT'D)

What insurance provider are you with?

THIN MAN

No one. I'm...I'm afraid I might be dying.

Allison looks at him, uneasy. The air shifts.

NURSE ALLISON

Sir, I'm gonna need some information from you.

THIN MAN

(abrupt, aggressive)
I just need you to help me! Please.

NURSE ALLISON

That's what I'm trying to do, sir.

THIN MAN

Sorry. I know. I'm sorry. It's just, I'm real scared. I'm pissing out blood. Does that seem normal?

Allison looks to the water bottle. Small protein chunks float. Sick. She looks around--no other nurses on the floor. She turns back to him.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Nurse Allison ushers the Thin Man into the room.

NURSE ALLISON

You can wait in here. The doctor will be in with you shortly.

THIN MAN

Thank you so much. I'm pretty scared.

NURSE ALLISON

Well, try to stay calm. He'll be in with you soon.

THIN MAN

Are you gonna poke me with one of those needles?

She looks at him. Tentative beat.

NURSE ALLISON

We'll just see what the doctor says, okay?

THIN MAN

Needles give me the heebee-geebees.
I hate hospitals.

He laughs, awkwardly. Allison forces a smile.

NURSE ALLISON

Well, you're in good hands.

THIN MAN

I know.

He smiles. She turns back out into the hall, leery.

THIN MAN (CONT'D)

Nurse Allison?

She stops. Reluctantly turns back to him.

NURSE ALLISON

Yeah?

THIN MAN

I wouldn't mind it, if you had to.
With the needles. I know you'd just
be doing your job.

She forces a much less convincing smile and leaves the room.

INT. HOSPITAL, NURSES STATION - DAY

Nurse Allison waits behind the counter, on edge. DOCTOR
LIVELY (40's), male approaches from down the hall.

DOCTOR LIVELY

You paged me?

NURSE ALLISON

(hushed)

Yeah, I've got a guy over in one.
He says he's got blood in his
urine. He's...there's something
weird with--

MALE NURSE

(coming around the corner)

You say you put him in one?

NURSE ALLISON

Yeah.

MALE NURSE

He's not there.

NURSE ALLISON

What?

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Nurse Allison, Doctor Lively and the male nurse enter. No sign of the Thin Man.

MALE NURSE

Maybe he went to the bathroom?

NURSE ALLISON

No, he would've had to pass by the desk.

She looks down the hall to a door marked EXIT just as it's closing. She looks back inside the room--

Draped over the back of a chair is the man's CHECKERED JACKET. She stares at it, unnerved. Chilled to the bone.

EXT. FOX RESIDENCE - NIGHT

Lights glow inside. Classic John Hughes' clapboard.

INT. FOX RESIDENCE, MICHAEL'S ROOM - NIGHT

Cheerleader Allison and Michael sit opposite each other on his bed. Safe distance between the two. Small TV flickers on mute in the B.G. The mood is somehow melancholy.

MICHAEL

You have beautiful eyes.

CHEERLEADER ALLISON

Stop it.

MICHAEL

I mean it. They've got like ten different colors in them.

CHEERLEADER ALLISON

Thanks.

A staring game. He's eager, she's playing it cool.

MICHAEL

I wanna know things about you.

CHEERLEADER ALLISON

What do you wanna know?

MICHAEL

I dunno. Your dreams. Your fears.
Favorite color. Middle name...

CHEERLEADER ALLISON

We should be studying.

MICHAEL

We have our whole lives to study.

She looks at him, another shy smile. Looks down.

CHEERLEADER ALLISON

It's Eleanor. My middle name.

MICHAEL

That's beautiful.

CHEERLEADER ALLISON

It's boring.

MICHAEL

Nothing about you is boring.

CHEERLEADER ALLISON

You're too sweet to me. It's weird.

MICHAEL

Do you want me to be meaner?

CHEERLEADER ALLISON

...no.

They look at each other. A kiss feels inevitable.

CHEERLEADER ALLISON (CONT'D)

What time is it?

MICHAEL

It doesn't matter.

He leans in a little closer.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

It's not a school night.

She inches a little closer too. They're both scared to death;
hormones racing.

CHEERLEADER ALLISON

Michael, I wanna get in trouble. I
wanna go to the dentist and hear
that I have a cavity. I wanna get a
speeding ticket and cry.

(MORE)

CHEERLEADER ALLISON (CONT'D)

I wanna fail on a test because I was up too late the night before with a boy. Those are some of my dreams, Michael.

It's a vulnerable, perfect moment. He leans in. They kiss. After a beat, they pull away. Look at each other, flustered. That was enough for now. A truly perfect moment.

EXT. FOX RESIDENCE - NIGHT

Cheerleader Allison climbs down the trellis outside Michael's window. She reaches the ground, spins toward the street when--

BAM! She nearly runs head-long into a MAN waiting on the grass. She gasps, covers her mouth. The man is MR. FOX (40's), bearded, kinda handsome.

CHEERLEADER ALLISON

Mr. Fox. Sorry, I--

MR. FOX

You two have fun up there?

CHEERLEADER ALLISON

We were just studying. I'm sorry, we should've--

MR. FOX

Relax, Allison. I'm not mad. I just came out here to fix one of these damn sprinkler heads. Good thing I turned them off when I did or else you would've got all soaked.

She laughs, awkwardly. Girlish. The tension is palpable.

MR. FOX (CONT'D)

(then, remembering)

Oh, you gotta let me give you a hug.

He comes in, wraps his arms around her. She holds her breath.

MR. FOX (CONT'D)

Little girl disappeared right here in town and you know what her name was?

CHEERLEADER ALLISON

Yeah, I saw it on the news. Same name as me.

MR. FOX

I almost had a heart attack when I heard it on the radio. Had to give you a hug.

He releases her. She bites her lip, holds herself for warmth.

MR. FOX (CONT'D)

It's a cold night.

CHEERLEADER ALLISON

Yeah. I should be getting home.

MR. FOX

Want me to give you a ride?

CHEERLEADER ALLISON

Oh, no thank you. I'm fine. It's just around the corner.

MR. FOX

That was a nice little moment we had last night. Short, but sweet.

He strokes her face. She swallows. Her eyes flit back up to Michael's window. HEART POUNDING. Wants and doesn't want it.

CHEERLEADER ALLISON

Well, I should probably go, Mr. Fox. Thanks for...

His hand lingers. Another kiss might be in order, but--she pulls back, turns. Steps away into the nighttime FOG.

EXT. SHED BEHIND DINER - NIGHT

Low timber of an OWL HOOT. We PUSH IN on the small shed window:

INT. SHED - NIGHT

A make-shift gym. A small TV flickers in the corner: *The Discovery Channel plays. Waves smash against jagged rocks.*

Diner Allison stands in a wife beater, perfecting bicep curls with 20lb weights. She stares ahead, intent; focused. Working out aggression. She GRUNTS. Sweat drips down her brow. She pumps up and down, up and down. GROWLS ahead.

We SPIN AROUND to the wall across from her--big, blank wall where a mirror used to be. Now, only shards of glass in the corners, splintered off from the missing bigger piece.

INT. NURSE ALLISON'S APARTMENT, KITCHEN - NIGHT

Nurse Allison sits opposite her 6 year-old son, Harry. They eat TV dinners. He's cute; precocious. TV plays quietly in the living room.

HARRY
Mom, you know what?

NURSE ALLISON
What?

HARRY
You make the best dinners.

NURSE ALLISON
Thank you. I'll be sure to tell the people over at Stouffers.

HARRY
Who's that?

NURSE ALLISON
Make sure you eat all your peas.
(then)
How was school today?

HARRY
Ugh! *Mom!* That's what grown-ups
always ask kids.

He's dramatic. Throwing his hands on the table. A funny kid.

NURSE ALLISON
You're right.

HARRY
It's like, I don't wanna talk about school and math and stuff.

NURSE ALLISON
Okay. What do you wanna talk about, then?

HARRY
Like, Pokémon or connects or Power Rangers Dino Super Charge. That kinda stuff. And mom, you know what?

NURSE ALLISON
What?

HARRY

I can read four...no, five books now!

NURSE ALLISON

Five whole books?! All by yourself? I don't believe it!

HARRY

I can. That's almost six.

She takes him in. Smiles. Emotion brims.

HARRY (CONT'D)

What? Why are you looking at me like that? Mom!

NURSE ALLISON

Nothing. I'm just a lucky lady, that's all.

HARRY

Why?

NURSE ALLISON

Because. I have a pretty spectacular life.

She watches him. They continue eating.

HARRY

I ATE ALL MY PEAS!

He throws up his hands, triumphantly.

INT. NURSE ALLISON'S APARTMENT, HARRY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Nurse Allison and Harry cuddled in bed. She reads to him from a "Choose Your Own Adventure" kids book. He's enraptured.

NURSE ALLISON

"You look down at your hands. Small, slimy scales are blistering across your fingers. 'Oh no,' you cry. 'I'm running out of time!' The sun has all but disappeared behind a swirl of black clouds and you can already hear the distant rumble of thunder. 'It's now or never,' you say aloud."

Nurse Allison snaps to Harry, dramatic wide mouth. He covers his mouth with equal drama.

NURSE ALLISON (CONT'D)

"If you brave the storm to reach the island, turn to page 71. If you dive into the depths of the sea to join the merpeople, turn to page 31."

HARRY

(excitedly)
Merpeople!

NURSE ALLISON

Okay.

She flips to find the page.

INT. NURSE ALLISON'S APARTMENT, HARRY'S ROOM - LATER

A very sleepy Harry now tucked under the covers. Nurse Allison plugs in his night-light. Strokes his hair. She gathers up a few toys strewn across the floor and suddenly stops at the sight of something--

the PURPLE BEAR with the winking face--the same one she saw the Thin Man leave at the lamp-post. It lies haphazardly in a corner.

Allison slowly moves toward it, transfixed; terror rising. She picks it up. Examines it. Goes to her son.

NURSE ALLISON

Harry. Harry, where did you get this?

HARRY

(sleepily)
What?

NURSE ALLISON

This bear. Where did it come from?

HARRY

The man gave it to me...before nana picked me up from school.

All hairs stand on end. Her mind races. Her eyes drift up to the window--

BAM! The THIN MAN'S face right there, looking in! Allison SCREAMS. He takes off as soon as she's seen him.

Harry startles in bed. Allison grabs him, cradles him.

NURSE ALLISON
Oh my god. Oh my god!

Mother and son huddle in his room, vulnerable and terrified.

INT. SHED - CONTINUOUS

Diner Allison takes a long swig of water, workout nearly through.

Behind her, the TV in the corner drifts from beaches to SNOW. STATIC FUZZ. A weird HUM suddenly vibrates, almost like it's picking up another signal. Allison snaps to look: What the hell? She puts down the bottle and walks over--leans down to inspect. BANGS on the side. More STATIC, worse than before.

DINER ALLISON
Piece of shit.

She BANGS again.

EXT. SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD - CONTINUOUS

A rattled Cheerleader Allison walks the quiet streets. It's cold. Her BREATH trails ahead in a cloud.

A BRANCH BREAKS behind her. She spins to look--NOTHING. Just street and darkness. She trudges on, picking up pace.

INT. NURSE ALLISON'S APARTMENT, HARRY'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Nurse Allison switches off Harry's bedside lamp. She and Harry crawl across the floor to where her cellphone sits on his dresser.

She snatches it up.

INT. SHED - CONTINUOUS

Diner Allison hunches in front of the TV. She BANGS the side of it again--that weird, HIGH-PITCHED HUM. Then, the picture starts to flicker back on, distorted. No longer crashing waves. She leans in for a closer look, something's appearing...

DINER ALLISON
What the hell?

EXT. CHEERLEADER ALLISON'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Cheerleader Allison arrives at her house on high-alert. She hurries to the side door, fiddles with her keys.

ANOTHER SOUND. She turns--can't quite make anything out in the dim street lights behind her. She fiddles some more with the keys. Hands shaking.

INT. SHED - CONTINUOUS

Diner Allison stares, transfixed--

ON THE TV: *Fuzzy lines run through VIDEO FOOTAGE of a FRONT DOOR shot from the inside. Newspaper covers each pane of glass, blocking out daylight. Stained, carpeted floor. Long, STATIC SHOT.*

What the fuck? Allison studies it, furrowed brow.

INT. NURSE ALLISON'S APARTMENT, HARRY'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Nurse Allison sits on the floor, phone to ear.

OPERATOR (O.S.)
911, what's your emergency?

NURSE ALLISON
(whispering)
There's a man outside my window.

EXT. CHEERLEADER ALLISON'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Cheerleader Allison finds the right key and lets herself inside. She locks the door quickly behind her. Looks out one last time into the darkness.

INT. SHED - CONTINUOUS

ON THE TV: *STATIC FUZZ returns, starting to blur out the front door image.*

Diner Allison BANGS again on its side. The Discovery program returns, front door image gone as quickly as it came. Allison stares at it, perplexed. Slightly shaken.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
...nothing but the big expanse of ocean; the troubles of land a world away.

A single boat sails across a glassy sea. Tranquil. Free. The calm after the storm.

ON ALLISON, drawn in by it. Captivated by the stillness.

INT. NURSE ALLISON'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Nurse Allison sits on the couch, Harry on her lap. She's rattled; disoriented. A female officer, CHERYL MOODY (30's), sits opposite, interviewing.

OFFICER MOODY

And you're sure it was the same man?

NURSE ALLISON

Yes. He was at my work and then the memorial before that.

OFFICER MOODY

Memorial?

NURSE ALLISON

Not memorial...the, what do you call it? By the park, for Allison Adams. I saw him put the bear next to the flowers and candles.

OFFICER MOODY

The same bear he gave to your son?

NURSE ALLISON

Yes. I mean, I...I don't know. I'm assuming it's the same. I was distracted by...there's this tape I've been listening to in the car and the voice was saying...it was...

OFFICER MOODY

Voice?

A MALE OFFICER enters from outside, looks to Moody, shrugs: *didn't find anything*. There's doubt on both their faces. Allison sees it.

OFFICER MOODY (CONT'D)

And you say, no one else saw him when he came to your work?

NURSE ALLISON

Well, no, I'm sure someone saw him, just not...there are cameras.

Moody's skepticism is palpable.

OFFICER MOODY

Well, we'll be sure to check into all that.

(then)

You married, Allison?

NURSE ALLISON

No.

Allison watches the male officer casually snoop family photos on the mantel. Moody eyes the sleep deprived Harry.

OFFICER MOODY

Is there anyone you can call who can come over tonight?

OFF ALLISON, dejected by how blasé they're being--

INT. NURSE ALLISON'S APARTMENT, HARRY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Nurse Allison re-tucks in a sleeping Harry. She kisses his forehead. Strokes his hair.

INT. NURSE ALLISON'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Kim stands at the door as the two cops are leaving. They speak in hushed voices.

KIM

Thank you so much for your help.

OFFICER MOODY

Ma'am, is your daughter on any kind of medication that you're aware of?

KIM

No. Not that I'm aware of.

OFFICER MOODY

Has she suffered panic attacks in the past or shown signs of paranoia, dramatic mood swings?

KIM

No. I mean, she's been more high-strung lately. Her job is stressful.

OFFICER MOODY

Okay. Just keep an eye on her.

Kim looks down the hall to Harry's room.

KIM

You think something might be wrong?

Moody takes a weighty beat. Talks even quieter:

OFFICER MOODY

She said she saw the man's face
right outside the bedroom window.

MALE OFFICER

Being on the second floor kinda
makes that impossible.

OFFICER MOODY

Unless he had a pretty big ladder,
but none of the neighbors heard or
saw anything. No track marks
outside.

Kim goes pale. Nods slowly.

KIM

I see.

OFFICER MOODY

Either way, it'd be good for her to
get evaluated by someone. Being a
single mom can be tough. I think
she could really benefit from it.

Kim nods again, a bit dazed.

EXT. NURSE ALLISON'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

The cops walk to their car at the end of the driveway. Moody
looks over her notes.

OFFICER MOODY

Allison Adams.

MALE OFFICER

Yeah. Weird coincidence, huh?

OFFICER MOODY

I dunno. Adams is a common enough
last name.

MALE OFFICER

She's batshit, right?

OFFICER MOODY

Hey. Don't be a dickhead. Get in
the car.

They load up. Moody's deep in thought. Wheels spinning. They drive away.

INT. HERMIT ALLISON'S DUPLEX, LIVING ROOM - MORNING

OPERA streams from somewhere. We PAN past the stacks of mail, the empty armchair, the shut off TV to find--

Hermit Allison adding small details to the tree mural on her wall. She looks like she's been up all night. A table-lamp sits tableless on the floor, illuminating the dark space. Sunlight pierces along the edge of a closed curtain.

Hermit Allison adds another long branch with a thin brush. Fine points a fresh leaf. Dabs at more paint.

INT. HERMIT ALLISON'S DUPLEX, KITCHEN - MORNING

No curtains in here, but bars on the small, second floor window. Hermit Allison fries strips of bacon on a hot plate. They SIZZLE and POP.

She looks out the window above the sink. In the apartment across the way, a MAN and WOMAN are fighting. It's nasty. She throws something and he YELLS LOUDLY. Allison spies, slight twinge of fear.

INT. HERMIT ALLISON'S DUPLEX, LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Hermit Allison sits down with her plate of bacon and eggs. Switches on the TV. Morning talk show hosts YAP. She squeezes four full droplets of Nettle tincture in a glass of water. Stirs it. Drinks.

INT. HERMIT ALLISON'S DUPLEX, KITCHEN - MORNING

Hermit Allison washes her two dishes in the sink--fighting couple now gone from across the way.

INT. HERMIT ALLISON'S DUPLEX, LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Hermit Allison returns to her station in front of the TV. Morning news plays:

NEWS ANCHOR

The hunt for 9 year-old Allison Adams continues, marking day three since her disappearance last Thursday. Friends and family will gather Sunday night for a candle lit vigil hoping to raise awareness within the community.

An ant crawls across Hermit Allison's cheek. She watches TV for several beats before noticing. Eventually, she brushes at it with her fingers and it crawls onto her hand. She sees it, flings it away in disgust.

She looks down. Notices three or four more on the arm of the chair. She looks past the chair to the floor: dozens laying siege on a forgotten peach can. A trail runs all the way from the can to the front door. Nice, organized line. *Shit.*

INT. HERMIT ALLISON'S DUPLEX, LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Hermit Allison stands above the chair, cordless phone to her ear. RING. RING. RING. Someone answers...

HERMIT ALLISON

I need to add something to an order.

(beat)

I don't remember. I don't have it.

(beat)

It's the same order I get every week and now I need to add something to it.

(beat)

Allison Adams.

(beat)

ADAMS. Like the first man.

(beat)

Yes, that's right.

(beat)

You already have it. Same place as always.

(beat)

42 Muller Court, apartment B, the upstairs unit. Same place as always.

(beat)

I need some ant traps.

(beat)

ANT TRAPS. Traps for ants.

(beat)

Well, I don't know. Is there more than one kind of ant trap?

(MORE)

HERMIT ALLISON (CONT'D)

(beat)

Oh, sweet Jesus. Okay.

(beat)

Look, listen, it doesn't matter.
It's just...I just need something
that'll get rid of them, that's
all.

(beat)

Uh-huh? Well, what kind of
chemicals are we talking here?

(beat)

Is it toxic?

(beat)

Of course toxic for the ants,
genius. I mean, is it toxic for *me*?

(beat)

No, uh-uh, I don't like the sound
of that. You know what, here's what
we're gonna do. Throw in a few
different kinds and I'll figure it
out when they get here.

(beat)

I'm not worried about it.

(beat)

I'm not worried about it. Throw in
one of every brand and I'll figure
it out.

(beat)

Listen, I don't care about being
cost effective, Mr. So and So. Do
you understand? I have an entire
infantry of insects trespassing
through my property, eating me out
of house and home, and I want them
not to be here. Do you get that?

(beat)

Thank you. Thank you for being so
understanding.

(beat)

Oh, give me a fuc-- It's the same
as always!

(beat)

Surprise me.

(beat)

Just give me whatever you feel like
giving me, okay? Paper or plastic,
you decide. Same as always.

(beat)

Uh-huh, that's right. Thank you.
Tell the girl to get here early if
she wants a good tip.

She hangs up. Out of breath. The most she's spoken in a long
time. She watches the ants scurry to and fro.

INT. CHEERLEADER ALLISON'S HOUSE, HER BEDROOM - MORNING

POV--glow in the dark stars on a ceiling. Lace curtains on a window. Stuffed animals carefully arranged on a hope chest. Large TV on a dresser, glittery stickers around its edges. A GOLD CANARY flutters against the confines of a hanging cage.

Cheerleader Allison lies alone in bed. Looks around the room. BREATHES heavy.

POV--Michael comes into FRAME above her. Shirtless. He smiles down.

Allison and Michael make-out on her bed. Roll around. It's passionate. Sweaty hands rubbing bare skin.

We SNAP back and forth between DREAMLAND and REALITY. Sometimes Michael is there with her, in other moments she's all alone. Touching herself.

Allison closes her eyes, kisses Michael. She pants. When she opens her eyes again, a look of trepidation--

POV--Mr. Fox is now above her. He smiles down, innocent eyed and sweet.

Allison kisses him. They're naked. She takes his hands, places them over her neck. She MOANS. He SQUEEZES tighter and tighter. The CANARY flaps wildly in its cage.

Back to reality, Allison touches herself beneath the covers. It's fast and fierce; eyes clenched. She CLIMAXES.

INT. ARCADE - DAY

Kim, Nurse Allison and Harry wander the arcade floor. Kids playing ski ball, whack a mole, etc. Harry is in heaven. They pass two older boys playing a gruesome shoot 'em up game. BLOOD EXPLODES across the screen.

KIM

Gosh, when did some of these get so violent?

NURSE ALLISON

I don't let him play any of the shooting games. Harry, please stay where I can see you.

KIM

I mean, whatever happened to good old fashioned ring toss? Or pin the tail on the donkey?

They round a corner to a room with a giant jungle gym of play equipment--a maze of connecting tubes with slides and a ball pit.

HARRY

Oh, mom! Can I? Can I? Pleeeeease?!

Nurse Allison gives a nod and Harry runs ahead to play.

INT. ARCADE, JUNGLE GYM ROOM - DAY

Kim and Nurse Allison sit off to the side on a bench. Harry scampers around in the ball pit. Kim takes in her daughter. Evaluating her. Careful beat.

KIM

How you doing?

Nurse Allison pulls out of a slight daze. Looks at her mom.

NURSE ALLISON

I'm still pretty shaken up.

KIM

Oh my goodness, I know. Me too.

NURSE ALLISON

And I'm worried about Harry. Stuff like this is traumatizing for kids.

KIM

Oh, Harry'll bounce back. Look at him. He's already forgotten all about it.

Kim forces a laugh. Another delicate beat.

KIM (CONT'D)

How you doing in general?

NURSE ALLISON

I'm fine. Why?

KIM

Just...it's stressful, what you're doing. I remember how it goes, raising a kid, working at the store until 3am. Its draining. There were some nights I would come home, crawl into bed and I could swear your father was there next to me. There were moments I could actually see him there. It was so eerie.

NURSE ALLISON

Yeah.

KIM

I would be so convinced he was actually there.

She laughs, casual. Allison just stares at her.

NURSE ALLISON

Are you trying to say I'm making it up?

Kim looks truly horrified, almost hurt.

KIM

What? No! Not at all! Oh my gosh, Allie. What made you jump to *that*?

NURSE ALLISON

Then what are you saying?

KIM

Nothing. Nothing, I was just trying to be encouraging to you. Of course, I don't think you made it up. You saw something that really scared you.

NURSE ALLISON

Yeah, a man's face.

KIM

Yeah.

(then, very laid back)

I just think it's important to go over every detail of it in your mind. Remember it as best you can. Try to replay it again. That's all I'm saying.

NURSE ALLISON

So, you're saying you don't believe me.

KIM

Not at all. Allie, would you knock it off. I'm just saying, you've been stressed lately and not as present as usual and I just, I wouldn't fault you in a million years for mixing things up or seeing something that...

NURSE ALLISON
...that wasn't real?
(then)
That is so fucked.

KIM
Allie.

NURSE ALLISON
No, it is. You think I'm crazy or
that I'm delusional or--

KIM
Well, now you're just spinning
everything I said.

NURSE ALLISON
He gave Harry a stuffed animal,
mom. He interacted with your
grandson!

KIM
Right. But Harry can't remember who
gave it to him. It could've been
another parent or a teacher or--

NURSE ALLISON
This is unbelievable. You don't
believe me.

KIM
I believe that someone weird came
to your work and that you got
spooked by something outside the
window.

NURSE ALLISON
I don't want to talk about this
with you.

Allison turns away, dead serious. Kim sighs.

KIM
Fine. Okay. I'm sorry I brought it
up.
(beat)
I'm gonna get another diet Coke,
you want anything?

Allison shakes her head, eyes glued on the ball pit. Kim
sheepishly stands, exits.

Several tense beats. Allison slips inside herself, betrayed; world closing in around her. She looks back to the ball pit and goes cold--

Harry isn't in there anymore. She scans the play equipment and suddenly goes numb--

Through the mesh netting of the ball pit, she can see something moving around--a tall, THIN FIGURE. Moving in and out behind the columns.

Allison leaps to her feet. Goes up to the netting...just as the figure disappears into another tunnel.

NURSE ALLISON

Harry! *Harry!*

Allison races to the entrance of the jungle gym--peers up the mouth of the slow inclining tunnel. It WHISPERS back at her, all other sound DISTANT and ECHOY. She stares up. An almost psychedelic swirling is happening. Lulling her forward.

NURSE ALLISON (CONT'D)

(barely a whisper)

Harry...

She steps right up to the mouth. Pokes her head in. A HUSHED CHORUS of voices reverberates down from the top. Quietly beckoning. Haunting. Other worldly.

In a trance, Allison begins her climb up the long plastic tube.

INT. TUBING - CONTINUOUS

Nurse Allison makes her way up--slow and steady--VOICES MURMURING somewhere ahead.

HARRY (O.S.)

(playful, echoing)

Come find me, Mommy.

She hurries, scooting on hands and knees toward the sound of his voice.

INT. TUBING LANDING - CONTINUOUS

She reaches the top. Two new tubes--one leading up, another leading down. Allison looks from one to the other.

Harry GIGGLES from somewhere above. Allison turns to the tube leading up. She crawls inside it....

INT. MORE TUBING - CONTINUOUS

She can see Harry's little body up ahead, disappearing around the tube's bend.

NURSE ALLISON

Harry?

She crawls faster--deeper into the labyrinth of colorful plastic tubes.

INT. ANOTHER TUBE LANDING - CONTINUOUS

Nurse Allison reaches the top of this tube and Harry is suddenly nowhere to be seen. Just three new tubes stretching off in three different directions. All seemingly identical.

Allison looks at each entrance, no idea where to go.

HARRY (O.S.)

(playful, echoing)

Mommy...

NURSE ALLISON

Baby, where are you?

She leans in closer. Examines the tube to her left--A TRAIL OF ANTS runs up it in an endless line. She cowers back, horrified.

She looks between the tube in the middle and the tube on the right. Distant SOUL MUSIC streams from the right tube. MIRROR BALL light spins down from it's top. Dancing flecks.

Allison settles for the silent tube in the middle. She begins to climb...

INT. MIDDLE TUBE - CONTINUOUS

The walls seem to close in around her the further up she goes. She squeezes onward--like Alice in the rabbit hole.

Up ahead, Harry's legs disappear over the lip of the tube.

Allison gets to the top, barely maneuvers her way through the tight opening--

INT. NURSE ALLISON'S APARTMENT, HARRY'S ROOM - NIGHT

--she's home. Back in her son's room. SMOKE WAFTS from somewhere. She waves it away with her hand.

In the center of the room, FOUR COPS sit at a round table, playing cards, smoking cigarettes. Officer Moody among them.

Disoriented, Allison looks around the room.

NURSE ALLISON

Harry?

She looks under the bed. In the closet. Behind the dresser.

NURSE ALLISON (CONT'D)

(to the cops)

Excuse me, have you seen my son? A little boy, about this high, sandy hair.

They ignore her. Play on in silence. Allison's eyes dart to the window. *That* window. Nothing but darkness. She ventures further toward the cops.

NURSE ALLISON (CONT'D)

Excuse me?

Officer Moody turns to look at her--dismissive; mocking. She smirks, turns back to the game.

GIGGLING behind her. Allison spins around to see Harry running out his bedroom door. She pursues after him--

INT. NURSE ALLISON'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Nurse Allison races into the living room. No sign of Harry. The TV flickers.

HARRY (O.S.)

Mommy! I'm over here, mommy!

Allison turns to the TV: *HOME VIDEO FOOTAGE of Harry riding a bicycle in the driveway. The CAMERA work is shoddy. Shaky. Harry looks right into the lens and waves.*

HARRY (CONT'D)

Hi, mommy!

NURSE ALLISON

Harry! Baby, where are you?

HARRY

I'm with daddy, mommy.

CAMERA MAN (O.S.)

Say: "we miss you, mommy!"

HARRY
We miss you, mommy!

The CAMERA MAN turns the camera onto himself--it's the THIN MAN! His lips curl up at the camera.

NURSE ALLISON
 No! No! NO!

She clutches her mouth and stumbles backward. She falls--
 Long, free-fall into--

DARKNESS.

INT. ARCADE, JUNGLE GYM ROOM - DAY

POV--Blurred vision. FUZZY FIGURES crouch above us. Distant, echoy VOICES. We FOCUS for a split second--an EMT coming down on us with a breathing mask.

Nurse Allison lays on the floor of the arcade. Harry and Kim crouch above her. EMTs work to revitalize her.

HARRY
 Mommy! Mommy?!

EMT
 I'm gonna need you guys to stand back.

Allison jolts on the floor as she comes to. She GASPS, terrified. Looks around, frantic.

KIM
 You had a panic attack, honey. Just a really bad panic attack. You're okay. You're okay now.

Allison's eyes settle on Harry. He looks traumatized. She shakes in the arms of the EMT. A CROWD has gathered: lookie-loos hoping to catch something gruesome.

For a split second we might notice a CHECKERED JACKET disappear into the mass of people...

EXT. DINER - DAY

The missing poster of Allison Adams droops slightly on the door. MUSIC hums from inside.

INT. DINER - DAY

An R&B OLDIE plays. Diner Allison moves away from the jukebox, gives her way down the aisle of the restaurant. She nods and hip swivels in time to the music, smiles as she makes her way past various customers.

DINER ALLISON
How you doin', baby?

A woman smiles back.

DINER ALLISON (CONT'D)
Let me give you a little top off there, sugar.

She pours coffee into a man's cup.

DINER ALLISON (CONT'D)
Mmmm mmm. Milkshake make mama wanna boogie.

--to a booth of BOY SCOUTS all sipping milkshakes. They laugh, smile.

Diner Allison dances her way to the back door. Eyes closed, letting the music take her over. Total freedom.

INT. DINER - DAY

New MUSIC plays. Something more subdued. Diner Allison tidies up after the lunch crowd.

At the door, the busboy, BERTY (16), stares at the missing poster of little Allison Adams, tub of dishes in his hands. Diner Allison watches him. Takes in his sullen face.

DINER ALLISON
Hey Berty, know what next month is?

BERTY
No.

DINER ALLISON
Next month. Take a guess.

BERTY
I dunno, Miss Allison.

DINER ALLISON
Next month is Miss Allison here's birthday. Know how old she gonna be?

BERTY

No.

DINER ALLISON

50. 50 damn years-old. Can you believe it? You were nothin' but a bunch of stardust when I came into this world.

Berty laughs politely.

DINER ALLISON (CONT'D)

And you know what I'm gonna do?

BERTY

What?

DINER ALLISON

Imma buy myself a boat. Sail around the world.

BERTY

Really?

DINER ALLISON

Absolutely. Gonna take some time off from this place. Get away from the day in, day out.

BERTY

Wow.

DINER ALLISON

Just me, the boat and the sea. And no one to tell me not to do it.

BERTY

Do you know how to sail one?

DINER ALLISON

I've been watching some of those shows about it. You can learn about almost anything on the TV now a days. And of course, I'll take lessons. Read some books. I'll be alright. It's something I've always wanted to do.

She takes a thoughtful beat. Gathers more dishes.

DINER ALLISON (CONT'D)

Only trouble out there's the stuff mother nature throws at ya.

(MORE)

DINER ALLISON (CONT'D)
 And I don't think that's all that
 troubling anyway. She knows what
 she's doing. It's the people mess
 it all up.

BERTY
 Yeah.

DINER ALLISON
 Yeah.
 (then)
 You know something, Berty? I have a
 pretty spectacular life. 50 damn
 years-old.

Berty only nods, awkwardly.

DINER ALLISON (CONT'D)
 (re: poster)
 Put some fresh tape on that thing.
 Don't want it flapping off every
 time someone opens the door.

Berty nods, snaps into action. Diner Allison HUMS and SINGS
 to herself as she scrubs down the counter.

INT. HERMIT ALLISON'S DUPLEX, LIVING ROOM - DAY

Hermit Allison sits in her chair. She stares down warily at
 the ant infestation. CLOSE UP on their little bodies, tiny
 legs CLICK, CLACKING across the floor. TEETH SINKING into
 microscopic peach morsels. Scurrying to and fro--sharp notes
 on VIOLIN. A dead one lies in the path of the others; crawled
 over--already forgotten.

A KNOCK at the front door. Hermit Allison rises from her
 chair, plods across the hardwood to the door. Looks through
 the peep hole.

HERMIT ALLISON
 Who are you?

DELIVERY GUY (O.S.)
 I'm here with your groceries, Miss
 Adams.

HERMIT ALLISON
 Where's the girl?

DELIVERY GUY (O.S.)
 She's out sick today, Miss Adams.
 I'm taking over all her deliveries
 for the day.

HERMIT ALLISON
You get the ant traps?

DELIVERY GUY (O.S.)
Yes, Miss Adams. I can help set
them up for you, if you like.

HERMIT ALLISON
That won't be necessary.

Hermit Allison opens her door, still leaving the chain latched so that it only opens a few inches. We see the delivery guy's face--

It's the Thin Man. He smiles, sweetly. Hermit Allison eyes him suspiciously.

HERMIT ALLISON (CONT'D)
Alright, pass it through.

THIN MAN
Oh, I don't think it'll fit, Miss
Adams.

He tries, but the bag is clearly too large to squeeze through the thin opening. She studies him, apprehensive.

THIN MAN (CONT'D)
It's okay. We can do it real fast
like.

Hermit Allison hesitates, keeps her eyes on him. She timidly undoes the latch. Grabs the grocery bag. Then quickly re-latches the door. He smiles at her.

THIN MAN (CONT'D)
There. That wasn't so bad, was it?

HERMIT ALLISON
Here.
(handing wad of cash)
Keep the change.

THIN MAN
Thank you, Miss Adams. You have a
nice day now.

She closes the door.

INT. HERMIT ALLISON'S DUPLEX, KITCHEN - DAY

Hermit Allison goes through the bag of groceries. Puts things away in the cabinets and fridge.

She takes out four different brands of ant traps. Studies the back instructions on one; then another. She looks to the ants, completely overwhelmed. She opens one of the boxes. Pulls out the traps. Stares at it, daunted.

Another KNOCK at the door. Allison turns: what now?

INT. HERMIT ALLISON'S DUPLEX, LIVING ROOM - DAY

Hermit Allison opens the door a crack, chain still latched. The Thin Man smiles back at her.

THIN MAN

I just had a thought. You'll have to put one of the traps outside the door here on the porch to cut them off at the source.

HERMIT ALLISON

Okay...

She looks down at the trail of ants coming in under the door.

THIN MAN

And I thought you wouldn't want to do it yourself since you don't like going outside. I thought maybe you'd like me to do it for you.

HERMIT ALLISON

Oh. Well. Okay.

THIN MAN

My dad used to be an exterminator, you see. That's how I know so much about it.

(a goofy laugh)

You have to be strategic about where you place them.

Hermit Allison nods, slowly--she's in over her head.

THIN MAN (CONT'D)

I really don't mind helping you out a bit. I've got time before my next delivery. It's no trouble.

She takes him in. Studies his face. He's perfected a bumbling, 1950's charm. She's skeptical, but in need.

HERMIT ALLISON

Alright. But be quick about it. I have a lot to get done today.

THIN MAN

Of course, Miss Adams. You won't even remember I was here.

And she unlatches the door and lets him inside.

INT. BRITNEY'S BEDROOM - DAY

CLOSE ON a young girl's lips. Red lipstick being applied. POP MUSIC plays. We PULL OUT to reveal--

Cheerleader Allison, getting a makeover by three of her friends: BRITNEY, MEGAN and TONYA (all 16). She sits on the bed. A TV plays MTV music videos in the corner.

BRITNEY

Stop wiggling your lips.

CHEERLEADER ALLISON

How much are you putting on?

BRITNEY

Stop asking questions.

MEGAN

You look hot.

TONYA

Yeah. Full on slutastic.

CHEERLEADER ALLISON

I don't want too much on.

MEGAN

He's gonna like fall over when he sees you.

CHEERLEADER ALLISON

Shut up. He will not.

BRITNEY

Stop talking. You're messing me up.

TONYA

Why are you guys even going to that thing anyway?

MEGAN

Because Michael's a good person.

BRITNEY

Tonya doesn't know what that means.

The girls all laugh--including Tonya.

TONYA

It's like really unfortunate that you have the same name as that girl. It's like super awkward.

BRITNEY

Oh my god, so my mom like flipped out when she heard about it on the news. She got home and was like crying and stuff.

CHEERLEADER ALLISON

She was crying?

BRITNEY

Yeah, like all panicked because she heard the girl's name and thought it was you.

MEGAN

My mom thought that too.

TONYA

It's too dark around the eyes.

BRITNEY

I have to blend it more. Stop hovering.

Megan looks at herself in a mirror hanging on the wall.

MEGAN

I'm so mad at my boobs. What if they just stopped growing?

BRITNEY

They didn't stop growing.

TONYA

They probably stopped growing.
(then, to Allison)
So. Do you think you guys will do it tonight?

CHEERLEADER ALLISON

No!

BRITNEY

They're totally gonna do it. After he sees how hot you look.

TONYA

That's like super morbid. Did you ever think you'd be losing your V card at a vigil for a dead girl?

CHEERLEADER ALLISON

We're not gonna... And she's not dead.

MEGAN

Just missing.

TONYA

I feel like she's dead.

BRITNEY

Guys, come on. That's really sad.

They take it in. Indulge in the drama and sadness. A collective: *Mmmmmmm*.

MEGAN

Yeah.

TONYA

Yeah.

CHEERLEADER ALLISON

(beat)

Can I look at myself now?

Britney steps away. Throws up her hands--her work finished. Allison turns to look in the mirror hanging on the other side of the room. Just as her face meets the glass--

WHOOSH! The mirror FALLS FROM THE WALL. SHATTERS on the floor. It's sudden and scary. The girls jump back and SCREAM. Then laugh.

BRITNEY

Oh my god, you broke the mirror.

TONYA

I'm pretty sure Megan's boobs broke the mirror.

They all laugh again--except Allison who stares at the wall where the mirror was. Uneasy. Haunted.

BRITNEY

23 years bad luck!

More LAUGHTER brings us--

INT. HERMIT ALLISON'S DUPLEX, LIVING ROOM - DAY

The Thin Man crouches on the floor, spritzing Windex at the trail of ants. Wiping them up with paper towel. Hermit Allison watches in the doorway of the kitchen.

HERMIT ALLISON
Careful not to warp the wood.

THIN MAN
I won't. Not to worry, Miss Adams.

She watches him work for several beats of silence.

THIN MAN (CONT'D)
Must get awful lonely in here
sometimes. I know I would.

HERMIT ALLISON
You need more paper towel?

THIN MAN
No. I'm alright.
(then)
What is that about, anyway? Sun
allergy? Some kind of PTSD?

HERMIT ALLISON
Excuse me?

THIN MAN
Just curious why you're all holed
up like this. Patricia told me
about you before I took her shift.
Said you were a shut-in.

HERMIT ALLISON
Well, that's none of her business.
None of yours either.

THIN MAN
Of course not. I'm sorry I asked.
(then)
Agoraphobic. That's what she said
you were.

HERMIT ALLISON
Well, I'm not. She doesn't know
what she's talking about.

THIN MAN
I didn't think so. She's not
exactly the sharpest knife in the
drawer, if you know what I mean.

HERMIT ALLISON
It's called Aboulomania.

THIN MAN
Aboul-what?

HERMIT ALLISON
It means it's difficult for me to
make everyday decisions.

THIN MAN
Oh. I see. That's gotta be tough.
Why do you think?

HERMIT ALLISON
Why do I think what?

THIN MAN
Why is it difficult for you? To
make everyday decisions?

HERMIT ALLISON
Because it's a condition I have.
It's relatively common actually.

THIN MAN
Right. I mean, I've never heard of
it, but I believe you. And where do
you think it came from?

HERMIT ALLISON
I don't know.

THIN MAN
What are you afraid will happen if
you make a decision?

HERMIT ALLISON
A million different things could
happen. A trillion different
things. An infinite number of
outcomes for every decision we
make. I don't fancy that kind of
responsibility.

THIN MAN
Gosh. You're right. I never thought
about it like that. Now you've got
me all freaked out.

He laughs. Allison watches him. Grows uncomfortable.

HERMIT ALLISON
I can take care of the rest now.

THIN MAN

Oh. But I'm almost done.

HERMIT ALLISON

You've shown me how. I can do the rest myself. I'll let you carry on with your day.

THIN MAN

But it's no bother, really. I'm enjoying our conversation. I'm fascinated by all this.

HERMIT ALLISON

I need to take my nap now, so you'd better go.

THIN MAN

Are you saying that for every decision I make I'm creating another me? Like I could be that me over there, but by choosing to eat a...say, beef sandwich instead of a turkey one I'm somehow making a me that's this guy right here-- crouching in your living room?

HERMIT ALLISON

Yeah. Something like that.

THIN MAN

So, with what you're doing, you're only allowing one of you to exist? By limiting the number of decisions you have to make?

HERMIT ALLISON

Sure.

THIN MAN

So I'm like the fly in your ointment then?

HERMIT ALLISON

What?

THIN MAN

The fly in your ointment. By inviting me in you disrupted the flow. Because now anything could happen. I'm a wild card in an otherwise predictable scenario.

Allison is scared now. Her eyes drift to the phone on the armchair--behind him.

HERMIT ALLISON

I really think you oughta go.

THIN MAN

But now I'm intrigued. What could happen? The possibilities are endless.

HERMIT ALLISON

Get out.

He slowly stands.

THIN MAN

Maybe I tell you about my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. You repent and give your life to him, decide to do mission work in Mumbai.

HERMIT ALLISON

Please go.

THIN MAN

Or perhaps I kiss you and suddenly you feel beautiful again. Wanted by a man. And you get a hankering for love at the ripe old age of 68.

HERMIT ALLISON

If you don't go, I'll scream.

THIN MAN

This is fun. You handed me the reigns for a bit and neither of us have any idea what's going to happen.

Allison opens her mouth wide and SCREAMS. The Thin Man lurches forward, sprays the back of her throat with Windex. She chokes. Sputters back, coughing.

She stumbles into the kitchen to grab a weapon, but he's on her FAST--

INT. HERMIT ALLISON'S DUPLEX, KITCHEN - DAY

He SHOVES her against the counter. She SCREAMS again. Tries hitting him with a soup ladle. He grabs her by the wrists. She knees him in the crouch. He grabs at her face, hair.

She YANKS away. He puts his hand down on the counter to stabilize himself and suddenly lets out a loud, painful HOWL--

His hand SIZZLES on the hotplate. He grabs at it. Giving Hermit Allison just enough time to dart away--

INT. HERMIT ALLISON'S DUPLEX, LIVING ROOM - DAY

She runs into the living room, scoops the phone up from the armchair, races to the front entry. She turns back--the Thin Man is gunning toward her from the kitchen.

She's caught between the front door and the hallway. She looks between the two. Not sure where to go. The front door stares back, ominously.

He's almost on her. She makes her choice. Darts down the hall to the bathroom--

INT. HERMIT ALLISON'S DUPLEX, BATHROOM - DAY

Hermit Allison rushes in. The Thin Man is almost upon her. But she closes and locks the door just in time. He starts KICKING it from the outside. There's no window in here. The mirrored door on the medicine cabinet is missing.

Allison dials on the cordless phone. It RINGS.

OPERATOR (O.S.)
911, what's your emergency?

She's just about to speak when--

SMASH! The door is kicked open. The Thin Man snarls in the doorway. She's trapped against the tub. He takes confident, slow strides toward her. She cowers. Drops the phone to the floor. Shivers.

HERMIT ALLISON
Why are you doing this? Please.

THIN MAN
I'm just trying to make your life a little more exciting.

HERMIT ALLISON
I have a fine life. A spectacular life.

THIN MAN
Spectacular?

HERMIT ALLISON

Yes. Yes, because it's mine. I chose this life. Me!

He's inches from her face now.

THIN MAN

You thought I couldn't find you here. That you'd be safe.

She nods, slowly.

THIN MAN (CONT'D)

Well.

HERMIT ALLISON

Please. Let me be. I beg of you. Just go and--

In a SNAP move, he SLICES A BLADE across her throat. Her eyes go wide. BLOOD SPURTS. She GURGLES. Grabs at her throat and stumbles to the floor.

ON HER FACE against the tile--the life draining. We hear the floorboards SQUEAK as the Thin Man makes his exit. Front door OPENS and CLOSES in the entry. She CHOKES and GURGLES. The discarded phone on the floor beside her:

OPERATOR (O.S.)

Hello? Hello? Is anybody there?

She BREATHES OUT one last time. Goes still. An ant CLICK-CLACKS across the floor--crawls up the side of her face. Settles on her dead, open eyeball.

SIRENS sound somewhere in the distance...

INT. NURSE ALLISON'S APARTMENT, BATHROOM - DAY

Nurse Allison showers. Steam envelops around her. She stares ahead, blankly. Zombiefied.

INT. NURSE ALLISON'S APARTMENT, ALLIE'S ROOM - DAY

Nurse Allison changes into fresh clothes, hair still wet from the shower. She looks for socks in her dresser drawer and--stops at something on top--

Three framed photographs: Harry's school photo. A picture of Harry and Kim smiling. And one of Allison all alone, standing beside an empty swing.

Allison picks up the one of herself and the swing. Studies it. Confused. Disturbed. That empty swing. Her eyes drift back to the picture of Harry and Kim.

INT. NURSE ALLISON'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - DAY

Harry sits on the couch watching TV. Nurse Allison enters. Her son stares up at her, wary.

NURSE ALLISON
Where's nana?

HARRY
She went outside.

NURSE ALLISON
Why?

Harry shrugs. Continues to stare at her. Allison looks ill.

INT. NURSE ALLISON'S APARTMENT, KITCHEN - DUSK

Nurse Allison spreads mayonnaise on several slices of bread. She's in a kind of haze--going through the motions. Harry still watches TV in the living room. Kim enters from outside. Comes into the kitchen. Allison doesn't turn.

KIM
How you feeling?

NURSE ALLISON
What were you doing out there?

KIM
I was just on the phone. Work called. How was your shower?

Allison keeps her back to her mom. Stares ahead, suspicious.

NURSE ALLISON
Why couldn't you talk in here?

KIM
I don't know. The TV was loud.
(then)
How are you feeling?

Allison is quiet. Distrust mounting. She continues making sandwiches in silence. Kim lingers guiltily behind her.

KIM (CONT'D)
Let me know if you want some help.

INT. NURSE ALLISON'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - DUSK

ON THE TV: *Dozens of people gather at sunset in the park. Someone strums on a guitar. People wear T-shirts with Missing Allison Adam's face on them. A NEWS ANCHOR stands in the foreground, addresses the camera:*

NEWS ANCHOR

As you can see, dozens have already started arriving in the park here behind me. Tonight's vigil will be held for community members to offer up prayers for the safe return of Allison Adams, the 9 year-old who went missing from the park on Thursday.

OFF HARRY'S FACE, taking it in. Worry in his little eyes--

EXT. PARK, PARKING LOT - DUSK

Fog rolls. The sun is setting fast. Do-gooders wearing Allison Adams T-shirts over hoodies head up the hill to the top of the park. News vans unpack gear. Reporters report.

A dolled-up Cheerleader Allison pulls into the parking lot. Britney sits beside her in the passenger's seat. Allison sputters her way into a parking spot.

BRITNEY

Geez, break much?

CHEERLEADER ALLISON

How do I look?

BRITNEY

Like a sex god. Let's go.

CHEERLEADER ALLISON

I don't look trashy?

BRITNEY

No. Come on.

They get out of the car.

BRITNEY (CONT'D)

Trey said they'd meet us up at the top of the hill. Would you relax? You look spectacular.

Cheerleader Allison trails up the hill behind her friend. Pulls selfconsciously at her short skirt.

INT. HERMIT ALLISON'S DUPLEX, BATHROOM - NIGHT

A PHOTOGRAPHER snaps a picture of the dead Hermit Allison. The apartment is now a crime scene. Detectives, forensics swarm.

INT. HERMIT ALLISON'S DUPLEX, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Officer Moody surveys the space. Kicks off an ant trying to crawl up her shoe. She walks to the tree mural on the wall. Studies it. Her male partner looks through a pile of mail in the B.G.

MALE OFFICER

You see this?

She turns. He hands her an envelope: ALLISON ADAMS, electric bill.

OFFICER MOODY

You gotta be fucking kidding me.

She looks back to the mural--a thin line of black paint slowly drips from one of the branches. SLOW PUSH IN--

INT. NURSE ALLISON'S APARTMENT, KITCHEN - NIGHT

Kim and Harry sit at the table eating sandwiches. They laugh and kid each other. In the next room--

INT. NURSE ALLISON'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

--Nurse Allison tidies up. Wired and stressed. She stops at the sight of her mom's purse on the entry table. Looks over to the kitchen--her mom's back is to her, laughing at something funny Harry is doing.

Allison slyly lifts her mom's phone from the purse. Scrolls through recent calls: the latest one is an UNKNOWN NUMBER. Allison looks back to the kitchen. Harry and Kim oblivious.

INT. NURSE ALLISON'S APARTMENT, BATHROOM - NIGHT

Nurse Allison hovers by the closed door, phone to her ear. RING. RING. RING.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

Hello?

Allison holds her breath. Listens.

MALE VOICE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Hello? Kim, are you there?

NURSE ALLISON
(whispering)
Yes. I'm here.

Silence. Then--

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
Well, look, Kim. I think you might
be right. I think maybe we should
take the boy away from her--

Allison REELS. Gasps. Ends the call immediately. She holds her mouth. Gags. Wards off a sudden urge to puke.

She turns to the mirror. The glass is still fogged from her shower.

INT. NURSE ALLISON'S APARTMENT, HALLWAY - NIGHT

Nurse Allison opens the door from the bathroom and jumps back, startled--

Kim stands right outside the bathroom door. Smiling.

KIM
Is everything alright, sweetie?

Allison looks at her like she's looking at a stranger.

KIM (CONT'D)
I was just gonna go outside to make
another call.

Kim holds up her phone. Allison looks down to her hand--it's EMPTY! No phone. It's not on the counter. It's somehow still with her mom. She gapes up at her mother.

KIM (CONT'D)
Sweetie, what is it?

Allison's losing it. She pushes past her mom in a panic.

KIM (CONT'D)
Allie?

INT. NURSE ALLISON'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Nurse Allison rushes toward her son.

NURSE ALLISON
Harry, we have to go. Get your
stuff. We're leaving.

Kim follows after her.

KIM
Allison, what are you doing?

NURSE ALLISON
Come on, Harry. Right now. We have
to go.

Kim comes right up behind her. Allison whirls around--

NURSE ALLISON (CONT'D)
Don't you dare touch him!

She grabs her son's hand and shoves past her mom.

INT. NURSE ALLISON'S APARTMENT, HARRY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Nurse Allison storms into the room, clutching Harry's hand.

NURSE ALLISON
Sit on the bed. Stay there.

Harry obeys, afraid. Allison grabs a duffle bag from under his bed. Starts raiding his dresser drawers and filling the bag with clothing. Kim arrives in the doorway.

KIM
Allison, what on earth are you
doing?

NURSE ALLISON
You're working with him, aren't
you? Trying to take Harry away from
me!

KIM
Allie, what are you talking about?

NURSE ALLISON
Trying to make me feel crazy.
Making secret calls. *The picture!*

KIM
What?

NURSE ALLISON
Yeah. I saw what you did to the
picture.

(MORE)

NURSE ALLISON (CONT'D)
It used to be Harry in that swing.
Now he's gone. You're trying to
take him away from me.

KIM
Allie, calm down.

NURSE ALLISON
No! I'm not gonna calm down! I'm
taking my son and we're going to
get far, far away from this--

BAM. Her hands HIT WOOD at the bottom of a drawer. LIGHTS
FLICKER. She looks--the drawer is empty. She looks up to the
bag. Riffles through it. It's empty too. She look to her mom.

NURSE ALLISON (CONT'D)
What are you doing? How did you do
that?

KIM
Allie, please.

Allison opens drawer after drawer of Harry's dresser. All of
them are empty.

NURSE ALLISON
What is happening?! What the fuck
is going on?

She screams. Unraveling.

KIM
Honey, you're scaring me.

Allison looks to the bed. Naked mattress. No Harry.

NURSE ALLISON
Where is he? Where did he go?

She shakes. Verge of a sob. Kim watches her, helpless.

KIM
Sweetie. Allie.

LIGHTS FLICKER again. The room is now DANK. Dim and sad. No
colorful wallpaper or kids drawings on the wall. No toys or
stuffed animals. No smiley face night-light.

NURSE ALLISON
No, no, no. This isn't happening.

Allison crumples to the floor. She WAILS. Kim crouches down,
cradles her. Lets her cry and cry.

NURSE ALLISON (CONT'D)

This is a bad dream. This isn't happening.

PULL OUT from the empty, lonely little room. That black window above the bed. Nurse Allison struggles in her mom's arms. Writhes. Sanity completely unravelling...

EXT. PARK, HILLTOP - NIGHT

The vigil. Men, women and children huddle in a crowd holding candles. A PASTOR (40's) prays near the front:

PASTOR

And Lord, we just ask that you be with her now, Lord Jesus. That you send your angels of protection to comfort her. That you give her the strength to know that she is not alone, Father God. We ask that you bring her home to her family unharmed, Father. Swiftly and safely.

He goes on... People sway, lift their hands. Some cry. It's cold. You can see a collective cloud of BREATH.

Cheerleader Allison stands on her toes, pokes her head above the crowd. Searches. Britney and her boyfriend, TREY (17), come up behind her.

BRITNEY

Boo.

Allison whirls around.

CHEERLEADER ALLISON

Ugh. Where were you guys?

BRITNEY

Looks like lover boy had something else in mind. This was on the car.

She hands her a note scribbled on lined paper: "MEET ME AT THE PAVILION. XX"

CHEERLEADER ALLISON

What is this?

BRITNEY

Just go with it. It's romantic. We're gonna take off.

Britney hangs on her boyfriend. Kisses his ear. They disappear into the crowd. Allison looks back to the note.

EXT. PARK, WOODS - NIGHT

Fog swirls the dead trees. Nothing but moonlight. Something out of a del Toro flick. Cheerleader Allison trudges through the woods, lit candle clasped in hand.

An owl HOOTS from above. Sounds of the CROWD die out. Allison ventures deeper and deeper, her fear swelling.

EXT. PARK, PAVILION - NIGHT

Cheerleader Allison breaks through the trees and arrives at the over-grown pavilion--a large, gazebo-type structure wrapped in vines. Giant bird cage. She approaches, timidly.

CHEERLEADER ALLISON

Michael?

No sign of anyone. She ventures up the CREAKING steps.

Suddenly, a SOUND behind her. She whirls around to look-- something RUSTLING in the trees. Maybe just the wind. Allison holds up her candle, a weak protection. She shivers on the steps of the pavilion. Waits.

INT/EXT. MOODY'S SQUAD CAR, HERMIT ALLISON'S DUPLEX - NIGHT

Officer Moody sits in the driver's seat. Her male partner hovers outside by her open door. He smokes. She sifts through a database on her computer.

MALE OFFICER

You really think this is a thing?

OFFICER MOODY

Seems too weird not to check it out. Okay, looks like there are two other Allison Adams' in the area.

MALE OFFICER

Should we tell Stone what's up?

OFFICER MOODY

When's the last time Stone listened to anything I had to say?

MALE OFFICER

We could tell him it was my idea.

OFFICER MOODY
Let's not. Say we did.

She plugs an unseen address into the computer. Pulls her door closed.

OFFICER MOODY (CONT'D)
You coming?

EXT. PARK, PAVILION - NIGHT

Cheerleader Allison sits on the steps. Waiting. More MOVEMENT in the tress. She cranes forward. Stands.

CHEERLEADER ALLISON
Hello?

She takes slow, steady steps toward the entrance to the woods. Stops just outside the brush. It's too dark to see much of anything.

Suddenly, a HAND is around her eyes. She gasps. Goes to scream. She's spun around to face--

MR. FOX. He smiles at her like a goofy kid.

MR. FOX
I see you got my note.

She takes him in. Catches her breath.

CHEERLEADER ALLISON
You scared me.

MR. FOX
I'm sorry. I didn't mean to.

He hands her a dewy American Beauty rose. She takes it.

MR. FOX (CONT'D)
I didn't know if you'd come. You look beautiful. Like a queen.

She stares up at him, mix of caution and intrigue. He looks dashing in the moonlight.

MR. FOX (CONT'D)
Queen Allison. Let's go into your castle.

He takes her hand and leads her toward the pavilion. She trails a step or two behind, apprehensive, eyes shifting back to the woods behind them.

INT. DINER - NIGHT

Diner Allison sits behind the counter, practicing knots with a string. A CUSTOMER approaches with his empty coffee cup.

CUSTOMER
Should I leave this here?

DINER ALLISON
There's a sink in back. Rubber gloves and soap on the counter.

He gapes at her. She looks up at him: *really?*

DINER ALLISON (CONT'D)
Give it to me.

She puts out her hand for the mug. Takes it.

DINER ALLISON (CONT'D)
Little Sunday night humor for ya.

He gives a fake, humoring laugh and leaves.

DINER ALLISON (CONT'D)
Oh, yeah, you laughing now. You think it's *damn* funny now. You see how it is when I'm not here fixing all your problems. Nobody gonna know how to do shit.

DING. A new customer enters--a teen girl, 90's punk, Wednesday Addams-vibe. This is CAMILLE (14). She wears a baggy Missing Allison Adams T-shirt over a sweater.

DINER ALLISON (CONT'D)
Go on, sit anywhere you like.

But the girl comes right up to the counter. Looks in at the case of pies. Something ghostly about her. Anti-social. Allison takes her in. Notices her Allison Adams T-shirt.

DINER ALLISON (CONT'D)
You come from the park?

The girl nods, eyes still on the pie case. She holds a blown-out candle from the vigil.

CAMILLE
How much for a piece of apple?

DINER ALLISON

Apple? Hmmm. Well, now, let's see.
Just so happens apple's on special
tonight.

CAMILLE

It is?

DINER ALLISON

Uh-huh. You keep spreading the word
about that little girl and piece of
pie won't cost you a thing.

Diner Allison gets a slice out of the case.

DINER ALLISON (CONT'D)

You want ice cream with it?

CAMILLE

Yeah. But I can pay.

DINER ALLISON

Pssh. I don't want your money.

She scoops some vanilla ice cream from the freezer and adds
it to the plate. Sets it down in front of the girl at the
counter. Camille awkwardly takes a seat.

DINER ALLISON (CONT'D)

You come over here on your own?

CAMILLE

Yeah.

DINER ALLISON

You gotta be careful out there.

CAMILLE

I know.

She eats.

DINER ALLISON

It's a good thing you're all doing.
Spreading the word. Raising
awareness.

Camille notices Allison's knot behind the counter.

CAMILLE

What's that?

DINER ALLISON
That? Oh, that's a sailor's knot.
I'm practicing.

CAMILLE
For what?

DINER ALLISON
Being a sailor.
(then)
You ever been on a boat before?

Camille shakes her head, continues eating.

DINER ALLISON (CONT'D)
I'm gonna sail around the islands
of New Zealand. Hike the mountains.
Explore some of them glow worm
caves. Mmm mmm.

She gives a hearty laugh. Camille takes a few more bites.

CAMILLE
(simply)
It's my little sister that's
missing.

Allison stops, taken off guard.

DINER ALLISON
That little girl? Allison Adams?

CAMILLE
Mhmm.

DINER ALLISON
I'm very sorry to hear that.

CAMILLE
Everyone's over there crying and
praying and stuff. And I thought it
was stupid so I left.

Allison watches her. Measures her next words--

DINER ALLISON
Some people think it helps.

CAMILLE
Yeah, well, I don't believe in God.
So.

She takes another bite. Eats on in silence.

EXT. PARK, PAVILION - NIGHT

Hot and heavy. Cheerleader Allison and Mr. Fox make-out under the pavilion. He strokes her face, gentle. She SQUEEZES his hand and pulls it away. He goes to stroke her face again and she firmly pushes it down.

He pulls back. Looks at her. There are tears in her eyes.

CHEERLEADER ALLISON

(meek whisper)

I don't want you to be sweet to me.

MR. FOX

What do you want?

She timidly takes both his hands, slowly brings them up to her neck. Places them on her throat. He studies her and grins. Applies some PRESSURE. She nods. He's charged now. So is she. He goes in for an aggressive kiss.

INT. DINER - NIGHT

Diner Allison watches Camille peruse the diner. They're the only two there. Camille walks over to the jukebox in the corner. Scans the list of songs.

CAMILLE

Does this thing work?

DINER ALLISON

Sure does. 25 cents a song. You need a quarter?

Camille ignores her, pulls out her own quarter. Drops it in. Punches a code.

Silence. Then--SOOTHING, TRANCE-LIKE MUSIC. Camille sways.

DINER ALLISON (CONT'D)

Good choice.

CAMILLE

It's my sister's favorite.

Then--

THE BEATLES (O.S.)

(singing)

*"Picture yourself in a boat on a
river
With tangerine trees and marmalade
skies..."*

Diner Allison watches as the girl gently sways in time to the music. Eyes closed.

THE BEATLES (O.S.) (CONT'D)
"Somebody calls you, you answer
quite slowly
A girl with kaleidoscope eeeeeyes."

Camille turns her back on Allison. Allows two silent tears to fall free.

EXT. PARK, PAVILION - NIGHT

One hand still on Cheerleader Allison's throat, Mr. Fox begins unbuckling the belt on his pants. It JANGLES. She pulls away from him in sudden alarm.

CHEERLEADER ALLISON
 Wait. Is this right?

MR. FOX
 Do you want it to be?

He continues with the belt. Pulls her in for another passionate kiss. She closes her eyes, surrendering.

INT. DINER - NIGHT

Diner Allison bobs her head to the MUSIC behind the counter. Camille dances with greater abandon.

THE BEATLES (O.S.)
(singing)
"Look for the girl with the sun in
her eyes
And she's gone.
Lucy in the sky with diamonds!"

EXT. PARK, PAVILION - NIGHT

Cheerleader Allison continues to make-out with her partner in the shadows. They both MOAN. When she pulls back to look at him, we see--

it's young MICHAEL. He strokes her face. Gentle, sweet.

MICHAEL
 What's wrong? Allie, are you okay?

She blinks. Takes him in, slightly disoriented. "LUCY IN THE SKY WITH DIAMONDS" HUMS, ECHOY in a dream-like distance.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
We don't have to.

CHEERLEADER ALLISON
No. No, I want this.

She's been with Michael all along. Her mind is playing tricks. Michael leans in, unbuttons the first few snaps of her blouse. Softly kisses her neck. She quivers, BREATH expelling in a cloud. She looks up, past him to see--

MR. FOX looming in the entry to the pavilion. Just watching.

INT. DINER - NIGHT

Diner Allison comes out from behind the counter. She and Camille sway beside the jukebox.

THE BEATLES (O.S.)
(singing)
"Newspaper taxis appear on the
shore
Waiting to take you away
Climb in the back with your head in
the clouds
And you're gone."

EXT. PARK, PAVILION - NIGHT

Cheerleader Allison and Michael kiss wildly. Her eyes darting to the pavilion entry every so often--

Mr. Fox lurks. Stoic and still. He gets CLOSER each time she sees him. Michael remains oblivious, his back to the entry. They kiss on. Allison takes one more look behind him and--

Mr. Fox is GONE. The entry is empty. RELIEF washes over her face. She pulls back to look at Michael and they smile at each other, both giggly. He's about to lean in for more when--

SLOSH! A knife suddenly pierces into his back. He GROANS in sudden pain, body stiffening. He tries to make sound, but nothing comes out. Cheerleader Allison SCREAMS--

INT. DINER - NIGHT (SIMULTANEOUSLY)

Dance party continues. Diner Allison and Camille rock out.

THE BEATLES (O.S.)
(singing)
"Lucy in the sky with diamonds!"
(MORE)

THE BEATLES (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Lucy in the sky with diamonds!
Ahhhhhhhh."

EXT. PARK, PAVILION - NIGHT

--Michael's eyes bulge. A trail of BLOOD OOZES from his mouth. He throws a final, pleading look to Cheerleader Allison and then--falls. Allison trembles up at--

the THIN MAN, BLOOD SPLATTERED across his calm face. Serene smile. He moves slowly toward her. She balls up, terrified, whole body slipping into shock.

He takes a seat beside her. Wraps his arms around her, lovingly. Cradles her. She starts to cry.

THIN MAN
 Shhhhhh. It's okay. Everything's okay now. There, there. You make me feel bad when you cry. You're safe now. I've got you. You're safe.

She looks to the entry--the SILHOUETTE of Mr. Fox disappears into the nighttime FOG. She and the Thin Man are now alone.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Chaos. Nurse Allison SCREAMS and writhes in bed. Doctors and Nurses rally around her. Hold her down. She yells out--

NURSE ALLISON
 My baby! Where is my baby?!

Doctors SHOUT medical jargon to each other. One nurse injects Allison with a shot.

INT. HOSPITAL, HALLWAY - NIGHT

Kim waits in a chair just outside the door. Patti (one of the nurses) approaches with a cup of coffee. Hands it to Kim.

PATTI
 You okay?

KIM
 Thanks.
 (then)
 She miscarried six years ago. It hasn't been this bad in a while.

Patti just stares down at her. No idea what to say.

INT. DINER - NIGHT

The song has ended. Diner Allison and Camille are laughing. Camille looks lighter somehow.

DINER ALLISON
You gotta laugh in the awful shit,
you know what.

Camille nods, somewhat guiltily.

DINER ALLISON (CONT'D)
No one tells you that.

DING.

MISSING ALLISON'S MOM (O.S.)
Camille!

Diner Allison and Camille look to the open door--

MISSING ALLISON'S MOM stands bundled up in a jacket, face tear stained and panic stricken.

MISSING ALLISON'S MOM (CONT'D)
Where on earth have you been?

She runs to the girl. Wraps her arms around her.

DINER ALLISON
I'm sorry, ma'am. She just needed a
break, that's all.

MISSING ALLISON'S MOM
Why didn't you tell me where you
were going? I've been worried sick.
Do you have any idea what I've been
going through? Your aunt's out
looking for you in the car. Oh, my
baby.

Camille holds her mother close.

DINER ALLISON
I'm sorry, ma'am. I should've
called someone.

Missing Allison's Mom turns to Allison. Walks up to her.

DINER ALLISON'S POV--Missing Allison's Mom looks radiant. Young and fresh--glowing like an old fashioned movie star in SOFT FOCUS. She gives a warm, close lipped smile.

MISSING ALLISON'S MOM
Well, you're safe now. That's all
that matters.

In classic mom fashion, Missing Allison's Mom licks her hand
and scrubs at a smudge on Diner Allison's face.

MISSING ALLISON'S MOM (CONT'D)
Were you girls eating pie?

DINER ALLISON
Yes. We shared some.

Diner Allison looks at her with deep reverence. Mom smiles.
Grabs Camille's hand, then Allison's in the other. She looks
at them both. Angelic. Beaming. Then--

DING. All three women turn to the door--

the THIN MAN stands in the entrance. Blood on his shirt and
hands.

THIN MAN
I think I just hit an animal.

INT/EXT. MOODY'S SQUAD CAR, MOVING - NIGHT

Moody and her partner follow the GPS down a dark, tree-lined
road.

OFFICER MOODY
Looks like we're getting close.

VOICE ON RADIO (O.S.)
Requesting all available units
respond to a stabbing at Troubadour
Park. Requesting all available
units to Troubadour Park.

Moody and her partner exchange glances.

MALE OFFICER
Should we go?

OFFICER MOODY
Hang on. Not yet.

VOICE ON RADIO (O.S.)
We've got two victims down: one
male, one female, appear to be in
their mid to late teens. Both
unresponsive. Waiting on medical.

EXT. ROADSIDE - NIGHT

Diner Allison follows the Thin Man out to his car. She watches his back. Cautious, on guard. He leads her around to the front of his car.

THIN MAN

It's right over here.

She steps in front of him to look. Headlights glow onto--

Nothing. She whirls around just as he SWINGS forward with a crowbar. She DUCKS. Pulls her gun. BANG! But she misses. He SWINGS again. KNOCKS THE GUN from her hand. Kicks it under the car. Allison cowers back.

He charges her. She dodges his grasp. Takes off running into the surrounding woods. He's FAST behind her--

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Diner Allison charges ahead. Jumps over rocks and logs. The Thin Man isn't far behind.

LOUD RUMBLING! Allison looks back--

It's as if the forest is MELTING behind her. Folding into itself. Disappearing into the earth. CRACKS and CRASHES as trees FALL and are SWALLOWED UP into the ground.

She runs on. PANTS. He's gaining. Allison looks back again--

The dinner, glowing on the hillside through the trees. Suddenly, it implodes, walls caving in on themselves as it start to SINK.

Allison runs on.

Ahead, a dozen or so VIGIL PEOPLE wearing Allison Adams T-shirts trudge toward her, carrying candles. They SING softly. Diner Allison darts her way around them, Thin Man still on her tail.

DINER ALLISON

Help me! Help me!

She YELLS. But no one looks up. She's invisible to them as they pass her and vanish into the darkness. The Thin Man smiles, getting CLOSER and CLOSER.

Allison continues to run for her life. She reaches a new area of wood near a PATH. A bike lies abandoned to one side. She watches it sink into the dirt as she runs past.

"FARGO"-ESQUE LANDSCAPE SHOT: Allison running, Thin Man several feet behind. Forrest CRUMBLING in their wake. Then--
BANG! A shot rings out.

Diner Allison falls to the ground. The Thin Man freezes. BANG! Another shot WHIZZES right past his face. He turns on his heels, takes off into the darkness of the woods.

Allison lies in the dirt and pine needles--BLOOD FLOWS OUT from her wound. She gasps. Her eyes plead up into the trees. An owl HOOTS somewhere above. She BREATHES slowly. Strained. In and out, in and out. Then, a steady surrender. A peace eases onto her face. She goes still as the life drains.

BREATHING and FEET RUNNING. Someone approaching quickly--

It's the Male Officer, Moody's partner. He stops at Allison's body.

MALE OFFICER
Shit! Shit!

Officer Moody runs up behind him. She PANTS. Sees Allison.

OFFICER MOODY
Jesus Christ, did you do this?

MALE OFFICER
I didn't mean to. It was an accident. It all happened so fast.

OFFICER MOODY
Get the fuck away from her. Did you see where he went?

MALE OFFICER
No. No. Fuck!

He cries. Kicks a tree. Moody crouches down beside Diner Allison's body. Takes her pulse. Sees her blood soaked name-tag: ALLISON.

OFFICER MOODY
Shiiiiit.

OFF DINER ALLISON'S FACE, glassy, lifeless eyes--

INT. HOSPITAL, HALLWAY - NIGHT

Quiet. Eerily still. No one waiting outside the room anymore.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

CLOSE ON NURSE ALLISON, sleeping. CHATTER on the TV. It's blue light flickers on her face. Her eyes slowly open. Squint awake. She gazes around the room, piecing together where she is. A sitcom plays on the TV:

SITCOM MOM (60's) sits on the couch with sleeping, SITCOM KID (6) in her lap. SITCOM DAUGHTER (30's) stands in the kitchen.

SITCOM MOM

I did that pile of dishes in the sink. You're almost out of soap.

LAUGH TRACK. Sitcom Daughter throws up her arms in annoyance.

SITCOM DAUGHTER

Mom!! You can go. I'll put him to bed.

SITCOM MOM

*Oh, I don't mind. Really.
(comedic beat)
How was work?*

More LAUGH TRACK. Sitcom Daughter falls against the counter, dramatically.

SITCOM DAUGHTER

MOM!! I'm exhausted.

SITCOM MOM

Okay. Alright. I'll get out of your hair.

Nurse Allison stares at the TV. Perplexed. Deja Vu. She looks around the room and suddenly stops dead--

In the chair across from the bed is the stuffed PURPLE BEAR. Her eyes go wide. She tries to sit up, but can't. Her wrists and feet are strapped securely to the bed. She pulls at the confines, tries freeing herself in vain.

JANGLING. The room's doorknob slowly begins to turn. Allison freezes; braces herself. LAUGH TRACK CACKLES loudly on the TV. Allison holds her breath. Stares at the door as it opens. A FIGURE stands in the doorway. We PAN UP the body to the face of--

the Thin Man. He wears a doctor's smock and gloves. Blank look on his face. He walks casually over to the bed.

NURSE ALLISON

No, no, no, no.

THIN MAN

How are you doing this evening,
Allison?

NURSE ALLISON

Where is he? You took my son! Where
is he?

THIN MAN

Are you building little fantasy
worlds now, Allison? Been cooped up
a bit too long, have you?

Nurse Allison twists in the straps. SCREAMS.

NURSE ALLISON

Let me out of here! *Let me out!*

THIN MAN

It's time for your medicine.

NURSE ALLISON

You did this. You took them all
away from me. You killed them,
fucker!

She SPITS in his face. He blinks. Remains emotionless. Pulls
a rag and wipes the saliva off his cheek. He turns away. And
then turns back, giant syringe in his hand.

NURSE ALLISON (CONT'D)

No! No! Stop! Please! Let me keep
this one! Please! Let me have it.

THIN MAN

It's time, Luce.

She arches her back; SCREAMS. He sinks the needle deep into
her arm.

NURSE ALLISON

Noooooooooooooooooooo!

THIN MAN

Wakey, wakey.

The TV behind him drifts into SNOW. STATIC suddenly WHOOSHES
on the screen.

INT. HERMIT ALLISON'S DUPLEX, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The apartment is empty. Nothing but the trail of ants. The TV
goes FUZZY here too. STATIC.

INT. CHEERLEADER ALLISON'S HOUSE, HER BEDROOM - NIGHT

The TV BLARES STATIC FUZZ here too. The room is empty, save the GOLD CANARY going berserk in its cage.

INT. SHED - NIGHT

Diner Allison's gym. Vacant. The small TV WHOOSHES with STATIC in the corner, just like the others.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Nurse Allison and the Thin Man are gone. Just an empty bed and a STATIC SCREAMING TV. HIGH-PITCH sound of interference.

Then, a signal starts coming through. A HIGH-PITCH noise. An image flickers onto the screen--the same image we saw before on the TV in Diner Allison's gym:

VIDEO FOOTAGE of that shabby FRONT DOOR, each pane of its glass covered in newspaper. Stained carpet. Sunlight fighting to pierce through.

INT. HERMIT ALLISON'S DUPLEX, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Same image comes on the TV here.

INT. CHEERLEADER ALLISON'S HOUSE, HER BEDROOM - NIGHT

And here: A *SHADOW* moves in the room on the screen.

INT. SHED - NIGHT

The image appears on the TV here too: *the source of the shadow enters--a WOMAN, skinny and pale. She stands, back to us, facing the door.*

The HIGH-PITCH interference noise grows LOUDER and LOUDER, until--

BAM!

INT. THE HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - DAY

Silence. Everything is instantly grittier. Less polished. Less vibrant. Less like a movie. This feels real.

WE ARE INSIDE THE ROOM ON THE TV. SAME SHOT: on the door and the woman's back. Her long blonde hair. A dog BARKS somewhere in the distance. Blue light from a TV flickers. An INFOMERCIAL plays.

After several beats, the woman turns to us--

MISSING ALLISON ADAMS (32--although her sun-less skin makes her look much younger). She has timid, sad eyes; a palpable heaviness. Stares ahead, BREATH HELD.

INT. THE HOUSE, KITCHEN - DAY

Newspaper covers the window here too. Missing Allison makes bacon on a hot plate. SMOKE bellows as a piece burns.

The whole house is a stale, rotting mess. Sentences scribbled in Sharpie on random patches of wall.

INT. THE HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - DAY

Missing Allison eats breakfast on the couch in front of the TV. A game show plays. She watches, bored.

INT. THE HOUSE, BATHROOM - DAY

Missing Allison throws up in the toilet.

She wipes around her mouth with toilet paper. Flushes.

She dowses her face with water from the sink. Looks up to the mirror--but there is no mirror. Just a blank wall with the outline of where a mirror used to be. The words: "WHO AM I?" written in sharpie in the center.

INT. THE HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - DAY

Missing Allison flips through a gossip magazine. She lands on a picture of a beautiful young girl on a red carpet: CHEERLEADER ALLISON, smiling glamorously.

Allison stares, then flips to the next page.

INT. THE HOUSE, KITCHEN - NIGHT

Missing Allison does dishes. Tries to tidy up what little she can.

KEYS jangle. In the living room, the front door is unlocked and opened. In walks--

the THIN MAN, looking far less sinister than we've seen him. Gaunt; bags under his eyes. Sickly. He carries two bags of groceries. Allison barely turns.

THIN MAN

Hey.

MISSING ALLISON

Hey.

He comes into the kitchen. Sets down the bags. They're awkward with each other--familiar, but disconnected.

THIN MAN

Got some of the canned veggies you wanted.

MISSING ALLISON

Thanks.

Her voice is baby-ish, like a little girl's.

THIN MAN

They were on sale. Buy one get one free. Otherwise they're expensive.

He takes one out of the bag.

THIN MAN (CONT'D)

Do they go in the fridge or...?

Allison looks at him. Shrugs. Takes the can from him, studies the directions on the back.

INT. THE HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Missing Allison and the Thin Man watch TV. He's sprawled across the couch. She sits in the armchair in the corner.

ON THE TV: *Jimmy Fallon interviews a guest. The crowd LAUGHS uproariously at a joke.*

The Thin Man cracks up too. His laughing morphs into a COUGH. He takes a swig of his beer. Allison just stares at him.

INT. THE HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - LATER

Missing Allison makes up the couch into her bed--lays out a sheet, puts down a pillow.

We can hear the Thin Man PISSING in the other room.

THIN MAN (O.S.)
Oh, FUCK! Lucy! Lucy, get in here!

She stops. Hangs her head. Slowly walks into--

INT. THE HOUSE, BATHROOM - NIGHT

The Thin Man stands at the toilet. Look of pure horror on his face. Missing Allison lingers in the doorway.

THIN MAN
The water's orange again. That's not normal, is it? Look at it.

Allison enters. Looks down at the toilet bowl. The water is, indeed, a deep, reddy-orange.

THIN MAN (CONT'D)
Holy fuck. What's happening to me?

Allison looks worried too.

MISSING ALLISON
I think you should go see a doctor.

THIN MAN
Fuck. Jesus, fuck.

He turns to her. Grabs onto her and cries on her shoulder. She pats his back. Stares blankly ahead.

INT. THE HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - DAY

Missing Allison sits on the couch eating cereal. She watches a cooking show on the TV:

DINER ALLISON stands in front of a live audience chopping veggies.

*DINER ALLISON
You're gonna wanna do thin slices.
Just a little bit thicker than a
coin. Like this. Look at that
broccoli. Ain't she a beauty? Mama
loves her some nice, fresh
broccoli. Mmm mmmm.*

The audience LAUGHS.

Missing Allison watches, enraptured.

INT. THE HOUSE, KITCHEN - DUSK

CLOSE ON a strainer--soggy, floppy broccoli dumped inside.

Missing Allison shakes it around until most of the water is gone. She looks at it, somewhat disappointed.

She dumps it onto the hot plate. Moves it around with a spatula, trying not to let it burn.

In the living room, a NEWS ANTHEM plays, followed by:

NEWS ANCHOR (O.S.)

In tonight's news, it's been 23 years since the disappearance of Allison Eleanor Adams, the Modesto girl who went missing while on a bike ride in the winter of 1993.

Missing Allison freezes.

INT. THE HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - DUSK

ON THE TV: *The News Anchor addresses the camera--*

NEWS ANCHOR

For decades, local law enforcement agents have been baffled by a case that--from its very start--turned up little to no leads. Tonight, dozens from the community are gathering to finally lay Allison Adams to rest once and for all.

The screen switches over to a woman with short-cropped hair: ADULT CAMILLE (37), heavy set. Title underneath reads: CAMILLE DUNNE, VICTIM'S SISTER.

Missing Allison watches numb in the doorway.

ADULT CAMILLE

Sure there's still hope. I mean, there's always gonna be that small shred of hope. But is that a good thing? I dunno. I'm 37 years-old and I have kids of my own now. It feels good to say goodbye, even if it's just a headstone. It's somewhere I can put all those feelings.

She speaks glibly; matter-of-fact. The News Anchor returns--

NEWS ANCHOR
And "just a headstone" it is.
Allison's family has--

Missing Allison is hit with a sudden wave of nausea. She runs from the room.

We hear her VOMITING in the bathroom while the news continues to play.

INT. THE HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Missing Allison chokes down charred broccoli while watching a sitcom.

KEYS jangle in the front door. The Thin Man comes home, looking drained and depressed.

Allison doesn't look up. He bee-lines for the kitchen; gets a beer. Returns and plops down on the couch. They watch TV for several moments of silence.

THIN MAN
I went to the doctor.

MISSING ALLISON
What did they say?

THIN MAN
Nothing. Just took some tests. It's gonna be fucking expensive though. The blood work they have to do.

MISSING ALLISON
But did they say you'll be okay?

THIN MAN
Yeah. Probably.

MISSING ALLISON
Good.

They stare at the TV for several more beats.

THIN MAN
Something smells like farts.

MISSING ALLISON
I burned the broccoli.
(then)
There's some more in the kitchen if you want it.

THIN MAN

Nah. I ate on the way home.

More silence. The sitcom plays on, LAUGH TRACK blaring.

INT. THE HOUSE, KITCHEN - NIGHT

Missing Allison does the dishes. The Thin Man sits at the small kitchen table going over bills.

THIN MAN

We're gonna have to start cutting costs around here. First of all, I can't get you anymore of those cans, Lucy. They're just too fucking expensive.

He wheezes out a string of COUGHS.

MISSING ALLISON

Okay. That's fine.

THIN MAN

And we both need to cut back on the water we use. That means no more long showers, you understand?

MISSING ALLISON

Yeah.

THIN MAN

And I think we gotta take a break from cable for a while. Shit's costing me an arm and a leg.

Allison stops cold. Turns to him.

MISSING ALLISON

What do you mean?

THIN MAN

I mean, I pay too much for that crap. We'll still have basic channels, but the rest of it's gotta go. And you can't leave it running all day like you do. It wastes energy.

Allison stands frozen, eyes locked on the sink.

THIN MAN (CONT'D)

Did you hear what I said, Lucy?

She bristles. Eyes still on the sink.

MISSING ALLISON

(quietly)

I don't want to be called that anymore.

THIN MAN

What?

MISSING ALLISON

I don't want to be called Lucy anymore.

THIN MAN

Why not? You love Lucy. You chose Lucy.

MISSING ALLISON

I know, but I don't like it anymore.

THIN MAN

Well, what name do you want then?

She's quiet. Still doesn't look up.

MISSING ALLISON

What will I watch during the day?

THIN MAN

What?

MISSING ALLISON

If you get rid of the cable, what will I watch?

THIN MAN

Jesus Christ, I'm not getting rid of the fucking TV. Just the cable. Don't get your panties in a twist. Jesus. You know, I might be dying here and all you care about is the fucking television.

Allison immediately regrets it all. Looks up.

MISSING ALLISON

No. No, I don't. I do care about you. I'm sorry. You can get rid of the cable. That's fine.

(then, flat)

I just want you to get better.

He looks at her. He's scared.

THIN MAN

I could really use a hug right
about now, Luce.

She dries her hands. Walks over to him. Hugs him in his chair. He buries his face in her shoulder. Smells her; drinks her in. Allison's face is blank.

THIN MAN (CONT'D)

How come you always know how to
make everything better, huh?

She's quiet for a beat. Then--

MISSING ALLISON

I think I might need another
pregnancy test.

He looks up at her, sudden hope in his eyes. She stares down at him. Now she's the scared one.

INT. THE HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A smiley face night-light glows in an outlet, the flicker of the TV the only other source of light. Missing Allison watches from her bed on the couch.

ON THE TV: *A Medical Procedure* plays. NURSE ALLISON rushes through the hospital doors with a patient on a gurney.

NURSE ALLISON

John Doe, pined under a corner of the plane's fuselage. Sustained crush injuries to his right torso and upper extremities. BP initially low, but now up to 90 over 60 after a liter of fluid and placing him on his side.

She's sharp. Takes charge. A real hero.

Missing Allison watches, deeply engrossed.

INT. THE HOUSE, BATHROOM - DAY

Missing Allison sits on the toilet. Eyes glued to the blank spot on the pregnancy test. Slowly, a PLUS SIGN appears. She's pregnant. A small smile breaks across her face.

INT. THE HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - DAY

The Thin Man lies back on the couch, waits. Missing Allison exits the bathroom. She lingers awkwardly, then--

MISSING ALLISON

I'm pregnant.

The Thin Man beams.

THIN MAN

I knew it! *I knew it!* This is God's miracle. It's His sign that I'm gonna be okay!

He rises slowly from the couch. Wraps his arms around her. Allison stiffens in his grasp, but smiles nonetheless.

EXT. THE HOUSE, BACKYARD - DAY

The Thin Man leans in the door frame of the back door. Smokes a cigarette. He watches as Missing Allison walks from the house to a patch of dirt in the backyard. She carries a modest bouquet of flowers.

Two homemade crosses stick up from the ground and lean against a tall fence. A dead bouquet lies beside a muddy Purple Teddy Bear.

Missing Allison kneels. Puts the fresh flowers in place of the dead ones. Touches her palm to each cross.

The Thin Man watches impatiently. After a beat, Allison rises and walks back to the house. She enters, passing the Thin Man without so much as a glance. He chokes out a COUGH, flicks his cig and closes the door behind them.

INT. THE HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Missing Allison and the Thin Man eat TV dinners in front of a flickering TV. Another late night talk show plays. He eyes her hungrily from across the room. Lustful.

INT. THE HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - LATER

Missing Allison makes up her bed on the couch. The Thin Man enters.

THIN MAN

I was thinking maybe you sleep with me tonight.

She turns to him. Masks her dread.

THIN MAN (CONT'D)
We won't be able to for too much
longer.

He idles. Caresses the door frame with a finger.

INT. THE HOUSE, THIN MAN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Missing Allison lays naked on her back. The Thin Man thrusts on top of her; his skinny, sagging body gyrates. She stares up helplessly at the ceiling. Same blank face as always. He GRUNTS and MOANS, eyes clenched.

INT. THE HOUSE, THIN MAN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Missing Allison lies in bed, a sleeping Thin Man spooning her from behind. He SNORES. Sputters out a COUGH. Allison stares straight ahead as a single tear falls.

INT. THE HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - DAY

ON THE TV: *CHEERLEADER ALLISON sits across from a HANDSOME GUY (17) at a diner booth. A film in the style of "The Notebook."*

HANDSOME GUY
*Gee, Betty, you sure do have
beautiful eyes, you know that?*

CHEERLEADER ALLISON
*Oh, Lon, stop it. Mrs. Highsmith is
watching.*

HANDSOME GUY
*I don't care if the whole world's
watching, Betty. I love you.*

MUSIC SWELLS.

Missing Allison lies back on the couch staring wistfully at the TV. She rubs her belly subconsciously with one hand.

There's a RUCKUS outside. Allison looks to the newspapered window. An ANGRY VOICE cursing, having a fit. KEYS jangle in the lock and the door bursts open--

The THIN MAN blusters into the room.

THIN MAN

Fuck! Fucking fuck. Shit. Cunt.
Fucker. FUUUUUUUUUUCK!!

He slams the door behind him. KICKS at a chair. SLAMS over a lamp. PUNCHES the wall. A full-on rampage. Allison recoils on the couch, petrified. Watches him in complete stillness.

The Thin Man falls to his knees. Cries, spits, SCREAMS--

THIN MAN (CONT'D)

Jesus, fuck!

He folds his body over. WHISPERS into the floor. Rocks back and forth--

THIN MAN (CONT'D)

(whispered chant)

Jesus and Mary. Jesus and Mary.
Fuck me, fuck me, fuck me.

He calms. Gently soothes himself with the rocking. Allison holds her breath. He slowly looks up at her, tears in his eyes. The panic of a child.

THIN MAN (CONT'D)

I'm fucked. Totally fucked.

She just stares. Afraid to do anything.

THIN MAN (CONT'D)

The doctor says I have it in my prostate and now it's spreading to my lungs.

MISSING ALLISON

(carefully)

What is?

He suddenly grits his teeth. Body vibrating. Seething. He picks up one of Allison's heavy text books and HURLS it at the TV. CRASH!

THIN MAN

Fuck! FUUUUUUUUUUCK!!

The top corner of the screen loses picture--PIXELS JUMBLE. Distort. Allison tenses. The Thin Man crumples again. SOBS.

THIN MAN (CONT'D)

Get it out of me. Get it out of me.
Oh God, please don't let me die.

Allison stares at him, genuinely terrified.

INT. THE HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - MORNING

The Thin Man sits catatonic in front of the TV. A mindless game show plays. The screen FLICKERS IN AND OUT, damaged from his outburst.

Missing Allison enters and sets a plate of bacon and eggs in front of him. He doesn't move. Just stares forward in a daze.

Eventually, Allison kneels beside him. Picks up the fork and gently inserts small bites into his mouth. He chews. Drools. A mother and her child.

INT. THE HOUSE, THIN MAN'S ROOM - DAY

Missing Allison tidies up the bedroom. Weekly, monotonous chores. Organizes paperwork, cleans dust off the windowsill.

She pulls the sheets off the bed. Takes off the mattress cover--reveals a large, RUSTY STAIN on the mattress. Remnants of where a POOL OF BLOOD once was.

She stares at it for a moment. Then carries on.

INT. THE HOUSE, BATHROOM - DAY

Missing Allison showers. Clutches a barely showing belly.

INT. THE HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The broken TV plays. Lines run up and down the screen.

Missing Allison crouches beside the Thin Man. Feeds him small bites of cut-up chicken. He plays into the drama of his diagnosis--forlorn, hard-done-by expression on his face.

Allison studies him, timid.

MISSING ALLISON

I think I'm probably two months
along.

He stays silent, eyes hazy. She feeds him some soup. He SLURPS.

MISSING ALLISON (CONT'D)

I was thinking maybe this time we
could go to a hospital.

He goes still.

MISSING ALLISON (CONT'D)

If you thought that would be okay.

Suddenly, his hand LURCHES up. Grabs a chunk of her hair and pulls. Allison SCREAMS in pain. He stares down at her. Twists her hair. Pulling at the roots. She trembles.

MISSING ALLISON (CONT'D)

You're hurting me.

THIN MAN

Selfish bitch. How fucking dare you?

MISSING ALLISON

I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

He releases her. SHOVES her head away. She grabs at it. Slowly crawls backwards.

THIN MAN

Don't you treat me like that. I don't treat you like that, do I? Disrespecting me.

MISSING ALLISON

No. No. I just thought...since you need your rest. To get better.

THIN MAN

The baby will make me better.
(then)

It's a miraculous thing, Lucy. Fuck doctors. Fucking ignorant doctors. They don't know about what God has decreed when He said it. "For unto us a child is given and whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life." Everlasting life, is what it says. And they'll see. It'll be pretty miraculous to them when they see it. What God has blessed me with, with this baby. I'll be healed, God said. And none of them will know how I made it all happen. How I put it all together.

He stares up, palms out to the heavens. A "god" of his own making. Allison quivers on the floor.

INT. THE HOUSE, THIN MAN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Missing Allison lies naked on her back again. The Thin Man has sex with her. GRUNTS and GROANS. He orgasms. Doubles over in pain. CRIES OUT--

THIN MAN

Ow. Fuck. Jesus.

He falls on top of her. PANTS, sweaty and seizing.

INT. THE HOUSE, THIN MAN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Missing Allison wakes up in bed. Turns to her side--he's gone. The sound of HACKING in the bathroom. Deep, ugly COUGHS that just won't stop.

She lies there, trembling in the dark.

INT. THE HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - DAY

Missing Allison sits on the couch watching the distorted TV:

A sailboat glides across the sea. A Discovery program.

VOICES trail down the hall. Allison keeps attention split between the TV and hallway--

THIN MAN (O.S.)

Oh, that's just my old guitar cases.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)

And what about in this closet?

THIN MAN (O.S.)

More meds. They've got me on all these pills now, Cheryl. This pill with breakfast, that pill before bed. I mean, shit. Now, they've got me on an inhaler. I need help even breathing now.

The Thin Man enters the room, followed closely by--

OFFICER MOODY, his parole officer. She gives a polite nod to Allison, who quickly everts her eyes.

OFFICER MOODY

What happened to the TV?

THIN MAN

Oh, that. You'll laugh. I fell on it. It's these goddamn pills, Cheryl. Make me lose my balance.

OFFICER MOODY

You fill out all the paperwork for Friday?

THIN MAN

Yes, siree. Got it in here.

He limps his way past them into the kitchen. Allison is left alone with Moody. Moody looks to her--

OFFICER MOODY

You're the niece, right?

Allison just stares--a silent, subtle plea: *help me*. Then she nods. Moody takes her in, leery.

THIN MAN

Here ya go. Fresh off the presses.

The Thin Man returns, paperwork in hand. Moody turns her attention to him and Allison goes back to being invisible.

OFFICER MOODY

Okay. Great. I'll meet you at the courthouse at 9:45. Don't be late or you'll piss me off.

THIN MAN

Wouldn't dream of it.

She opens the front door. The Thin Man follows her out. Allison watches them through a small tear in the newspaper-- Moody walks down the path, the Thin Man smiling and waving her off.

Allison turns back to the TV. Life sludges on.

INT. THE HOUSE, KITCHEN - NIGHT

Missing Allison makes a sandwich. Carefully spreads Mayo on bread. She notices a small area of mold on one of the slices. Cuts it off. Inspects the rest and then continues spreading.

INT. THE HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Missing Allison watches TV while eating her sandwich. Lines run through the screen, picture going in and out.

ON THE TV: A talk show *HOST* interviews a wheelchair bound *HERMIT ALLISON*. Title card underneath reads: *DR. MCKENZIE HOLT, physicist.*

HERMIT ALLISON

I think when we talk about Daughter Theory it matters just as much on a metaphorical level as it pertains to any kind of physical reality. You can look at me, for example, in this chair, and see someone with a life stolen out from under them. Someone gypped by the gods out of a career as a mountain climber or cross-country skier. But does that mean this life has any less or more validity than the others? That choice is still mine. Some drunk driver doesn't get to dictate that for me. Or you look at someone--

The TV *BLANKS OUT*--the distortion worse than before. Missing Allison sits up, concerned. The picture *POPS* back on in quick, disjointed *BURSTS*:

HERMIT ALLISON (CONT'D)

--services that don't--without a hope of--another example would be-- takes light years to even--for-- some--

Missing Allison gets up. Kneels in front of the TV and hits the side of it. Nothing changes--it continues on in disjointed fragments. She hits the side again and suddenly--

the screen *FIZZLES* into *DARKNESS*. Dead picture and sound.

Missing Allison stares at the black, silent box in front of her. It's gone for good. She stares at *HER FACE BEING REFLECTED* in the glass. Holds her gaze--the first time she's seen herself in years. One one thousand. Two one thousand. Three one thousand. Long *EXHALE OF BREATH*.

INT. THE HOUSE, BATHROOM - NIGHT

Missing Allison showers. Her belly a bit more distended than before.

INT. THE HOUSE, BATHROOM - NIGHT

Missing Allison dries off in front of the mirror-less wall. Her eyes settle on the words written in its center: *WHO AM I?*

INT. THE HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Missing Allison lays back on the couch, the TV still black and dead. Allison runs her fingers over her belly, gentle caressing. BREATHES up and down, up and down. Then, very softly--

MISSING ALLISON

(singing quiet)

"Picture yourself in a boat on a
river
With tangerine trees and marmalade
skies
Somebody calls you, you answer
quite slowly
A girl with kaleidoscope eyes."

INT. THE HOUSE, KITCHEN - DAY

Missing Allison sits at the table. Eats a bowl of cereal. COUGHS of the Thin Man echo from the bathroom.

It's quiet in the house without the TV whirring. Allison stares ahead, deep in thought. Her eyes drift to the newspapered front door--light glows from the outside. Beckoning.

The COUGHING in the bathroom gets more aggressive. Then the sound of someone FALLING. The Thin Man GRUNTS and GASPS--

THIN MAN (O.S.)

(wheezing)

Lucy! Lucy, help me!

ON ALLISON--dead center between the BATHROOM DOOR and the FRONT DOOR.

We see just the tips of the Thin Man's fingers grasping at the bathroom tile through the cracked door. The glowing front door on the other side of the room.

Allison looks between the two.

We PULL AROUND BEHIND HER (ala the OPENING SHOT of the little girl on the bike caught at the fork in the road. Same image)--

The FRONT DOOR or the BATHROOM. The Thin Man's unanswered CRIES. Which way to go? Long HOLD. Then--

CUT TO BLACK.