

ELI

Written by

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FADE IN

WE'RE IN A CHILD'S POV. WE'RE RUNNING. FAST, DOWN A HALLWAY.

We HEAR panting, our own heavy breaths. We're scared, terrified even. Something's very wrong.

The hallway feels endless. There's no escape.

We TRIP, fall down. We're dazed for a moment. We HEAR something else now, something behind us...a RUMBLING.

We LOOK back...

EVERYTHING IS ON FIRE! THE SOUND IS DEAFENING.

The flames are alive, licking the walls, barreling towards us like they want to swallow us up...

INT. PLASTIC TENT/MOTEL ROOM - DAY

ELI (11) BOLTS AWAKE from his nightmare. His face is pale, big bags under his eyes. He's choking on air, wheezing uncontrollably. He can't get a breath.

He looks around frantically. He's inside his plastic tent, used to quarantine him from his surroundings. The walls are opaque and the room outside looks foggy.

There's a A LOUD HUMMING SOUND, an air purifier pumping clean air into the tent from a hose.

Eli himself is wearing A SANITARY FACE MASK. His bed has been stripped of the motel supplied sheets and comforter and replaced with a special hypo-allergenic kind.

A DARK SHAPE approaches the tent wall. But an angelic voice whispers into the tent...

MOM (O.S.)

(soothing)

Breath honey, it's okay. You're okay.

ELI

(wheezing)

Dust...there's dust!

MOM (O.S.)

It was just a bad dream. There's no dust. I made sure everything was totally clean.

(MORE)

MOM (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 Remember what we practiced, in one-
 two, out one-two, in one-two, out
 one-two.

Eli does as Mom directs. It's a tried and true practice. He takes a breath, holds, and releases.

As Eli does his breathing, Mom sings softly to him:

MOM (CONT'D)
 (singing)
*You are my sunshine, my only
 sunshine. You make me happy, when
 skies are grey...*

The simple breathing technique works. He calms down.

WE REVEAL THE MOTEL ROOM from OUTSIDE THE TENT for the first time. It's a dingy roadside motel room, the kind where the most modern appliance is a ten year old TV.

Mom stands just outside the tent, places her hand up against the plastic wall. She's in her mid 40s, midwestern Mom attractive - but tired, frayed. She has a name, but if Eli doesn't use it then neither do we.

The plastic tent is less than an eighth on an inch thick, but the separation between Eli and Mom feels huge.

A LIGHT CLICKS ON. It's Dad, laying in the twin bed next to the tent. He's also mid 40s, in shape, goatee.

He removes a sleep mask to reveal eyes puffy with sleep, puts on his glasses next to the nightstand. The clock says 6:00am.

DAD
 Fire or dog?

Eli responds from inside the tent.

ELI
 Fire.
 (then)
 I'm fine.

DAD
 Of course you are, champ.

But the look on Eli's face says he's pretty far from okay.

A MONTAGE OF ELI'S MORNING ROUTINE

(All from inside the plastic tent)

CUT TO: ELI WASHES UP

Eli wipes his body clean with ANTIBACTERIAL WIPES.

CUT TO: ELI BRUSHES HIS TEETH

He POURS BOTTLED WATER onto the toothbrush and begins to brush his teeth. He spits the dirty water into a plastic cup and sets it down.

CUT TO: ELI CHANGES CLOTHES

He pulls out a FRESH T-SHIRT from out of A VACUUM SEALED BAG. Tosses it on.

CUT TO: ELI GETS INTO HIS GERM-FREE SUIT

It's basically a full body HAZMAT SUIT, colored BRIGHT YELLOW. Eli steps into the suit - far from thrilling. The zipper's on the inside and Eli ZIPS HIMSELF UP.

END MONTAGE

Now that Eli's finished, he's ready to leave the tent. The fingers on his suit are too bulky work the zipper though, so he gently slaps the tent wall to signal to Mom.

MOM
All zipped up?

ELI
(muffled)
Yes.

MOM
Sorry, honey, you have to speak up
in that thing.

ELI
Yes!

MOM
Okay, here I go.

Mom slowly unzips the tent and Eli steps outside. It's not easy to maneuver in the suit, he trips on the way out.

Mom catches him before he falls.

MOM (CONT'D)
Careful honey.

EXT. MOTEL - DAY

It's a local motel in a small town. There's TWO DELINQUENT LOOKING TEENAGERS skateboarding in the parking lot.

Dad pulls the car around, a late model luxury SUV, a car you only buy if you can afford the seventy-five dollars a week it costs to fill the gas tank. There's suitcases tied to the roof. He honks the horn.

The motel room door opens and Mom steps out, a few suitcases in her hand. She shoots a nervous glance at the DELINQUENT TEENAGERS, keeps moving.

Dad gets out and starts loading the luggage.

Eli hasn't left the motel room yet. Mom turns back.

MOM

Come on, Eli. Let's go.

Dad shuts the trunk.

Slowly, Eli peeks his head out from the motel room into the harsh daylight. We see his sickly face through the plastic visor of the suit.

He looks at the outside world like frightened prey. To Eli, this beautiful summer day is terrifying.

Dad comes around to the back passenger side door.

DAD

Ready?

Eli looks nervous, but he gives his Dad a thumbs up.

DAD (CONT'D)

Okay. 3...2...1...Go!

On "Go" Eli races as fast as he can from the motel room to the car. Dad opens the door just as Eli jumps in. Another tried and true technique of Eli and his family.

INT. CAR - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Eli leaps into the backseat and Dad shuts the door quickly. He's panting, nervous, but he calms down once in the car.

He chooses the middle seat to sit, as far as he can from the windows. He's wheezing again. Mom turns from the front seat.

MOM

In one-two, out one-two...

Eli does his breathing exercises, calms down again.

From outside the car, Eli hears laughter. He turns to look out his window. The Teenagers are laughing at him.

He catches their eye.

TEENAGER 1

(clearly stoned)

To infinity and beyond, dude.

They CRACK THEMSELVES UP.

Eli looks away, embarrassed. He balls his hand into a fist.

As they drive away, TEENAGER 1 tries to do a KICKFLIP and FALLS on his face. TEENAGER 2 laughs hysterically.

Eli smiles a little himself.

EXT. WINDY COLORADO HIGHWAY - DAY

Their car drives through a windy, beautiful stretch of highway in isolated Colorado. It's SUMMER and the PINE TREES lining the road are in full bloom.

Not another car in sight.

INT. CAR - DAY

SCRATCH-SCRATCH-SCRATCH. The SOUND of colored pencils on paper.

It's coming from Eli. He's in the backseat of the car, diligently working on a drawing with colored pencils.

INSERT ON DRAWING: an image of himself on a skateboard, still dressed in his hazmat suit, ollieing high above the heads of the two stunned-looking delinquent teenagers.

Meanwhile...in the front seat, Dad jams away to music, loud.

MOM

Honey, you mind turning it down?

Eli pays no attention to either of them.

DAD

Come on baby, you gotta listen to
this loud.

SCRATCH-SCRATCH-SCRATCH. Eli colors-in his hazmat suit. As he works, his marks gets harder and harder.

Mom notices, looks at him through the rearview mirror.

MOM

How you feeling honey?

Eli doesn't respond. Dad keeps jamming away.

SCRATCH-SCRATCH-SCRATCH. His face begins to tighten up. His jaw clenches.

SCRATCH-SCRATCH-SCRA---. The colored pencil tip snaps. Eli throws the pencil on the seat next to him in frustration. It lands amid a collection of other broken colored pencils.

Mom shuts the music off abruptly. Surprises Dad.

DAD

Hey...!

Mom gives Dad a stern look. She notices Eli in the back.

Mom turns to face Eli, and as nicely as possible:

MOM

You doing okay back there?

ELI

(dismissive)

Fine.

MOM

Excited to finally be done with all
this driving?

Eli apathetically shrugs his shoulders. He's clearly not interested in talking. He gets out a new colored pencil and starts to shade in another part of his drawing.

Mom's about to say something else when Eli cuts her off.

ELI

What happened to the music?

Mom gives up, she's clearly not going to get more out of him. Dad can't help but smile.

DAD
(teasing)
The boy's got his Dad's good taste.

He turns the music back up.

Mom breathes out a heavy anxious sigh. Dad undercuts his teasing by reaching his hand over, gently massages her neck.

In the backseat, Eli continues to color.

EXT. WINDY ROAD - CONTINUOUS

The car speeds OUT OF FRAME.

EXT. ISOLATED ROCKY ROAD/INT. MOM'S CAR - DAY - LATER

Dad pulls off the main road onto a smaller, rocky road.

Eli's moved on from drawing and is now reading a book on his IPAD. As Eli flips the (electronic) pages, we realize what he's reading because of the illustrations. It's PINNOCHIO.

They pass by A DILAPIDATED COTTAGE with an old red paint job bleached years over from sunlight and harsh weather. There's A LITTLE GIRL balancing herself on an old wooden fence.

She immediately catches Eli's eye. He puts the iPad down.

The little girl is roughly Eli's age and her hair is a fiery red; her hand-me-down dress thoroughly worn.

MOM
Didn't realize we had neighbors.

She moves across the old fence, arms outstretched to balance herself. Eli's eyes are glued to her. But in a moment, the car rounds a bend and the little girl disappears from view.

MOM (CONT'D)
Turn here.

The car pulls into a long driveway lined with trees on either side, serene but isolated.

They turn around a slight bend and the trees open up, revealing...

EXT. ELI'S NEW HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

A remarkable Gothic-style house, old-looking but somehow modern. The outside's been redone, the door is made of steel.

It's big enough to house ten people, quite a bit more than Eli and his parents.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Eli stares incredulously up at the house through the window.

ELI

This is where we're living?

Remarkably, both Mom and Dad have the same look as Eli.

DAD

Yeah, this is where we're living?

MOM

Well, she said it was isolated.

EXT. PATH TO THE HOUSE - DAY

Eli walks up to the path to his new house with great trepidation. It might as well be hot lava on all sides of him. He stays wedged between Mom and Dad.

EXT. ELI'S NEW HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - DAY

Eli, Mom and Dad stand in front of the solid steel front door. No locks or doorknobs, it looks like the kind of thing you might find in an ultra modern home, or a spaceship.

DAD

Hmm. Should we knock or do you think there's a doorbell--

Dad is interrupted by a FEMALE VOICE, friendly but firm, from a speaker near the door. There's a small camera above it.

VOICE/DR. HORN (O.S.)

Hello, Miller family. I'm Dr. Horn. Apologies for the formal introduction, but in order to maintain the sanctity of the house, and protect Eli, I'm going to open the door and have Eli enter. We can have our personal introductions afterwards.

Eli takes a subtle step back, shields himself behind Mom and Dad, scared. There's nothing inherently frightening about Dr. Horn's voice, but the theatrics of it all are overwhelming.

DR. HORN (O.S.)

Don't worry, Eli. There's nothing to be afraid of. Just a few precautionary measures to keep this clean house clean. Okay, I'm going to open the door just enough for you to enter, and I ask that you enter as quickly as possible. We want as little of the outside in as possible. Ready?

Eli holds on tighter to Mom.

MOM

It's okay, honey. Remember, this is why we're here.

The door begins to slide open.

DAD

3...2...1...Go!

Eli doesn't move.

MOM

We'll be right behind you, honey.

Mom gently breaks Eli away. Eli steps inside.

INT. DECONTAMINATION CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

Eli reaches the middle of the small room. The steel door slams shut behind him, startling him.

The room is eerie and overwhelming. It appears to be some sort of decontamination chamber. Ahead, another steel door.

Eli's totally freaked, as would anyone.

Dr. Horn's voice comes out of another speaker.

DR. HORN (O.S.)

Great job, Eli. Now this room is going to kill all that bad, scary air out there and give us good air that you can breath. But it's going to be loud, and it's going to be bright, so don't be scared, okay? Are you ready? Here we go.

A LOUD HUM erupts inside the room, like a powerful vacuum. Regardless of Dr. Horn's preamble, it still startles Eli.

DR. HORN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Now for the lights.

A blinding bright light goes on, and Eli's vision whites-out. It almost brings him to his knees.

But moments later the lights shut off and the humming ceases.

The steel door in front of him begins to slide open.

Eli's vision is still blurry from the lights and he can't make out what's on the other side.

The steel door finishes opening and Eli can make out a fuzzy shape standing in the doorway.

DR. HORN (CONT'D)
Right this way, Eli.

The shape comes into focus. It's DR. ISABELLA HORN (early 50s), in the flesh finally. We immediately get the sense that she has bigger things on her mind than her appearance: she wears neutral colored clothing and her hair is years uncut, tied back in a ponytail. She flashes a warm, inviting smile.

DR. HORN (CONT'D)
I'm Dr. Horn. Welcome to your new home.

INT. FOYER - DAY

The decontamination room door opens and Mom and Dad enter, having just gone through the decontamination process.

Eli's grateful to have them there. He rushes to their side quickly, grabs onto them.

DR. HORN
I told him he could take the suit off, but he wanted to wait for you.

Mom bends down to Eli's level. Looks him in the eye.

ELI
What if it isn't safe?

MOM

It's totally safe, Eli. That's what makes it so special here. No more plastic barriers.

Eli looks around. High ceilings, lots of open space and modern furniture. Everything new and clean.

DAD

You got this, champ.

With trepidation, Eli unzips his suit. He slowly removes the helmet, takes a deep breath in. And then another. And another. The air is clean.

He doesn't hardly even get the suit off before Mom wraps her arms around him and hugs him as tight as she can. Dad joins.

She starts kissing him all over his cheeks.

ELI

Okay, okay. That's enough.

But Eli is laughing. He's enjoying it too.

MOM

Oh it's been so long since I could hug my sweet little angel. I'll never let you go again.

DR. HORN

One of the many benefits of living here.

Mom turns at Dr. Horn's words and gives her a great big hug of her own, surprising her a little.

MOM

Thank you, Dr. Horn.

She joyfully tears up.

DR. HORN

No thanks required.

Eli takes the rest of the suit off and relaxes a bit. Dad turns his attention towards the interior of the house.

DAD

It's actually not bad in here.

DR. HORN

You sound surprised.

Mom shoots Dad an annoyed look.

MOM

I think what he meant was...well,
we were expecting something more
like a hospital.

Dad walks over to a small window. Looks suspiciously at it.
Knocks on it. Plastic and sealed shut.

DR. HORN

On purpose. Although everything
here is specifically and specially
built for people like Eli, I don't
like to think of it as a hospital,
or even a medical facility. To me,
this is a home.

Eli walks up to what once was a fireplace, but is now
cemented over. But Eli's eyes are drawn to what's hanging
over it, AN ELEGANT GOLD CRUCIFIX.

The PAINED FACE OF JESUS is particularly horrific, and the
look in his eyes gives Eli the willies.

DR. HORN (CONT'D)

But more importantly, it's *your*
home. I want you to think of me as
your guest, not the other way
around.

INT. DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY - DAY

Eli, Mom and Dad follow Dr. Horn down the hallway. It
connects to all the rooms and as Eli passes he looks into
them: THE LIVING ROOM, THE COMPUTER ROOM, ETC.

DAD

How long have you been doing this?

DR. HORN

I've been an immunologist for over
twenty five years, but I started
this home about ten years ago.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

A modern looking kitchen, large and spacious, with lots of
counter space and state of the art appliances.

DAD
Now this is my room!
(to Dr. Horn)
I'm the resident chef.

Mom leans in to Dr. Horn, jokes:

MOM
He used to flip burgers in high school.

DAD
Yeah, you married me because of the those burgers. Speaking of, maybe I can make them tonight...

Dad opens the fridge and scopes it out: *not thrilled*.

DAD (CONT'D)
Or not.

DR. HORN
You've noticed, there's no meat in there. I have a diet I'm going to request Eli to stick to. Dishes high in immunity boosting grains and vegetables like mushrooms and barley. I'll give you a list.

ELI
No meat? I hate mushrooms.

DAD
I'm not the biggest fan of them either, but if the doc says mushrooms, you gotta eat mushrooms.

Dad rubs Eli's hair. Mom kneels down to Eli's level.

MOM
You know what, if you eat it, we eat it. Because we're all in this together.

Dad gives her a look, "*I don't want to eat mushrooms.*" Mom quickly shoots it away with a look of her own.

INT. ELI'S ROOM - DAY

Dr. Horn opens the door to Eli's room. Everyone steps inside.

DR. HORN

This is your room. It used to be the dining room but I had it converted.

The room is enormous. Patterned wallpaper, queen size bed, large walk in closet, desk, bookshelves and tons of open space to hang around in.

MOM

Wow, Eli. Looks like you made out like a bandit.

Eli takes it in, but still doesn't seem too enthusiastic. As superficially nice as everything is, it's a far cry from anything resembling home.

Dr. Horn can see Eli's unhappiness. She moves to the opposite wall where there's a large set of drapes.

DR. HORN

Our residents seem to like this.

She pulls the drapes open and Eli is immediately blasted by sunlight from a giant floor to ceiling window, showcasing a stunning view of the outside wilderness: trees, grass, even a small stream about twenty yards out.

But instead of being pleased as Dr. Horn expected, Eli cowers in fear, shields himself behind Mom and Dad.

MOM

Ever since he got sick, he doesn't do well with windows.

DR. HORN

Well Eli, I can assure you, you've got nothing to worry about. The windows here are made of thick plastic, nothing can get in or out. I find the natural lighting does wonders for the psyche.

Eli still won't get out from behind Mom and Dad.

ELI

Can you close the drapes, please.

DR. HORN

I promise you Eli, there's absolutely nothing--

ELI

Close them!

Eli's sudden yell surprises Dr. Horn, but she's obliges.

DR. HORN
Of course. I'm sorry.

MOM
Eli, don't yell at Dr. Horn like that. She's trying to help.

DR. HORN
It's quite alright. This is a huge adjustment, it's going to take some getting used to.
(then)
I do think I have something that might cheer you up though.

Dr. Horn smiles like she knows something AS WE CUT TO...

INT. ELI'S BATHROOM - DAY

CLOSE ON: A SHOWERHEAD - the kind pointing straight down from the ceiling to simulate rain. Expensive.

DR. HORN (O.S.)
Probably a long time since you've used one of these.

WE REVEAL Eli nervously looking at the shower.

Dr. Horn turns the water on and Eli reacts as if she just let a snarling dog off a leash. Fear in his eyes. Dr. Horn smiles again, she's seen this before.

DR. HORN (CONT'D)
I know it's scary, but the water here is totally safe, as is the window, as is everything else. It's all completely filtered before it ever reaches us.

Eli stares at the running water; it's been a long time since he's felt flowing hot water on him.

DR. HORN (CONT'D)
Go ahead. Give it a feel.

Eli shakes his head. He won't do it.

DR. HORN (CONT'D)
It's okay, Eli, I promise.

Mom takes Eli's hand.

MOM

How about we do it together?

Eli's scared but he acquiesces. Eli and Mom walk toward the running shower and, hands clasped, gently touch the water.

Almost instantly, Eli loses himself in the feeling. The water feels perfect, and it's been so long since he's felt hot running water. He looks at Mom, can't help but smile.

DR. HORN

See, safe.

Mom and Eli remove their hands from the water.

DR. HORN (CONT'D)

If you're comfortable, Eli, I'm going to have you wash up while I show your parents to their room. Okay?

Eli takes a long beat to think about being alone in the new house. But the idea of a hot shower is a powerful convincer.

ELI

Okay.

The adults all smile, relieved.

DR. HORN

Take as much time as you'd like. I'll have your Mom come and get you when we're ready.

CUT TO: Eli in the shower. For the first time he seems to be relaxed. The water runs down his face.

INT. ELI'S ROOM - DAY

Eli exits the bathroom wearing the new clothes provided: the same kind of clothes Dr. Horn was wearing. Neutral colored long sleeves and pants.

He steps into his new room, alone in it for the first time. He looks so tiny amidst all the space.

He opens a door to find an EMPTY WALK-IN CLOSET. He yells:

ELI

Echo!

"Echo" echoes back to him. Eli takes notice. He experiments:

ELI (CONT'D)

Ah!

It echoes back. He smiles, looks around slyly.

ELI (CONT'D)

Shit!

"Shit" echoes back. Eli smiles, finally having a little fun.

He really lets loose now, a BIG SCREAM, coming from somewhere primal, letting his frustration out.

ELI (CONT'D)

AHHHH!

But this time, there is no echo. Eli waits for one, but it doesn't come. He shrugs his shoulders. *Whatever.*

He heads for the door, almost makes it out when...

"AHH!" ECHOES BACK! But it sounds different than Eli's yell.
The scream sounds painful.

Eli startles, looks around him. He's alone. A VOICE FROM BEHIND HIM:

MOM (O.S.)

Eli?

Eli whirls around but it's only Mom and Dad in the doorway.

MOM (CONT'D)

Dr. Horn is ready for you in her office. Come on.

INT. THIRD FLOOR HALLWAY/OUTSIDE DR. HORN'S WING - DAY

Mom and Dad lead Eli up the staircase.

They reach THE LANDING. There's a door with a keypad lock on it. The entrance to Dr. Horn's wing. Mom knocks.

MOM

Dr. Horn, we're here.

There's a silent moment while they wait. Eli's nervous.

ELI

Mom, what's she going to do--?

CLICK. The electronic lock disengages, cutting Eli off. Dr. Horn steps out, a welcoming smile on her face.

DR. HORN
Right this way.

INT. INSIDE DR. HORN'S WING - DAY - CONTINUOUS

There's another small hallway inside. There are three doors leading out of it: one at the end, and two on the right side.

DR. HORN
At the end is my room. This is my library...

Dr. Horn opens the door to THE LIBRARY. Eli and Mom observe from the hallway: nothing special, bookcases on each wall filled with medical textbooks. Leather chairs to read in.

They continue on to the last door on the right.

DR. HORN (CONT'D)
Right this way.

Dr. Horn opens it and they enter.

INT. EXAM ROOM - DAY

Eli scans the room. It looks much like a typical doctor's office you would find anywhere.

DR. HORN
Why don't you have a seat here.

Eli breaks away from Mom, not without a little resistance, and sits on the medical bench in the center of the room.

Dr. Horn pulls out a digital camera.

DR. HORN (CONT'D)
I'm going to get a picture for my records. Can you smile for me? Big smile?

Eli musters up a smile. She snaps a picture.

DR. HORN (CONT'D)
Perfect. Let's get started.

CUT TO: Eli lies on the medical bench, shirtless, attached to what looks like an ECG machine. Mom holds the lead wires.

Although not in pain, Eli looks uncomfortable and nervous.

Dr. Horn stares at the machine printout.

DR. HORN (CONT'D)

A minor but normal arrhythmia due to nerves, otherwise your vitals look good. Let's get those pesky wires off you.

Mom carefully removes the lead wires attached to Eli.

DR. HORN (CONT'D)

Can you flip onto your stomach?

Eli obeys. Dr. Horn moves behind Eli, wheels a medical tray along with her. He can see her reflection in the glass cabinet in front of him.

DR. HORN (CONT'D)

In a normal healthy body, antibodies are produced by a gene found within the bone marrow. But in your case, the gene that produces those antibodies malfunctions and ceases production.

Through the reflection Eli can see Dr. Horn removing items from packaging on the medical tray, but his own reflection obscures what the items actually are.

DR. HORN (CONT'D)

That means the first step to curing you is isolating the gene, and figuring out how to make it function again. In order to do that, I have to harvest the marrow. The procedure takes up to an hour, so I'm going to give you a general anaesthetic which will put you to sleep. When you wake up you'll feel groggy, and you might be nauseous which is absolutely normal. Nothing to worry about.

In the reflection Eli sees Dr. Horn raise a large hypodermic needle. Eli grabs Mom's hand, grips so tightly it hurts her.

DR. HORN (CONT'D)

Okay, I want you to count back from one hundred for me, okay. You're going to feel a little pinch when I give you the injection.

ELI

(shaky)

One hundred, ninety-nine, ninety-eight...

Eli's face scrunches up in pain and he exhales sharply as the needle enters his back.

DR. HORN

Okay, it's all done now. Keep counting.

ELI

Ninety-seven, ninety-six...

Eli's eyelids suddenly get very heavy.

ELI'S POV: As the drugs begin to take hold, the WORLD LOSES FOCUS. WE'RE LOOKING AT THE REFLECTION...and there's A FIGURE standing behind Dr. Horn, not belonging to anyone previously in the room. We can't make out who or what it is.

ELI (CONT'D)

(softly)

What...

And with that, he's out.

CUT TO:

A BACKYARD SOMEWHERE.

WE'RE IN ELI'S POV AGAIN.

Shining sun, chirping birds. Picturesque. There's a SLEEPING DOG curled underneath the shade of a tree.

We WALK toward the sleeping dog, it's back to us. We REACH down, go to touch it when THE DOG VICIOUSLY SNAPS AT US...

CUT TO:

INT. ELI'S ROOM - DUSK

Eli wakes with a start. He's disoriented, groggy from the medicine. He rolls over and winces in pain.

INT. ELI'S BATHROOM - DUSK

In the mirror, Eli examines his hip where Dr. Horn harvested the bone marrow. It's bruised badly and sore to the touch.

INT. ELI'S ROOM - DUSK

Eli limps back to his bed from the bathroom.

He walks past his window, drapes closed. He stops in front of it, stares at it like it's something to be defeated.

And from somewhere behind it, he can hear A VOICE. He can't make out what the voice's saying, but it's intriguing. He flips the switch on the wall; sounds of the outside rush in.

Ever so faintly he can make out:

LITTLE GIRL (O.S.)
Now that's a good 'un!

Eli draws the drapes open just enough to peer outside.

THE LITTLE NEIGHBOR GIRL is about twenty yards away playing in the stream. She stands ankle deep in the water, next to her is a big red bucket. She drops something into the bucket.

She goes back to staring intently into the water, searching, then she suddenly LUNGES into the water with her hands, like she's grabbing something.

Eli stares at her, totally transfixed when -- SHE TURNS TO LOOK AT HIM. Eli darts behind the drapes, embarrassed.

Before long, there's a dreaded knock at the window. Eli does nothing, too scared to open the drapes back up.

LITTLE GIRL (O.S.) (CONT'D)
I saw you lookin' at me. I know
you're in there.

Eli stays frozen, doesn't move. Hopes she'll just go away.

LITTLE GIRL (O.S.) (CONT'D)
What's a matter? You scared or
somethin'?
(a beat, then)
Fine, I'll tell my daddy and he'll--

That gets Eli's attention. He pulls back the drapes.

ELI
Wait. I'm sorry. I just heard your
voice and---

LITTLE GIRL
(laughing)
I'm just foolin' with you! You
oughta see your face. Look like you
seen a ghost!

This girl is something else. Eli smiles nervously.

LITTLE GIRL/HALEY

I'm Haley. I live in the house over there.

HALEY. While her body has not yet matured into womanhood, her eyes have, and they're sharp and knowledgeable. Her hair is different than before, it hangs down on her shoulders instead of in pigtails. She speaks with a slight mountain twang.

ELI

I'm Eli. What were you doing in the stream?

HALEY

What's that? You gotta come closer, I can't hear you.

Eli takes a nervous beat, closer to the window means closer to the outdoors. But like all boys before him, he'd rather risk his life than appear cowardly in front of a girl.

He steps closer to the window.

ELI

I said what were you doing in the stream?

HALEY

Catching 'poles.

ELI

Huh?

She reaches into the bucket and comes back with something in her fist. She reveals it to Eli.

CLOSE ON: A SLIMY TADPOLE, flapping around, gasping for air.

HALEY

Tadpoles. They come out at dusk to eat.

The tadpole slips out of Haley's hands, SMACKS the window. Eli startles, jumps back.

Haley LAUGHS, picks the tadpole up off the grass.

HALEY (CONT'D)

You scared of a tadpole?!

Eli's red-faced. He bumbles through an excuse:

ELI

No, I just...

But in a moment, he becomes transfixed on the tadpole. This squirmy, slippery little nothing is utterly foreign to him. Without being aware, he moves closer to the window.

ELI (CONT'D)

I've never seen one that wasn't in a book, before. That becomes a frog?

HALEY

Yep. Don't look like one now though, does it?

Eli shakes his head.

HALEY (CONT'D)

Come out and I'll show you how to catch 'em. I got real good at it.

Eli shifts, semi uncomfortable.

ELI

Um...

HALEY

Oh yeah. You're like, allergic to the outdoors or something, right?

ELI

How'd you know?

HALEY

I just figured, since you're staying here.

ELI

Oh, right.

HALEY

So you ain't never been outside?

ELI

Yeah. Well, no...

Eli realizes he's never really had to explain his condition like this before. Maybe that's because he's never been around a person his age.

HALEY

Well which is it?

ELI

I didn't used to be sick. Or, well, I guess I was but...

HALEY

Are you always this confusing?

Eli takes a breath, restarts. The only way to tell it is to start from the beginning.

ELI

There was something wrong with me before I was born. My Mom said the doctors didn't think I'd make it. But I did. That's why Dad calls me Champ.

HALEY

Champ?

ELI

I beat the odds. Except...I guess I kind of didn't, because---

Haley finishes the story for him.

HALEY

You just got sick again later.

Eli nods. Haley shakes her head in disbelief.

HALEY (CONT'D)

Man, that sucks. If I couldn't go outside, I'd probably go crazy.

Eli shifts uncomfortably, Haley realizes:

HALEY (CONT'D)

Oh, sorry...

ELI

That's okay. I don't really remember being outside, so...

He trails off. His lame excuse isn't fooling anyone anyway.

HALEY

So like, you just have your friends come over?

ELI

Well, mostly it's just me and my parents. There's Dr. Horn too now, and she seems nice.

HALEY

So what do you do all day?

ELI
I read a lot. I got an iPad, I can
get any book I want on it and--

HALEY
That sounds boring.

Haley lacks tact but she's not antagonistic. And Eli knows,
in this case, she's kinda right.

ELI
What about you? What do you do?

HALEY
I'm outside just about every second
of every day. Swimming in the
creek, skipping rocks, sometimes I
even just lay out on the grass and
stare up at sky. Don't really do
anything, just lay there.

ELI
That sounds boring.

A joke! Eli's starting to get more comfortable. Haley smiles,
which in turn makes Eli smile.

HALEY
You're funny, Eli. But I gotta go.
It smells like rain. See ya!

Haley takes off before Eli can even say goodbye. He stays
staring outside long after she's gone, like a person watching
the credits play out at the end of a movie that moved them.

ELI (PRE-LAP)
Mom? Dad?

INT. DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Eli moves through the new house alone for the first time. He
walks slowly down the hallway.

ELI
Mom? Dad?

The hallway takes on a more ominous tone at night than it had
during the day. Every shadow is new to Eli, every creak of
the floor a surprise.

As Eli passes by each room...THE LIVING ROOM, THE KITCHEN,
THE COMPUTER ROOM...he looks into it.

All the furniture looks...perfect. Too perfect, like the displays at an Ikea showroom.

CUT TO:

THE GOLD CRUCIFIX

Hanging on the wall. It's a striking piece of work. You can see the torment in Jesus's eyes.

INT. FOYER - NIGHT

Eli stares up at the crucifix. He doesn't like it, and for good reason. It's kinda creepy. Especially at night.

But for some reason, he can't take his eyes off it. He stares into the pained eyes of Jesus.

And...is it possible? The mouth of Jesus looks as though it's opening, ready to cry out! Eli's about to scream himself when, behind him:

DAD (O.S.)
Kinda spooky, don't you think?

Eli JUMPS, whirls around to find Dad behind him.

DAD (CONT'D)
Sorry, champ. Guess I'm the spooky one, huh.

Eli turns back around but the Face of Jesus has returned to it's normal state. *Did it ever really move?*

ELI
It wasn't you.
(gestures to the crucifix)
It was that.

Dad moves to put his arm around Eli. They both stare at it.

DAD
Can't say I'm a huge fan, either. A little grim, wouldn't you say?
(a beat, then)
You know what...

Dad reaches up to the Crucifix and removes it from the wall. Looks at Eli and smiles.

DAD (CONT'D)
Dr. Horn said to treat this house
like it was ours. So adios Scary
Jesus.

Eli smiles.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

CLOSE ON: Eli's tired, baggy-eyed face as he stares
disappointed down at his dinner...

A bowl of grey, uninspired oatmeal.

ELI
Oatmeal for dinner? Can I add some
syrup to it at least?

Dad sympathetically shakes his head *no*.

ELI (CONT'D)
Cinnamon?

DAD
Sorry, champ. No can do.

Eli begrudgingly picks up his spoon, swirls the grey gruel
around the bowl. Dad sits down to eat himself, neither of
them look very happy about it.

DAD (CONT'D)
Well, maybe we've got a little
brown sugar around, hmm?

Eli lights up at the prospect. Mom puts a quick stop to it.

MOM
I don't think so. We have to follow
Dr. Horn's recipes exactly. You
know that, honey.

It's unclear which "honey" she's referring to, but both Eli
and Dad look equally disappointed.

Dad leans over and whispers in Eli's ear.

DAD
Sorry. I tried.

Eli pushes the bowl away from him.

ELI

Do you think Haley might be able to come over sometime?

Mom was waiting for that question. She gets serious.

MOM

I don't think that's a good idea right now.

DAD

Who's Haley?

Mom gives Dad a look.

MOM

The neighbor girl.

ELI

But if we can all be in this house, why can't she? She can follow all the directions and stuff.

Mom's worked through this in her head already.

MOM

I think right now we need to just focus on getting you better. Once that happens you can see Haley whenever you want. Okay?

ELI

But what if...I don't get better?

DAD

Don't forget, Eli, you're The Champ.

Dad lays the love on thick but Eli doesn't bite. He slides his bowl away from him.

ELI

I don't think I'm hungry tonight.

MOM

Why don't you get some rest, Eli. You have a long road to recovery.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Eli doesn't get far before he hears Mom quietly yelling.

MOM (O.S.)

Do not make me be the bad guy here.

Eli stops to eavesdrop. He carefully walks backwards without making a sound, peeks around the corner:

DAD

I'm not, but we both know a little sugar isn't going to hurt him.

MOM

We agreed, anything Dr. Horn says goes. There needs to be a unified front.

Mom and Dad, usually a singular force around Eli, are behaving drastically different now that he's not around.

DAD

Look at his face, Linda. He's miserable. We got him here, the least we could do is try to make him happy.

MOM

My concern is making him well, and that's Dr. Horn's concern too. And it should be yours.

DAD

Of course it is, but...

Eli's seen enough. It's hard enough to watch his parents fight, let alone about him. He leaves the scene. Mom and Dad never notice him.

INT. ELI'S ROOM - NIGHT

Eli lies in bed, on his iPad. Reads Pinocchio. But he pauses, looks at the window. The drapes are open, he can see outside.

After a beat, he puts down the iPad, goes to the drapes, and shuts himself off from the outside world.

INT. ELI'S ROOM - NIGHT - LATER

CRASH! A whip-crack of thunder forces Eli from sleep. It takes him a moment to clear the fog of sleep from his brain.

For some reason, it's burning hot. Eli wipes the sweat off his forehead. He realizes he's totally drenched in it.

There's A LOW RUMBLING coming from outside his window. It's a familiar sound, one we've heard before, but from where?

He sluggishly gets out of bed, curious to see.

He reaches for the drapes, pulls them apart...

And is greeted by A ROARING FIRE. Blazing hot, burning just on the other side of the window.

Eli falls backwards, terrified. He hits his bad leg, the pain momentarily paralyzing him. He watches the towering flames. And if things couldn't get any worse...

The window begins to crack from the overpowering heat. They spider out, threatening to destroy the window.

Eli starts wheezing, the same thing we saw earlier. He manages to pick himself up and bolt.

INT. VARIOUS HALLWAYS

Eli races through the house, as fast as he can with his limp, screaming his head off, wheezing in between cries of help.

ELI

Help!...Mom!...Dad!...Help me!

He can't get to Mom and Dad fast enough. He blazes with lightning speed through the hallways, mad with panic.

ELI (CONT'D)

Help!

Eli turns the corner to take the stairs and runs SMACK into Mom. Only, she's on fire, burning right before Eli's eyes! She reaches out to grab him with a sudden burst of movement!

Eli screams and cowers in fear...but nothing happens.

MOM (O.S.)

Eli, it's me! What's the matter?!

When Eli looks back he sees Mom, as normal as she's ever been, with Dad just behind her. It must've been a panicked hallucination in the dark.

DAD

What's wrong?

He flips on the light. Eli looks deranged.

ELI
The fire was breaking my window!

MOM
What?!

Dr. Horn hurries down the stairs from all the commotion.

DR. HORN
What's happening?

CUT TO:

ELI'S PERFECTLY UNCRACKED WINDOW

Dad and Dr. Horn stand looking at it. No signs of fire either.

INT. ELI'S ROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

The rest of the room however, is in total shambles. It looks like a tornado went through it.

The adults look perplexed, just a shade under worried.

Eli stays back, hides behind Mom in the hallway.

MOM
Eli, what in the world happened in here?

ELI
I didn't do this.

Eli's as confused as anybody about how the room got trashed.

DR. HORN
Where did you say you saw this fire, Eli?

ELI
Outside.

Dad throws his hands up in confusion.

DAD
Doesn't look like a fire came through here, champ. A tornado, maybe...And the window's fine. Look, you can see for yourself.

ELI
But...I saw it.

Mom bends down to meet him at eye level. Their matching blue eyes stare into one another's. She recognizes something in them, seems satisfied, stands and takes his hand.

MOM
Why don't we get some sleep? You
can sleep in our room tonight.
We'll get this mess cleaned up
tomorrow.

As Mom takes him away, Eli stares back at the mess of the room, the uncracked window and the unscorched grass outside it. *Was everything just in his head?*

INT. LIBRARY - DAY

Eli sits with his parents in the leather chairs in the center of The Library. Dr. Horn sits opposite them.

She makes notations in her notebook.

DR. HORN
Your parents tell me you've been
having nightmares. Recurring ones.
Would you mind telling me about
them?

Eli looks at his parents, a little uncomfortable.

Mom nods comfortingly. *It's okay.*

Eli turns back to Dr. Horn.

ELI
Well, there's the one with Prince.

Dr. Horn stops writing, looks up.

DR. HORN
Prince?

DAD
The Dog Formerly Known As.

He chuckles to himself. Mom swats at his chest.

MOM
We had to...get rid of him once Eli
got sick.

DR. HORN

Ah. I see. Sorry, Eli, go on.

Dr. Horn goes back to the notebook.

ELI

Well, in the dream I'm not sick,
because I'm outside without my suit
on, and I'm not scared or anything.

DR. HORN

(doesn't look up)

I see.

ELI

Prince is there, and I go to pet
him, but when I do, he gets real
mad and he tries to bite me. That's
when I wake up.

Dr. Horn notes this in her notebook.

DR. HORN

What else, Eli?

A beat, then:

ELI

A dream about the fire at our
house.

Dr. Horn puts down her pen for a moment. Looks at Eli.

DR. HORN

That must have been really scary.
How well do you remember it?

ELI

I remember putting my suit on. And
Dad carrying me to the car.

Dr. Horn jots down another quick note before she slips the
notepad into a MANILA FOLDER labeled "ELI" on it.

DR. HORN

Eli, can you see how your
nightmares might explain a little
bit about what happened last night?

ELI

The fire?

Dr. Horn nods.

DR. HORN

I think you were sleepwalking. It's a rare side effect of the treatment. Sleepwalking can occur during various stages in the sleep cycle. Yours happened during a recurring nightmare. That's why you saw the fire. Does that make sense?

Eli struggles to understand, but he knows what to say.

ELI

I guess so.

DR. HORN

Good. Now...

INT. EXAM ROOM - DAY

DR. HORN

I believe I was able to isolate Eli's malfunctioning gene.

Eli's back on the medical bench. Dr. Horn wheels around the covered medical tray.

Mom and Dad stand excitedly by Eli's side. But Eli just looks nervous. He squeezes Mom's hand.

DAD

That's great.

DR. HORN

Yes, but that's the easy part. I'm going to introduce a modified version of that gene into Eli's system.

MOM

And then he's cured?

DR. HORN

Unfortunately not. The process is gradual and has to be repeated every few days, otherwise the body rejects them. My goal is essentially to trick Eli's body into making these genes on its own.

Dr. Horn unveils a syringe on the medical tray, already filled with an opaque liquid.

Eli quickly turns away, shaking but trying to contain it.

DR. HORN (CONT'D)
This will only take a moment.

Dr. Horn rolls up Eli's sleeve. She doesn't draw any attention to his fears.

DR. HORN (CONT'D)
It's going to burn a little, Eli. I wish there was something I could do about that, but there just isn't. But the first time always hurts the worst.

Eli squeezes his eyes shut, just shy of hyperventilating now.

MOM
It's okay, Eli. In one-two, out one-two. In one-two, out one-two.

Eli tries the breathing technique, but it's not helping.

Dr. Horn injects the solution into Eli. There's a momentary scrunching of the face, but the pain is gone in a flash.

DR. HORN
All done.

MOM
See that wasn't so bad, was it---

All of a sudden, Eli's face scrunches up again.

ELI
Ow.

MOM
Eli, are you okay?

The pain within Eli increases. His eyes well with tears.

ELI
It hurts. It hurts.

MOM
Take my hand, take my hand.

He squeezes down onto Mom's hand like a vice. His strength is shocking. It hurts her.

MOM (CONT'D)
(pained)
Just breathe. Breathe, honey.

Eli's breath comes out in short, jagged bursts.

DAD
Doc, what--?

DR. HORN
I'm sorry, Eli, I know it's
unpleasant. It'll be over before
you know it.

Eli squeezes tighter onto Mom.

MOM
Eli, my hand.

Tighter still. Mom grows panicky.

MOM (CONT'D)
Eli. Eli, my hand!

DAD
(to Eli)
Take mine.

Dad holds out his hand for Eli to squeeze, but Eli doesn't do it. He squeezes on Mom's hand tighter...tighter...

Dad tries to pry his hand off Mom's before he breaks it...

And Eli releases. The pain dies down. Mom yanks her hand away, rubs it and breathes a sigh of relief.

Eli bursts into tears. Dad hugs him while Mom tries to console him through her own pain.

MOM
It's okay, baby. It's all over now.

Dad glares up at Dr. Horn, who's a little shaken up herself.

DR. HORN
I'm sorry, Eli, there won't be
anymore pain now. It's all over.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Eli walks slowly down the hallway towards his room, Mom and Dad behind him. He's totally drained from the procedure.

But then, ahead of him, something catches his eye...

A YOUNG BOY, clothing in tatters, enters an open room down the hall.

Eli freezes, his body surges with adrenaline. This Boy doesn't belong here.

Dad bumps into Eli's back, jarring him back to reality.

DAD
What the...?

ELI
Did...did you see that?

DAD
See what?

Eli looks up at Dad with fear in his eyes.

ELI
I saw someone.

Mom and Dad give each other worried glances.

MOM
Come on, let's get you right to bed.

INT. ELI'S ROOM - DAY

Eli's still pleading with Mom and Dad as they tuck him in.

ELI
He walked right into the computer room. How could you not have seen him?

MOM
There wasn't anyone there, Eli.

ELI
There was. I saw him!

DAD
Easy, champ.

ELI
But---

Mom shushes him.

MOM
Your eyes were playing tricks on you. There was no one there. You'll feel better after some rest.

Dad kisses him on the top of his head.

DAD

I'll have a little something for
you to eat when you wake up. Love
you.

They leave Eli alone. But Eli's adrenaline is way too high for him to get any kind of sleep. Plus, the drapes are open.

Eli stands at the window, searching it, wondering how the previous night could've all been a dream.

He notices something outside, an animal lying in the grass. But there's something familiar about this animal...

WE SLOWLY PUSH IN TO REVEAL...

The DOG from Eli's dream, the exact one. Eli's eyes go wide. The dog lifts its head to look at us when...

HALEY POPS UP obscuring our view of the dog! It startles Eli half to death, he screams.

HALEY

Geez you're jumpy!

ELI

Do you see that dog?

Haley turns, looks.

HALEY

What dog?

She steps aside. The spot where the dog was is now just empty grass.

ELI

You didn't see...

Eli trails off. *Was it real or his imagination?*

ELI (CONT'D)

I'm awake right?

Haley screws her brow up in confusion, but moments later, A MOSQUITO lands on Haley's outstretched arm. She freezes.

HALEY

Hey, watch this.

Haley clenches her fist, tightens the muscles in her arms.

Eli watches her with a cold fascination, forgetting about his vision momentarily.

ELI
What are you doing?

HALEY
When a mosquito is sucking your blood, you clench your fist and make your muscles real tight, like this.

CLOSE ON: The mosquito sucks the blood out of her arm.

HALEY (CONT'D)
When you're squeezin' they get trapped. And they can't get their little suckers out of you.

CLOSE ON: As the mosquito drinks, it grows larger and larger.

HALEY (CONT'D)
And they can't stop drinking neither, so they just get bigger and bigger until...

CLOSE ON: The mosquito POPS like a balloon.

Eli flinches backwards as blood explodes onto the window.

ELI
Whoa! Gross!

HALEY
You still get a bite, but it's worth it. I hate them damn things.

ELI
I've never had one. I heard they itch.

Haley cleans the blood off the window with her shirt.

HALEY
Well I guess that's one thing good about living inside.

WE HEAR:

MOM (O.S.)
(panicked)
Eli. Eli, wake up.

INT. ELI'S ROOM - NIGHT

Eli opens his eyes. He's in bed, asleep.

Mom stands over him, her face covered in shadow.

MOM

Eli, get up. We have to go.

ELI

(sleepy)

Mom? What's going on?

Mom backs away. She heads for the door.

MOM

It's time to go. We have to leave.

ELI

Huh? What are you talking about?

But Mom doesn't respond because she's already out the door and into the hallway.

Eli hurries out of bed and follows her.

INT. DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Eli exits his room and moves into the hallway. He can see the back of Mom walking in front of him. The moonlight casts an eerie glow on her. Something doesn't seem right.

ELI

Mom what's going on?

MOM

We have to hurry. Your father is already in the car.

Mom turns a corner and disappears. Eli chases after her.

ELI

Mom! Wait!

INT. FOYER/DECONTAMINATION CHAMBER - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Eli enters the foyer and Mom, still ahead of him, opens the door to the decontamination chamber. She turns, her face still shrouded in shadow, and beckons him inside.

MOM

Hurry, Eli.

Eli can feel something off. Mom is acting weird.

He approaches the decontamination chamber threshold, doesn't want to cross it.

ELI
(scared)
Please tell me what's going on.

MOM
It's time to go.

There's something different about Mom's voice this time. Something...inhuman.

ELI
Mom...?

Suddenly, THE DOOR BEHIND ELI SWINGS SHUT, knocking him into the DECONTAMINATION CHAMBER. Eli falls forward.

He looks up and we can finally see that it isn't Mom at all in there with him. It's A LONG HAIREWOMAN. Her gaunt face is locked in a horrified expression.

Eli SCREAMS, scrambles off the ground and tries to open the door back into the house. It's locked, he doesn't know the code. He BANGS on the door as hard as he can.

ELI (CONT'D)
Help! Help! Mom, Dad, please help!

The door to the outside slowly opens. A sliver of moonlight like a laser beam cuts through the darkness.

The wheezing starts. His throat closes up. He's having trouble taking in oxygen.

He spots his Germ-Suit hanging on the wall. Forces himself to move for it. Inside his blood feels like cement, every movement is a trial in and of itself.

The door opens wider. Eli can see the outside world: the grass, the trees, the dust - the death. He tries to get the suit down, but in his panic he can't get it off the hanger.

His face grows bright red, he can hardly breathe. He finally gets the suit down. He looks back at the door. It's opening wider and wider, almost all the way open now.

He collapses trying to pull his legs into the suit. His oxygen is completely cut off. No more wheezing, just an open mouthed gasp, a vacuum within his lungs. He's seconds from passing out when....

He's dragged back into the house! The door slams shut!

Eli sucks in clean air as he lies on his back. He sees his savior, Dr. Horn, hovering over him, frantic and bewildered.

DR. HORN
Eli, what the hell are you doing?!

Eli's consciousness begins to fade. This is all too much for him. His vision becomes foggy, the sounds echo-y.

Mom and Dad come rushing downstairs.

MOM
What's going on?!

DR. HORN
The sensor in my room went off. Eli was about to leave the house!

Mom rushes to Eli's side. Then he blacks out.

INT. EXAM ROOM - NIGHT

WE'RE IN ELI'S POV: Everything is still foggy, a minor blink of consciousness...

MOM
(frantic)
He was outside, what are you going to do?!

DR. HORN
I'm administering something intravenously.

Dr. Horn reveals a syringe and injects it into Eli. Eli's too zonked out to be bothered by the needle. Mom holds his hand.

MOM
It's going to be okay, honey. My little fighter. It's going to be okay.
(sings)
You are my sunshine, my only sunshine. You make me happy, when skies are grey...

He blinks out again...

CUT TO:

A HALLWAY

WE'RE IN ELI'S POV AGAIN. The same nightmare from the opening scene.

We're RUNNING. We TURN to face the FLAMES, like a giant FIREBALL coming straight at us. Somewhere deep inside the fireball, it's almost as if we can hear words:
EEEELLLLLIIIII...

INT. ELI'S ROOM - NIGHT - LATER

Eli wakes up, back in his bed.

Mom, Dad and Dr. Horn are talking in a circle. They don't realize he's woken up yet.

DAD
(upset)
You said this place was secure.

DR. HORN
It is. I don't know what happened.

DAD
Well that's reassuring.

MOM
(to Dad)
Stop it. Now is not the time.

DAD
Then when is the time? When he's standing on the front porch?

Eli finally speaks, dazed enough that he didn't register their conversation.

ELI
(weakly)
Mom? Dad?

The adults wipe their faces of emotion, almost like they're coming in and out of different characters. Mom goes to Eli.

MOM
Eli, honey. How are you feeling?

Eli is still weak. It's hard for him to speak.

ELI
We have to go.

DAD
Go where, champ?

ELI
We have to leave now.

Mom and Dad look to Dr. Horn confused, *why is he saying this?*

DR. HORN
Let's let him rest, for now. We'll
keep a close watch on him. We'll be
right here the whole time, Eli.

Eli's losing consciousness again.

ELI
This house...

MOM
Shhh. It's going to be okay. Just
go to sleep.

Eli closes his eyes again. Mom runs her hand through his hair, simultaneously shoots a concerned glance to Dr. Horn.

INT. EXAM ROOM - DAY

Eli is sitting up on the medical bench. The color has returned to his face and he looks healthier.

Dr. Horn examines him while Mom and Dad watch. Although tired, everyone is looking much less frazzled.

DR. HORN
Blood pressure's good, temperature
has returned to normal. I think
we're out of the woods. Eli, how do
you feel?

ELI
Better.

Mom and Dad breathe a sigh of relief.

DR. HORN
Alright Eli, now what can you tell
us about the other night?

ELI
Mom came into my room while I was
sleeping. She said we had to leave.

MOM

I wasn't in your room at all last night, Eli.

DAD

Your mom was with me the whole time.

ELI

I know. It was the house pretending to be her.

Mom looks at Eli incredulously.

MOM

The house? Eli---

DR. HORN

It's okay. Let him explain.

ELI

There's something wrong with this place. I think...I think the house is haunted.

DAD

Haunted? Come on now.

Eli rises from the medical bench, indignant, wound up.

ELI

It used to be just the stuff from my dreams but now I'm seeing people, like that kid, and the woman that pretended to be Mom.

Mom puts a gentle hand on him.

MOM

Calm down, honey.

Eli sits back down, but he's not calmed.

MOM (CONT'D)

We'll get this sorted out. I'm sure-

ELI

They're trying to hurt me, Mom! You have to believe me.

MOM

Eli, sweetie, nobody's trying to hurt you.

Eli balls his hand into a fist.

ELI
You're not listening to me!

MOM
We're listening, but you can't
expect us to truly believe--

Eli bangs his fist on the medical bench. The outburst visibly shakes Mom and Dad. They look to Dr. Horn to take control of the situation, which she does.

DR. HORN
I believe you, Eli.

Everyone in the room is stunned by Dr. Horn's revelation. It takes the wind out of Eli's sails.

ELI
You do?

DR. HORN
Of course I do. I believe that *you*
believe this house is haunted. But,
Eli, remember what we talked about
before? The sleepwalking, the
nightmares?

ELI
But it feels so real.

DR. HORN
Don't dreams feel real while you're
having them too? You're under a lot
of stress. I promise if you remain
calm, and try to relax, these
problems will go away.

ELI
But...
(realizes)
How did I get out of the house
then?

Dr. Horn answers without wavering.

DR. HORN
A short in the electrical system.
All it required was a simple
adjustment of the wiring. I was
able to fix it on my own.

She smiles, but Eli doesn't find much cheery about it. He turns his attention to Mom and Dad.

ELI

It was real. I'm telling you the truth, you have to believe me.

DAD

I want to believe you but Dr. Horn's the expert. She's been through this before.

ELI

The others patients! They must've seen stuff too!

DR. HORN

I've lived here for ten years, with patients in and out, and no one's ever mentioned ghosts. I promise.

Mom and Dad appear reassured with the explanation. Eli, not so much.

INT. ELI'S ROOM - DAY

Eli and Haley are sitting Indian-style on the ground on opposite ends of the window.

Haley breathes on the window, fogs it up. She draws a TIC-TAC-TOE board into the condensation. She marks "X" in the corner.

HALEY

Okay. Your turn.

Eli doesn't move. He's not paying attention, lost in thought. Haley waves her arms to get his attention.

HALEY (CONT'D)

Hello? Anybody in there?

Eli comes to, points to a spot and she draws an "O."

HALEY (CONT'D)

What's the matter with you today? You bored or something? We can play a different game if you want.

ELI

If I tell you something, you promise not to laugh?

HALEY

Alright.

Eli holds a beat, getting up the nerve, then:

ELI

I think this house is haunted.

Haley's reaction doesn't change, but she utters:

HALEY

That's funny.

ELI

You said you wouldn't laugh!

HALEY

Well first off I didn't laugh, I said it was funny. And I didn't mean funny like that, I mean funny like weird. The kid that lived here before you, his name was Perry, he said the same thing.

ELI

(shocked)

What?!

HALEY

Yep. I didn't talk to him as much as I talked to you on account of it being winter, but the few times I did see him he seemed mighty spooked.

Eli rises to his feet. Paces around with excited anxiety.

ELI

What did he tell you?

HALEY

I don't really remember much. To be honest, I didn't really take him too seriously when he told me.

ELI

What about me? Do you believe me?

Haley takes a beat, really thinks about her answer. It's actually quite adorable.

HALEY

Well, since both ya'll are saying the same thing, but neither of you met each other, I suppose there's got to be some truth to it.

Finally, a compatriot! Eli's posture relaxes.

ELI

I wish it was that easy to convince the people in this house. Dr. Horn said I was hallucinating.

HALEY

You know, now that I think about it, that's the same thing Perry told me she said.

ELI

So if he told Dr. Horn too, that means...

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

ELI

...she's a liar!

Eli ardently talks to Mom and Dad. They're trying to remain calm while Eli goes to town.

MOM

Calm down, Eli.

ELI

But she is! Perry, he was the patient here before me and he saw ghosts too. Haley told me!

DAD

Dr. Horn is...a lot of things, but I have to believe her over a ten year old neighbor.

ELI

No! Why aren't you listening to me?!

Eli's starting to unspool. He balls his hands into fists again. Mom and Dad try to take him back from the edge.

MOM

You need to relax, Eli. This is exactly what Dr. Horn was talking about---

ELI

NO!

Eli SLAMS his fist down onto the glass coffee table with rage. The glass tabletop shatters.

Eli stands there amidst the broken glass, unable to move from shock. Dad snatches him up, panicked. Looks at his hand. Mom just SCREAMS bloody murder.

INT. ELI'S ROOM - BED - NIGHT

Dr. Horn examines Eli's hand while he's in bed. There's not a mark on it.

DR. HORN

You're very lucky.

The tone in the room is severe. Everyone is still shaken up. Mom's eyes are bloodshot from her tears.

DR. HORN (CONT'D)

A wound that severe could have quite possibly been unmanageable.

(reassures Mom)

But it's okay. Everyone is safe and unharmed.

ELI

I didn't mean to. It just...happened.

DR. HORN

It's alright. I want you to take this though.

Dr. Horn hands Eli a SMALL WHITE SLEEPING PILL.

DR. HORN (CONT'D)

It's going to help you sleep.

Eli doesn't fight her. He takes the pill with a glass of water from his nightstand.

DR. HORN (CONT'D)

Good. Now get some rest. Tomorrow we have another treatment and I want you to be as strong as possible.

Dr. Horn smiles at Eli as she gets up, but it seems to be a more strained smile than before, like she's feigning.

Mom hugs Eli as tight as she can.

MOM

We love you so much, Eli.
Goodnight.

Dad comes around and gives him a hug too.

DAD

When this is all said and done,
we'll take you out to the ring and
get you some boxing lessons.
(then)
I love you.

ELI

Love you guys too.

They shut the door and leave Eli alone. From out in the hallway, Eli can hear their muffled arguments.

INT. ELI'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

CLOSE ON: THE SLEEPING PILL drops into the toilet bowl.

Eli stares down at it with disdain. He never took it. He flushes the toilet, the pill swirls down the drain.

INT. HALLWAY/KITCHEN - NIGHT

Eli sneaks down the hallway, on a mission.

He hears the adults' voices coming from the kitchen. Dad sounds on edge.

DAD (O.S.)

Hallucinations? You never mentioned anything like that.

Eli sidles up towards the kitchen entrance to listen better.

He peeks through the door, WE SEE everything from his voyeuristic angle:

Mom, Dad and Dr. Horn all sitting at the kitchen table.

DR. HORN

Each treatment is tailored to the patient. And Eli has maybe the most advanced case I've come across yet. His reactions are going to be unpredictable. We'll have to manage him one step at a time.

DAD

And what if you can't manage him. What happens then?

Mom shifts uncomfortably. She doesn't like where this line of conversation is headed. Dad knows it.

DAD (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, honey, but we need to talk about this.

Mom gets stern.

MOM

No. We don't. Because Dr. Horn, you can manage it. Right?

DR. HORN

Yes.

Dr. Horn absently glances over towards Eli's direction and he darts behind the wall.

Eli waits a tense beat until he hears the conversation continue. She must not have seen him. He peeks over again.

DR. HORN (CONT'D)

And the most important thing you two can do is be calm around him. He's going to take his cues from the two of you, and if he senses dissention, it's going to make my job harder.

Dad takes a breath, nods his head. He holds Mom's hand. Gives his best facsimile of a happy smile.

DAD

Fair enough. I'll keep it together.

Suddenly, Mom breaks down, starts sobbing. Dad holds her.

DAD (CONT'D)
Everything's okay. It's going to be
okay.

Eli watches on, his face steeled but his eyes processing.

INT. ELI'S ROOM - NIGHT

Eli quietly shuts the door to his room so he isn't heard. He lies down on his bed.

He picks up his iPad and looks at the home screen. The background is a FAMILY PHOTO taken from when Eli was just a baby: Baby Eli, Mom and Dad, even Prince The Dog, posing, looking happy. Nobody with any clue that life would throw them such a curveball.

Eli begins to tear up...

...But he has no clue the horrific events unfolding just beneath him...

FROM THE BOTTOM OF THE FRAME, and without a decibel of sound, THREE GHOSTS, gaunt and horrific, slither their way towards Eli's bed on their bellies. One of them is a BALD MAN, the other is THE LONG HAIREd WOMAN (from earlier) and the final ghost is an ELDERLY GAUNT MAN.

Eli stares at the picture, his mind someplace else...

The Ghosts slither underneath Eli's bed and disappear.

Suddenly, there's a BUMP underneath Eli's bed. It startles him. His pulse begins to race. He bends over the bed, looks down, but it's too dark to see anything.

He uses the iPad next to him like a flashlight and with bated breath, peers underneath his bed.

There's nothing there. The light shines clear through to the other side. Eli lifts himself back up onto the bed, still spooked, still unsure.

The bed shudders hard. Eli clamps down onto the comforter. The iPad falls to the floor, flashlight pointing up.

CLOSE ON: The legs of the bed frame. They lift straight off the ground.

Eli feels it, holds onto the comforter as if it provides some sort of stability. The bed rises further up: six inches off the ground...a foot...a foot and half...

Eli knows it's time to move. He focuses in on the door - his exit. Leaps off the bed and races for the door.

He swings the door wide and standing before him is the YOUNG BOY. The same boy we caught a glimpse of entering the computer room, but now we see him in full view. He's no older than Eli, his stringy blonde hair hangs off the Dead Boy's face, which is locked in a pained expression.

Eli startles so bad he falls to the floor. The Dead Boy advances on him, Eli scrambles backwards.

The Dead Boy keeps coming, his eyes little black abysses burrowed into a colorless face. Eli keeps moving back when suddenly The Dead Boy stops, looks up.

Eli realizes with a sinking feeling what The Dead Boy is looking at...the bed floats a few feet above his head.

There's not even a second for Eli to move out of the way before the bed comes crashing to the floor.

Silence. The room is still, no ghosts, no movement whatsoever. *Is Eli a goner...?*

No. UNDERNEATH THE BED we find Eli, lying flat on his back, the bottom of the bed frame mere inches away from his nose.

He turns to look -- one of the frame's legs landed on top of his iPad, smashing the screen but giving Eli the life saving inches he needed.

Eli breathes for a beat, gathers himself, and notices something directly above him...

Etched into a wooden slat above him is a crudely written number: 5-1-6-6...

INT. ELI'S ROOM - DAY

Eli stares out the window in deep thought. He hasn't slept.

The door opens...

MOM

Eli, honey, time to wake up for...

(then, surprised)

Oh, you're already up.

She sees Eli's broken iPad underneath the bedframe leg.

MOM (CONT'D)

What in the...?

She removes the smashed iPad from under the bedframe.

MOM (CONT'D)

Eli, what in the world did you do?

ELI

It was...

Eli trails off, holds a beat, debating whether or not to tell her the truth. Then:

ELI (CONT'D)

...an accident.

Mom's not buying it.

MOM

I know you're upset, honey, but destroying your stuff isn't the way to express it. This isn't going to be easy to replace right now.

(then)

Come on, it's time to see Dr. Horn.

INT. OUTSIDE DR. HORN'S WING - DAY

CLOSE ON: The keypad above Dr. Horn's doorhandle. The red light above it indicates it's locked.

Eli watches Dr. Horn's fingers tap the keypad. An idea clicks in his head. Although he can't be totally sure from his angle, it damn sure looks like her fingers hit 5-1-6-6.

The red light turns to green and Dr. Horn opens the door.

DR. HORN

Come in.

INT. EXAM ROOM - DAY

We're in the midst of another gene treatment, this one looks as painful as the first. Eli's on the medical bench, entire body locked up in excruciating pain.

Dad holds onto his hand, talking him through it.

DAD

...It's okay. You're okay...

Mom's holding back her tears as she watches her son writhe.

Dr. Horn stands beside Eli, empty syringe in her hand, watching him with interest, like one might look at a lab rat.

HALEY (O.S.)
I couldn't find nothin' on her.

INT. ELI'S ROOM - WINDOW - NIGHT

HALEY
There was a bunch of other Dr. Horns but none of 'em was yours. You'd think if she was so well known, there'd be something about her on the internet.

Eli and Haley are at the window again. His face is pale and his cheeks sunken, like he's turning into a ghost himself.

There's a large red sack next to Haley.

ELI
Thanks for checking.

HALEY
How did your parents find out about her?

ELI
She called *us*.

Eli and Haley let that sink in a moment before Eli continues:

ELI (CONT'D)
I think I figured out what those numbers hidden under my bed are. It's a code.

HALEY
To what?

ELI
Dr. Horn's wing.

Haley ponders the sentiment, then:

HALEY
Okay, say it is. What you gonna do about it?

ELI
I'm going to see if it works. Tonight, after everyone goes to sleep.

HALEY

Good thing I brought this then.

Without missing a beat, Haley undoes the drawstring on the large red sack and turns it upside down. Lots of metal poles and red fabric fall onto the grass: tent making materials.

She starts rifling through it.

ELI

What are you doing?

HALEY

What's it look like? I'm setting up my tent. You expect me to sleep under the stars tonight? I tried that once, mosquitos nearly sucked me dry.

(then, struggling)

Dang it, can't see nothin' out here in this moonlight.

As Eli watches her struggle with her tent, and realizing she means to stay by his side, a smile creeps onto his face.

INT. ELI'S ROOM - NIGHT - LATER

Eli's spread his comforter on the floor and is sitting on it. His back's against the window, and he looks over at the clock: 12:30am. Time to go.

Haley's red tent is fully set up now, the opening flush against the window. Eli looks out at her, she's fast asleep.

He debates for a beat, then knocks on the window to wake her. She bolts up, surprised.

HALEY

I'm awake!

ELI

I'm going.

Haley rubs the sleep out of her eyes, gets serious as Eli stands to leave.

HALEY

Don't get caught.

INT. STAIRCASE - NIGHT

It's dark on the staircase, Eli uses a flashlight to see.

He creeps up the stairs, careful not to make too much noise.

INT. THIRD FLOOR HALLWAY/OUTSIDE DR. HORN'S WING - NIGHT

He reaches the top of the staircase. Even darker here.

Eli finds Dr. Horn's door with the light, moves towards it.

He takes a deep breath, hovers over the keypad. If the code is right, this changes everything.

He enters the code slowly: 5...1...6...6. The split second before the light goes from red to green feels like an eternity. But the code works, the surprise shows on his face.

The door audibly unlocks - loud in the silence. Eli freezes.

Now what? Eli hesitates a beat, does he dare enter? Yes. He gently pulls open the door and enters Dr. Horn's Wing.

INT. INSIDE DR. HORN'S WING - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Eli very quietly shuts the door. He looks around.

He shines the light into the library, nothing in there but a lot of bookshelves.

Dr. Horn's room is shut, but the Exam Room door is open.

Eli holds here for a moment, shines the flashlight on Dr. Horn's room, wonders if Dr. Horn might still be awake inside. It's too late for that now though, he's already here.

He enters the patient's room, and shuts the door behind him.

WE HOLD on Dr. Horn's door. From beneath the door frame WE SEE a light turn on.

INT. EXAM ROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Eli shines the flashlight around the room. Although we've seen it before, it's menacing in the darkness.

There's a medical cabinet close by, Eli opens it. There's the usual first aid supplies, various medical instruments, some pill bottles, but nothing that would help Eli.

Finally, at the far end of the room, Eli reaches Dr. Horn's desk. He scans the flashlight over it.

Time to check the drawers.

He tries the top two smaller drawers of the desk but there's nothing there but various office materials.

He tries the larger left bottom drawer. It's empty.

Finally, Eli tries the last drawer, but when he pulls on it, it won't open. He tries again, still nothing.

He shines his flashlight on the side of the drawer and discovers a lock.

Eli scans the surface of the desk with the flashlight, searching for the key. It's not there, and Dr. Horn wouldn't be foolish enough to leave it anywhere Eli could get to it.

But something inside a pen container reflects the light of Eli's flashlight. It's a letter opener. He removes it, examines the tip, the wheels in his head spinning.

He examines the lock again. It's cheap, came with the desk and made to fit one of those thin metal keys.

Eli takes the letter opener and inserts it slowly into the keyhole until it stops. He tries to twist, but nothing happens. He readjusts the letter opener, pulling it out slightly and tries again.

This time, wouldn't you know it, the lock gives.

He tries the drawer and it opens smoothly. Eli smiles, quite pleased with himself.

Inside the drawer is a hanging file cabinet. He pulls out the first file. It's a manila folder with his name written on it.

He opens the folder, flips through it. Lots of handwritten notes, most of them written in doctor's chicken-scratch. It's impossible to read, except for the headings, which can be made out clearly.

ELI
(reading)
Treatment One....Treatment
2....Treatment 3...

He reaches the end, and the last page contains a typed document listing Eli's specs: hair, weight, eye color, etc. There's a small photo of him stapled to the corner.

Eli goes back into the drawer for more, but Eli's folder is the only thing there.

ELI (CONT'D)
Where are the rest of them?

There's a strange noise from the other side of the room. Eli whirls around, shines his flashlight at the source. There's nothing there. Eli's about to turn back around when...

A HAND REACHES UP FROM THE OPEN DRAWER AND GRABS HIM! Eli SCREAMS, his whole body lurches forward off balance, falls into the open drawer.

Something beneath his hand shifts inside the drawer and Eli hits something solid. He pulls his hand out from the drawer and gathers himself. There's no one else there.

He looks back inside the drawer and realizes the drawer had a false bottom. He moves the false bottom away to reveal another stack of folders.

Eli pulls the stack out and lays them on the desk. The top folder is labeled "PERRY HENDERSON." He opens it up. More illegible chicken scratch except for the headings:

ELI (CONT'D)
(reading)
Treatment One...Treatment Four.

He flips to the last page, the specs page.

His eyes go wide...

The photo is Perry. And Perry is The Dead Boy that's been haunting him.

He quickly flips through the other folders. WE SEE THE PICTURES OF THE PATIENTS, three of them have turned up as ghosts so far: HELENA (The Long Haired Woman), VICTOR (The Elderly Man) and HARRIS (The Bald Man).

There's a noise from outside the door. But this isn't the noise of a ghost -- it's the sound of Dr. Horn opening her bedroom door! She must've heard Eli scream.

It startles Eli. The folders slip out of his hands, spill onto the floor.

WE HEAR her FOOTSTEPS coming towards the room - THUMP, THUMP, THUMP, THUMP...

Eli scrambles into action. He rushes to pick up the folders.

...THUMP, THUMP, THUMP, THUMP...

He tries to remember which order they were in. Arranges them.

...THUMP, THUMP, THUMP, THUMP...

Eli drops the folders into the desk. Shuts the drawer quietly but quickly. Looks for a hiding spot.

...THUMP, THUMP, THUMP. THE FOOTSTEPS STOP. THE DOOR OPENS.

Eli ducks under the desk, the closest place, and only, place to hide. Clicks off his flashlight nick of time. He HEARS the door creak open, Dr. Horn sticking her head in:

DR. HORN (O.S.)
Hello? Anybody in here?

Dr. Horn enters the room, turns on the lights.

DR. HORN (CONT'D)
Eli, is that you?

From her perspective, the room looks empty, just as she left it. She enters the room anyway.

Eli squeezes himself into the corner as tightly as possible...

And realizes the letter opener still sticks out of the cheap drawer lock. Dr. Horn moves around the room slowly, snooping, but she hasn't noticed the drawer yet.

DR. HORN (CONT'D)
If you're in here, Eli, it's okay.
I won't be mad.

Eli very deliberately grabs onto the letter opener and twists to lock it. He barely snatches the letter opener back in time before Dr. Horn is at the desk.

Without bending over, she reaches down and tries that very drawer. Eli tenses, certain she's going to spot him...

But the drawer doesn't budge, apparently satisfying Dr. Horn. She turns to leave without more fuss and turns the light off on her way out.

She leaves Eli, panting in the darkness underneath her desk.

ELI (V.O)
The Ghosts are her patients.

INT. ELI'S ROOM - NIGHT

Eli paces anxiously around the room. Haley listens rapturously.

ELI

And I think The Ghosts have been trying to tell me that since the beginning.

HALEY

So what you're telling me is she ain't cured anybody. She...killed 'em?

Eli nods.

ELI

The treatments. I saw Perry had four of them. Same with the others. That must mean the fourth one kills.

HALEY

And how many you had?

Eli holds a beat, then:

ELI

Today was my third.

HALEY

Oh my God! Eli, you gotta get out of there. It ain't safe anymore.

Eli shushes her.

ELI

I don't think it ever was. But still...I can't yet.

HALEY

What do you mean, "*you can't?!*"

ELI

It's not exactly like I can just walk out of here, Haley. Think about it.

HALEY

I ain't the one that's not thinking! Tell your folks what you just told me, they'd have you outta here faster than a spooked deer.

Eli snaps angrily at her.

ELI

I already tried that, remember?!

Haley puts her hands on her hips: *don't you dare.*

HALEY

Don't you yell at me, Eli. I'm trying to help you. And I can't do nothin' from out here behind this dumb window except talk some sense into you, because right now you ain't got none.

Haley's words affect him, he tries to relax.

ELI

I'm sorry.

HALEY

Sure are.

ELI

But look at it like this. My parents trust Dr. Horn, and they don't believe me about The Ghosts. Even if I told them what I told you, Dr. Horn could just deny it. They wouldn't listen to me. It might even make things worse.

Haley takes a moment to calm down herself. Eli's reasoning does make sense. She sighs, defeated.

Eli moves towards the window, gets as close as he can, no longer frightened by the potential danger outside, and looks Haley dead in the eyes.

ELI (CONT'D)

But if I had proof, something I can show my parents that Dr. Horn can't deny, then they'd have to believe me.

HALEY

And how you plan on finding that?

Eli thinks, doesn't immediately know the answer. Then:

ELI

The Ghosts. I wait for them to come back, and hopefully they'll give me another sign.

HALEY

Hopefully? Wait? That don't sound like much of a plan.

ELI
For now it's all I got.

HALEY
How long can you wait.

ELI
I have three days until the fourth
treatment.

Haley shakes her head in disbelief.

HALEY
I guess I can't stop you anyway,
huh?

ELI
(shakes his head)
Nope.
(then)
I can do this. I know it.

Haley puts her open hand on the glass, Eli does the same.
It's the closest they can get to any physicality.

HALEY
Dammit, Eli. You better be careful.
And if you wind up a ghost, don't
go haunting me.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Eli, Mom and Dad eat breakfast. Eli's got big bags under his eyes from not sleeping, and he still looks sickly and pale. He's not touching his food.

DAD
Eat up, champ. You need your
strength.

ELI
I'm not hungry.

Mom and Dad shoot each other concerned glances, as they're wont to do.

DAD
Is everything okay, Eli? You're not
acting much like yourself these
days.

Eli looks up from his food, at Mom and Dad, their worried faces looking back at him. He wants to tell them what he knows, but he can't. Not yet. He tries another strategy:

ELI

Can we just leave here? We can go back to St. Louis.

Mom and Dad look shocked.

MOM

Eli, not this again.

ELI

Please?

DAD

Maybe you should go see Dr. Horn--

ELI

(yells)

No!

The sudden outburst surprises Mom and Dad. Eli reels it back.

ELI (CONT'D)

I mean, I'll eat.

Eli unceremoniously spoons the grey oatmeal into his mouth, chokes it down.

INT. ELI'S ROOM - AFTERNOON

The drapes are drawn and the light is off, so the room is totally dark. Eli sits crosslegged in bed, stares blankly into the darkness of the room, his eyes glazed over, lost.

He's waiting for a sign from The Ghosts.

The door opens up, Eli comes out of his trance, hoping it's a ghost. But it's only Mom.

MOM

Eli?

She peeks her head in and looks at Eli with concern.

MOM (CONT'D)

You've been in here all day. Why don't you come out with your father and I?

ELI
I'm busy.

MOM
Well, don't you want the lights on?

She flips on the light and Eli recoils from the brightness. Snaps at Mom like a hissing cat.

ELI
No! Shut them off! Go away!

MOM
Eli--

ELI
I said I'm busy!

Mom shuts the lights off. Eli turns back towards the darkness once again, status quo again.

MOM
Remember Eli, we're here for you if
you need us.

But Eli doesn't respond. He just stares into the darkness.

CUT TO: A clock. It reads 3:00am.

Eli's asleep where he was sitting, day clothes still on.
There's a noise from somewhere in the room. Eli jolts awake.

He looks around the room, there's no one there.

He blinks the sleep out of his eyes. He clicks on his flashlight. Shines it around.

ELI
(to himself)
It's okay. They don't want to hurt
you.

Another noise, from above him. Eli whips the light towards the sound and illuminates A GHOST crawling on the ceiling!

Eli gasps, startled. His hand shakes with fear, but he doesn't run. The Ghost retreats from the flashlight beam like a cockroach, scuttles into the closet. The door SLAMS shut.

He keeps the quivering beam trained on the closet door, waits for something to happen...but nothing does. He's going to have to open the door himself.

Eli takes a few deep breathes, a futile attempt to calm himself, and goes to the door.

ELI (CONT'D)

Hello?

There's no response, as if Eli ever expected one. With a shaky hand, he places his hand on the doorknob, holds it there, still unsure. He tenses up his hand, ready to swing the door wide when...

SKREEK! The sound of something heavy moving across the floor behind him.

Eli whirls around, shines the flashlight onto the bookcase. It's been moved, about six inches away from the wall. Eli steps towards it...

SKREEK! It MOVES again, this time in full view of Eli. He jumps back, surprised. The bookcase begins to rattle.

It's a heavy wooden bookcase, the power with which it shakes is intimidating. Books begin to fall from the shelves. Eli has to stand back, the bookcase rocks more violently now.

The shelves are empty of books now, the last ones crashing to the floor, and with one final shutter it tips over. It lands facedown with a HEARTY THUD.

Eli doesn't know what to do at first, waits for something more to happen. Nothing does. He shines his light over the fallen bookcase and realizes:

ELI (CONT'D)

Is this...are you trying to tell me something?

He checks everywhere, on the wall where the bookcase used to be, on the back of the bookcase, even at the books that fell. Nothing seems to give him any leads.

ELI (CONT'D)

There's nothing here.
(angrier)
There's nothing here!

Eli absentmindedly shines his flashlight across the room and standing right next to him is Perry, The Dead-Boy Ghost! Dr. Horn's other now deceased patients are standing behind Perry.

Eli screams, falls backwards. The Ghosts stand still, but all in unison they point their fingers towards the ceiling.

Something GRABS him! He SCREAMS, swings his arms wildly. He CONNECTS with something solid. There's an AUDIBLE GASP in front of him in the darkness. The lights go on.

And all of a sudden Eli's looking at his own Mom, hunched over in pain, holding her lip.

Eli's aghast, stunned.

ELI (CONT'D)
Mom? I...I didn't...

Mom rubs her cheek, in shock more than anything. Dad angrily steps forward.

DAD
Eli, what did you do...?

Eli braces for an explosion of anger, but Mom holds up her hand, stops Dad. She isn't mad.

She's worried.

MOM
It's okay. It was an accident.

She bends down again, looks into Eli's eyes, like she's trying to peer inside him. It's the same thing she did when he complained about the cracked window.

Eli has a far away look in his blue eyes.

MOM (CONT'D)
I want you to see Dr. Horn.

Mom grabs his hand, and it sends a shot of adrenaline through Eli that brings him back to his senses.

ELI
No! I don't need to see her I'm fine!

INT. EXAM ROOM - NIGHT

Eli stands in the corner, behind a worried looking Mom and Dad. He uses them as a barrier between himself and Dr. Horn.

MOM
He's not acting like himself.

ELI
I'm sorry, I'm just tired. Can't I just go back to bed?

DR. HORN
Let's have a look at you.

Dr. Horn pulls out a pen light and bends down...

ELI
No!

He forces Mom and Dad closer together, too scared to even let Dr. Horn look at him.

DAD
What's gotten into you, Eli? She just wants to have a look, that's all.

Eli's shaking he's so scared. Dr. Horn backs off.

DR. HORN
Eli's right. Sleep is the answer here. Go ahead, get some rest. We can start again tomorrow.

INT. INSIDE DR. HORN'S WING - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Eli exits the exam room, Mom and Dad by his side. They look worn out, concerned, over-stressed. Eli looks worse.

As he turns to leave, his eyes lock onto something that gives him pause...

THE LIBRARY. Eli doesn't quite know why at first, but he can't stop staring into it. Then it hits him.

All those bookcases. *Is this the sign The Ghosts were giving him?*

CUT TO:

A KEYPAD

Fingers punch in the code: 5-1-6-6. The light turns green.

INT. OUTSIDE DR. HORN'S WING - NIGHT

Eli looks around, making sure the coast is clear. Enters Dr. Horn's Wing.

INT. LIBRARY - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Eli slips into the library, constantly watching his back. There's no door so there's no way of concealing what he's doing.

He immediately goes to THE OAK DESK located in the corner of the room. He had luck with the last desk he tried, so why not again here.

There's nothing on the surface of the desk except a desk lamp and some meaningless knickknacks. He tries the drawers: one...two...three...four...they're all empty, they're all unlocked, and there's no false bottoms. There are no secrets to be found here.

He turns his attention to the bookcases. He's growing antsy. He doesn't know what to look for, and time is of the essence.

The door to the exam room is still shut, so his parents haven't left yet. But they could open it up any second.

Eli walks the perimeter of the bookcases, scanning the books, looking for anything unusual. But it's all just old medical texts and publications.

He balls his hands up into fists, his unease turning into frustration. He moves along the bookcases faster, searching, searching.

He talks to himself, but also perhaps, The Ghosts.

ELI

(angry)

What am I supposed to find?

Maybe it's the bookcases themselves! He goes to the one on the end and examines it with a close eye. He looks at the bottom, the top, he tries to pry the bookcase away from the wall, but it's too heavy.

ELI (CONT'D)

Come on. There has to be something.

Eli's downright manic at this point, exasperated. He starts to pull at the books on the shelves, perhaps hoping to find some super villan-esque revolving door.

He finds nothing. He starts tearing down the books off their shelves, no longer caring about making noise, or a mess, or being caught.

He yells:

ELI (CONT'D)
You were supposed to help me!

FROM BEHIND HIM:

DAD
You got something against books,
champ?

Eli looks up to see Mom, Dad and Dr. Horn all staring at him from the hallway.

Dr. Horn's face is emotionless, but Eli knows. He's caught.

DR. HORN
Bring Eli to my exam room please.
I'll be administering the fourth
treatment. Tonight.

INT. DR. HORN'S WING HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

ELI
No! Put me down!

Dad carries a flailing Eli over his shoulder.

DAD
Stop it, Eli. Calm down.

ELI
Don't let her do it! Stop!

As Eli tries to fight his way from entering The Exam Room, he sees something that suddenly stops him in his tracks.

It's DR. HORN'S BEDROOM DOOR, it's open just enough to see inside.

And in the brief moment before Dad strong-arms him into The Exam Room, he sees something...

THE GHOST BOY (Perry), inside Dr. Horn's room, pointing an object Eli can't see. It's a message.

Eli understands. He was looking in the wrong room.

INT. EXAM ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Dr. Horn is busily filling the syringe with liquid. She doesn't look at them.

DR. HORN
On the bench please.

Eli kicks back into high gear. Struggles with all his might

ELI
Let me go!

DAD
Look, I know the treatments hurt,
but you can get through this.

ELI
No! Let me go!

Eli flails with everything he's got. Dad can barely hold on.

DAD
Jesus, Eli, relax.

All Mom can do is stand by and watch in horror as the scene unfolds around her. Dr. Horn can't give Eli the injection until he's better restrained.

DR. HORN
Hold him still and I can give him
the injection there.

DAD
I'm trying!

MOM
Maybe we should wait...

DR. HORN
No. It must be now.

Dad gets a better grasp. He uses all his strength to hold Eli down, and finally he's successful. Eli's lost the fight.

ELI
(out of breath)
No...please...she wants to...kill
me!

But it's too late. Dr. Horn's inches away from his arm with the needle. Eli has to do something, it's now or never.

He does the only thing he can. He bites down hard onto Dad's arm. Dad SCREAMS in surprise and pain, draws back, freeing Eli.

Eli lunges forward, **SHOVES** Dr. Horn with all his strength. Dr. Horn careens backwards, smashes into her desk. The syringe flies out of her hands, breaks.

More importantly, **THE ENTIRE BOTTLE** of the clear liquid falls off the desk and shatters on the floor.

Eli stands in the room, his adrenaline pumping, panting like a wild animal.

CUT TO:

INT. ELI'S ROOM - DUSK

SLAM. Dr. Horn shuts the door to Eli's room.

Eli puts his ear to the door, **EAVESDROPS** on the conversation between Mom and Dr. Horn outside his door.

MOM (O.S.)

Dr. Horn, I don't know what to say.

Mom sounds past the point of exhaustion. Dr. Horn, on the other hand, remains eerily clinical.

DR. HORN (O.S.)

I have to go into town to replace what Eli...

(stops, corrects herself)

...what was destroyed.

Eli's eyes widen. *Did Dr. Horn just say she was leaving?*

MOM (O.S.)

Is there anything we can do while you're away?

DR. HORN (O.S.)

Keep an eye on Eli. I'm not sure how he got into my wing in the first place...

Eli smiles.

DR. HORN (O.S.) (CONT'D)

...but I changed the code on the door just in case.

Eli's smile vanishes.

DR. HORN (O.S.) (CONT'D)

I'll be back tomorrow morning at the latest.

The conversation continues but Eli doesn't need to hear it anymore. His whole plan, dashed to pieces with the change of four simple numbers.

HALEY (V.O)
There's gotta be something you can do.

INT. ELI'S ROOM - NIGHT - LATER

Eli lies in bed, staring at the locked door, his face shrouded in darkness. Haley stands at the window, trying to be productive.

Eli doesn't face her when he answers.

ELI
Haley, forget it. She changed the code. There's nothing I can do.

HALEY
Think, Eli.

ELI
I can't think. I just want to go to sleep.

HALEY
Don't say that. We're so close--

Eli sits up, turns to Haley aggressively.

ELI
We?! What do you mean, we?!

Eli's never been this aggressive with Haley. He looks crazed, threatening; it spooks Haley.

HALEY
I just meant---

Eli stands, makes his way menacingly towards the window.

ELI
I'm going to die in here, Haley. Just like all the others. And you're going to still be out there catching tadpoles.

HALEY
You're not going to die, Eli, don't say that.

Haley's trying to fight back tears at this point. Eli doesn't care, he's lost all semblance of self control.

ELI

Why don't you just get out of here?
I never asked for your help, and I
don't want it now. So just leave me
alone and let me DIE!

Haley bursts into tears. She turns her back on Eli so he can't see her cry.

And suddenly, Eli sees not a tough country girl before him, but a sad, scared kid, like himself. Which is probably what she's been all along.

It sucks his anger away like a vacuum.

ELI (CONT'D)

Haley, I'm sorry. Don't cry. I
didn't mean it. I don't know why I
said that stuff. It's like I don't
even feel like myself anymore.

After a few more sniffles, Haley manages to get herself back together. She turns to face him.

HALEY

I wasn't crying. A bug flew in my
eye.

Even with all that's happening, Eli manages a brief smile, Haley back to her old self again.

ELI

What should I do, Haley? I can't be
in this house another second.

HALEY

Well, you were able to get in her
wing before.

ELI

Yeah, but that's because The Ghosts
helped---

Eli cuts himself off. Whatever he realized, Haley did too.

HALEY

It's worth a try.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Eli creeps through the hallway. It's dark, and he doesn't dare turn on the light. He's got his flashlight with him.

Listens for the sound of Mom and Dad. It's all quiet. The coast is clear.

He heads for the stairs.

INT. HALLWAY/KITCHEN - NIGHT

The kitchen light is on and Eli stops beside the doorway. If someone's in there, he might be spotted. He peers inside...

And there's DAD, sitting at the kitchen table, staying watch. But, something looks odd. Eli realizes, HE'S ASLEEP.

As long as Eli's quiet enough, he should be able to get past Dad no problem.

He moves.

INT. OUTSIDE MOM AND DAD'S BEDROOM - SECOND FLOOR - NIGHT

Eli very quietly puts his ear up to Mom and Dad's door, listens in. No sounds from within. Mom must be asleep too.

He makes his move up to Dr. Horn's wing.

INT. THIRD FLOOR HALLWAY/OUTSIDE DR. HORN'S WING - NIGHT

The RED LIGHT on the keypad stands out in the darkness.

Eli stands at the door. He doesn't really know how to begin. He looks towards the ceiling, like that'll help.

ELI

Um, it's Eli. I need your help. I need you to unlock the door.

Eli stares at the red light, waiting for it to go green. It doesn't. Eli tries again, more conviction this time:

ELI (CONT'D)

I don't know if you can hear me, but I really, really need you to open the door.

Still just red light. Eli closes his eyes, one final try.

ELI (CONT'D)

If I can't get in here, I'm going to die. So please, I'm going to open my eyes, and please let this light be green. This is my last chance. Please--

THE GHOST BOY (Perry) passes in FRONT OF FRAME, practically a blur. Eli doesn't see it because his eyes are closed.

But he opens them now...

And the light is green. Eli could cry he's so happy. But there's no time for that. He quietly opens the door...

The Ghost Boy (Perry), stands motionless on the other end.

Eli doesn't move, fear and excitement coursing through him. After all, there's a dead child standing before him, friendly or not.

INT. DR. HORN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Dr. Horn's room is tiny, even in the darkness Eli can tell.

He stands in the door, shines the flashlight around: the place is bare, frightfully so. Like someplace a squatter might sleep, or a crazy person.

In place of a bed there's an army style cot, nothing more than a sheet for a blanket. THE HOLY BIBLE lies on top.

And so far, that's the only thing in the place...until Eli shines his light on a lone bookcase against a wall.

The bookcase is completely empty, and Eli examines it more closely with the light. He uses the underside of an empty shelf to lift the entire thing. It's heavy but not bad, and he moves the bookcase a few feet over to the right.

When he steps away, what he sees shocks him...

Behind the bookcase is a dark hallway, a black abyss that begs to be left alone, to turn away from and never look back.

A Ghost (Perry, again) stands at the other end of the secret hallway, in front of a door, a big red symbol painted on it we can't make out. It doesn't startle Eli this time.

INT. DARK HALLWAY - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Eli enters the hallway, towards the door. When he gets close enough he can make out the symbol. It's a snake, coiled in a circle, devouring it's own tail. The technical term is *OUROBORUS*, but Eli doesn't know that.

Eli's adrenaline skyrockets. This is it, this is what he was meant to find.

His heart is beating out of his chest. The sound of his quickened breaths echo in the hallway. Eli pushes the door open slightly; speckles of dust dance about in the beam of his flashlight from within.

He steps backwards, frightened, covers up his face with his hands, terrified to breath. He looks back out towards the hallway he came from; going out now would mean failure and certain death. He came too far to quit now.

After a contemplative beat, Eli pushes his t-shirt over the bridge of his nose. It's no hazmat suit, but it'll have to do. He opens the door the rest of the way and enters.

INT. OUROBORUS ROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

The room's nothing but a big concrete square. There's a bare lightbulb hanging in the center of the room, Eli clicks it on. It casts an ugly yellow glow.

Eli doesn't need the flashlight anymore so he turns it off. Ahead of him, painted on the floor, is a A LARGE OUROBORUS. Within the circle is a OLD WOODEN CHEST, about six feet long and four feet wide.

ELI

Is this it? Is this what you wanted
me to find?

At first, it appears as though Eli is speaking to himself. But Eli turns his head, THE CAMERA PANS WITH HIM, to REVEAL Perry standing next to him.

Eli steps into the circle of The Ouroborus, looks back and Perry is gone.

The chest is covered in dust. Eli grabs the handle with an outstretched hand, careful not get too close. He opens slowly, so as not to disturb the particles.

CRRRRREEEAAK. The sound the old chest opening fills the room. It's open now, but Eli can't see inside from where he is.

He gets closer, leans in. It's still too dark to see, the yellow light not bright enough.

He clicks on his flashlight, and points it inside the chest...and the DEAD FACE of Perry stares back at him. Not as a ghost, but as a corpse - rotting, mouth agape. The eyes have long since rotted out, leaving empty black sockets.

Beneath Perry's body are the bodies of the other patients, most of them just skeletons by this point.

There's a NOISE behind Eli. It must be Perry. Eli turns...

But it isn't Perry. Someone's running after him. It's got to be Dr. Horn, but we can't make out her face.

ELI (CONT'D)

I got you Dr. Horn! I---

Eli aims the flashlight at Dr. Horn's face...and WE SEE it isn't Dr. Horn at all...

ELI (CONT'D)

Mom?

Almost impossibly, it's MOM who's running towards him. Throws Eli into confusion. *What's she doing up here?*

ELI (CONT'D)

Mom...what are you...?

Mom stops at the door. Stares at Eli with a TEAR IN HER EYE.

MOM

I'm sorry, Eli.

She SLAMS the Ouroboros Door shut on Eli! Eli races towards the door tries to open it from the inside.

ELI

Mom, it's me! There's dust everywhere, open the---

There's an audible THUNK as the door locks from outside. Eli's eyes go wide: *what the hell is going on?*

He tugs at the door with all his might, pounds on it. The shirt falls from his face, leaving him completely unprotected. With each panicked breath he inhales the dust billowing off the door and permeating the air.

ELI (CONT'D)

Please, let me out! Mom, please!

His breathing becomes raspy, his throat closes up.

ELI (CONT'D)
(gasping)
Mom...help...can't...breath...

FROM OUTSIDE: Eli HEARS more footsteps. Dad.

DAD (O.S.)
Linda, what...?

Eli uses the rest of his energy to plead with Dad, praying he will help him.

ELI
Dad! Help...I'm...trapped...dust...

But there's no help. Instead he HEARS:

MOM (O.S.)
He knows.

DAD (O.S.)
No. How?!

Eli can't bang any longer. His vision begins to blur. He slumps to the ground. *What in the hell is happening?*

He HEARS Mom and Dad's footsteps heading away, leading out towards Dr. Horn's room.

MOM (O.S.)
Call Dr. Horn. Tell her to get back here. Immediately.

The SOUND Dr. Horn's bedroom door closing. Then, nothing.

All Eli can hear are his own shallow, raspy breaths.

He faints.

CUT TO:

A BACKYARD SOMEWHERE

WE'RE IN ELI'S POV AGAIN. THE DOG NIGHTMARE.

The SLEEPING DOG is ahead of us...We WALK towards it...It looks at us, SNAPS...

But instead of waking up now, we GRAB the dog by the scuff, subdue it...

INT. OUROBORUS ROOM - LATER

Eli comes to on the floor, his face directly on the dust covered cement. He picks his head up, and there's a large streak of dust covering the side of his face.

Yet, he can breathe just fine. He stands up, inhales deeply. No problems at all. He tries the door again, still locked.

He looks around again, this room that earlier was his escape plan has now become his cage.

FROM OUTSIDE, he HEARS the bookcase door opening, footsteps. His breath quickens, he creates distance between himself and the door.

The footsteps get louder until they stop outside his door. A BEAT, then:

DR. HORN (O.S.)

Eli? Can you hear me? It's Dr. Horn.

She waits for his response, but he remains silent. Her voice clinical now, monotone.

DR. HORN (O.S.) (CONT'D)

I have your parents here. They want to speak to you.

MOM (O.S.)

Hi, honey.

Mom's wavering voice comes through the door. Eli winces, as if the voice were a palpable thing, capable of physical harm.

ELI

Mom...Why are you doing this?

There's a LONG BEAT, then:

MOM (O.S.)

Because you're sick.

ELI

But...I'm not sick, am I?

More silence from outside the room. Eli stands at attention now, his fear diminishing, but his rage building.

ELI (CONT'D)

I've never been sick. You lied to me.

MOM (O.S.)
We had to honey. It--

Eli cuts her off. He moves closer to the door, his anger growing with the ever increasing pulse of his heart.

ELI
Everything you told me was a lie.
Why did you lie to me? Why did you
take me away from my friends and
lock me up in here? Why did you
make me think I was going to die?!
Why are you trying to KILL ME?!

Eli grabs onto the door in a furious rage and pulls with all his might. It rattles mightily but it's not going to open.

ELI (CONT'D)
LET ME OUT OF HERE! I HATE YOU! WHY
ARE YOU DOING THIS TO ME? LET ME
GO! LET ME GO!

He's so loud he doesn't hear the adults retreating back to the library. He does however, hear the closing of the bookcase.

INT. OUROBORUS ROOM - LATER

Eli sits with his back against the wall. He's drawing a crude picture of Haley in the dust on the floor with his finger.

ELI
I should've listened to her. I
should've just left.

He rubs the picture out with his hand.

ELI (CONT'D)
But now I'm going to end up just
like you.

Again, WE REVEAL Eli's talking to Perry, along with the rest of The Ghosts. In an odd way, they almost look like friends.

ELI (CONT'D)
Were your parents in on it too? Did
they trick you like they tricked
me?

Eli gets up, goes to the wooden chest. Opens it up.

ELI (CONT'D)

I guess you can't get me out of
here huh?

Eli looks back at Perry and The Ghosts. They're perched just around the border of the Ouroborus. Eli looks down at his feet, understands the symbol acts as some sort of boundary.

He shines his flashlight down into the chest, illuminates all those corpses. All those bones.

It gives Eli an idea.

INT. OUROBORUS ROOM - LATER

Eli nervously paces back and forth. HE HEARS the bookcase move, shuffling footsteps approaching.

He quickly opens up the chest, then hurries towards a spot on the wall near the door.

He lays down with his back against the wall, making it look like he's passed out.

The footsteps stop.

Dr. Horn's voice calls out from behind the door.

DR. HORN (O.S.)

Eli?

(beat)

Eli, are you awake in there?

(a beat)

If you're awake, answer me.

Eli doesn't move. He doesn't even open his eyes. There's a long bit of silence, then some shuffling, then finally, the THUNK of the door unlocking.

Dr. Horn sticks her head in.

DR. HORN (CONT'D)

Eli?

She spots Eli on the ground doing a swell acting job. Dr. Horn thinks for a brief moment, then fully enters the room.

She quickly goes towards Eli and reaches down to check his pulse. The moment he feels her fingers on his skin, his eyes SHOOT OPEN.

He grabs her wrist and pulls her towards him, with his other hand HE SWINGS something oblong toward her head. He connects, there's an audible THUD, and Dr. Horn stumbles backwards.

Eli rises, we see what's in his hand. It's A FEMUR BONE taken from one of Dr. Horn's victims. He goes at her again, strikes her across the face.

Dr. Horn crumbles to the ground, unconscious. Blood flows from out of her hair line and beings to pool on the ground.

Eli doesn't wait around to see if she'll get up.

INT. STAIRCASE - NIGHT

Eli bolts down the staircase as fast as he can. He's making haste, but he's noisy.

Mom opens her door, spots him.

MOM
Shit! Eli, no!

Eli doesn't look back, just keeps running.

MOM (CONT'D)
Paul, he's out! Stop him! Stop him!

Mom chases after him but her door slams shut, seemingly on its own. Eli looks back, sees Perry holding the door shut.

Eli charges ahead.

INT. FIRST FLOOR - NIGHT

Eli reaches the bottom of the steps and makes a bee-line for THE FRONT DOOR. The door unlocks (The Ghosts doing) and opens slightly.

With freedom in sight, Eli pushes himself harder, puts it into fifth gear. He reaches the door, he's almost out of there. He grabs for the handle when...

Dad grabs him from behind, wraps him up, pulls him away so that they've reversed positions. Dad now blocks his path to the door.

Eli's wild eyed, panting hard. The bone-club he holds makes him look like a caveman. Dad talks calmly, but his eyes betray that emotion.

DAD
Eli, calm down. I can't let you
leave. Drop that and we'll talk.
Okay, son?

Eli looks at the LARGE OAK ARMOIRE next to Dad. The Ghosts stand next to it, they mean to push it over.

ELI
You better look out.

Dad doesn't understand what he's talking about it.

DAD
Eli, everything's going to be---

Dad looks to his right; the armoire falls, a potential killing blow if it were to land on him. He leaps to safety as the armoire crashes to the ground.

Eli turns back the way he came. Races towards his room.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Eli breaks down the hallway. Dad's back up, chasing him.

As Eli runs, objects get swept up in his wake, come crashing down as obstacles in Dad's path.

To Dad, it looks like these things are happening on their own. But from Eli's perspective, it's The Ghosts helping him.

Eli navigates down the hallway, he can see his room. The door is closed but Perry's there. He opens the door for Eli.

INT. ELI'S ROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Eli bursts in his room. Perry slams the door shut. Eli runs straight for the window. He can see Haley's tent set up outside. But that's not his concern at the moment.

Using the momentum behind his run, Eli BASHES the window with his bone-club as hard as he can.

The window absorbs most of the hit, leaving only a small spidery dent in the plastic.

Behind him, Eli's dresser crashes to the floor, blocks the door.

Eli continues to smash the window with the heavy bone but he's making little headway.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE ELI'S ROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Dad pushes on the door but it won't budge.

DAD

Open the door, Eli. You don't understand what's happening here. Open the door!

INT. ELI'S ROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Eli keeps smashing. He's losing energy fast.

Haley unzips her tent, confused. She sees Eli struggling, quickly realizes what's happening.

HALEY

Eli!

ELI

It won't break! I can't get out!

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE ELI'S ROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Dad keeps trying the door. He puts his shoulder into it and it gives slightly.

Mom comes racing to Dad's side. She's got Dr. Horn, who's bleeding pretty badly from the head.

DAD

Jesus! Did Eli--?

DR. HORN

We cannot let him leave!

DAD

Something's blocking the door. I can't get it open.

Dr. Horn places her shoulder up against the door with Dad.

DAD (CONT'D)

3...2...1...push!

The two of them push on the door with all their might.

INT. ELI'S ROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Eli's run out of steam. The window is spidered all over, but it's not broken, and there's no way it's going to.

HALEY
 (freaked out)
 What's happening? Where have you
 been? I thought you might've---

BANG! The door slams from the outside. The dresser rocks from the force. It's not going to hold the door forever.

Eli's drops the bone on the ground, defeated.

ELI
 They're going to get in, Haley. You
 need to go before they see you.

HALEY
 I don't understand, Eli. You're
 scaring me.

ELI
 I'm not sick. I never was.
 Everything's been a lie, and my
 parents are in on it. They didn't
 bring me here to fix me, they
 brought me here to kill me.

Haley looks at Eli with big wet eyes. She's speechless.

BANG! The door slams again. This time, the dresser actually moves. Not long now.

ELI (CONT'D)
 You have to go back home, Haley.

Haley tries to give Eli her tough-girl routine. It doesn't look so tough through tears, though.

HALEY
 No, you can't just let them--

Eli's not affected.

ELI
 There's nothing we can do now. Get
 your tent and go home. If they see
 you they'll kill you too.

BANG! The door slams again, moving the dresser even further away. DAD'S HAND reaches through the space.

DAD (O.S.)
 Help me push!

Dad grips the side of the door and pushes. Seconds until they're in the room.

Haley stands her ground.

HALEY
I ain't leaving you. Maybe if they
see me, they'll stop and--

ELI
(severely)
You have to go.

HALEY
But---

ELI
I said GO!

Eli SMASHES the bone against the window as punctuation. It startles Haley, and for a moment, she's frozen. But eventually, she turns tail and grabs her tent.

She dashes away and disappears into the darkness. No trace of her to be seen.

Which is good, because suddenly Eli finds himself being lifted off his feet...

INT. EXAM ROOM - NIGHT

ELI
Let go of me!

Eli struggles against the weight of Dad as he holds him down on the medical bench. Dr. Horn finishes strapping him in.

DR. HORN
Okay, that should hold him.

Eli struggles to break free but it's no use, the straps are too tight.

DR. HORN (CONT'D)
(to Mom and Dad)
Why don't you wait for me in the library.

DAD
But, what if---

DR. HORN
Please.

Mom and Dad acquiesce and exit the room, shutting the door behind them. Dr. Horn locks the door.

Eli struggles against the straps, but he can't break free.
Dr. Horn goes to her desk, rummages around.

ELI
Don't do this. Please.
(then)
Please!

Dr. Horn ignores him, which ignites Eli's temper.

ELI (CONT'D)
You're crazy! Why are you doing
this?!

Dr. Horn stops what she's doing. Breathes out a deep sigh.
She looks more exhausted than murderous.

For the first time, she seems genuine, an odd time
considering she's getting ready to murder Eli.

DR. HORN
A lot of people have called me
crazy. And maybe I am. I honestly
thought I could cure you.

ELI
You're not trying to cure me.
You've been poisoning me just like
you did the others.

DR. HORN
Eli, there's so much you don't
know. So much you *can't* know. The
first three injections were Holy
Water and Tannis Root. I thought
perhaps on someone so young, it
might work this time. But...

She stops. Looks like she's going to cry. Composes herself
and starts again.

DR. HORN (CONT'D)
I've come to understand, Eli, that
what you have is like...rabies.
Once infected, the only way to stop
the spread is to destroy the host.

Eli continues to struggle.

ELI
I'm not sick!

Dr. Horn turns her back on Eli again, goes back to what she
was doing. We still don't see what.

DR. HORN

You are. You're sick of spirit.
It's not your fault. You weren't
given a choice. It was made for you
by your parents before you were
even born.

ELI

What are you talking about? Let me
go!

Finally, Dr. Horn turns around, AN OPEN BIBLE in one hand, A
SMALL CONTAINER OF LIQUID in the other.

But the most surprising bit, are the tears in her eyes.

DR. HORN

The children always suffer from the
sins of the parents.

She moves in closer to Eli.

DR. HORN (CONT'D)

I'll ask the lord for forgiveness,
Eli. I hope he grants it.

Her face grows cold, her eyes steeled. She GAGS Eli's mouth.

She begins to read aloud from the bible:

DR. HORN (CONT'D)

*Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your
adversary the devil prowls around
like a roaring lion, seeking
someone to devour.*

She flings the liquid from the container onto Eli in a
crossing motion. The liquid SIZZLES against Eli's skin. He
SCREAMS OUT in pain, his eyes bulging. Muffled screams from
beneath his gag.

Dr. Horn continues reading:

DR. HORN (CONT'D)

*Put on the whole armor of God, that
you may be able to stand against
the schemes of the devil. For we do
not wrestle against flesh and
blood, but against the cosmic
powers over this present darkness,
against the spiritual forces of
evil in the heavenly places.*

She flings more acidic liquid onto him. He SCREAMS OUT once more as the liquid burns into his flesh.

DR. HORN (CONT'D)
May Holy Water purify the skin...

She retreats back to her desk, the container of liquid now empty. Reaches for something else...

DR. HORN (CONT'D)
And this dagger purify the soul.

Dr. Horn turns back around. This time she carries A CRUDE LOOKING DAGGER, like something out of ancient times.

Upon seeing that, Eli manages to dredge up more strength, more energy to fight his restraints. Except...nothing.

DR. HORN (CONT'D)
*You are of your father the devil,
and your will is to do your
father's desires. Let God's hand,
by my hand, send The Devil's
servants back, back into the
sulphur lake from which they were
born.*

She raises the dagger above her head, preparing to strike. Eli's eyes go wide, abject terror in his face. This is it.

Dr. Horn closes her eyes, bends her head, appears to say something not written within the bible.

DR. HORN (CONT'D)
Grant this boy your forgiveness
lord. He knows not what he's done.

She brings the knife down, right into Eli's heart...

But her hand freezes, the knife does not pierce Eli's skin.

His right hand has broken free of the straps. He's GRIPPING onto Dr. Horn's wrist.

She can't break free of his grasp. This is not the normal power of an eleven year old.

Dr. Horn stares wide-eyed at Eli. He has a confused look on his face, as if he isn't sure what's happening. Like someone dropped blood in the ocean, Eli's eyes turn from bright blue to dark red.

DR. HORN (CONT'D)
God, no.

Eli looks up at Dr. Horn, no longer confused.

ELI
You were right, Dr. Horn.

Eli's voice is calm and knowing, with the timbre of someone far older, very different from the Eli moments ago.

ELI (CONT'D)
This house was never haunted. It was never a problem...

The rest of the straps momentarily BURST INTO FLAME then extinguish, leaving Eli free of his bounds.

ELI (CONT'D)
...It's been me the whole time. I'm the problem.

DR. HORN
(in pain)
Please...Eli...

Eli squeezes effortlessly down on Dr. Horn's wrist and she drops the knife, her face scrunching up in pain.

He SNAPS Dr. Horn's wrist ninety degrees the wrong way. She cries out, collapses onto the floor in pain.

Eli stands, places his hands out front and balls them into fists. The room behind him EXPLODES into FLAMES.

Dr. Horn tries to crawl away but Eli easily catches her and grips her around the throat. Easily lifts her into the air. He stares at her like she's a subject to be studied.

Suddenly, we're more afraid of Eli than Dr. Horn.

ELI
You should've killed me sooner.

Dr. Horn's face grows red as her esophagus closes off. She crawls at his hand with her good arm, but she can't pry his fingers away.

Behind Eli, the FIRE RAGES. His shadow looms, bigger than it ever should be.

Dad bursts into the room, the door finally opening from one too many shoulder charges. It doesn't affect Eli. He casually looks at them.

MOM

Put her down, Eli. Put her down and come to us. You don't have to do this.

Eli takes a beat, red eyes burning inside his head like tiny embers. He looks at Dr. Horn, then back at his parents.

Smiles.

ELI

But I want to.

SNAP!

Dr. Horn's body goes limp. Eli drops her to the floor, nothing but dead weight now.

MOM

Oh, Eli. What have you done?

Eli advances towards them. His parents retreat back.

ELI

What am I?

MOM

You're our son.

ELI

No. Tell me the truth!

As Eli gets angrier the fire behind him grows.

Mom drops to her knees. Dad holds her.

MOM

We weren't supposed to have children. The doctors warned us that if we did, there was a good chance the baby wouldn't survive.

DAD

We didn't listen. We wanted to be parents so badly. But when your Mom got pregnant...

ELI

I got sick.

MOM

The doctors told us it was incurable.

(MORE)

MOM (CONT'D)

There was nothing they could do. So we did the only thing we could. We prayed.

ELI

Prayed to who?

Mom and Dad don't respond.

ELI (CONT'D)

To who?!

The FIRE ROARS behind Eli again, and that's all the answer we need. It's not God that likes fire.

DAD

When you were born healthy, all the doctors thought it was a miracle. And for a while, so did we. But then...

Eli remembers, we see it too...

EXT. BACKYARD - DAY

WE SEE IMAGES, BLURRY AND FAST MOVING. NO SOUND.

TODDLER ELI (4) walks up to A SLEEPING DOG in his backyard.

THIS IS ELI'S NIGHTMARE. NOT A NIGHTMARE AT ALL, BUT A MEMORY.

Toddler Eli reaches out for the dog, but it SNAPS at him, just like the dream.

Toddler Eli's eyes turn RED, he grabs the dog by the head.

We HOLD THE FRAME ON Toddler Eli's red eyes, but WE HEAR sudden WHIMPER of the dog, and the crisp, clear CRACK of Eli breaking its neck.

Mom sits up suddenly, takes off her sunglasses and stares at Eli. He looks back at her, smiling, the dead dog in his arms.

Mom's mouth opens wide, A SILENT SCREAM...

INT. DR. HORN'S WING HALLWAY - BACK TO PRESENT

Eli moves forward on Mom and Dad, backing them into the hallway. The fire moving with them, all of it a part of Eli.

Mom looks at Eli with big, wet, pleading eyes.

MOM

We discovered if we kept you isolated, you didn't have any...problems. But as you got older, you began to change...

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

LIKE THE FIRST MEMORY, STYLIZED IMAGES. NO SOUND.

Eli's running down the hallway. Away from the FLAMES BURNING behind him.

WE'RE IN ELI'S OTHER NIGHTMARE. THE FIRE IN ST. LOUIS.

He trips and falls, the fire comes barreling towards him. He looks back, scared, it's going to get him.

But it doesn't. Because once again, his eyes change, turn blood red, and the fire stops just before his feet.

Mom and Dad stare at him, panicked. They see his red eyes and stop in their tracks.

Eli's smiling again. Mom and Dad aren't.

INT. DR. HORN'S WING HALLWAY - BACK TO PRESENT

DAD

...We couldn't control you anymore.

MOM

That's when we found Dr. Horn. She said she could cure you.

Mom and Dad bump up against the back wall. There's nowhere else for them to go. Eli stands right up close to them.

ELI

But she couldn't.

Mom finally gets the courage to stand. She takes Eli's hand. He doesn't try to stop her.

MOM

We made mistakes, Eli. But we can move forward. We can make it work. Together.

DAD

It's not too late.

Dad stands too, takes Eli's other hand.

DAD (CONT'D)
We can still be a family.

The tears are freely flowing from Mom and Dad's eyes now. Eli stares back, and it looks like there might be humanity glinting through his gaze.

They stand together, holding hands, a family unit desperately trying to stay together in the face of horror.

Eli's eyes are a constant melding of red and blue, a fight between the Eli that once was and the Eli that is now.

He can't bear to look at their desperate faces anymore. He points his eyes to the floor.

MOM
Please, Eli.

And Mom does the only thing she knows to truly calm him down.

MOM (CONT'D)
(sings)
*You are my sunshine...my only
sunshine...you make me happy...when
skies are grey...*

Dad joins in. Eli squeezes his eyes shut. Holds back tears.

MOM & DAD
*...you'll never know dear...how
much I love you...please don't take
my sunshine away.*

Mom gently lifts Eli's head up by the chin.

MOM
Eli. We love you. You can still
make the right choice.

Eli opens his eyes. And they're still burning red.

EXT. FRONT OF THE HOUSE - NIGHT

The front door opens, and Eli steps outside. The house burns down behind him.

He takes a moment, breathes in the fresh air.

HALEY
Nice night.

Eli looks. Haley is waiting for him ahead. There are no police, no adults, just Haley, looking different somehow.

He isn't the least surprised.

She stands to greet him. He stops ahead of her, like there's still a window between them. From look at them now, one would never guess Eli just killed three people.

ELI

Hi.

HALEY

Hi.

(then)

Catch.

Haley tosses something at Eli. He catches it, opens his hand and looks. It's a tadpole.

HALEY (CONT'D)

Thought you might like to finally see one up close.

Eli studies, fascinated. Then...he squashes it in his fist.

ELI

So you're like me?

HALEY

(nods)

We're everywhere. Dad gets around.

ELI

Will I get to meet him?

HALEY

Eventually. How do you feel?

ELI

Good, actually.

HALEY

You were special, I knew it from the second I saw you. You weren't going to let Dr. Horn kill you like she killed the others.

ELI

Why didn't you just come in?

HALEY

That's not how it works. You have to figure things out on your own.

(MORE)

HALEY (CONT'D)

More or less. A little nudging in the right direction never hurt anybody.

Eli nods. He's relaxed, taking in the world as if for the first time. He looks out:

ELI

Who are...?

Eli gestures to the front yard. WE REVEAL an entire yard full of ghosts, all watching Eli and Haley, like patient dogs.

HALEY

Oh them? They're everywhere. When you get stronger you'll be able to use them better.

Eli spots Mom and Dad in the crowd, no longer living people but burned up ghosts. They stare at him with the same blank stare as the rest of them. They're under *his* rule now.

Eli doesn't react.

HALEY (CONT'D)

I have lots to teach you, Eli. You and I are going to be unstoppable. But first, I thought we might just enjoy the fresh air.

She extends her hand.

Eli takes it.

They walk into the yard, The Ghosts part to let them through.

Behind them, the house burns.

THE END