

IN THE DARK

Written by

S. Wilson

**Instructions for reading with WeScreenplay coverage:**

- 1) Download WeScreenplay coverage PDF on Any Possibility
- 2) Read script and form your own thoughts
- 3) Read coverage
- 4) Compare your analysis

FADE IN:

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - 1996 - NIGHT

Street lights press through a thick fog, barely illuminating a middle-class Chicago neighborhood. Television screens punctuate living room windows in staccato beats. Second story lights click off.

It's BEDTIME.

INT. RODRIGUEZ HOUSE - PARENTS' WALK-IN CLOSET

A six by six feet cube. The size of a small palace to anyone under four feet. TWO GIRLS, mischief makers, fumble through their parents clothes. Dresses and polos litter the ground.

SOPHIA RODRIGUEZ, 7, vibrant and bossy, straps one of her mother's lacy bras over her pajamas.

SOPHIA  
Gimme dad's socks.

NEVAEH (Nuh-VAY-Ah) RODRIGUEZ, 5, funny, clever, and practically drowning in her father's suit jacket, wobbles over. She hands Sophia a roll of socks held between two suit sleeves, since she can't find her hands.

Sophia stuffs each cup like a pro, then steps into a pair of glittery high heels, her tiny feet barely filling them.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)  
(pointing to the jacket)  
Get out of that thing.

NEVAEH  
But I like it.

SOPHIA  
But what are you?

NEVAEH  
Well, what are you?

SOPHIA  
I'm an adult.

Nevaeh lifts her little arms drenched in the jacket sleeves.

NEVAEH  
(in her scariest voice)  
I'm the boogeyman.

Nevaeh runs at Sophia.

Sophia shrieks and scoots away in her oversized heels, out of the bedroom and into the hall...

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Where she SMACKS into LEGS. She looks up at her mother, CHRISTINA RODRIGUEZ, 30, easy going and getting a kick' out of her kid's getup. Nevaeh staggers closely behind.

CHRISTINA  
(smiling)  
Well, look at you two-

Christina unbuttons Nevaeh's jacket. Takes it off.

NEVAEH  
-Sophia made me do it.

SOPHIA  
Did not!

CHRISTINA  
No one likes a tattletale, Nevaeh.

But- NEVAEH But- SOPHIA

CHRISTINA (CONT'D)  
(toward the stairwell)  
Carl! I can use some help.

Christina hands Nevaeh the jacket. Nevaeh heads to the closet to hang it up. Sophia stays rooted to the spot.

CHRISTINA (CONT'D)  
Sophia, I'm not kidding.

SOPHIA  
No. I want to show my friend.

CHRISTINA  
All your friends are going to bed for school tomorrow. Take the heels off.

SOPHIA  
My friend doesn't go to school.

CHRISTINA  
What?

SOPHIA  
He only visits me when we're sleeping.

Christina blinks, rubs her eyes, then stares at Sophia's unwavering gaze. Nevaeh returns.

A thud of steps comes up the stairwell. Christina tears her gaze away towards CARLOS RODRIGUEZ, 32, loving. He scoops up a giggling Nevaeh.

CARL  
I got one.

CHRISTINA  
Our child has a creepy imaginary friend.

Carl tickles Nevaeh.

CARL  
(to Nevaeh)  
Name names.

NEVAEH  
Not me!

CARL  
(to Sophia)  
Listen to your mother or you're grounded.

CHRISTINA  
For life.

SOPHIA  
I hate you!

CHRISTINA  
Wonderful. Help me pick up.

Sophia kicks off her heels and storms into the closet, angrily picks up a clump of dresses from the floor.

INT. GIRLS' BEDROOM - LATER

Moonlight illuminates TWO TWIN BEDS set on either side of a small room. Nevaeh's half is tomboy, Sophia's half is princess.

A SET OF SLIDING CLOSET MIRRORS watch Nevaeh stir in her sleep.

She shudders and opens her eyes. Turns over and looks at her sister's EMPTY bed.

Nevaeh sits up, noticing the bedroom door ajar. A thin BEAM OF LIGHT shines in from the hallway, cutting the darkness.

Nevaeh leans over the side of her bed. Stares nervously at the ground. The darkness between her bed frame and the floor stares back at her.

She swallows her courage, aims for the RUG in the middle of the room, and takes a giant hop off of the bed.

Clear.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Nevaeh tip toes from her doorway across the hall towards the OPEN BATHROOM DOOR. She STOPS at the sound of her sister's voice.

SOPHIA  
(whispering)  
I can't talk to you anymore.

Nevaeh inches forward along the wall to get a glimpse into the bathroom.

Sophia STANDS ON A STOOL, looking into the bathroom MIRROR. Staring deeply into, maybe PAST, her face.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)  
I don't want to go. You have to  
leave me alone.

A hushed, whispering response comes from somewhere unseen. Sophia stiffens.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)  
Nevaeh doesn't want to talk to you.  
She's sleeping.

Another low whisper...

Sophia furrows her brow. Her EYES SNAP towards Nevaeh in the mirror.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)  
(still whispering)  
What are you doing?

Sophia turns.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)  
Go back to bed. He-

Her eyes snap back to the mirror. She gets down from the stool and rushes towards Nevaeh grabbing her arm.

NEVAEH  
(quietly)  
Ouch. You're hurting me.

Nevaeh tugs her arm out of Sophia's and runs back into their bedroom. Sophia at her heels.

INT. GIRLS' BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Nevaeh runs towards her bed.

SOPHIA  
Nevaeh, wait-

THE SHADOW OF A HAND LUNGES OUT FROM UNDER THE BED FRAME.

Sophia SHOVES Nevaeh HARD up onto her mattress - out of the way. THE HAND MISSES NEVAEH AND LATCHES ONTO SOPHIA'S ANKLE.

Sophia is pulled HARD. She falls flat onto her chest, clawing at the floor for something to grip onto.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)  
Nevaeh. Help!

Nevaeh's fists clench her covers, PARALYZED.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)  
HELP ME!

Sophia grabs the leg of the bed post and clings on for dear life.

FOOTSTEPS running down the hall.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)  
PLEEEEEEEASE!

CARL (O.S.)  
Sophia?!

SOPHIA  
DADDY!

Christina and Carl BURST INTO THE ROOM. The visible SHAPE OF A HAND clings to Sophia.

CARL  
(to Christina, in Spanish)  
Call the police.

Christina bolts out of the room as Carl grabs Sophia around the middle.

Sophia LETS GO OF THE POST and clings to her father's neck.

He pulls her back into the room for a moment, until they are both SUCKED COMPLETELY UNDER THE BED.

SILENCE.

FOOTFALLS from the hallway. Christina runs back into the room, phone to her ear. Stares around the room - THEY'RE GONE.

CHRISTINA  
Carl? Sophia!?

She looks at Nevaeh. Nevaeh opens her mouth as if she's going to say something. STOPS.

The CLOSET MIRROR SHATTERS into fragments as Nevaeh's father CRASHES THROUGH onto the floor of the room.

Christina drops to her knees at his side.

He lays in splinters of glass, one piercing his carotid artery. Blood pooling. Mouth open, gasping for air he cannot breathe. His body seizes in quick jolts until it stops. Lifeless.

DEAD.

Nevaeh SCREAMS.

BLACK.

TITLE OVER:

**TWENTY YEARS LATER**

INT. ELEMENTARY CLASSROOM - DAY

The bell SCREAMS through the loudspeaker. A throng of 8 year-old elementary school students shove notebooks into their desks.

A 26-year-old Nevaeh, sociable but unconfident, calls out over their chatter.

NEVAEH  
Form one line by the door.  
Alphabetical order.

Chairs SCRAPE against the floor. Students stand up, pushing and shoving for their place in line. STRAGGLERS run rampant around the classroom.

NEVAEH (CONT'D)  
(scanning the room)  
Focus. Jenni, put it down.

A surprised looking JENNI, an 8 year-old goofball, drops the STAPLER where she stands.

NEVAEH (CONT'D)

Back on my desk. Now. I will take  
away recess privileges.

Jenni picks it up and places it back on the desk. Slides into  
line of jabbering, vibrant kids.

EXT. SCHOOL PLAYGROUND - MOMENTS LATER

The moment students reach sweet freedom, they break into a  
run.

Metal monkey bars, plastic slides, and four tether ball poles  
break up the large expanse of asphalt.

A group of TEACHERS congregate in a shaded area next to the  
BALL CHECK OUT, keeping an eye on the students. Students sign  
out soccer balls, basketballs, footballs...

Nevaeh joins the gossip circle of TEACHERS.

TEACHER 1

Weekend count down. Four hours.

TEACHER 2

God, when's the next three day  
weekend?

NEVAEH

They're not that bad.

TEACHER 2

You've got what, third? Did you  
hear what Tyler's fourth graders  
did to Alex McMillan?

NEVAEH

Those kinds of kids are in every  
class.

Jenni runs up.

JENNI

Ms. Rodriguez, can I sign out a  
basketball?

NEVAEH

Yeah, bring it back. Look at me.  
I'm serious this time.

JENNI

Okay, okay.

Nevaeh turns to a paddock on their left. Hands Jenni a ball.

TEACHER 1

If you're too soft on them, they'll  
run all over you.

NEVAEH

I know. I know.

Nevaeh watches a second grader bat the tetherball with his fist. It spins around, around, around, AROUND...

From the other side of the playground comes a SMACK.

Nevaeh follows the sound of immediate crying to Jenni towering over BO, a small third grade boy, clutching his eye. A small trickle of blood coming out of his nose.

JENNI

It's not my fault he can't catch.

BO

She threw it at my eye.

JENNI

Did not.

NEVAEH

Jenni, go sit on the bench. We'll  
talk later. Bo, let's go get that  
looked at.

Nevaeh escorts Bo back inside.

NEVAEH (CONT'D)

Can you send the teacher's aide  
with them if the bell rings? I'll  
be right back.

INT. ELEMENTARY HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Nevaeh steers Bo towards the nurses' office as he holds his face.

They brush past classrooms of children, some more behaved than others.

INT. NURSES' OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

A large room with several BED COTS in the back. Tall, sheer curtains give privacy between ill students.

STAFF MEMBERS sit at the front desk, idly chatting.

MARK SHIN, a male nurse in his late 20s with soft eyes but the build of an armed guard, sees Nevaeh and lights up.

Bo hiccups a sob. Mark's expression falls to concern. He stands.

MARK  
What happened?

NEVAEH  
Recess happened.  
(mouths)  
Basketball to the face.

MARK  
All right, let's get a look at that.

Mark leads them to an empty bed cot at the rear of the room.

MARK (CONT'D)  
Sit right here.

Bo sits. Nevaeh stands by. She notices a SMALL GIRL, lying in the next cot over with her back towards them.

Mark gently removes Bo's hand from his face, revealing the beginning stages of a black eye.

MARK (CONT'D)  
Man, you are tough. It's going to be just fine. You've got a bit of a shiner.

BO  
(stifling a sob)  
Shiner?

MARK  
Big ol' black eye. I've gotten one before too. Heals up in a few weeks. And my face is completely back to normal... well, as normal as my face is going to get.

Bo smiles while clutching his eye.

BO  
That was a stupid joke.

Mark crosses to a freezer, pulls out an ice pack.

MARK  
I appreciate your honesty. Lie down, ice this and we'll give your parents a call.

BO  
Okay.

NEVAEH  
You're going to be just fine.

Nevaeh stands.

As Mark pulls the curtain closed BETWEEN THE TWO COTS the Small Girl TURNS OVER, making EYE CONTACT with Nevaeh. For a *moment*, she looks JUST LIKE SOPHIA until the curtain shuts completely.

Mark catches Nevaeh's face.

MARK  
Let's talk outside.

They walk past the front desk. Mark turns to the staff.

MARK (CONT'D)  
Give Bo Liu's parents a call.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

The two stand outside the door, intimately close for an empty hall.

MARK  
He's going to be fine.

Mark leans in and lightly kisses Nevaeh. She leans back.

NEVAEH  
Hey! Not at school.

MARK  
Want to put me in detention?

He takes his thumb to her forehead and smooths out the worry line from her furrowed brow.

MARK (CONT'D)  
That was the effect I was hoping it had.

She smiles.

MARK (CONT'D)  
And that.

NEVAEH  
You are the worst.

MARK  
Definitely. That's the introduction I'm hoping to get tomorrow.

NEVAEH  
 (sarcastic)  
 "This is my boyfriend, Mark. He's  
 the worst."

MARK  
 Speaking of which, can we use  
 tonight as test prep? I'll buy you  
 dinner.

NEVAEH  
 You'll be fine. It's just my  
 mother, aunt Lucy, uncle Astor,  
 aunt Shelly, my cousins Jake,  
 Tyler, Nadia, Lanai, and...maybe  
 Porsha.

They look at each other.

NEVAEH (CONT'D)  
 Okay, yeah.

INT. NEVAEH'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Nevaeh releases the curling iron from a final strand and sets  
 it down.

She flips her hair over and sprays the curls into submission.  
 Tosses her head back up, looks at the final touches in the  
 MIRROR as she pumps her hair up with her hands.

Her stare shifts from her hair to her eyes, caught there for  
 a moment, then suddenly GAZING PAST HERSELF. INTO SOMETHING.

TIME SLOWS...

LOW WHISPERS reach through the mirror beckoning her forward.

Her body LEANS CLOSER, MAGNETIZED --

A CELLPHONE CHIMES. Nevaeh snaps out of it.

MARK TEXT  
 Outside.

INT. RESTAURANT - LATER

A trendy Japanese Ramen joint. Nevaeh and Mark sit halfway  
 through their bowls.

NEVAEH  
 Big into table manners.

He slurps his soup.

MARK

Getting it out of the way now.

NEVAEH

Perfect. So I assume you wore that with similar intentions?

Mark looks down at his Jedi t-shirt.

MARK

This is a classic.

NEVAEH

About that...

MARK

I want the big stuff. What do they like talking about? What subjects should we avoid? I probably shouldn't go in talking about global warming and Pope Francis.

NEVAEH

Oh my god, they love Pope Francis. Hard core Catholics. Especially after my sister and everything...

Her thought peters out.

MARK

It's okay. I won't mention it at dinner.

NEVAEH

My mother will. About 17 times. Might as well prepare for that.

MARK

Okay.

NEVAEH

And they'll probably interrogate you about what you do.

MARK

Male nurse is going to go over well.

NEVAEH

Don't say that. What you do is important.

MARK

I can lead with honorable military discharge.

NEVAEH

You can say you're the school nurse. They already know even if they pretend they don't.

MARK

Can I tell them I was seduced by the 3rd grade teacher?

NEVAEH

That is not what happened.

MARK

So we're assuming you got the flu on "accident."

NEVAEH

Yes.

MARK

And that you needed "medicine."

NEVAEH

Why are you putting air quotes around medicine?

MARK

We all know what you were after.

NEVAEH

Okay, and you're done.

EXT. NEVAEH'S APARTMENT - NIGHT - LATER

KEYS dangle, forgotten, from the door handle.

Mark presses Nevaeh against the door. Mouths meshed together. Her hands slide up his shirt, pulling it up along with them.

MARK

Does this mean I get to come in?

Nevaeh lets go.

NEVAEH

I'll see you tomorrow.

MARK

We don't have to do anything.

He slides his hands under her thighs, picks her up, and she wraps her legs around him.

NEVAEH

Unlikely.

MARK

I'm not saying I don't want to, but  
if you don't want to, I get it. I  
can wait.

NEVAEH

No, that's not why...

He kisses her nose, then her forehead.

MARK

Then why not?

She looks into his eyes. Nods yes.

MARK (CONT'D)

Fuck yeah.

He twist the door handle. Kissing her lips. Kissing her neck.

INT. NEVAEH'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

He moves to kick the door shut.

NEVAEH

Keys! Keys. Keys.

He grabs the keys. Tosses them aside. Slams the door.

Carries her past the couch.

MARK

Which way?

NEVAEH

Left.

MARK

Here?

He opens a bedroom door.

INT. NEVAEH'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Nevaeh flips a switch near the door. Mark carries her to the  
middle of the room, looks for the bed then...

STOPS.

She unwraps her legs and stands in front of him, carefully  
scrutinizing HIS FACE as he takes in her room.

A QUEEN SIZE MATTRESS sits in the corner ON THE FLOOR.

There is no wall art of any kind, only LIGHTS. EVERYWHERE.

TAP LIGHTS, DESK LAMPS, FLOOR LAMPS, CEILING LIGHTS, FLASH LIGHTS, CANDLES...

What would have been a closet with sliding mirrors now has the mirrors ripped off so it's open.

Mark takes a step back.

Nevaeh stays still, waiting for him to say something.

MARK  
Electricity bill must be high.

NEVAEH  
Bulbs are really energy  
efficient...

Pause.

MARK  
So this is why you don't like  
sleepovers?

NEVAEH  
I guess.

Nevaeh shakes with nerves. Mark pulls her into a hug.

MARK  
It's okay.

NEVAEH  
It's not okay. I'm an adult and I  
need a fucking night light.

MARK  
To be fair, I would say lights -  
plural.

Nevaeh disintegrates into a mess. Shoulders heaving under short sobs.

NEVAEH  
I'm sorry. I'm so sorry. I look  
like one of those psychos on  
daytime television. You thought I  
was all normal-

MARK  
Not really-

NEVAEH  
- and now you probably want to get  
the hell out of here. I don't blame  
you, really-

MARK

Hey, hey. Look at me. Everyone's afraid of the dark, they just try not to think about it.

NEVAEH

You don't understand.

MARK

Try me.

INT. KITCHEN - LATER

Nevaeh and Mark sit on the counter eating peanut butter out of the jar, alternating spoon scoops.

NEVAEH

So my mother... and several psychologists, said that I made it up. Sometimes children who suffer intense trauma make up things - stories. They told me there was a man hiding under my bed and he killed my father. That he abducted my sister. But, that's not what I saw. I swear.

She comes out of story mode and reaches his eyes.

MARK

(sincere)

Okay.

NEVAEH

I have these nightmares. They're so real. And she's still screaming for me to help. And I can't help her. And I can't move.

MARK

I understand. Better than you think I do.

NEVAEH

She was the best sister. She'd get us into loads of trouble, stealing snacks from the kitchen, my mom's clothes- but I loved it. I loved every second around her. Sometimes it feels like she never left. Like she's watching me. And she knows it's my fault.

MARK

There was nothing you could do.

NEVAEH

She pushed me out of the way, Mark.  
She saw something, and she saved  
me. She needed help. And I- I  
didn't do anything.

She searches his face for an answer.

MARK

When I was on tour, my buddy  
stepped on a IED. Blew off his  
legs... Tore off another guy's arm.  
We couldn't stop the bleeding.  
Couldn't help him. There isn't a  
day I'm not there in my mind trying  
to fix it, make different choices.  
But in the end it happened the way  
it happened.

NEVAEH

But that's real. It's not this half  
delusional-

MARK

Your dad died in front of you and  
your sister disappeared. No matter  
what way it happened. It's real.

NEVAEH

Why am I still scared? Why doesn't  
it go away?

MARK

I want to say it gets easier over  
time, but it won't. You'll just  
handle it differently. It doesn't  
go away. Look at me, I work in a  
nurses' office.

NEVAEH

You like helping kids.

MARK

Only job I've been able to keep  
that hasn't shaken my nerves. So  
your insane fear of the dark isn't  
a big deal to me.

NEVAEH

I don't want to be crazy.

MARK

I hope you're a little bit crazy.  
That's probably why we love each  
other.

He pulls her into a hug.

INT. NEVAEH'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - LATER

Nevaeh's eyes blink open to a DARK ROOM.

She SITS UP.

Her bed is ELEVATED ON THE SAME FRAME AS HER CHILDHOOD BEDROOM. She sweeps her legs off the side and rests them on the floor. No hesitation.

A strip of light peeps out of the ADJACENT BATHROOM DOOR, which is cracked open slightly.

Dull whispers draw Nevaeh towards the bathroom.

She pushes the door open, just as the WHISPERING CRESCENDOS.

SOPHIA (O.S.)  
(behind her)  
Help me.

Nevaeh wheels around, staring at the empty bed. Gaze slowly adjusts to the space UNDERNEATH IT, where her GAUNT SEVEN-YEAR-OLD SISTER CROUCHES.

Something grabs a hold Sophia and drags her backwards.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)  
PLEEEASEEEEE!

INT. NEVAEH'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Nevaeh startles AWAKE. GASPS FOR AIR.

The room is BRIGHTLY LIT. Her mattress rests firmly on the ground.

Mark rests, still asleep, beside her.

Nevaeh stares out of her window. The sun rises, pushing out the darkness.

INT. NEVAEH'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Dressed and ready to go, Nevaeh leaves a note by Mark.

NOTE:  
Hey love, can't sleep :( Heading  
over to mom's early. See you  
tonight. xoxo

EXT. SUBURBAN CHICAGO - DAY

Train rushes through the suburbs. Landing at its stop.

EXT. TRAIN PLATFORM - CONTINUOUS

Nevaeh steps off of the train and heads for the exit as the metal wheels grind against the track.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DAY

Nevaeh walks up the front steps to her childhood home. Pauses before ringing the door bell.

Footsteps on the other side before the door swings open. Christina looks the same as she ever did, except a slight severeness embellished by the cross around her neck.

CHRISTINA

What brings you over so early?

NEVAEH

Couldn't sleep.

CHRISTINA

It's genetic.

Christina pulls her in for a hug.

INT. RODRIGUEZ HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

The kitchen stands the test of time. A few new appliances. A few Catholic crosses decorating once blank spaces.

Nevaeh sits under a LARGE MIRROR above the kitchen table, which swallows the view of the kitchen. TV chatter squeaks in from the living room.

Christina puts a coffee pod into a Keurig, then turns back to making a check list.

CHRISTINA

He eats pork, right?

NEVAEH

Yeah-

CHRISTINA

We'll slow cook the pulled pork for tacos.

NEVAEH

Mom, you don't have to go all out.

CHRISTINA

Tacos are easy. That's why we're doing tacos.

NEVAEH

It's like a 14 hour process for pulled pork.

CHRISTINA

Your aunt Shelly gave me a faster recipe. Cuts half the time. She's coming over around nine.

NEVAEH

And I think Nadia is a vegetarian.

CHRISTINA

I guess I'll add tofu to the list. Your father would roll over in his grave. Can you imagine if Sophia was a vegetarian?

NEVAEH

No, I can't.

CHRISTINA

We'll set aside a plate for her tonight. Sound good, Sophia?

NEVAEH

Mom...

Christina marks on her list.

CHRISTINA

Yeah?

NEVAEH

She's not coming. Can we not do this. Please don't start talking to her like she's here, during dinner. Just for tonight?

CHRISTINA

I put out the energy so wherever she is, she knows I'm thinking about her.

NEVAEH

Just this once, please.

CHRISTINA

If your boyfriend wants to get to know your family, that means all of us.

The MIRROR behind Nevaeh ENGULFS their image.

NEVAEH

All of the living family. The ones  
in the room with us.

CHRISTINA

Sophia is with us. God brings me  
her presence every day to make sure  
I'm prepared for when she comes  
back to me. I won't forget them  
because they're gone.

NEVAEH

We *should* forget sometimes. We  
should be allowed to forget.

CHRISTINA

I'm not giving up on-

NEVAEH

I am. I just want to live one day  
of my life where she isn't  
overshadowing it. I don't want you  
constantly reminding me about her,  
and I don't want her to scare away  
the one person in my life who  
doesn't think I'm a complete  
psychopath. I want to forget her.

CHRISTINA

You're being selfish.

NEVAEH

If she was going to come back,  
she'd be here. She's not here, mom.  
They're dead, and it's depressing.  
No one wants to listen to it for  
three hours over dinner.

Christina stops. The Keurig sputters the last drip of coffee  
and clicks.

CHRISTINA

Sophia is not dead.

NEVAEH

Mom-

CHRISTINA

I can feel it.

They stare at each other a long moment.

NEVAEH

I'm sorry. I didn't mean to-

Christina sets a cup of coffee in front of Nevaeh, squeezes  
her shoulder.

CHRISTINA

I've got to run to the store for a few more things. If he doesn't like pork, I'll grab some beef.

NEVAEH

I can go if you want.

CHRISTINA

Need to get out of the house. If you want something to do, clean up the kitchen.

Nevaeh looks over at the spotless kitchen.

NEVAEH

Okay.

INT. RODRIGUEZ HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Alone.

Nevaeh walks out of the kitchen, grabs the remote control and turns off the TV.

SILENCE.

Behind her a WALL MOUNTED MIRROR reflects the room. Nevaeh turns around slowly, staring at herself, head cocked to one side.

A DULL WHISPER pulls her forward, palm out reaching towards the mirror. She presses her hand onto the glass, then her head SNAPS towards the base of the stairs.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Nevaeh climbs the last of the steps and turns into the hallway. Inching past the bathroom, she pushes open her bedroom door.

INT. GIRLS' BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

It's like opening a time capsule. Two twin beds pushed against opposite walls. Sheets fresh, recently dusted.

The repaired SLIDING CLOSET MIRROR pulls in Nevaeh. She studies the room's reflection, hers being the only thing that has changed.

A hushed chatter VIBRATES the air.

Nevaeh glances at her old bed frame. She kneels down, places her hands on the ground, and peers into the darkness under her mattress.

Nothing.

She slowly turns her head towards Sophia's side. TWO LARGE CHILD EYES stare back.

Nevaeh pushes herself backwards, slamming into the bed behind her. Eyes shut tight.

The shadow of an arm REACHES out from behind her, grabs Nevaeh and YANKS. She falls on her torso and scrapes at the floor, looking for something to hold onto. The room disappears from view as she's pulled COMPLETELY UNDER the bed.

DARKNESS all around.

INT. GIRLS' BEDROOM - **GRAY** - CONTINUOUS

She slides out of the darkness and into HER BEDROOM- the SAME configuration, except FLIPPED, like a reflection. All the color and life drained, a GRAYSCALE version of the room she left.

Nevaeh pushes herself onto her hands and knees. She scrambles back to the bed and looks underneath it - DARKNESS.

She reaches her hand into the darkness, pushing, meeting resistance. She looks up and into the MIRROR.

She has NO REFLECTION.

Instead, the mirror acts as a WINDOW. Showing VIBRANT, REAL WORLD COLORS of the SAME dead bedroom. The reflection shows the SHADOW OF HER ARM REACHING INTO REALITY.

She recoils and stares into the mirror's window, which is unable to reflect Sophia standing behind her.

The hairs on the back of Nevaeh's neck stand, knowing.

NEVAEH

Sophia?

Nevaeh slowly turns from her spot on the floor.

She looks up at Sophia, unaged, but slightly gaunt, dull. Her eyes hungry. In the same pajamas, only gray.

The two absorb each other's presence. Standing stock still.

Sophia LUNGES forward and wraps Nevaeh in a hug.

NEVAEH (CONT'D)

Am I-

Home. SOPHIA NEVAEH  
Asleep?

CHRISTINA (O.S.)  
Nevaeh?

Nevaeh's head perks up. She rises to her feet looking at the door to the room.

NEVAEH  
Mom?

Through the looking glass, Christina appears in the REAL ROOM.

INT. GIRLS' BEDROOM - **ALIVE** - CONTINUOUS

Christina continues on as she walks in before realizing...

CHRISTINA  
I can use a hand with the groceries...

No one's there.

INT. GIRLS' BEDROOM - **GRAY** - CONTINUOUS

Nevaeh pads on the mirror with the palms on her hands.

NEVAEH  
MOM! Mom, can you hear me?

INT. GIRLS' BEDROOM - **ALIVE** - CONTINUOUS

Christina revolves toward the mirror, looking in, almost like she can see...

INT. GIRLS' BEDROOM - **GRAY** - CONTINUOUS

Nevaeh looks directly into her mother's eyes. Sophia watches Nevaeh curiously.

NEVAEH  
She can hear me.

SOPHIA  
She can hear me too sometimes.

NEVAEH  
You talk to her?

SOPHIA  
Every night.

Nevaeh opens her mouth as if to speak. Closes it and nods her head up and down slightly.

Her eyes clock potential exits.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)  
I talk to you sometimes too. Except you live far away, and you don't look the same.

NEVAEH  
I'm going to wake up soon, and you won't be here.

SOPHIA  
I'm always here. I can't leave.

A SCHOOL BELL RINGS from a distance.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)  
We have to go to school now.

Sophia grips and tugs Nevaeh's wrist with unnatural strength.

NEVAEH  
Stop it. You're hurting me.

SOPHIA  
I'll hide you, but we have to hurry.

NEVAEH  
No, I-

Nevaeh yanks her arm back and turns.

INT. GIRLS' BEDROOM - **ALIVE** - CONTINUOUS

Christina tears her eyes from the mirror. Pauses by Sophia's bed. Smooths out the sheet with her hand.

CHRISTINA  
(at the bed)  
Miss you, baby.

As Christina exits...

INT. MIRRORED GIRLS' BEDROOM - **GRAY** - CONTINUOUS

Nevaeh watches Christina go as Sophia tugs at her clothes.

NEVAEH  
Mom! MOM!

Nevaeh SMACKS her fist into the looking glass, a nightmare rising into a PANIC.

SOPHIA  
Stop it! He'll hear you. I can't protect you if he hears you.

NEVAEH  
Help me! MOM!

Her knuckles busting, pounding, streaking the invisible barrier with blood.

Sophia grabs at Nevaeh, ripping her clothes. Nevaeh twists away, still beating the glass.

SOPHIA  
Please, you can't leave me here.

NEVAEH  
You're not real. IT'S NOT REAL.

SOPHIA  
You have to help me!

NEVAEH  
MOM!

SOPHIA  
YOU CAN'T FORGET ME.

A final blow CRUMBLES the glass under Nevaeh's fists, her body weight thrusting her forward, FALLING into...

INT. GIRLS' BEDROOM - **ALIVE** - CONTINUOUS

The same bedroom, but COLORFUL, ALIVE. Her HEAD SMACKS hard onto the floor, glass showering around her.

She BLINKS slowly, fading. Looks back from where she fell at a now BROKEN sliding mirror. Nothing else.

She blinks again, but her eyes stay closed as her head rests back on the ground.

INT. GIRLS' BEDROOM - LATER

BLACK. A sharp scream pierces the air.

CHRISTINA (O.S.)  
NEVAEH! Honey, wake up.

Mom lightly taps Nevaeh's cheek.

CHRISTINA (CONT'D)  
*Wake up. Are you okay?*

Nevaeh's eyes move under their lids.

NEVAEH  
Mom?

CHRISTINA  
That's it. Sit up.

Nevaeh opens her eyes and slowly rises. Glass slides off her clothes and onto the floor.

CHRISTINA (CONT'D)  
Careful.

Mom reaches for her hands to pull her up, but Nevaeh gasps in pain. Looks down at the CUTS on her palms. Christina grabs her wrists instead and pulls her to standing.

CHRISTINA (CONT'D)  
What happened? What's going on? I just checked for you.

NEVAEH  
Mom?

Nevaeh wobbles on her feet. Christina leads her towards the BED.

CHRISTINA  
Sit down.

Nevaeh PANICS.

NEVAEH  
No!

Her arm flies out of her mother's grip. She backs up to the door.

CHRISTINA  
What happened, honey? What's wrong?

NEVAEH  
I don't know.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

AUNT SHELLY, 50s, spirited and feisty, wraps a white gauze over Nevaeh's hand.

AUNT SHELLY  
We should call everyone and cancel.

CHRISTINA  
And do what with 10 pounds of pork?

AUNT SHELLY  
She's having another one of her episodes. It'll compand the stress.

NEVAEH  
I'm right here.

CHRISTINA  
She needs family. She needs God.  
And she needs food.

NEVAEH  
I don't want you to cancel. You're meeting Mark.

AUNT SHELLY  
Right, and look at you.

Nevaeh suffers cuts on her hands and her cheek. Aunt Shelly snips the gauze roll and tapes the end piece in place.

NEVAEH  
I fell.

AUNT SHELLY  
Sleepwalking?

NEVAEH  
I don't sleepwalk.

AUNT SHELLY  
Then how do you explain what happened upstairs?

Nevaeh looks at a mirror, then her mother.

NEVAEH  
Look, the pulled pork isn't going to cook itself. Can I help?

Both women get up and move towards the kitchen.

AUNT SHELLY  
Lie down.

NEVAEH

Mom, can I see Dr. Paul again?

CHRISTINA

I'll call. We'll make an appointment for next week.

AUNT SHELLY

In the meantime, I'll write you a prescription for Xanax.

EXT. RODRIGUEZ HOUSE - LATER

Mark reaches out and KNOCKS. Padding of footsteps and lively chatter resonate from inside.

Aunt Shelly opens the door, then back over her shoulder.

AUNT SHELLY

(to the kitchen)

I've got him!

A distinct group CHEER responds.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

All the usual chaos. The family sits around a kitchen dining table, shooting the shit.

AUNT LUCY and UNCLE ASTOR, 50s, bicker before turning on their only child JAKE, 30. Shelly crosses to TYLER AND NADIA, late 20s, laughing and teasing in Spanish.

SHELLY

Be presentable.

On the other side of the open space, PORSHA, 20s, Christina and Nevaeh do the dance of chefs, keeping out of one another's way in the kitchen area.

PORSHA

I don't want to touch the meat.  
It's disgusting.

AUNT LUCY

(across the room)

Just grab the pan before it burns, Porsha. For godsake.

PORSHA

Why can't Nevaeh do it?

TYLER

She's flipping the tortillas.

PORSHA  
I'll flip the tortillas!

Nevaeh passes the tongs to Porsha and beelines it for Mark.

NEVAEH  
Hey!  
(kisses Mark's cheek)  
Everyone this is Mark. Mark this is  
my family.

Mark hands Nevaeh an apple pie as Christina swoops in.

MARK  
In case or in addition to dessert.

CHRISTINA  
Welcome to the family!

Christina gives Mark a big hug. Mark looks over Christina's shoulder at Nevaeh.

NEVAEH  
(mouthing and pointing)  
My mom.

Mark gives her a thumbs up. Christina walks him to the wall where a PICTURE OF CARLOS AND A PICTURE OF SOPHIA hang.

CHRISTINA  
This is my deceased husband Carlos  
and my daughter Sophia, who can't  
be with us tonight.

Mark looks over his shoulder at Nevaeh, who shrugs her shoulders.

INT. DINING ROOM - LATER

A WALL MIRROR reflects everyone packed around the dining room table. Food set up family-style.

MARK  
(under his breath)  
What happened to your hand?

NEVAEH  
(joking)  
Knife fight.

MARK  
What?

NEVAEH  
It's nothing. I'll tell you later.

TYLER

Mom says you punched a mirror.

Everyone's attention shifts to Nevaeh.

AUNT SHELLY

Tyler-

PORSHA

That's not what happened. I heard sleepwalking.

UNCLE ASTOR

Leave the kid alone. Shelly said it might be the schizo thing.

AUNT SHELLY

I did not. I said maybe she might be...

MARK

They know you're here, right?

NEVAEH

Yup.

CHRISTINA

For godsake Astor, she isn't schizophrenic.

TYLER

Then what happened?

NEVAEH

I thought I saw my dead sister.

Collective pause.

A fork CLATTERS onto a plate.

CHRISTINA

Well, she isn't dead, so that's not possible is it?

Christina scoots away from the table. Grabbing empty plates.

CHAOS erupts. Everyone SHOUTING OVER one another.

The undertone of the room VIBRATES. A HUSHED WHISPER RISING, GAINING VOLUME.

MARK

Are you okay? Let me get you out of here. We'll talk at home.

NEVAEH

Can you hear that?

MARK  
 (concerned)  
 Hear what?

Nevaeh stands, looking directly INTO THE WALL MIRROR, where she sees SOPHIA standing BEHIND HER.

Nevaeh jerks around, looking at the spot her sister was standing.

NO ONE.

She looks BACK INTO THE MIRROR. Sophia is GONE.

Background arguments escalate. Mark considers the look on Nevaeh's face.

MARK (CONT'D)  
 All right, we're out. Come on.

NEVAEH  
 I have to help with the dishes-

MARK  
 Really? No.  
 (loud, to everyone)  
 Nevaeh isn't feeling well. I'm going to take her home. It was lovely meeting you all.

A collective series of "nos" and "don't" fill the air.

INT. NEVAEH'S APARTMENT - LATER

Nevaeh and Mark lay on top of her floor mattress, staring at the ceiling.

MARK  
 What do you think happened?

NEVAEH  
 I think I'm losing it.

MARK  
 You're not.

NEVAEH  
 Do you ever feel like someone's watching you? But you can't tell where or who?

MARK  
 So they were right about the paranoia?

NEVAEH

I was an extremely anxious child. I used to sleep on the sofa. Refused to enter a room without lights on...

Nevaeh looks up at the lights around her room.

NEVAEH (CONT'D)

Some things don't change.

MARK

Well, what can we do? How can I help?

NEVAEH

I don't know.

MARK

There's got to be something. A juice detox, a vacation -

NEVAEH

Mark, I don't know.

MARK

Running. I can start running again with you if you want. I hear that boosts all sorts of-

NEVAEH

Can we not talk about it?

MARK

Yeah.

She rolls into him and wraps her arms around his torso.

NEVAEH

I'll take this though. I like this.

He pulls her in close.

MARK

Let me show you something that makes me feel better.

EXT. CHICAGO STREET - DAY

Nevaeh and Mark huddle together down the sidewalk. People wander out of dive bars and pass them as they walk towards the ELEVATED TRAIN TRACKS.

NEVAEH

There's no stop here. Are we getting on the train?

MARK

Nope.

NEVAEH

Are you going to murder me?

MARK

Maybe.

They walk directly under the tracks. He reaches for her hand.

A distant rumbling vibrates the metal up above. A train is coming...

The SCREECHING RIPS THROUGH THE AIR. The tremors are DEAFENING. The scrapping and popping sounds like gun fire.

Nevaeh covers her ears with her hands, still gripping Mark's. Mark stares forward, unblinking, unmoving, but frigid.

The train passes completely. SCRAPING dies out. Nevaeh removes her hands.

NEVAEH

Are you psychotic? I thought you said we were going somewhere that made you feel better.

MARK

It does.

He raises his hands parallel to the ground, they shake slightly.

NEVAEH

That was terrifying.

MARK

Yeah, but we're okay. That's my point.

NEVAEH

I'm not. I- Mark, I think I saw her. Like I wasn't asleep. Like it was real. But she wasn't like herself... And she wanted me to go with her to school.

MARK

On a Saturday? Sounds like a nightmare to me.

NEVAEH

I know it's stupid. You're right. It was like a bad dream, but it was like she needed my help. I panicked.

MARK

Catholic guilt. Your mother would be proud.

NEVAEH

Mark, it's not funny.

MARK

I know, but I only have so many coping mechanisms. Look, your aunt got you meds. You're getting help. You'll fight this thing, whatever it is.

NEVAEH

Fighting the crazy.

MARK

Getting closure.

NEVAEH

(gesturing to the tracks)  
Is this closure for you?

INT. SCHOOL - DAY

The hallway bustles with elementary school students. A few adults stand out among the crowd.

MARK (V.O.)

Close. Exposure therapy. You expose yourself to the things you're afraid of. Then they can't scare you anymore.

NEVAEH (V.O.)

Or they drive you insane.

A BELL RINGS.

VOICE (O.S.)

5 minute bell. Get to class.

INT. NEVAEH'S CLASSROOM - DAY

Fractions scribbled onto the board. Students do their best to pay attention to the math lesson.

Nevaeh loses her train of thought, marker paused and pressed against the white board. She looks at the fractions on the board, adjusting, then continues.

NEVAEH

Greater than or equal to?

BO  
Equal to.

NEVAEH  
No, it's - wait, yes. You are correct. Equal to. Scroll to workbook page 35.

Kids scroll on their tablets.

EXT. PLAYGROUND - DAY

Recess. Teachers congregate at the usual spot.

A large POOL OF STAGNANT WATER has taken over half of the lopsided basketball court. One STUDENT playfully taps the water with her foot, sending ripples through its placid surface.

TEACHER  
(to kid)  
Nope! Out of the water unless you want gangrene.

STUDENT  
What's 'ganga-ring'?

TEACHER  
Your limbs turn green and fall off.

The kid's eyes widen as they shift course and scurry towards the monkey bars.

TEACHER (CONT'D)  
(to other teachers)  
I thought Mr. Jones was supposed to rope off that area before recess.

TEACHER 2  
Busy with a vomit spill.

TEACHER 3  
Ew.

NEVAEH  
I can grab some cones from the maintenance closet.

TEACHER 3  
Cool.

Nevaeh turns and walks towards the building entrance. A gaggle of kids run by playing tag.

Something tugs roughly at the back of her shirt to stop her.

Nevaeh turns around to see Jenni. Her eyes look tired, purple circles setting in.

NEVAEH  
What's wrong?

JENNI  
My friend told me to tell you something.

NEVAEH  
Excuse me?

JENNI  
Stay away.

NEVAEH  
A student told you to say this?

JENNI  
He doesn't go to this school.

Nevaeh freezes.

JENNI (CONT'D)  
He only visits when we're sleeping.

Nevaeh grabs Jenni's shoulders and leans down to her height.

NEVAEH  
Who is he?

TEACHER (O.S.)  
Nevaeh?

Nevaeh lets go, and Jenni dashes back towards the playground. The Teacher walks over.

TEACHER (CONT'D)  
What are you doing? We're not allowed to touch the kids. The board gets really weird about it.  
(off Nevaeh's expression)  
Everything okay?

NEVAEH  
Yeah, sorry.

She turns back toward the building.

INT. TEACHER'S BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Water SPLASHES across Nevaeh's face. She pulls a paper towel and pats her face dry.

As she STARES into her reflection, her gaze shifts past herself.

A LOW WHISPERING emanates from the mirror.

Suddenly she isn't looking at her face, she is gazing INTO ANOTHER BATHROOM, EXACTLY LIKE THIS ONE BUT GRAY. SOPHIA, perched on the sink counter, stares directly into Nevaeh's eyes.

Sophia's LIPS MOVE, mouthing words Nevaeh can't hear.

Nevaeh jerks back. BLINKS.

Stares at a completely NORMAL mirror, reflecting nothing but her surroundings.

INT. CUSTODIAN'S CLOSET - MOMENTS LATER

Nevaeh opens the janitor's closet and grabs a stack of orange cones.

EXT. PLAYGROUND - MOMENTS LATER

Nevaeh crosses the playground, cones in her arms.

The puddle water sits still - SMOOTH AND GLASSY - perfectly mirroring the sky.

Nevaeh sets the boundaries of a restricted area. A PLAYGROUND FULL OF CHILDREN race behind her, vibrant and alive. The teachers eye Nevaeh, whispering. Whispering. WHISPERING.

DR. PAUL (V.O.)  
Describe your increased anxiety.

NEVAEH (V.O.)  
It's just- increased, I guess. I'm always anxious, but now, every time I walk into a room or notice someone staring at me, I feel...

INT. FAMILY PHYSICIAN OFFICE - DAY

The office is simple, clean and friendly.

Nevaeh sits across from DR. PAUL, 60s, kind-faced and formal.

DR. PAUL  
Paranoid?

NEVAEH  
I guess.

DR. PAUL

Well, we're going to do some blood work, see if your hormone levels are changing, see if anything is out of balance. Think of it like this: As we get older, our bodies start changing. Childhood traumas can resurface. We'll pinpoint what you're going through and start a treatment. In the meantime, I'm going to prescribe you Ativan.

He pulls out a prescription pad and starts writing.

NEVAEH

But what if I have a reason to be paranoid?

DR. PAUL

What do you mean?

NEVAEH

Well, what if the things I'm seeing are real?

DR. PAUL

Hallucinations?

NEVAEH

(reconsidering)

No, not really, no. I mean, it's like sometimes I hear...

DR. PAUL

Voices?

NEVAEH

(backtracking)

No. No. Nevermind. I just mean, I hear my thoughts getting louder and louder the more I'm around... things that I'm afraid of, or something. It's like there are all these triggers, and they go off and I can't tell if what I'm feeling is real. I just want it to stop.

DR. PAUL

You know what, have you heard of exposure therapy?

NEVAEH

You're the second person to mention it this week.

DR. PAUL

You have seventy-six lights in-

NEVAEH

Sixty-seven.

DR. PAUL

Sixty-seven lights in your room.  
Why don't you cut it down to sixty?  
We'll decrease it in slow  
increments. Pace yourself. Then  
maybe even buy a bed frame.

Nevaeh laughs to herself.

DR. PAUL (CONT'D)

Like I said, small steps. Pacing.  
The more you expose yourself to  
thing things you fear, in mild ways  
at first, the less frightening they  
become.

Nevaeh shakes her head and looks at her hands.

DR. PAUL (CONT'D)

Nevaeh?

She looks up.

DR. PAUL (CONT'D)

Do you want to get better?

NEVAEH

I do. That's why I'm here.

INT. NEVAEH'S APARTMENT - DAY

Nevaeh stares at her bedroom from the doorway. It's a mess of empty and crazy.

MONTAGE - VARIOUS

A) INT. NEVAEH'S BEDROOM - Nevaeh takes down a series of string lights.

B) INT. NEVAEH'S APARTMENT - Old candles fly into a used grocery bag. Nevaeh, now in different clothes, different day, walks into the kitchen and dumps the bag in the garbage can.

C) INT. NEVAEH'S BEDROOM - Phone pressed between her shoulder and her ear, another day, another task. She removes the sticky glue from the back of a Tap Lite while talking to her mother.

NEVAEH

Yes, mom, it's going fine. No, he's not allowed to talk about our sessions with you. I'm an adult.

D) INT. APARTMENT BUILDING HALLWAY - Mark and Nevaeh - new day, new challenge - drag two long rectangular IKEA boxes down the hallway.

NEVAEH (CONT'D)

Why?

E) INT. APARTMENT BEDROOM - Nevaeh broods over shitty directions as Mark tries to connect two pieces and fails.

MARK

Mother fu-

F) INT. APARTMENT BEDROOM - Set up is complete. Nevaeh finishes hanging a piece of wall art above her bed frame, then plops down on the mattress.

END OF MONTAGE

INT. NEVAEH'S BEDROOM - DAY

Nevaeh and Mark admire their work.

NEVAEH

It looks like a real room.

MARK

Definitely not like a fake room.

NEVAEH

You know what I mean-

MARK

What about that?

He points to clothes hanging inside THE OPEN CLOSET, SLIDING MIRRORS RIPPED OUT.

INT. PANTRY - MOMENTS LATER

Pantry door OPENS. Resting in the back are two LARGE PANELS. Mark grabs one, pulling it out reveals the FRONT of the panel is a MIRROR.

INT. NEVAEH'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Mark rests the panel against the outside of the closet. He peeks at the track, gauging how to line it up.

Nevaeh lugs in the second panel placing it on top of the first. She eyes it with UNEASE.

MARK  
Can probably line these up pretty  
easily.

NEVAEH  
Can we do it later?

Mark wraps his hands around her waist and pulls her in. She  
lays her arms over his shoulders as he rests his forehead  
against hers.

MARK  
How're you doing? Panicky? You  
okay?

NEVAEH  
I'm fine. I swear. I can't be  
panicky, I'm on Ativan.

MARK  
I know you. You'll find a way.

NEVAEH  
I'm going to be all right. I have  
you.

MARK  
Okay, cheeseball. You know what  
this room needs?

Nevaeh winks. PUSHES Mark onto the bed.

INT. APARTMENT BEDROOM- NIGHT

The two lie next to each other entwined. ASLEEP.

A low WHISPERING pulses into the room.

Nevaeh tosses in her sleep. Eyes SNAP open, body JERKS,  
waking up Mark.

MARK  
What is it?

He REACHES out OVER THE SIDE OF THE BED AND INTO THE DARKNESS  
for the desk lamp on the side table. FLIPS the switch on.

Nevaeh grips the sheets, looking at her surroundings, trying  
to get her bearings.

NEVAEH  
Something's wrong.

MARK  
Medication wear off?

NEVAEH

What does everyone think I need medication? I can HEAR her.

Mark blinks slowly, adjusting to the light. Grabs his cellphone and checks the time.

MARK

It's two a.m.

NEVAEH

She's trying to get me to help, but I-

MARK

You had a bad dream.

NEVAEH

It isn't a dream!

Mark rubs his eyes. Looks at the clock.

MARK

The crazy really isn't cute right now.

NEVAEH

I'm not crazy!

MARK

I'm not saying you're crazy. I'm saying I'm tired, and I thought we were moving past this.

NEVAEH

What if this is real? What if it's real, and I'm not doing anything? Again.

MARK

Nevaeh, it's the middle of the night. Let's not do this right now.

NEVAEH

When would be a good time for you?

MARK

(fed up)  
This is a light.

He reaches over to the lamp.

MARK (CONT'D)

Exhibit A: the light is on.

He flicks the switch.

MARK (CONT'D)  
Exhibit B: the light is off.

He flicks the switch again and the light comes back on.

MARK (CONT'D)  
It's the same fucking room, Nevaeh,  
nothing's changed except  
visibility.

He clicks it ON, OFF, ON, OFF, ON, OFF.

As he does this, the SHADOW OF A HAND CREEPS OUT FROM UNDER  
THE BED, INCHING FORWARD SLOWLY.

NEVAEH  
STOP IT.

MARK  
I can't sleep with the light on.

He flicks the switch OFF.

NEVAEH  
NO!

He flicks it back ON.

MARK  
Fine, but I'm going home.

NEVAEH  
Wait!

He steps OFF OF THE BED--

The hand WITHDRAWS. He grabs his shirt off of the floor, puts  
it on.

MARK  
I've got your back okay. I just  
can't do this every night.

He tugs on his jeans over his boxers. Nevaeh sits there,  
unable to move.

The MIRROR watches him leave.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

A large Catholic church towers over the streets of Chicago.

Christina climbs the steps to the massive front doors,  
followed by Nevaeh.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Nevaeh kneels next to her mother in a pew. Christina prays while Nevaeh's eyes wander to a giant glass mosaic of Mary holding baby Jesus.

NEVAEH

Mom, how do you know she's alive?

CHRISTINA

I feel it.

NEVAEH

In what way?

CHRISTINA

I'll walk into a room, forget why I'm there and suddenly start thinking about her. But it's like I hear something inside myself. God reaching out and telling me she's okay. That she's here. That we can't forget about her. She's going to come home soon.

NEVAEH

Why doesn't God say anything about dad?

CHRISTINA

He's at peace.

NEVAEH

How can someone who was murdered be at peace?

CHRISTINA

Nevaeh, God works in-

NEVAEH

What if you're not hearing God. What if it's her?

CHRISTINA

Do you hear her?

NEVAEH

Are you asking for Dr. Paul or for yourself?

CHRISTINA

If you hear her - if she's reaching out somehow and she needs you, you need to help her. You have to help her, Nevaeh.

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

Bell rings as she hops up the steps to the school entrance.

INT. NEVAEH'S CLASSROOM - DAY

Mid science project. It's a paper mache mess as kids dip STRIPS OF NEWSPAPER into trays of WATERED-DOWN GLUE, and then paste them onto what eventually will be a volcano. An EXAMPLE VOLCANO sits on Nevaeh's desk.

Nevaeh helps a student even out his attempt. She glances up at the clock. Almost lunchtime.

NEVAEH

All right, clean up time. We'll come back to it after lunch.

Kids line up at the corner SINK, washing off their hands. Nevaeh helps gather up trays and clear off desks.

A stream of protests emit from the corner of the room.

STUDENT

Come on, Jenni. It's drying all over my hands.

STUDENT 2

Hurry up.

Water cascades over Jenni's hands, but she stands stock still in front of the mirror - lost. Stares at something the other children can't see.

NEVAEH

Jenni.

Nevaeh walks over.

NEVAEH (CONT'D)

Jenni? What are you-

Nevaeh looks up and into the mirror. Instead of her classroom, a GRAY, DEAD WORLD reflects back.

THE OTHER CHILDREN SIT ODDLY STILL in her student's desks, staring at her.

JENNI

They're watching us, Ms. Rodriguez.

NEVAEH

Do you see him?

Jenni turns and stares at her.

NEVAEH (CONT'D)

If you see him you have to stop talking to him, Jenni. He's not your friend. Promise me.

JENNI

Stay away.

The students standing in line furrow their brows, whisper amongst themselves.

The LUNCH BELL RINGS.

Kids turn on a dime, hustle out of the room and off to freedom.

Nevaeh turns to the mirror, backs away.

INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Nevaeh is the last to exit, face pale. She stands uneasy, leans onto a locker and VOMITS onto the hallway floor.

She looks from the vomit to a pair of shoes standing a few feet away. MR. JONES, the school janitor, shakes his head. Hand gripped on the handle of a mop, attached to a rolling bucket.

NEVAEH

I'm so sorry.

MR. JONES

Nurses' office.

He points down the hall.

NEVAEH

I'm really sorry.

MR. JONES

Go on.

Nevaeh complies.

INT. NURSES' OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Mark looks up, making eye contact with Nevaeh. Pale face. Unfocused eyes.

MARK

What's wrong?

NEVAEH

I think I need to lie down.

MARK  
Yeah, of course.

Mark leads her to the far end of the room with BED COTS.

Nevaeh LIES DOWN as Mark pulls the curtain CLOSED around her cot.

He sits on the edge of her bed.

NEVAEH  
Mark?

MARK  
Yeah.

NEVAEH  
Please don't be mad at me.

MARK  
Never. I'm sorry I snapped. I was tired... But you look exhausted. I can drive you home later if you don't feel up to it yourself.

She nods. He kisses her forehead.

NEVAEH  
Okay. Can you send a sub to my classroom?

Mark exits, leaving Nevaeh ALONE.

CLEAR CUT SILENCE settles over the room.

A MOMENT OF STILLNESS before WHISPERING vibrates off the walls. Nevaeh STIFFENS, clutching her head. CLOSES HER EYES.

NEVAEH (CONT'D)  
No.

VOICE (O.S.)  
Nevaeh?

Nevaeh OPENS her eyes.

She turns to the side edge of her bed. LOOKS DOWN at the floor. Scuffed linoleum stares back.

NEVAEH  
You're here, aren't you?

SOPHIA (O.S.)  
Give me your hand.

Nevaeh breathes in. She leans over the EDGE OF THE BED.

A SHADOW REACHES OUT AND WRAPS AROUND HER, PULLING HER UNDER.

INT. NURSES' OFFICE - **GRAY**

A REVERSED MIRROR IMAGE of the room she left.

Nevaeh gains her bearings. She looks up to meet BIG EYES gleaming back at her - Sophia's.

SOPHIA  
We have to move fast.

Sophia stares just a moment too long. She turns away and walks out of the office.

Nevaeh rushes to her feet and follows.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - **GRAY**

Sophia's head peeks around a corner. Staring at empty tile, rows of lockers, gray fluorescent bulbs.

Clear.

She walks forward, Nevaeh trailing behind.

Sophia pushes open the GIRLS' BATHROOM DOOR.

INT. GIRLS' BATHROOM - **GRAY**

The sinks and stalls sit low to the ground. Made for elementary school children.

Nevaeh looks through the LONG MIRROR OVER THE SINKS at the PINK STALLS.

SOPHIA  
Wait here until the bell rings.

Sophia turns to exit.

NEVAEH  
Don't go-

SOPHIA  
We have to be careful.

NEVAEH  
We can leave. Last time I- I can crack it if we can find some sort of-

SOPHIA  
Why won't you help me?

Nevaeh's eyes glass over.

NEVAEH  
I will.

SOPHIA  
Dad held on. He tried so hard to  
fight him.

NEVAEH  
Him?

SOPHIA  
I saw what happened. I don't want  
that to happen to you.

Sophia scans the flush pink rising in Nevaeh's cheeks. Her eyes flash, a moment of envy.

NEVAEH  
I'm so sorry, Sophia. I didn't mean  
for any of this...

Nevaeh kneels down and hugs Sophia. A piece of Nevaeh's hair falls in front of Sophia's face. Sophia reaches for it. She examines it in her hand.

SOPHIA  
What does it feel like?

NEVAEH  
What do you mean?

SOPHIA  
Growing up?

Nevaeh jerks back slightly. She looks into Sophia's gray eyes.

NEVAEH  
What do you need me to do?

SOPHIA  
Wait here.

Sophia exits.

INT. GIRLS' BATHROOM - **GRAY** - LATER

Nevaeh sits against the far wall. She CLOSES HER EYES. Rubs the palms of her hands against them. Then OPENS them again.

Still here.

The faint sound of a DOOR OPENING draws her attention into the MIRROR, where the janitor, Mr. Jones, backs into the OTHER Girls' Bathroom, one hand on a mop handle, the other guiding a bucket on wheels.

Nevaeh STANDS.

NEVAEH  
Mr. Jones?

She GRIPS the sink and stares in.

Mr. Jones wrings out the end of the mop in the bin. Places it on the ground and pushes.

NEVAEH (CONT'D)  
Can you hear me? LISTEN TO ME.

She lightly SMACKS the glass with her palm.

Mr. Jones pauses mid push. His eyes jerk towards the mirror.

INT. GIRLS' BATHROOM - **ALIVE** - CONTINUOUS

The hairs on the back of his hand stand up.

For a moment, both adults STARE at each other. Mr. Jones seeing himself...

INT. GIRLS' BATHROOM - **GRAY** - CONTINUOUS

...Nevaeh staring directly into his eyes.

Mr. Jones pulls his focus back to the mop, pushing faster, and FASTER. Rushing through the motions.

NEVAEH  
Please help me.

Mr. Jones's eyes FLICKER to the mirror. He wrings out the mop and exits.

Nevaeh turns her attention to the door. Her chest rises and falls with each breath as she pushes it open.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - **GRAY** - CONTINUOUS

Nevaeh pads down the empty hallway. Steps resonating.

Familiar hallways...

Familiar rooms...

She pauses as she approaches a CLASSROOM DOOR, looking in through the glass cutout.

INT. CLASSROOM - **GRAY** - CONTINUOUS

The classroom is FULL of seated students. Unnaturally quiet, calm, STILL.

No teacher. No lesson. Just small, blank faces staring at an empty whiteboard.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - **GRAY** - CONTINUOUS

She continues on, peeking through the glass cut outs - passing the doors faster and faster - each group of children in the same position.

EVERY CLASSROOM IS LIKE THIS.

INT. CLASSROOM 2 - **GRAY** - CONTINUOUS

As her body eclipses another door frame, A CHILD'S HEAD TURNS towards the movement.

The calm face of a nine-year-old LITTLE BOY.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - **GRAY** - CONTINUOUS

Nevaeh reaches a fork in the hallway. Looking at the classroom number on the wall.

She looks left, right, and back the way she came. Finally choosing to go...

INT. BOY'S CLASSROOM - **GRAY** - CONTINUOUS

The little boy rises from his seat. ALL HEADS turn to stare as he walks out of the room in Nevaeh's direction.

INT. HALLWAY - **GRAY** - CONTINUOUS

He steps into the hallway and directly into Sophia.

BOY  
Why aren't you in class?

SOPHIA  
Why aren't you?

BOY  
Did you see something in the hall?

SOPHIA  
No.

BOY  
So?

SOPHIA  
The bell's about to ring.

BOY  
It hasn't.

Sophia stares, unblinking.

BOY (CONT'D)  
What did you do?

SOPHIA  
Nothing.

BOY  
I won't warn you again. Go back to  
class.

Sophia's body becomes rigid, as though controlled by his gaze. Her knees jerk, feet moving forward, every step met with resistance over something she can't control.

SOPHIA  
Don't-tell-me-what-to-do.

Her body betraying her, Sophia fights as she turns and heads down the hallway from the way that she came.

INT. HALLWAY - **GRAY** - CONTINUOUS

Nevaeh reaches room 208. HER CLASSROOM.

INT. ROOM 208 - **GRAY** - CONTINUOUS

Nevaeh enters the familiar, yet flipped setting.

She walks towards her desk at the back of the room. She ogles the 'Mrs. Rodriguez' NAME PLATE.

The MIRROR above the corner sink has become a WINDOW into her OTHER classroom.

Nevaeh is DRAWN TO IT. A window into COLOR, into LIFE.

The SUBSTITUTE TEACHER directs Nevaeh's rambunctious lot of students - bouncy, jittery, talkative.

She TEARS her eyes back into the GRAY CLASSROOM and onto...

A contrasting set of students - STILL, DESPONDENT. On closer inspection... TERRIFIED.

The backs of their heads are unmoving as they stare straight at the WHITE BOARD.

Nevaeh walks between a row of students, each in their pajamas, some from different eras.

NEVAEH  
I'm looking for Sophia. Sophia  
Rodriguez?

Not one child turns in acknowledgement.

NEVAEH (CONT'D)  
Can anyone help me find-

CHILD  
I want to go home.

Nevaeh searches for the voice.

The Child tries to turn her head towards Nevaeh - barely able to move an inch before being pulled back to center.

CHILD 2  
Can you help us?

Nevaeh takes a step back.

CHILD  
You're just like the others.

NEVAEH  
What others?

CHILD 3  
The other adults.

NEVAEH  
Is there another adult here I can  
talk to?

Silence.

CHILD  
Not anymore.

CHILD 2  
Stop talking.

NEVAEH  
What, why?

CHILD  
You're going to get us in trouble.

CHILD 2  
I said stop talking.

CHILD  
He hurts them if we bring them here. Sophia's going to be in big trouble.

The children start to shake slightly.

CHILD 2  
I told you to stop talking! He knows.

NEVAEH  
How?

CHILD 2  
We can feel it.

All at once, the children turn towards her. Their pupils dilate, widening their eye sockets.

INT. CLASSROOM - **GRAY** - CONTINUOUS

An image of Nevaeh crosses over the Little Boy's eyes. He cocks his head as the BELL BLARES through the loudspeaker. Looking up at it, his eyes go back to normal.

INT. CLASSROOM 2 - **GRAY** - CONTINUOUS

Sophia watches the speaker as the bell dies out. Her dilated pupils contracting back to normal too.

SOPHIA  
You don't listen.

INT. NEVAEH'S CLASSROOM - **GRAY** - CONTINUOUS

Everyone RISES simultaneously. Almost in sync. Eyes fading to normal. The children turn towards her.

CHILD  
Please help us.

Nevaeh stands paralyzed gripping the door handle. The Child walks up to her.

CHILD (CONT'D)  
You're going to need to run now.

INT. HALLWAY - **GRAY** - CONTINUOUS

Swarms of students file in one direction down the hallway.

Nevaeh pushes in the opposite direction. Eyes wildly looking for something.

NEVAEH  
Can someone tell me where the  
girls' bathroom is? Anyone, can  
someone-?

Nevaeh SENSES SOMETHING WATCHING HER.

At the far end of the hall, the Little Boy's stare lasers in on Nevaeh. He slowly walks towards her. The veins in his eye sockets swelling with black liquid, pulsing.

Nevaeh's whole body SHUDDERS.

She tears around and into the stream of students, running towards the exit.

EXT. SCHOOL - **GRAY** - CONTINUOUS

Students file out of the LARGE DOUBLE DOORS. Nevaeh follows them down the steps.

She STOPS. STARES out at a DULL FOG, leering over the corners of the school boundaries, obstructing a greater view of the street.

Students enter the fog without hesitation. Their small bodies fading into it and out of view.

She looks back at the school entrance.

The Little Boy stands at the top of the steps peering down at her. ANGER swelling in his eyes as they POOL INTO COMPLETE DARKNESS, the edges of his mouth BLACKENING.

He steps FORWARD.

Nevaeh instinctively TAKES OFF INTO THE FOG.

INT. FOG - **GRAY** - CONTINUOUS

The thick cloud engulfs her at once.

She falters. Turning left. Right.

The silhouette of a LITTLE GIRL with Sophia's long hair appears in front of her. As she starts fading, Nevaeh plunges after the girl.

EXT. UNKNOWN HOUSE - **GRAY** - CONTINUOUS

The fog lightens up at the edge of a SINGLE STORY HOUSE. The Little Girl opens the front door and enters.

Nevaeh pauses. Then follows.

INT. UNKNOWN HOUSE - **GRAY** - CONTINUOUS

Nevaeh lightly shuts the door, taking care to be silent.

The dark front hallway is empty.

A chair SCRAPES against the hardwood floor in another room. Nevaeh follows the sound into the...

INT. UNKNOWN HOUSE - **GRAY** LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Nevaeh peeks around the wall into a dreary middle-class living room.

What might look lovely in another world is lost in translation. It's gray, dead.

The Little Girl drags a dining room chair into the middle of the living room and STANDS ON IT.

Facing what would be a LARGE MIRROR, she looks through a window INTO a colorful reflection of the room she stands in.

From her new vantage point, she watches in on a COLORFUL SCENE. A MIDDLE-AGED MAN with a pot belly and a TEENAGE BOY with similar features CHEER wildly at the TELEVISION.

A MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN juggles three microwave dinners, which she plops onto TV trays. She joins in a WHOOP of joy as the Patriots score.

Their joy and laughter is FAINT but HEARD, reflecting in the little girl's EYES. Her young features absorbing the warmth from another world. Soaking them in.

Nevaeh shifts her weight. A floorboard CREAKS.

The Little Girl's head SNAPS in Nevaeh's direction.

LITTLE GIRL  
GET OUT!

NEVAEH  
I'm so sorry. I'm lost.

LITTLE GIRL  
GO TO YOUR OWN HOME.

The Little Girl steps off her chair and advances towards Nevaeh.

NEVAEH  
I don't know how to-

The Little Girl's eyes focus in before dilating into BLACK ORBS.

LITTLE GIRL  
I SAID GET OUT!

Nevaeh SPRINTS to the door, RIPS it open and runs out into the open yard.

The figure of the Boy emerges, eyes dilated. His lips turn up into a smirk.

Nevaeh shoots in the other direction, barreling into the fog.

INT. FOG - CONTINUOUS

Her running turns into a slow jog. She stops.

Nothing in any direction.

She reaches her arm out. The mist almost covers it from view.

NEVAEH  
Home.

She takes off again. Running.

Still nothing. She doesn't slow.

NEVAEH (CONT'D)  
Sophia. Home. I want to go home.

Out of the haze emerges the outline of her childhood home.

EXT. RODRIGUEZ HOUSE - **GRAY** - CONTINUOUS

The facade of the house is flipped, dark, eerie.

Nevaeh runs up the front steps and into the front door.

INT. LIVING ROOM - **GRAY** - CONTINUOUS

Nevaeh takes in the FAMILIAR YET INVERTED living room. Its gray features flattening the affinity.

She continues into the...

INT. KITCHEN - **GRAY** - CONTINUOUS

Nevaeh watches Christina chop carrots through the kitchen mounted mirror. She scoops slices and places them into a soup pot on the stove.

NEVAEH

You were right. She's here.

Nevaeh watches her mother pause.

NEVAEH (CONT'D)

I'm going to bring her home.

She continues on.

INT. LIVING ROOM - **GRAY** - CONTINUOUS

Nevaeh turns to the stairs.

INT. STAIRS - **GRAY** - CONTINUOUS

Nevaeh bounds up the steps...

INT. HALLWAY - **GRAY** - CONTINUOUS

Into the dark, claustrophobia inducing hallway.

NEVAEH

Sophia?

INT. GIRLS' BEDROOM - **GRAY** - CONTINUOUS

She swings the door open. No one.

Nevaeh steps inside, entranced.

Of the two SLIDING GLASS MIRRORS, one is BLACK. Broken.

INT. HALLWAY - **GRAY** - CONTINUOUS

Nevaeh steps out. Searching faster.

NEVAEH

Sophia?

She glances into her mother's room. No one.

INT. STEPS - **GRAY** - CONTINUOUS

She glides down the stairs, two at a time.

NEVAEH

Sophia?

A whisper emanates from the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN - **GRAY** - CONTINUOUS

Rounding the corner, Nevaeh looks up to see her mother through the looking glass, PRAYING in front of her sister.

NEVAEH

Sophia.

Sophia turns and looks at her.

LITTLE BOY (O.S.)

I told you to stay away. You're ruining everything.

Nevaeh whips her head towards the other half of the kitchen, where the Little Boy stands.

Nevaeh snatches Sophia's arm and runs.

EXT. RODRIGUEZ HOUSE - **GRAY** - CONTINUOUS

The girls fly down the front steps, Nevaeh looking over her shoulder.

They descend into the fog.

EXT. FOG - CONTINUOUS

The view of the house and of the street is GONE.

SOPHIA

Where are you going?

Their footsteps tap lightly in an otherwise silent world.

NEVAEH

I think-

In the distance, Nevaeh's apartment building towers through the mist.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - **GRAY** - LOBBY

They tear through the lobby.

PRESS the elevator key as Nevaeh looks out to the street, where the silhouette of the little boy EMERGES FROM THE FOG.

The elevator lift opens.

INT. ELEVATOR - **GRAY** - CONTINUOUS

Nevaeh tugs Sophia inside. The doors shut.

Three mirror panels surround them. REFLECTING NOTHING.

NEVAEH  
Why haven't you left?

SOPHIA  
I can't.

NEVAEH  
Dad came out. *I* came out. Why?

SOPHIA  
I tried.

Sophia looks into the mirror, takes her small fist and BEATS it against one panel. It CRACKS.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)  
It won't let me.

She BEATS it again - a fracture, close to breaking. BEATS it again and the MIRROR GOES BLACK.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)  
Because you let me die in here.

The doors OPEN. Nevaeh pauses and stares at Sophia before scooping up her hand and running out.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - **GRAY** HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Nevaeh turns right out of the elevator, staring at the apartment numbers.

She stops. Reorients. Turns around and runs with Sophia the other way.

NEVAEH

If you're with me- if you're  
holding onto me then we can-

SOPHIA

You have to stay here.

Nevaeh reaches her door, then pats down her body for a key, realizing she doesn't have one. Tries the door handle. Turns it and steps inside.

Sophia looks down the hall as the little boy comes into view. Clocking her options, she follows Nevaeh inside.

INT. NEVAEH'S APARTMENT - **GRAY** - CONTINUOUS

Nevaeh LOCKS the dead bolt, then the chain link.

She leans her back against the door, thinking.

SOPHIA

Why couldn't you listen? Now I  
don't have a choice.

NEVAEH

What?

EXT. NEVAEH'S APARTMENT - **GRAY** - CONTINUOUS

The little boy SLAMS his fists against Nevaeh's door.

Darkness spills out of his eye sockets along with his RAGE.  
His mouth howling - a BLACK MASS.

INT. NEVAEH'S BEDROOM - **GRAY** - CONTINUOUS

Nevaeh grabs the LAMP off the side table, stares through the  
Looking Glass, then SMASHES it against the would-be mirror.

DEEP CRACKS spider from the point of collision.

SOPHIA

Stop it!

NEVAEH

Trust me. We have to try.

Nevaeh grabs Sophia's hand.

SOPHIA

I don't want you to leave.

NEVAEH  
We're both going to leave I  
promise.

SOPHIA  
You DON'T understand.

Sophia struggles against her grip. The sound of the front door BREAKING OPEN makes Sophia's head turn.

NEVAEH  
It's going to be okay.

Nevaeh lifts her hand gripping the lamp. Brings it DOWN onto the fractured glass. It SMASHES open.

A TEAR BETWEEN THE TWO REALITIES.

A RUSH of screaming wind comes at them from all directions.

The boy bursts in.

Nevaeh PUSHES through the fissure, PULLING her sister behind her.

As she steps INTO--

INT. NEVAEH'S BEDROOM - **ALIVE** - CONTINUOUS

-- her room. Sophia's hand, which now resembles a dark shadow, slips out of her grip.

The sudden loss of Sophia's weight throws her off balance. She falls to the ground, landing on shattered glass.

Nevaeh flips around. THE OPENING HAS SEALED ITSELF. It's only a broken mirror now.

NEVAEH  
Sophia! No. No-

INT. NEVAEH'S BEDROOM - **GRAY** - CONTINUOUS

Sophia beats her fists against the fragmented closet door.

SOPHIA  
No. No. No. NO! YOU PROMISED!

Her pupils widen as the little boy drags her backwards.

She forces her way out of his grip. Eye sockets gushing black tar onto her cheeks. Corners of her mouth charring.

INT. NEVAEH'S BEDROOM - **ALIVE** - CONTINUOUS

Nevaeh scrambles backwards on her hands and knees. Hits the BEDPOST and jumps to her feet.

A shadow SWIPES out from under the bed reaching for her foot, missing.

Nevaeh snatches up the side table lamp, sprinting out of the room.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - **ALIVE**- HALLWAY

Nevaeh makes her way down the hall. Presses the elevator button.

INT. ELEVATOR - **ALIVE**- CONTINUOUS

She steps inside. MUFFLED SHRIEKING RESONATES FROM THE OTHER SIDE OF THE GLASS. The elevator mirrors only show Nevaeh's reflection - hair matted, red fluid running from the gashes in her face and arms.

INT. ELEVATOR - **GRAY** - CONTINUOUS

The little boy holds onto a still screaming Sophia - her features contorting. She bursts from his grip.

She POUNDS on the mirror panel.

SOPHIA  
HOW CAN YOU LEAVE ME?!

INT. ELEVATOR - **ALIVE** - CONTINUOUS

Nevaeh holds her ears. Eyeing the count down.

5...4...3... She looks at the BROKEN a mirror panel on her left.

2... SMASHES the panel to her right.

1... SMASHES the middle panel. The SCREAMS STOP.

Elevator doors OPEN. She calmly steps out.

EXT. RODRIGUEZ HOUSE - **ALIVE** - NIGHT

Nevaeh pounds on the door.

Footsteps approach. The door swings open. Christina stands in her robe.

CHRISTINA  
Nevaeh, it's late.

Nevaeh walks past her mother. Lamp base in hand.

CHRISTINA (CONT'D)  
What's wrong, honey? What happened?

She strides to the LIVING ROOM MIRROR and SMASHES it in one blow.

CHRISTINA (CONT'D)  
Nevaeh! What are you doing?

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Nevaeh marches into the kitchen and STRIKES the kitchen mirror in two BLOWS.

CHRISTINA  
Stop it!

Nevaeh drops the lamp base onto the floor.

CHRISTINA (CONT'D)  
What are you doing?

NEVAEH  
They're in the mirrors, mom.  
They're watching us.

CHRISTINA  
What?

NEVAEH  
She's been talking to you.

CHRISTINA  
*Sophia?*

NEVAEH  
Do you feel it? Sometimes, when I'm standing in the bathroom, or I come over. She's following us, mom. And that *thing* has her.

Christina notes the caked blood on her daughter.

CHRISTINA  
Stay here. I'm going to get dressed. Too late to visit Dr. Paul. We're going to the ER.

Nevaeh GRABS her mother's wrist.

NEVAEH  
*Don't go upstairs. It isn't safe.  
 He knows she's been talking to us.*

Christina looks from Nevaeh to her wrist.

CHRISTINA  
*Okay. Okay, honey. I'll just get my  
 keys then.*

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Nevaeh lies in a hospital bed. Vacant stare, straight at the ceiling.

INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Christina paces outside Nevaeh's door. Mark jogs up to the room.

MARK  
*I got here as fast as I could. What  
 happened?*

CHRISTINA  
*(unraveling)  
 I don't know. Showed up with more  
 cuts -- breaking things in the  
 house. She's talking about seeing  
 things, and I don't know if it's  
 the medication or if she's having a  
 nervous breakdown, and what do I  
 do, Mark? What do I do?*

Mark gives her a hug.

MARK  
*It's okay. She's going to be okay.  
 I can take over for a while. Go  
 home, and I'll call you. All right?*

Christina nods.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Nevaeh lies in a hospital bed. Vacant stare, straight at the ceiling.

Mark walks in and pulls a chair close to her beside. Sits.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A knock resounds from the door frame.

DETECTIVE KELLY (O.S.)  
Nevaeh Rodriguez? May we come in?

Mark rises to his feet. DETECTIVE KELLY, stout, flashes his badge at Mark while looking at Nevaeh. DETECTIVE HUNT, stern, follows.

NEVAEH  
Yes.

DETECTIVE HUNT  
We'd like to ask you a few questions about Jennifer Moore.

NEVAEH  
She's one of my students.

DETECTIVE HUNT  
Did you that know she's missing?

MARK  
What are you talking about?

DETECTIVE KELLY  
(ignoring Mark)  
We'd like to know your whereabouts yesterday.

NEVAEH  
School. I mean, I didn't feel well. I went home after lunch.

DETECTIVE KELLY  
Can anyone verify that?

MARK  
I can.

DETECTIVE KELLY  
Were you with her last night, Mr.-?

Mark looks at Nevaeh, then back at the detectives.

MARK  
Mark Shin. I work at the school. She went home early to rest.

The detectives give Nevaeh a once over, eyeing her bandages.

DETECTIVE KELLY  
This happen every time you leave early to "rest?"

NEVAEH

I'm a sleepwalker. You can talk to my mother. She's the one who brought me here.

DETECTIVE KELLY

We will.

DETECTIVE HUNT

One last thing.

Detective Kelly flips over a notebook.

DETECTIVE HUNT (CONT'D)

Several weeks ago a group of teachers witnessed you grabbing her on the playground. Yesterday, students in your third grade class claim she told you to "stay away" from her.

NEVAEH

That's out of context. That's not what she meant. I would never hurt any one of my students.

MARK

That's really enough. If you want to bring her in, you have to do it after she's out of here.

DETECTIVE KELLY

We will.

Detective one taps his notebook on the edge of the bed, eyeing her wrapped wounds. They turn and leave.

Mark looks at Nevaeh.

MARK

What was that about?

NEVAEH

(inaudible to Mark)  
He took Jenni.

MARK

What?

Nevaeh buries her eyes in her hands. Shakes her head.

Mark considers her for a moment.

MARK (CONT'D)

What aren't you telling me?

NEVAEH

I keep trying. Trying to tell everyone. I don't know how to make it make sense. It doesn't.

She look up into Mark's eyes.

NEVAEH (CONT'D)

I wouldn't hurt anyone.

MARK

I know.

He holds her stare.

INT. FAMILY PHYSICIAN OFFICE - DAY

Dr. Paul sits opposite of Nevaeh, jotting down notes.

DR. PAUL

You took on too much. It's that simple. We said small steps.

NEVAEH

Okay.

DR. PAUL

You can't force something for immediate results. You have to give things time.

NEVAEH

I don't think that's the issue anymore.

DR. PAUL

What do you think the issue is?

Nevaeh sits silently. Averting his gaze.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Mark drives. The suburbs pass by unawares.

DR. PAUL (V.O.)

Do you have anyone you can stay with?

He looks into the rear view mirror at Nevaeh, who lays down in the back seat, head and torso covered with a blanket.

NEVAEH (V.O.)

Yes.

INT. MARK'S APARTMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Mark fumbles with his keys. Nevaeh grabs his wrist.

NEVAEH

You have to cover the mirrors.

INT. MARK'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

A medium sized one-bedroom apartment, sparsely decorated but lived in. Lights ALL ON, still dense spots of darkness infiltrate the space.

Mark shuffles through a DRAWER, grabs DUCT TAPE.

INT. MARK'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Mark pulls a sheet off his bed and enters the--

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

He tears a piece of duct tape, places the sheet against the mirror and starts TAPING.

Catching sight of his face, he pauses. Hearing something SOFTLY MURMURING.

He looks around the bathroom for the source of the sound before settling back on the mirror.

Another piece of tape rips. He secures the sheet firmly. Blocking the view of the mirror altogether.

INT. MARK'S APARTMENT - LATER THAT NIGHT

Mark sits on the couch, Nevaeh resting against him. He gently runs his hand through her hair.

The TV flickers over Nevaeh's face, her eyes fluttering, fighting sleep.

They finally CLOSE.

Mark slips off of the couch. He picks up his cellphone, dials.

INT. CHILDHOOD BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Christina sits in front of the closet mirror.

CHRISTINA  
 Baby, can you hear me? Are you  
 there? Say something.

Her phone buzzes from her pocket. She answers it.

CHRISTINA (CONT'D)  
 Hello?

**INTERCUT**

Mark paces in the kitchen.

MARK  
 Hey, it's Mark. I just wanted to  
 give you a call to tell you she's  
 going to be okay.

**INTERCUT**

Christina stares into the mirror as Sophia appears. She  
 covers her mouth, muffling a sob.

CHRISTINA  
 Thank you.

INT. MARK'S APARTMENT - DAY

Daylight floods in. Nevaeh blinks awake.

On the couch, wrapped up in a blanket. Alone.

NEVAEH  
 Mark?

Light footsteps come from Mark's room. He peeks his head out  
 of the door frame, drying himself with a towel.

MARK  
 Morning.

He walks over, kisses her on the forehead.

MARK (CONT'D)  
 Called in your prescription.

Nevaeh rubs her eyes with the palms of her hands.

MARK (CONT'D)  
 Hey, it'll blow over.

NEVAEH  
 They're going to fire me.

MARK

You didn't do anything wrong.  
You'll feel better if you go  
outside. Walk around. Pick up your  
meds. Do things.

NEVAEH

I will do all of the things.

MARK

Perfect. See you after work.

EXT. PHARMACY - DAY

Clouds well up in the sky. Nevaeh exits the pharmacy carrying a prescription bag.

The sky breaks. A spatter of rain shoots down. Nevaeh looks across the street at the LIBRARY.

INT. LIBRARY - CONTINUOUS

Slightly damp, but otherwise unharmed. Nevaeh approaches the FRONT DESK and a bored looking LIBRARIAN.

NEVAEH

Hi, do you have, like, computers  
with internet connection that, you  
know, connect to the internet? Is  
that a thing libraries do?

LIBRARIAN

Obviously.

NEVAEH

It's just been a while-

LIBRARIAN

Second floor.

NEVAEH

Printers too?

INT. LIBRARY COMPUTER AREA - LATER

Nevaeh sits in front of an online article re: Jennifer Moore.

*...taken from home after 10pm... No sign of forced entry... indicates it could be someone the family knew... No witnesses...*

At the bottom of the article are "Missing" posters of different children.

She hits print.

Nevaeh tabs open a new window. Clicks into the search bar:

*"Intruder under the bed" + missing child*

A long list of results pop up. She scrolls to the bottom of the search page. Hits NEXT. Skims the descriptions. Hits next again.

*Missing child 1972... intruder his under the bed... 1995 New York State...1963 West Essex... Buenos Aires 2005, shards of glass found at crime scene...*

Nevaeh clicks into an article and zooms in on a PHOTO OF A BEDROOM. FULL LENGTH MIRROR shattered. Exits the tab.

Opens a new search bar.

*Sophia Rodriguez + missing child + Chicago, Illinois 1996*

She clicks open search results.

*No sign of forced entry... after 10pm. Intruder hid under the bed... Robert Rodriguez, deceased... missing child not found ... police investigating case similar to the disappearance of classmate Sara Cartwright.*

NEVAEH

Sara Cartwright.

Nevaeh clicks the hyperlink to an article on Sara Cartwright, an 8 year old with a big smile. She thinks back - a flash of a GAUNT CHILD from her gray classroom.

She hits print.

INT. SCHOOL - LATER

Nevaeh sweeps down the hallway, avoiding detection. Comes up to the nurses' office.

INT. NURSES OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Mark and his COWORKER chat. Nevaeh leans into the room.

NEVAEH

Mark. I need your help.

EXT. CARTWRIGHT HOUSE - DAY

Light drops of rain fall onto a middle class neighborhood.

A one-story house stands out. A little outdated. Paint chipping. Lawn unkept.

Nevaeh ducks for shelter on the porch, Mark trailing behind. RINGS the door bell, then waits.

Nevaeh rings the doorbell again, then knocks.

She edges over to a window. Uses her sleeve to wipe dirt and dew off. She PEERS inside.

A WOMAN in her 40s sits idly in front of a television. Unmoving, maybe catatonic. Until her head SNAPS towards Nevaeh.

Nevaeh stumbles backwards as the front door OPENS. NATHAN, 20s, rough around the eyes and around the edges appears.

NATHAN

What do you want?

NEVAEH

My name is Nevaeh Rodriguez. I wanted to talk to Mrs. Cartwright about Sara.

Nathan chuckles to himself.

NATHAN

Good luck. And you?

MARK

I'm just here for the ride.

INT. CARTWRIGHT HOUSE - DAY

The television plays a NCIS spinoff. MRS. CARTWRIGHT, 40s, sits in a recliner, a gaunt purple-veined face and hands peeking out of a turtleneck.

Her stare is distant, focused on a MIRROR across the room. It's width on the wall making the living room a little larger.

NATHAN

Mom?

Mrs. Cartwright continues to stare at the mirror.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

Give her a minute to warm up. Would you like water, coffee or something?

NEVAEH

Water would be nice. Thank you.

Mark shakes his head.

NATHAN  
I've got something on the stove, so  
give me a second.

Nathan exits to the kitchen.

MARK  
Nevaeh, what are we doing here?

NEVAEH  
Mrs. Cartwright, can I talk to you  
about your daughter?

Mrs. Cartwright looks to Nevaeh.

MRS. CARTWRIGHT  
(croaks)  
Who are you?

Her voice coarse from a lack of use. She takes a shaky hand  
and rubs her windpipe.

NEVAEH  
My name is Nevaeh. My sister was  
taken, like Sara.

MRS. CARTWRIGHT  
The boy.

NEVAEH  
I know.

MARK  
Nevaeh?

Nevaeh reaches into her pocket. Unfolds a newspaper article.  
Hands it to Mrs. Cartwright.

NEVAEH  
You've been inside, haven't you?  
With Sara?

Mrs. Cartwright sits up, limbs trembling slightly. She pulls  
back her long sleeve shirt, revealing DEEP SCARS covering her  
arms.

Mark looks from Mrs. Cartwright to Nevaeh, taking in Nevaeh's  
fresh bandages.

MARK  
I think maybe it's best if we go-

NEVAEH  
I want to help her. All of them-

MRS. CARTWRIGHT  
You can't help my little girl. You  
can't help your sister.

Mark puts his hand on Nevaeh's shoulder, signaling an exit.

MARK  
It was really nice meeting you-

NEVAEH  
Mark-

MRS. CARTWRIGHT  
He changes them. They're not ours  
anymore. They don't want to leave.  
They can't. You go in again, and  
she's going to find a way to keep  
you there.

Mark eyes the kitchen and exits in its direction.

NEVAEH  
But he's taken a child I know.

MRS. CARTWRIGHT  
You can't help her.

Mark and Nathan emerge from the kitchen.

MARK  
We're going to go now.

She points to the mirror, shaking.

MRS. CARTWRIGHT  
Careful.

Nathan emerges from the kitchen.

NATHAN  
I've been talking to Mark here, and  
we think it's best if you ladies  
wrap it up.

MRS. CARTWRIGHT  
He'll be watching you too.

Nevaeh grips the couch cushion, lets go and follows Mark out.

EXT. PORCH - CONTINUOUS

Nathan closes the door behind them.

NATHAN  
I don't appreciate you stirring  
things up.

MARK

I'm sorry-

NEVAEH

She's not crazy.

NATHAN

She's not in her right mind. Those scars... you have to understand, she was very depressed after it all happened. Found her on the bathroom floor with a shards of glass sticking out of her arm. That kind of a thing.

(to Nevaeh)

Look, take care of yourself. I'm sorry for what happened to your sister. Don't find yourself slipping down the same road.

INT. MARK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Nevaeh follows Mark inside. He heads towards the open kitchen, grabs a glass, fills it with water from the refrigerator door.

NEVAEH

This proves what's happening to me.

MARK

You think taking me to a house in the middle of nowhere, listening to a stranger talk incoherently is proof of... what exactly?

NEVAEH

Two people don't just randomly have the same delusion. She's seen the same things.

MARK

You shouldn't be seeing things. You should be taking your medication.

NEVAEH

You heard her. You have to help me.

MARK

I am helping you.

Mark hands Nevaeh the glass. Grabs her purse and takes out the pharmacy bag.

NEVAEH

Stop it.

She takes it from his hand and chucks it across the room.

They stare at each other a moment. Mark turns and heads for his bedroom.

MARK  
I need some space.

NEVAEH  
Don't-

Nevaeh fumbles with the glass, spilling water onto the floor. She dashes to the kitchen counter, places the cup down as the bedroom door slams shut. The lock clicks.

NEVAEH (CONT'D)  
Mark, it isn't safe.

She smacks her hand on the door.

INT. MARK'S BEDROOM - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Mark rips the blanket off of his bathroom mirror, rolls it into a ball.

NEVAEH (O.S.)  
I know I sound crazy, okay? I know it doesn't make sense. I need you to trust me.

MARK  
I'm trying.

INT. MARK'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Nevaeh's palms press against the door.

NEVAEH  
We have an obligation to help Jenni.

INT. MARK'S BEDROOM - BATHROOM -CONTINUOUS

Mark leans on the sink, shakes his head, staring at his reflection.

MARK  
If you know something, you need to go to the police after you take your medication.

Mark walks into...

INT. MARK'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

A shadow STIRS UNDERNEATH THE BED FRAME as Mark walks towards it.

NEVAEH (O.S.)  
They're not going to believe me.

He stops. Crouches down. Sees nothing but darkness.

MARK  
I'm going to lay down for a while.

NEVAEH (O.S.)  
Stay away from the bed.

Mark closes his eyes.

MARK  
Please leave me alone.

A shadow reaches out towards him.

INT. MARK'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

A large THUD shakes the baseboards.

NEVAEH  
Mark?

The sound of a struggle. Scraping, dragging, then NOTHING.

Nevaeh pounds her fists against the door.

NEVAEH (CONT'D)  
MARK!

She tugs at the door handle. The lock holds it secure.

She drops to all fours and peeks through the sliver under the door - NO ONE THERE.

Fists pounds on the door again and again.

Nevaeh's breath quickens, faster, faster - hyperventilating.

INT. MARK'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER - NIGHT

Tires SCREECH out of the parking lot. Down the damp Chicago road.

Nevaeh checks the rear view mirror, contemplating.

EXT. RODRIGUEZ HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Fist pounds on the front door. Hits the doorbell.

Nevaeh scrambles with her key ring. Unlocks it.

INT. RODRIGUEZ HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The moon shines through the living room blinds, creating bars of light across the furniture.

Nevaeh moves towards the base of the stairs.

Voices turn her attention upward.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Nevaeh cuts through the darkness towards her childhood bedroom, the door ajar.

CHRISTINA (O.S.)

I will.

A muffled whisper replies. Nevaeh inches up to the bedroom door and peers in.

INT. CHILDHOOD BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Christina kneels in front of the one intact closet mirror.

NEVAEH

Mom?

Christina turns.

CHRISTINA

We knew you'd come.

NEVAEH

Who are you talking to?

A short burst of murmuring comes from the mirror.

CHRISTINA

You don't have much time.

Nevaeh walks closer to the closet. No Sophia in the reflection.

Nevaeh tries to pick up her mother, who staggers to her feet.

NEVAEH  
 (whispers quietly)  
 Mom, go downstairs. I'm going to  
 call Aunt Shelly.

Christina grabs onto Nevaeh's arms.

CHRISTINA  
 I'm going to take care of the  
 house. You take care of her, okay?

Christina shoves her daughter into the middle of the room.  
 Nevaeh falls onto her back. Christina lunges on top of her,  
 pushing her towards the underside of her childhood bed.

The women grapple, pushing, screeching. Christina pushes  
 Nevaeh an inch too far towards the dark underbelly - a hand  
 reaches out and pulls her in.

INT. CHILDHOOD BEDROOM - **GRAY** - CONTINUOUS

Nevaeh scrambles back, ripping her arm out of Sophia's grip.  
 She pushes herself to her feet as Sophia moves towards the  
 door.

NEVAEH  
 What did you do to mom?

SOPHIA  
 We're going to be late.

NEVAEH  
 Tell me what's going on. Please,  
 where's Mark?

SOPHIA  
 At school.

NEVAEH  
 Why would you take him?

SOPHIA  
 I wanted to make sure you'd help. I  
 can't do this without you.

NEVAEH  
 Do what?

SOPHIA  
 Make the boy stop. Someone has to  
 let him know we're not his friends.  
 He keeps taking more and more. He  
 has your Jenni.

NEVAEH  
 Where?

SOPHIA  
I'll show you.

Sophia turns and walks out of the bedroom. Nevaeh passes the looking glass, her mother staring blankly into it.

EXT. RODRIGUEZ HOUSE - **GRAY** - MOMENTS LATER

Sophia descends from the porch into the fog. Nevaeh hesitates. Watches Sophia slip into the mist and follows.

INT. FOG - CONTINUOUS

Nevaeh takes in a long breath.

TIME SLOWS.

She exhales, and the school comes into view.

EXT. SCHOOL - **GRAY** - CONTINUOUS

The school boundaries cut into the mist. Clearing up the closer they get.

Sophia bounds up the school steps. Nevaeh at her heels.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - **GRAY** - CONTINUOUS

Sophia walks with purpose. Navigating the maze with easy and authority.

SOPHIA  
Just a little further.

Nevaeh stares into open classrooms. ALL EMPTY.

EXT. SCHOOL PLAYGROUND - **GRAY** - CONTINUOUS

A wet dew clings to blades of gray grass. The metal swing set creaks.

Students pile into the playground, standing stock still in the crowd.

The crowd PARTS as the little boy moves forward towards a LINE OF CHILDREN in the middle of the courtyard. Unlike everything else, these children are ALIVE.

CHILD 1  
I want to go home-

CHILD 2  
I want my mom-

JENNI  
Please...

Jenni wraps her arms tightly around herself.

INT. HALLWAY - **GRAY** - CONTINUOUS

Nevaeh stands WIDE EYED, staring THROUGH the glass cutout in the iron exit door to the playground.

NEVAEH  
Jenni!

Nevaeh pushes at the exit doors, but Sophia GRABS her wrist.

SOPHIA  
There's nothing you can do.

Nevaeh tries to pull out of her grasp.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)  
I said-

Sophia's eyes dilate.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)  
There's nothing you can do. Which is funny isn't it? That you care so much about her when you don't really care about me.

Her childlike form grows slightly, making her taller.

EXT. SCHOOL PLAYGROUND - **GRAY** - CONTINUOUS

The Boy ADVANCES on the live children, tilting his head.

The veins in his eyes squirm, pupils dilate, burning his eye sockets. Itching to engulf the span of his face.

His mouth OPENS in the shape of a SCREAM, becoming large - LARGER THAN HIS FACE - until his dark form enlarges into a giant human-shaped mass.

THE CHILDREN'S PLEAS RING OUT.

JENNI  
PLEASE-

He is the ABSENCE OF MATTER. He does not reflect light, he absorbs it. And as he descends, he absorbs all of the life around him.

And the screaming STOPS.

A SILENT CROWD watches, faces and bodies unmoving.

INT. HALLWAY - **GRAY** - CONTINUOUS

Nevaeh stands WIDE EYED, PARALYZED at the exit.

SOPHIA

I wanted you to see what you did to  
me. Because that's what I'm going  
to do to you.

Nevaeh stands face to face with Sophia, whose features have stretched, lengthened. Black ooze drips from her fingertips.

Nevaeh takes one last look out of the door, TO SEE THE LITTLE BOY STARING DIRECTLY AT HER.

He wipes his mouth with the back of his hand.

EXT. SCHOOL PLAYGROUND - **GRAY** - CONTINUOUS

The crowd parts as he moves towards the school.

Behind him, the DEVoured CHILDREN APPEAR AS GHOSTED VERSIONS OF THEMSELVES, solid but gray, no longer frightened. The same stillness as the other dead children in their new form.

BOY

I said no adults.

The children all turn towards the building entrance.

INT. HALLWAY - **GRAY** - CONTINUOUS

Sophia lets go of Nevaeh, like she's been burned. She shrieks in pain.

Her features shrink down, but her eyes stay wide. Nevaeh TAKES OFF.

SOPHIA

YOU DON'T NEED TO RUN. I CAN FIND  
YOU.

A swarm of students burst through the door and flood the hall.

Nevaeh runs ahead. Follows the curves of the hallways.

The maze engulfs her. Turn after turn, corridors stretching before her.

She rounds a corner. ARMS REACH OUT AND WRAP AROUND HER, pulling her into...

INT. AUDITORIUM - **GRAY** - CONTINUOUS

Empty seats sit before an empty stage.

Mark's hand rests over Nevaeh's mouth. She pulls at his arm, her chest heaving, muffled words. He flips her around to look at him- shell shocked, pale.

He signals "quiet" then releases his hand from over her mouth.

Nevaeh throws her arms around him.

NEVAEH  
(whispering)  
Oh my god, you're okay.

MARK  
(whispering)  
What's going on?

A distant SHATTER OF GLASS can be heard. Marks hands tremble slightly in Nevaeh's.

NEVAEH  
It's going to be okay. We have to get to an exit.

MARK  
How?

Nevaeh reaches for the door. She peeks out of the auditorium into the hallway.

INT. HALLWAY - **GRAY** - CONTINUOUS

A GROUP OF STUDENTS round the corner heading into a nearby classroom.

Another CRACK, SHATTERING OF GLASS resonates into the hall.

INT. AUDITORIUM - **GRAY** - CONTINUOUS

Nevaeh shuts the door and turns to Mark. She points past the rows of seats towards the stage. Starts down the aisle. Mark follows.

Their EYES adjust, pupils widening, to the lack of light on the stage. Nevaeh spots a DRESSING ROOM DOOR in the wings.

INT. DRESSING ROOM - **GRAY** - CONTINUOUS

They slip into a wide dressing room. LONG MIRRORS STRETCH OVER TWO OF THE WALLS.

Mark and Nevaeh pause as they notice a few dead-eyed STUDENTS STANDING IN FRONT THEM, but the children aren't looking at them. They stare straight into another world with purple chairs, blue floors...

CHILD  
He'll never let me see my gramps  
again because of this.

CHILD 2  
You've ruined it.

He takes his small fist and SLAMS it against the looking glass, sending a deep crack down the length of the mirror.

CHILD  
For all of us.

NEVAEH  
No!

Mark pulls her back.

The child lands ANOTHER BLOW. The other children join in. CRACKING THE GLASS WITH THEIR FISTS, OVER AND OVER AND OVER - it doesn't break, it doesn't bend - it goes BLACK. Broken.

Nevaeh tears around and pulls Mark out of the room.

INT. AUDITORIUM - **GRAY** - CONTINUOUS

Nevaeh drags Mark towards another exit.

MARK  
What does that mean?

NEVAEH  
They're sealing the way out.

INT. HALLWAY - **GRAY** - CONTINUOUS

They steal into the empty hallway.

MARK  
The way out? What do we need to get  
out?

CRACKING sounds reverberating from all angles.

NEVAEH

A mirror. Something that creates a reflection of where we would be on the other side. Large enough to fit through. We have to break through it.

MARK

But that's not what happens when they hit it.

NEVAEH

That's because they're all dead.

They halt as they come across a classroom. Look in.

INT. CLASSROOM - **GRAY** - CONTINUOUS

Gaunt faced, children stare at a blackened and fully cracked mirror in the back of the classroom.

INT. HALLWAY - **GRAY** - CONTINUOUS

They round the corner. An actual WINDOW in the wall shows the outside playground and a thickening fog. Mark takes in the STAGNANT REFLECTING POOL OF WATER on the basketball court.

A SMASHING CRACK emanates out of a classroom nearby.

Nevaeh's eyes widen in panic as Sophia comes into view.

NEVAEH

No.

Nevaeh and Mark whip around, ready to sprint in the opposite direction as the LITTLE BOY APPEARS at the other end of the hall.

SOPHIA

We can be a family again.

NEVAEH

Let Mark go. I'll stay. Just let Mark go.

SOPHIA

We'd be a family. All three. And he-  
(she points to the boy)  
-wouldn't be able to stop us.

LITTLE BOY

You can't keep them here. The adults won't listen. They never listen.

Nevaeh and Mark keep an equal distance between both children. Trapped in the middle.

SOPHIA  
You don't get to tell me what to do anymore.

LITTLE BOY  
If you can't follow the rules-

SOPHIA  
I don't need your rules.

LITTLE BOY  
-no one gets to see their family again.

SOPHIA  
I DON'T WANT TO WATCH THEM ANYMORE.  
(turns to Nevaeh)  
Do you know what it's like? You grow up and you change. AND I CAN'T.

Rage boils, blackens her mouth, charring her eyes.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)  
YOU THINK YOU CAN FORGET ABOUT ME?

NEVAEH  
No-

SOPHIA  
If I can't go home, they can come here. We can all be with our families again. Don't you see?

LITTLE BOY  
I told you NO-

But he can't control her...

The veins in her eyes POP, squirting a tar-like substance onto the floor. Black ooze pusses out of the veins in her arms, her eyes swim with darkness, mouth widens like a snake's jaw.

Mark pushes Neveah behind as Sophia descends.

The little boy comes from the opposite direction, grabs Nevaeh, FLINGING HER BACKWARDS. She flies through the air and smacks her head onto the linoleum, fading in and out of consciousness watching...

The little boy reaches for Mark, but it's too late.

SOPHIA'S MONSTROUS FORM CONSUMES HIM.

Then it lunges out and twists the little boy into its grasp, ripping him to shreds. Chunks of his body bleed into the ooze before disappearing.

INT. HALLWAY - **GRAY** - MOMENTS LATER

Nevaeh blinks, tries to open her eyes. Her body scrapes along the linoleum. The male hand gripping her forearm is pale, grayish without color- Mark's.

Sophia leads the way. The children follow behind.

EXT. PLAYGROUND - **GRAY** - CONTINUOUS

Sophia walks to the playground her minions trailing behind. Mark stops near the entrance.

His hand twitches on Nevaeh's arm.

MARK

I know you're awake.

She looks up at him from the ground. His swollen pupils pulse. He shakes his head and his eyes clear.

NEVAEH

Please, let me go. Please don't do this.

The veins in Mark's arms pump a black liquid, bulging the skin.

MARK

I feel it. In me.

Mark shivers. The last of the students file out of the door and towards the playground.

NEVAEH

What did she do?

MARK

When I pick you up, run towards the basketball court. You're only going to have a few seconds before they realize.

NEVAEH

What?

MARK

You trust me?

Nevaeh notes the charred edges of his mouth, the concern on his face. She nods her head yes.

NEVAEH  
I love you.

MARK  
3...

He lifts her to her feet.

MARK (CONT'D)  
2...

His shakes his head, clearing it. Nevaeh readies herself.

MARK (CONT'D)  
1...

Nevaeh SPRINTS towards the basketball court. Mark chases behind her.

The children's heads snap in their direction.

SOPHIA  
Stop!

The flood of students pursue them.

Nevaeh reaches the basketball court. Trapped between a POOL OF WATER and the swarm of children closing in.

TIME SLOWS... She makes eye contact with Sophia in the sea of students, then turns her head towards Mark as he TACKLES HER.

Nevaeh FALLS BACK INTO THE PUDDLE. She shuts her eyes tight and presses her lips closed, ready for IMPACT.

Her body SUBMERGES IN WATER, Mark's form pressing her down, drowning her.

THE WORLD TURNS...

EXT. PLAYGROUND - **ALIVE** - CONTINUOUS

Nevaeh emerges, GASPING FOR AIR. THE SHADOWED FORM OF MARK SPLASHES UP NEXT TO HER THEN FALLS BACK INTO THE POOL - GONE.

Deep ripples interrupt the stagnant water. Her lungs heave for air.

NEVAEH  
Mark!?

She looks around her. The clouds above her break open, revealing a light blue.

She stands, dripping wet, and staggers out of the pool.

EXT. PLAYGROUND - **GRAY** - CONTINUOUS

Mark rises to his feet, then barrels over the playground's fence and into the mist.

The children let him go. Their eyes shift to Sophia.  
Vulnerable. Alone.

She SCREAMS.

The BELL RINGS.

EXT. PLAYGROUND - **ALIVE** - CONTINUOUS

The BELL BLARES over the loudspeaker.

Nevaeh drags herself inside the school.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Crowds of students swarm the hallway. Nevaeh flinches.

She struggles into a nearby classroom.

INT. CLASSROOM - CONTINUOUS

Nevaeh stands in the doorway, dripping wet. Out of place.

The Teacher looks up from her desk.

TEACHER  
What happened?

NEVAEH  
Can you drive me home?

The teacher shuffles backward a step. Wary.

TEACHER  
I thought you were out sick.

NEVAEH  
I need to go home.

TEACHER  
Has Mark left already?

NEVAEH  
Can you just do it for fucksake?

INT. CAR - LATER

The Teacher pulls up beside Nevaeh's apartment building.

Nevaeh steps out. Slams the door. Walks away.

The Teacher reaches into her purse, takes out her cellphone.

INT. NEVAEH'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Nevaeh looks around an empty and dark apartment.

She flicks on the light switch.

INT. NEVAEH'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Nevaeh kicks glass shards to the side as she walks through.

Her own blood staining part of the carpet.

She walks into her...

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

She steps into the darkness.

A FIGURE flickers in the mirror image behind her.

She turns on the light and looks forward. The figure is gone.  
The reflection is purely of this room.

NEVAEH  
Are you there?

A moment's silence before a faint hushed response is heard.

NEVAEH (CONT'D)  
(she softens a little)  
Mark?

The whispering is faint, but audible, through the mirror.

MARK  
(muffled)  
Yes.

NEVAEH  
I'm sorry. I'm so sorry.

Her exterior crumbles, shoulders heaving into a sob. She  
clutches herself into a hug, backing up against the wall.

JENNI  
Ms. Rodriguez.

Nevaeh stops breathing. She leans forward, both hands on the sink. Staring into the mirror.

Two figures move beyond the glass, Mark and Jenni.

NEVAEH  
Jenni?

JENNI  
Ms. Rodriguez? My mom looks sad,  
will you tell her not to be? And  
that I can see her and dad still?

NEVAEH  
I-I'll tell them.

JENNI  
Thank you.

Jenni disappears.

JENNI (CONT'D)  
Mark!

MARK  
I'm not going anywhere.

NEVAEH  
What do we do now?

MARK  
I'll be here. Always.

NEVAEH  
Where's Sophia?

MARK  
I won't let her near you, okay?

Mark presses his hand against the mirror. Nevaeh lays her hand as though it could touch his.

EXT. JENNI'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A suburban one-story house. Plain. Lights burning inside, illuminating all of the windows.

Nevaeh paces outside. Weighing her thoughts. Emotions streaking across her face.

Nevaeh KNOCKS. A moment's pause before the door swings open and TWO HOPEFUL SETS OF EYES look out expectantly. They drop into confusion at the sight of Nevaeh.

NEVAEH

Are you Jenni's parents?

JENNI'S FATHER, a stout middle-aged man, answers, while his petite red-eyed wife, JENNI'S MOTHER, stays quiet.

JENNI'S FATHER

Who are you?

Nevaeh falters. Staring at the ground. Up at the porch light. Anywhere but their eyes.

NEVAEH

She wanted me to tell you not to worry.

JENNI'S FATHER

You know where our daughter is?

JENNI'S MOTHER

Is this some kind of sick joke?

NEVAEH

She wanted me to tell you- just look in the mirror. At night.

JENNI'S FATHER

(to his wife)  
Call the police.

NEVAEH

Listen for her. She there.

Nevaeh starts to back away. Jenni's father GRABS Nevaeh's wrist. She PULLS back against it and runs for her car.

INT. NEVAEH'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Police cars line the stretch in front of her mother's house. Nevaeh pulls up, slowing down.

A police light shines at her car. She covers her eyes from the beam.

POLICE

(over loudspeaker)  
Step out of the car.

Nevaeh looks to the door of her mother's house. Christina stands in the doorway, clutching her night robe around her neck, pleading with a police officer.

POLICE (CONT'D)

Step out of the vehicle.

Nevaeh complies.

EXT. RODRIGUEZ HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The car door opens. Nevaeh steps out.

POLICE  
Hands above your head.

She raises her hands. A body tackles her to the car. Pressing her into the side door and cuffing her hands.

INT. POLICE INTERROGATION ROOM - LATER

Two police officers facing a wide eyed Nevaeh.

She looks at the TWO WAY MIRROR, then back at their hard stare.

POLICEMAN 1  
Where's the girl?

Nevaeh stares straight forward.

POLICEMAN 1 (CONT'D)  
This is your apartment.

Policeman 1 slaps down photos.

POLICEMAN 2  
The night Jenni went missing, you showed up at your mother's house. She issued a statement saying you had blood caked on your hands and your clothing.

Nevaeh shakes her head no.

POLICEMAN 2 (CONT'D)  
Where's the girl?

NEVAEH  
Sophia planned this. She planned the whole thing.

POLICEMAN 2  
Who?

Nevaeh looks up and into their eyes. Shakes her head.

POLICEMAN 1  
Where is Mark Shin? Is he your accomplice?

NEVAEH  
Mark's dead.

The officers look at one another.

NEVAEH (CONT'D)  
They're watching us.

Nevaeh subtly rocks back and forth.

POLICEMAN 1  
Jesus Christ- where is the girl?

NEVAEH  
She's dead.

Policeman 1 walks around the table, handcuffs ready.

POLICEMAN 1  
Is that your confession?

She doesn't respond. Both officer nod to one another.

POLICEMAN 2  
Where's the body?

Nevaeh shakes her head. Side to side. Side to side. Side to side...

INT. CHILD'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Darkness.

Footsteps pad in from the hallway. An 8-year-old GIRL strides in. FLICKS the light switch.

Light touches upon a child's bedroom. BRIGHT, BOLD, full of life. Glow in the dark stars adorn the ceiling.

The Girl measures the distance to her bed with her eyes.

Keeping a hand on the light switch, she steps out as far as she can into the room. She looks back at her hand, over the bed, and back again.

URNS THE LIGHT OFF. Runs into the middle of the room and HOPS as far as she can onto the BED.

SAFE.

She crawls underneath the covers. Comforter snuggled close to her face. The stars on the ceiling protection of some sort.

She CLOSES HER EYES.

The room is STILL. QUIET. PEACEFUL?

From the darkness UNDER THE BED crawls a SHADOWED ARM, followed by another disjointed ARM.

CLAWING, DRAGGING a VOIDED BLACK TORSO BEHIND IT. Each inch into the room met with incredible RESISTANCE, as though the very air refuses to budge.

The FIGURE escapes across the floor into THE CLOSET.

The WOODEN DOOR slightly CREAKING as the figure moves past.

The Girl's eyes POP OPEN. SHE SITS UP.

GIRL  
Mom? MOM!

Footsteps ring down the hallway, before the GIRL'S MOM, 30s, steps in and TURNS ON THE LIGHT.

GIRL'S MOM  
What's wrong, pumpkin? It's bedtime.

GIRL  
There's something in my closet.

GIRL'S MOM  
It's probably...

The Girl's Mom walks over to the closet, OPENS THE DOOR.

GIRL'S MOM (CONT'D)  
Just as I suspected. Clothes.

The Girl giggles.

Her mom completely SHUTS the closet door.

GIRL'S MOM (CONT'D)  
Check and check. We're all good in here, honey. Go to bed. Okay?

GIRL  
Okay. Love you.

GIRL'S MOM  
I love you, too.

Her mom flicks off the light. Softly closes the door on her way out.

DARKNESS OVERWHELMS THE ROOM.

Breathing cuts into the silence. The closet door CREAKS open.

The Girl's breathing quickens.

The figure's eyes peek into the room from open door. It's form settling into that of Sophia...

Jealous... Angry... HUNGRY...

**FADE TO BLACK.**