

# STRANGER THINGS: PILOT EPISODE



By

The Duffer Brothers

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## IMPORTANT NOTICE

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**MONTAUK**

Pilot

Written by

The Duffer Brothers

**TITLES OVER BLACK:**

1942. WORLD WAR II. THE UNITED STATES BUILDS A MILITARY BASE AT THE EASTERN-MOST POINT OF MONTAUK, NEW YORK.

IT SPANS 278 ACRES. IT IS CALLED CAMP HERO.

1972. THE COLD WAR. AN ALLEGED SERIES OF TOP-SECRET EXPERIMENTS BEGIN TO TAKE PLACE AT CAMP HERO.

DECEMBER, 1980. CAMP HERO IS SHUT DOWN FOR UNDISCLOSED REASONS.

TO THIS DAY, ITS RECORDS REMAIN CLASSIFIED...

**EXT. MONTAUK SKY - NIGHT**

We FADE UP on the night sky. Dark clouds swallow the stars.

We hear a LOW-END RUMBLE. It sounds almost like thunder, only it is somehow more alive. Like the growl of an unseen beast.

We TILT DOWN to find...

**CAMP HERO MILITARY BASE.** It is an imposing cement building in a dense forest. A LONG-RANGE SEARCH RADAR DISH rotates atop its roof. Around and around.

Superimpose titles:

CAMP HERO. MONTAUK, NEW YORK.

OCTOBER 5. 1980.

TWO MONTHS BEFORE THE SHUTDOWN.

**INT. CAMP HERO - TUNNEL SYSTEM - NIGHT**

We move down a long windowless corridor.

There is a STEEL DOOR at the end.

We draw closer to this door...

And closer...

And...

WHOOM! THE DOOR SUDDENLY EXPLODES OPEN. THE HINGES SHRIEK.

A SCIENTIST staggers out into the corridor. He is gasping for breath. A Hazmat suit melts off his body. We can see some skin beneath; it is burned, shredded, bloody. His entire left arm is missing.

He collapses to the floor. Twitches. Stills. *Dead.*

His eyes remain open. Frozen in a look of sheer terror.

We continue past him...

Moving into...

**A LABORATORY.**

A DOZEN MORE SCIENTISTS lie dead on the ground.

They too, are burned; many also missing limbs. Some, heads.

We survey the lab around them. There are BULKY COMPUTERS, MYSTERIOUS ANALOG EQUIPMENT, and most striking of all:

An ISOLATION TANK, an upright metal cylinder filled with water. A tangle of electrical wires connect this tank to...

A METAL DOOR FRAME. The door leads nowhere; there is just empty white space behind it. The base of the door is on fire.

We watch as this fire begins to spread across the lab.

The flames grow hotter...

And hotter...

And...

HISS! FIRE SPRINKLERS kick on.

**EXT. SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT**

HISS! LAWN SPRINKLERS kick on.

We are now in a 1980s SUBURBAN CUL-DE-SAC. Quiet. Calm.

A row of uniform houses wind up the tree-lined street; station wagons and other family cars fill driveways; TV sets flicker behind drawn curtains; a few dogs bark.

We hear the VOICE OF A YOUNG BOY. Dramatic, intense.

MIKE (O.S.)

Do you hear that? Listen...

We focus on a TWO-STORY HOUSE at the end of the cul-de-sac.

The mailbox reads: THE WHEELERS.

MIKE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Something is coming... something hungry for blood...

**INT. WHEELER HOUSE - MIKE'S ROOM - NIGHT**

A GROUP OF BOYS, 12 years old, play DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS.

They sit in a circle, their knobby knees buried in carpet. A map is spread out between them, along with an empty pizza box, canned cokes, and the all-important DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS MONSTER MANUAL.

MIKE WHEELER, 12, is the "Dungeon Master." He is a cute mopy haired kid, classically good looking except for a BIRTHMARK on his left cheek.

MIKE (CONT'D)

A shadow grows on the wall behind  
you... swallowing you in  
darkness... *it is almost here...*

The other boys lean forward. Riveted. We survey them:

LUCAS CONLEY, 12, playing as a knight. He is very small but his loud mouth more than makes up for it.

DUSTIN HENDERSON, 12, playing as a dwarf. He wears glasses, is overweight, not quite fat, but he'll get there someday.

WILL BYERS, 12, playing as a wizard. Soft-spoken, gentle.

WILL

...What is it?

DUSTIN

The Demogorgon?

WILL

We're screwed if it's the  
Demogorgon --

LUCAS

It's not the Demogorgon --

Mike waits for them to settle down. Then:

MIKE

An army of Troglodytes charge into  
the chamber!

He slams SIX WINGED MINIATURES onto the map.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Their tails drum the floor. Boom!  
Boom! Boom!

DUSTIN

Troglodytes?!

LUCAS  
Toldja!

DUSTIN  
*Easy.*

Mike looks over his shoulder. His eyes grow wide.

MIKE  
*Wait... do you hear that? Boom!  
Boom! BOOM! That sound... it didn't  
come from the Troglodytes. No. It  
came from something behind them...*

Mike slams a LARGE TWO-HEADED MONSTER MINIATURE onto the map.

MIKE (CONT'D)  
THE DEMOGORGON.

The boys stare. *Shit.*

LUCAS  
We're all gonna die.

MIKE  
Will, your action.

Will swallows. God, he wishes it wasn't his turn.

WILL  
I -- I don't know --

LUCAS  
Fireball him --

WILL  
I'd have to roll thirteen or  
higher --

DUSTIN  
Too risky. Cast a protection spell--

LUCAS  
Don't be a pussy! Fireball him!

DUSTIN  
Protection spell -- !

MIKE  
The Demogorgon is tired of your  
silly human bickering. It steps  
toward you. BOOM!

LUCAS  
FIREBALL HIM Will!



**INT. WHEELER HOUSE - STAIRS - NIGHT**

Mike chases his mom down the stairs.

MIKE  
Just twenty more minutes --

KAREN  
It's a school night, Michael, and I  
just put Holly to bed. You can  
finish next weekend --

MIKE  
That'll ruin the flow --

KAREN  
*Michael* --

MIKE  
I'm serious, Mom! It took two weeks  
to design. How was I supposed to  
know it'd take seven hours -- ?

KAREN  
You've been playing seven hours?!

They reach...

**THE LIVING ROOM.**

Mike's dad, TED, 45, is watching "CHiPS." Or *trying* to. The  
signal is terrible; a snowstorm of static obscures the image.

He smacks the TV.

MIKE  
Dad, don't you think -- ?

TED  
(not even listening)  
I think you should listen to your  
mother. DAGGUM PIECE OF JUNK!

He smacks the TV again. The static flares.

**BACK UPSTAIRS IN MIKE'S ROOM,**

Lucas, Dustin, and Will stuff belongings into backpacks.

WILL  
Does the seven count?

LUCAS  
It was a seven?!

Will nods.

LUCAS (CONT'D)  
Did Mike see it?

Will shakes his head.

LUCAS (CONT'D)  
Then it doesn't count.

**THE UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER**

Dustin and Will bound down the stairs.

Lucas doesn't follow. He peers through a cracked door into...

**NANCY WHEELER'S ROOM.** This is Mike's sister, 16, girl-next-door pretty. She is on her bed in pajamas, a phone in hand, fingers twisting its cord, slender legs kicked in the air.

Lucas angles himself in such a way that he can see Nancy in the reflection of her vanity mirror.

NANCY  
I know, I know, but -- I don't  
think so -- yeah, he's cute, but --  
Barb -- BARB! -- listen to me --

Nancy turns around on her bed. Spots Lucas in the mirror.

Her smile drops.

NANCY (CONT'D)  
The HELL LUCAS! GET OUTTA MY ROOM!

She leaps out of bed and storms over to him.

LUCAS  
I'm not in your room --

NANCY  
(into phone)  
One of Mike's loser friends --

LUCAS  
-- Not technically --

WHAM! Nancy slams the door.

**EXT./INT THE WHEELERS GARAGE - NIGHT**

Lucas explodes into the garage. Excited.

LUCAS  
She knows my name!

Dustin and Will are mounting bikes; Mike is seeing them off.

WILL  
Who -- ?

LUCAS  
NANCY!

MIKE  
I'm not listening to this --

DUSTIN  
She's got a boyfriend now --

LUCAS  
Does not --

DUSTIN  
Does too --

Mike covers his ears.

MIKE  
NOT listening --

WILL  
Dustin's right. I've seen her  
hanging around that Steve guy --

MIKE  
NOT LISTENING --

LUCAS  
Steve Harrington? He's cool --

DUSTIN  
*She's cool.* You lost your chance.  
Should've gone for her when she had  
braces and no boobs.

LUCAS  
I'm playing the long game.

DUSTIN  
Oh, yeah, I'm sure a growth spurt  
will really do it for you, Lucas...

The boys bike out of the garage, arguing as they go. Mike takes his hands off his ears. He can't help but smile. Then:

BZZZZZ. The light above him begins to flicker. *Strange.*

Mike switches it off and heads back inside.

We return our gaze to the light.

It sputters back on. And...

**EXT. MONTAUK NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT**

WHOOSH! The boys bike home.

Their handlebar lights wink in the night. And good thing, because it's dark out here, as in, *very dark*. Montauk is coastal, but it's more akin to living out in the country.

Lucas peels off from the group.

LUCAS  
See ya, ladies.

DUSTIN  
Kiss your mom 'night for me.

Lucas flips him the bird and bikes up a driveway towards his TWO-STORY HOUSE. Almost identical to Mike's, a little larger.

Will and Dustin bike on in silence for a beat, then:

DUSTIN (CONT'D)  
Race to my place? Loser gets a comic?

WILL  
Any comic?

DUSTIN  
Yeah --

Will has heard enough. He starts pedaling. *Fast*.

DUSTIN (CONT'D)  
Shit!

Dustin pedals in pursuit. But he's already behind. And...

**A FEW MINUTES LATER.**

Will whizzes past a house at the far end of neighborhood.

He waves at Dustin. Now fifty yards back.

WILL  
I'll take your X-Men Uncanny two-six-nine!

Dustin stops. Out-of-breath.

DUSTIN  
(really bummed)  
...Man.

**EXT. FOREST ROAD - LATER**

Will is now biking along an empty forest road. All alone.

He lives much further out than the rest of his friends. It is even darker out here and quiet; unnervingly so. Only the sound of cicadas and a gentle breeze to keep him company.

He bikes past a LARGE METAL FENCE. A warning sign reads:

AUTHORIZED VEHICLES ONLY. NO TRESPASSING.

We're near Camp Hero.

Will suddenly notices something strange: the hair on the back of his arms is standing straight up. It's like he's in the middle of a massive electrical storm. And perhaps he is...

A LOW-END RUMBLE reverberates above him. He looks up.

Sees nothing but darkness. Clouds over the moon.

He looks back down. His eyes shoot wide.

A TALL FIGURE STANDS IN THE MIDDLE OF THE ROAD.

Will spins the wheel -- loses control --

He veers off the road --

And explodes into --

**THE FOREST.**

The bike flies down a steep hill and --

CRASHES. Will flies off the bike. He skids, rolls, eats dirt. As he lies there on the ground, gasping for air, he hears:

STRANGE GUTTURAL SOUNDS. COMING FROM BEHIND HIM.

He pushes to his feet and turns to the sound.

Foliage shudders. The sounds grow. Something is *coming*.

Will abandons his bike --

And runs.

**EXT. MONTAUK BEACH -- NIGHT**

Will bursts out onto the beach.

The wind whips his clothes. Waves crash the shore. Roaring.

**MOMENTS LATER.**

He races up a dune toward a house. *His house.*

It is small, lower class, and falling apart after decades of abuse from the battering ocean winds. But it offers safety.

**INT. THE BYERS HOUSE -- NIGHT**

Will slams the door shut behind him and bolts the lock.

A shaggy mutt, CHESTER, races to greet him.

Will ignores him, calls for his family.

WILL  
MOM?! JONATHAN?! MOM?!

There is no answer.

He checks his **MOM'S BEDROOM**. His **BROTHER'S BEDROOM**.

No one is home. *He is all alone.*

**INT. THE BYERS HOUSE - LIVING ROOM**

Will scrambles back to the living room window.

He cups his hands to the glass and peers out into the yard.

It is dark. Murky. Quiet. A gust of wind blows and...

Day-old laundry flutters on a clothes line to reveal...

THAT FIGURE AGAIN. JUST STANDING THERE AMONGST THE BILLOWING LAUNDRY. WE CAN'T MAKE OUT ANY FEATURES, BUT ITS PROPORTIONS SEEM... OFF. ITS HEAD IS TOO LARGE. ITS ARMS TOO LONG. ITS BODY SWOLEN AND BENT IN A STRANGE, TWISTED SHAPE.

Another gust of wind. The clothes flutters again and...

The Figure is gone.

Will pales. His heart in his throat.

**INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER**

Will rips a phone off the kitchen wall. Dials 911. But --

It does not ring. Just hums with LOW-END STATIC.

WILL  
Hello?! HELLO -- ?!

Will pauses. He hears something on the other line. But not a voice... it is that GUTTURAL SOUND he heard in the forest. The pitch rises and falls, making a series of strange sounds. *Words?* It is as if the figure... whoever... *whatever* it is... is somehow speaking to him through the phone receiver.

Behind him, Chester begins to GROWL at the front door.

Will lowers the phone. And looks back at the door.

A SHADOW fills the crack at the base of the door.

And then somehow, *impossibly*, the chain bolt begins to slide open, as if drawn by an invisible hand. The metal SHRIEKS.

Will drops the phone and --

**EXT. BYERS HOUSE - NIGHT**

WHOOM! Will explodes out the back screen door.

He sprints into an OLD WOODEN SHED and --

**INT. SHED - MOMENTS LATER**

WHAM! He slams the shed doors behind him. Breathing hard.

His eyes dart. Searching for *something*.

The shed is cluttered and dark, lit only by a NAKED LIGHT BULB, hanging from the ceiling. The bulb buzzes, flickers.

At last he spots it:

AN OLD REMINGTON RIFLE. DUSTY. HANGING ON A WALL MOUNT.

Will yanks it down, retrieves a few AMMO SHELLS from a work bench, and loads the rifle as fast as he can, which isn't very fast at all; he is so scared his hands sweat and shake.

THUD. THUD. THUD. HEAVY FOOTSTEPS ECHO. THEN GUTTURAL NOISES.

Will looks back to the shed doors. They shudder and moan.

And then, slowly... ever slowly... they begin to yawn open.

Will finishes loading the rifle. He snaps the chamber shut and aims it at the door. The rifle trembles in his hands.

The shed doors slowly yawn open the rest of way.

It... whatever *it* is... enters the shed.

We still do not show it in full, but we catch glimpses of it in the flickering light. Misshapen, withered, pale, slick.



**ACT TWO****INT. HOPPER'S HOUSE - MORNING**

BBBBBBBBEE! An ALARM CLOCK blasts.

A hand smashes it, shutting it up. The hand belongs to:

JIM HOPPER, or "HOP," early 40s. He is sprawled on a sofa, shirtless, wearing only a pair of worn Levi jeans. His house is a mess, cluttered with beer bottles, cigarette butts, and plastic vials.

A LOCAL NEWSMAN drones on a dusty eight-inch TV:

NEWS ANCHORMAN  
...reports of surges and outages  
across the county... we reached out  
to Public Service and Gas and...

Hop sits up. A RAY OF SUN slices through blinds. Strikes him.

He squints. Grimaces. *Hungover.*

**EXT. HOPPER'S HOUSE - MORNING**

Hopper steps out onto a decrepit porch. Drags on a cigarette.

His shack-like house is perched on the shore of the beach. The beach is deserted now; tourist season has come and gone. It's a bit lonely out here. But damn if it isn't beautiful.

Hop rubs his arms. Getting cold now. Enough beauty for now.

He flicks his cigarette to the sand.

**INT. HOPPER'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - A LITTLE LATER**

Hopper studies his stubble in the mirror.

Considers shaving. Doesn't.

**MOMENTS LATER**

Hopper pops open a PLASTIC VIAL labeled TUINAL.

He shakes out two capsules. Red and blue.

Scoops a mouthful of water. Washes them down.

**INT. HOPPER'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - A LITTLE LATER**

Hopper showers. Water pours down his weary face.

**INT. HOPPER'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - A LITTLE LATER**

Hopper dresses.

He yanks on a pair of brown pants... A matching brown collared shirt... A belt with a holster... A 9MM GLOCK...

And lastly, he clips on a GOLD BADGE. It reads:

MONTAUK POLICE. CHIEF.

**MOMENTS LATER.**

Hopper heads out the door. We watch through the smudged window as he climbs into CHEVY BLAZER POLICE CAR. Mustard sides. Square sirens.

As he peels away, we **DOLLY TOWARD** a FRAMED PHOTOGRAPH hanging on the wall. In it, a young Hopper stands with a PRETTY WIFE.

He cradles a LITTLE GIRL in his arms.

He looks like a different man.

He looks *happy*.

**EXT. BYERS HOUSE - MORNING**

Silence outside the Byers house.

The wind has died down. The laundry no longer flutters.

The shed is quiet.

**INT. BYERS HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING**

JONATHAN BYERS, 16, Will's older brother, cooks breakfast.

He is lanky with dark hair to his shoulders. He's quietly handsome... but he wouldn't believe it if you told him.

JOYCE (O.S.)

Where the fuck are they?!

His mom, JOYCE BYERS, late 30s, races past. She wears a peach waitress uniform and too much make-up. She has a Long Island accent, which comes out even stronger when she curses.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

Fuckfuckfuck --

JONATHAN

Check the couch.

Joyce does. She finds her keys under a cushion. *Thank God.*

She snatches them up, gives Jonathan a quick peck on the cheek, and races for the door, only to pause at the last second. She turns back to Jonathan.

JOYCE  
-- Will? Where's Will?

JONATHAN  
Sleeping I guess.

JOYCE  
You gotta make sure he's up,  
Jonathan, how many times -- ?!

JONATHAN  
I'm making breakfast --

JOYCE  
And I work two jobs. Only one if  
I'm late again.

Joyce storms to Will's room. Ranting as she goes.

JOYCE (CONT'D)  
Then how will we pay the bills?!  
You think you can feed this family  
working two nights a week at a  
movie house? We'll be out on the  
*goddamn street--*

**INT. DUSTIN'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER**

Joyce throws open the door to Will's room. Silences.

**INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER**

She strides back over to Jonathan. Worried now.

JOYCE  
Will came home last night, right?

JONATHAN  
He's not in his room?

JOYCE  
He come home or not?

JONATHAN  
I don't know --

JOYCE  
You *don't know?*

JONATHAN

I was at the dark room late. I...  
I guess I lost track of time --

JOYCE

I told you to wait up for him,  
Jonathan, I *specifically* told you --

JONATHAN

He was over at the Wheelers' all  
day. I'm sure he just stayed over.

JOYCE

Seriously Jonathan? Seriously?

JONATHAN

I'm sorry --

JOYCE

Fuck!

Joyce grabs the kitchen wall phone. Mashes a number.

INTERCUT WITH:

**INT. THE WHEELERS HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING**

A WALL PHONE RINGS at the Wheelers. It is chaos over here.

Mike is grabbing SYRUP from a cabinet; Nancy is eating scrambled eggs, HOLLY, 3, is crying; Ted is watching the morning news; and now the phone is ringing. *The fucking phone.*

Karen answers. Holly squirms in her arms.

KAREN

Hello?

JOYCE

Karen -- it's Joyce.

KAREN

Joyce, hi --

Behind her, Mike pours syrup onto his scrambled eggs.

NANCY

That's *disgusting*.

MIKE

It's good, swear.

Mike squeezes some onto Nancy's eggs.

NANCY  
WHAT THE FUCK MIKE?!

TED  
HEY! LANGUAGE!!

Karen puts the phone on her shoulder. She can't hear Joyce.

KAREN  
QUIET!  
(back to Joyce)  
I'm sorry, one of those mornings --

JOYCE  
Was that Will I heard back there?

KAREN  
Will? No, no -- just Michael.

JOYCE  
Will didn't spend the night?

KAREN  
...No. He, he left here a little  
after eight.  
(worried now)  
He's not home?

**INT. BYERS HOUSE - MORNING**

Joyce tries to hide her panic.

JOYCE  
I -- I was working late last night.  
I'm sure he just left early for  
school. Thanks... thanks Karen --

Joyce hangs up the phone.

She looks scared. And so does Jonathan.

He races for the door. Throws on a dark coat.

JOYCE (CONT'D)  
Where are you going?

JONATHAN  
To look for Will.

JOYCE  
Jonathan wait --

JONATHAN  
Call the school.

The door slams shut.

**EXT. MONTAUK MIDDLE SCHOOL - MORNING**

EEEEEEEEEE! AN ELECTRONIC BELL BLARES.

We are outside MONTAUK PUBLIC SCHOOL, a quaint one-story brick building. An American flag waves in the breeze.

Mike pulls up on his bike. He slots it into a bike rack.

VOICE (O.S.)  
Holy shit Wheeler!

Mike looks up to find two older kids, JAMES and TROY, 14, striding over to him. They're staring at his birthmark.

TROY  
I think it grew over the weekend!

JAMES  
You really gotta get that looked at, Wheeler! Might be cancer or some shit!

They laugh. Mike simply ignores them. This is a regular occurrence and this is how he handles it: with passivity.

Today, at least, it works: James and Troy shove past him.

Lucas pulls up on his bike. Glares at the bullies.

LUCAS  
Assholes.

Mike shrugs it off like it's no big deal, even though it clearly *is*. But his mood brightens when he spots...

JENNIFER HAYES. Freckled, cute, with a gaggle of POPULAR FRIENDS.

Lucas punches Mike in the arm.

LUCAS (CONT'D)  
Jesus, Mike! Reflections!

MIKE  
What?

LUCAS  
*Reflections*. Use them, remember?  
You can't just stare like some creeper.

MIKE  
I wasn't staring.

The boys begin to walk toward school.

MIKE (CONT'D)  
You seen Will around?

LUCAS  
No -- why?

MIKE  
I don't know -- his mom called this morning, looking for him.

LUCAS  
I'm sure he's just in class.

MIKE  
Yeah...

Mike's gaze drifts back over Jennifer.

Lucas punches him again.

LUCAS  
REFLECTIONS!

**INT. STATION WAGON - SCHOOL PARKING LOT - MORNING**

Nancy gauges her reflection in the rearview mirror.

She is in the driver's seat of a HAND-ME-DOWN 1972 STATION WAGON. "Crazy Little Thing Called Love" by Queen plays on the radio. She fusses over herself, carefully applying her mascara and blush, but she is unhappy with everything.

The song begins to skip. The radio signal stutters.

Nancy looks down at in confusion. What the hell?

A WARNING BELL BLARES. Out of time. *Fuck.*

**EXT. LONG ISLAND HIGH SCHOOL - A FEW MINUTES LATER**

Nancy exits the station wagon and hurries toward school.

**INT. MONTAUK HIGH SCHOOL - MORNING - LATER**

Nancy wades through a bustling hallway.

BARBARA, 16, her best friend, braces, catches up.

BARBARA  
So? Did he call?

NANCY  
Keep your voice down --

BARBARA  
Did he?!

Nancy shakes her head. Walks up to her locker.

NANCY  
I told you, he doesn't like me.

Barbara shoots her a look.

NANCY (CONT'D)  
Okay, I mean, yes, fine, he likes  
me, you know, but not like *that* --

Nancy silences. There is a FOLDED NOTE taped to the inside  
her locker. It is addressed "NANCY." She opens it. It reads:

MEET ME. GIRLS BATHROOM. STEVE.

Nancy looks up at Barbara. Speechless.

BARBARA  
You were saying, Nance?

**INT. GIRL'S BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER**

Nancy slips into the girl's bathroom. It looks vacant.

WHOOM! Someone grabs her and spins her around. It is...

STEVE HARRINGTON, 17, wealthy, athletic, charm to spare.

NANCY  
Steve! SHIT. You scared me.

She playfully shoves him back, but Steve just moves closer.  
He puts his hands on her waist and kisses her on the mouth.

NANCY (CONT'D)  
Steve -- What are you doing...?

He kisses her again. Nancy blushes and shrinks away.

NANCY (CONT'D)  
...Have you been drinking? Steve?

Steve doesn't answer. He just kisses her some more. Body  
pressing up against hers. Nancy gives in, consumed by  
hormonal lust, when...

THE BELL RINGS AGAIN. FINAL WARNING.

Nancy crashes back to reality. She quickly pulls away from Steve and hurries toward the door. Completely flustered.

NANCY (CONT'D)

I -- I have to go --

But Steve grabs her hand, holding her back.

STEVE

Five more minutes --

NANCY

I can't -- I have Mrs. Kreitzberg first period, she always gives a pop quiz --

STEVE

What about tonight?

NANCY

What -- ?

STEVE

There's gonna be bonfire at Turtle Cove. Chrissy'll be there, Donna, so will Tommy L. and Tommy H. --

NANCY

I... I have a chemistry test tomorrow --

STEVE

What's your GPA again? Three point ninenineineninenine-- ?

NANCY

Shut up!

STEVE

Come on. It'll be good times.

She hesitates. Wavering.

NANCY

Can I bring Barb?

STEVE

Bring Mrs. Kreitzberg for all I care.

NANCY

(laughs)  
Maybe.

STEVE  
 Maybe you'll bring Mrs. Kreitzberg?  
 Or maybe you'll come?

NANCY  
 Just... *Maybe.*

Nancy hurries out of the bathroom. Trying to hide her smile.  
 Steve grins. He knows he got her. *Hook, line, and sinker.*

**EXT. MONTAUK POLICE STATION - MORNING**

An American flag flutters in the wind. High on a flagpole.  
 We are outside the MONTAUK POLICE STATION. It is quaint. As  
 in, *really* quaint. If the sign out front didn't read  
 POLICE, you'd probably mistake it for a gift shop.

A CHEVY BLAZER POLICE CAR squeals into the lot.  
 Hopper exits. Dragging on another cigarette.  
 Still hungover.

**EXT. MONTAUK POLICE STATION - MORNING**

Hopper lumbers inside. Beelines for the coffee machine.  
 DEPUTIES CALLAHAN and DEPUTY POWELL look up from a game of  
 five card draw, their cowboy boots kicked up on their desks.  
 The mood here is casual, to say the least.

DEPUTY CALLAHAN  
 You look like shit, Chief.

HOPPER  
 Your wife looked worse when I left  
 her.

Hopper begins to make himself a cup of coffee.  
 His secretary, FLORENCE, 61, approaches. Pad and pen in hand.

FLORENCE  
 Tell your boys to get their feet  
 off the desk. This in't a barn.

Hopper snaps his fingers. The Deputies roll their eyes but  
 oblige.

Florence adjusts her glasses and consults a note pad.

FLORENCE (CONT'D)

While you were sleeping or drinking  
or whatever it is you deem so  
important on Monday mornings, Carl  
Blackburn came by the office, says  
he saw Earl and his boys  
spearfishing --

HOPPER

(won't look into it)  
Tell him I'll look into it --

FLORENCE

-- And Terry Ives called again,  
yammering on about some more  
activity last night at Camp Hero --

HOPPER

Tell him I've seen that Twilight  
Zone. No, scratch that, don't  
encourage him. If he calls again,  
cite him for wasting my time.

FLORENCE

It is precious.

HOPPER

Damn straight.

Hopper carries his coffee to his office. Florence trails.

FLORENCE

Another thing. Joyce Byers, she  
can't find her son this mornin' --

HOPPER

(won't look into it)  
I'll look into it.

Hopper walks into his office. He crashes to a stop.

Joyce is already *in* his office.

And she doesn't look happy.

**INT. HOOPER'S OFFICE - MORNING**

WHAP! WHAP! WHAP! Type hammers slam ink onto a police report.

A single, ominous word forms one letter at a time: "MISSING."

Hopper looks up from the typewriter. He now has on a pair of  
reading glasses, which lend him a more earnest look. His  
desk, however, shatters the illusion; it's cluttered with  
PAPERS and MUGS and CANDY WRAPPERS, like the desk of a child.

Joyce paces. Dragging on cigarette. She's on edge. So far out she might just fall right off.

JOYCE  
I've been waiting an hour --

HOPPER  
And I apologize again --

JOYCE  
A GODDAMN *HOUR* --

HOPPER  
I understand. But a boy his age,  
most likely he's playing hookie --

JOYCE  
Not my Will, no. He wouldn't do  
that. He's not like that --

HOPPER  
You never know. My mother thought I  
was on the debate team, when really  
I was screwing Chrissy Carpenter in  
the back of my dad's boat --

JOYCE  
Will's not like you. He's not like  
me. He's not like most.

She's takes another drag on her cigarette. Fights tears.

JOYCE (CONT'D)  
He's got a couple of friends. But  
everyone else, they -- they make  
fun of him. Call him names, laugh  
at him, his clothes --

HOPPER  
His clothes? What's wrong with his  
clothes?

JOYCE  
Too... too colorful -- I, I don't  
know. Does it fucking matter?

HOPPER  
Maybe.

Joyce takes another drag.

JOYCE  
He's just... different, alright?  
Lonnie... Lonnie always said he was  
queer -- called him a fag.

HOPPER  
Is he?

JOYCE  
What?

HOPPER  
A fag.

JOYCE  
He's missing. That's what he is.

Hopper scratches his stubble.

HOPPER  
You hear from Lonnie lately?

Joyce hesitates. This is an uncomfortable subject.

JOYCE  
He was in Philly last I heard. That was 'bout a year ago. But he's got nothing to do with this. He doesn't give two shits about that boy.

Hopper rummages around his desk. Unearths a pen and a pad.

HOPPER  
What's his number?

JOYCE  
I told you, Lonnie's got nothin to do with this --

HOPPER  
Kid goes missing, ninety-nine times outta a hundred the kid's with a parent or relative --

JOYCE  
What about the other time?

HOPPER  
What?

JOYCE  
You said ninety-nine outta hundred. What about the other time? The one.

Hopper removes his reading glasses. Leans forward.

HOPPER  
This is Montauk, Joyce. In four years, you know the worst thing I've seen? You know what it was?  
(MORE)

HOPPER (CONT'D)

(beat)

When that seagull attacked Eleanor Gillepsie. Thought her hair was a nest. Was about five seconds from shittin' an egg when we showed.

Hopper chuckles at the memory. Trying to lighten the mood.

Joyce begins to relax a little. But only a *little*.

JOYCE

I'll call Lonnie. He'll talk to me before he talks to a --

HOPPER

Pig?

JOYCE

Cop.

Joyce sits down. She snuffs her cigarette in an ashtray. Then she looks back up at Hopper. Her eyes are bloodshot. Glassy.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

You find my son, Hop. *Find him*.

Hopper takes this in. All at once he feels burdened with a responsibility he doesn't want. He finds his composure, nudges his glasses back on his nose, and resumes typing.

WHAP! WHAP! WHAP! Hammer type SLAMS paper.

**INT. CAMP HERO - SUBTERRANEAN TUNNEL SYSTEM - DAY**

WHAP! WHAP! WHAP! Shoes SLAM tile.

THREE AGENTS stride briskly down Camp Hero's underground tunnel. They wear gloves, gas masks, plastic overshoes.

**INT. CAMP HERO - LABORATORY - DAY**

The Agents enter the laboratory. Or what still remains of it.

MEDICAL OFFICERS IN HAZMAT SUITS place bloody body parts into plastic bags, mop up blood, and remove charred equipment.

AGENT ONE removes his gas mask.

He has slicked back hair. Piercing green eyes.

AGENT TWO

Sir, your mask --

Agent One ignores him. He walks over to the ISOLATION TANK.

He opens its cylindrical roof. A ladder slithers down into water. A TANGLE OF WIRES and ELECTRODES float on the surface.

This tank once held someone. *Something?*

He turns back to the others.

AGENT ONE  
Where is Eleven?

AGENT THREE  
We don't know.

Agent One considers.

His gaze shifts to a SURVEILLANCE CAMERA on the ceiling.

**INT. CAMP HERO - SURVEILLANCE ROOM - DAY**

An ENGINEER toggles through SURVEILLANCE FOOTAGE.

The Agents stand behind him. Making him nervous.

ENGINEER  
Okay, this is it...

The Engineer hits play.

Low definition video shows us the **LABORATORY** from last night, only now we are back in time; the scientists are still very much alive, huddled around that strange metal door frame.

There is a confusion of activity, shouting, followed by a VIOLENT BURST OF A LIGHT. It looks like an explosion. Then...

HISS! Static engulfs the surveillance image.

Beneath this static, we glimpse SHADOWED MOVEMENT. But just for a few frames. And then the static dissipates to reveal...

The scientists dead on the ground. Blood everywhere.

One of the scientists climbs to his feet. *Still alive.*

He staggers out the door and into the corridor.

We are back to the beginning of our story.

The video snaps to BLACK.

ENGINEER (CONT'D)  
There's nothing else. All the  
cameras -- they just... cut out.

AGENT ONE  
Go back. Ten seconds.

The Engineer wipes sweat from his forehead. Rewinds.

AGENT ONE (CONT'D)  
There.

The Engineer pauses the tape.

AGENT ONE (CONT'D)  
Go forward. Four frames.

The Engineer complies. One frame... Two... Three... *Four*.

There is someone... SOMETHING... captured on the video. It is obscured beneath static, but we see enough to know that this is the Figure that Will saw last night. For the first time, we glimpse its small black eyes, buried in pockets of pale, withered flesh.

AGENT TWO  
(low)  
...What the hell is that...?

A beat.

AGENT ONE  
Eleven will know.  
(beat)  
Find her.

Agent One strides away. The door slams shut behind him.

Agents two and three return their gaze to the monitor. Frightened. The frozen video waves and undulates.

Making the figure appear to bend, stutter.

Making it seem almost...

*Alive.*

**END ACT TWO**

**ACT THREE****EXT. WOODS - DAY**

A YOUNG GIRL, 10, emerges out of the woods.

She makes an immediate impression on us: Her hair is buzzed close to the scalp. Her feet are bare. Her skin is pale. She wears a tattered white hospital gown spattered with BLOOD.

She is more like a wild animal than a child.

**EXT. EMPTY ROAD - DAY**

The Young Girl pads barefoot down an empty road.

She sees a RUN-DOWN RESTAURANT in the distance.

A rusted sign reads: "BENNY'S FISH 'N FRY."

**EXT. BENNY'S FISH 'N FRY - DAY**

The Young Girl approaches the restaurant.

She stands on her tiptoes and peers into a smudged window.

BENNY HAMMOND, late 40s, lumbers past the window carrying THREE PLATES OF FISH AND CHIPS. He has leathery skin, sleeve tattoos, and a greasy apron wrapped around his waist.

He drops the plates off at a table of ELDERLY REGULARS.

They chain-smoke, speak with thick islander accents.

REGULAR #1

Benny, you hear 'bout Earl and the chickens?

BENNY

The chickens? What chickens?

REGULAR #2

Earl, see, he wanted to bring a crate of chickens 'board Mundo's boat, thought it'd be a fine idea to feed 'em to the great whites --

Benny guffaws as Regular #2 continues his yarn.

But the Young Girl is only interested in their food.

*She's starving.*

**EXT. BACK OF BENNY'S RESTAURANT - MOMENTS LATER**

The Girl sneaks around the back of the restaurant.

There is a GIANT ROTTWEILER lying out front of the back door. Its fat belly rises and falls. Rises and falls. *It's asleep.*

The Girl watches it for a moment. Makes sure it doesn't wake.

And then sneaks inside.

**INT. FISH 'N FRY - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER**

The Young Girl finds herself in a greasy kitchen. FRENCH FRIES sizzle in a deep fryer. Oil SPITS. She startles.

She hurries past and pushes through a door into...

**A STORAGE ROOM.**

A RUSTY FREEZER hums against the back wall.

The Girl yanks back on the handle. It yawns open.

Her eyes shoot wide. The shelves are packed with FRESH FISH.

She snatches up a DEEPWATER COD. So big that she can hardly hold it in her tiny hands. She turns it over onto its side, studies it, smells it. *Has she never seen fish before?*

She bites its fat glistening belly and --

Freezes again. Listening.

BENNY (O.S.)  
Sticking with Narragansett, Earl?

REGULAR #2 (O.S.)  
Ya gotta ask?

She hears LUMBERING FOOTSTEPS. Someone is coming this way.

She grabs up as many fish as she can carry and --

**INT. FISH 'N FRY - KITCHEN**

The Girl charges back into the kitchen. Fish in arms.

Benny spots her. Shouts:

BENNY  
HEY -- !

The Girl bolts for the back door. She knocks over the DEEP FRYER and sends a RAIN OF HOT OIL splashing onto the floor.

Benny leaps away. Narrowly avoiding the oil.

BENNY (CONT'D)  
SONOFA -- !

**EXT. BACK OF BENNY'S RESTAURANT - MOMENTS LATER**

WHOOM! The Girl explodes out the screen door and --  
Crashes to a halt. THE ROTTWEILER stands in her path. Awake.  
It bares its teeth and snarls angrily and --  
WHAM! Benny grabs the Girl by the shoulders.

BENNY  
Think you can steal from me, boy!

Benny whirls her around. His expression promptly softens as he realizes that this is no boy at all. It's also not a girl either, not exactly, at least not like any he has ever seen.  
Regulars #2, drawn by the commotion, steps outside.

REGULAR #2  
What'd you catch there, Benny?

Benny looks back at the Young Girl. She writhes in his arms.  
He notices her hospital gown. Spattered in BLOOD.

BENNY  
...I got no idea.

**INT. MONTAUK MIDDLE SCHOOL - SCIENCE CLASS - DAY**

MR. CLARKE, 30s, paces in front of a middle school class.  
He is magnetic, smart. Handsome too. The girls ogle.

MR. CLARKE  
Who here enjoys mysteries?

All of the girls immediately shoot up their hands. Most of the boys do too, including Mike, Lucas, and Dustin.

MR. CLARKE (CONT'D)  
Good, *good*. Because I want you to start thinking of this class as an investigation into the greatest *mysteri'es* known to man. You'll need to learn to think beyond your own senses. This means using your imagination.

(MORE)

MR. CLARKE (CONT'D)  
 I don't know how many of you  
 watched Cosmos like I asked...  
 (more hands)

...You may remember something Carl  
 Sagan said: "Imagination will often  
 carry us to worlds that never were,  
 but without it... we go nowhere-- "

A SHARP KNOCKING SOUND interrupts. Mr. Clarke turns.  
 The VICE PRINCIPAL is standing in the doorway.

VICE PRINCIPAL  
 Sorry to interrupt... may I borrow  
 Michael, Lucas, and Dustin?

Chief Hopper and Deputy Callahan now step into view.  
 The stunned class looks from the cops to our kids.  
 Mike, Lucas, and Dustin stare.

HOPPER (PRE-LAP)  
 ...So you were...racing?

**INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - A FEW MINUTES LATER**

Our three boys are now scrunched together on a couch.  
 Hopper and Callahan sit opposite.

DUSTIN  
 It was me and him, actually --

LUCAS  
 My house is the first up -

MIKE  
 He takes Mirkwood home --

DUSTIN  
 We were racing on a bet and --

HOPPER  
 Whoa, whoa, *WHOA*. One at a time.  
 (points at Mike)  
 You. You said he takes... what?

MIKE  
 Mirkwood --

HOPPER  
 Mirkwood?  
 (to Callahan)  
 You ever hear of a Mirkwood?

CALLAHAN  
Sounds made up.

LUCAS  
It's from Lord of the Rings --

DUSTIN  
The *Hobbit* --

LUCAS  
It doesn't matter -- !

DUSTIN  
He asked -- !

HOPPER  
Hey! What'd I just say? One at a  
goddamn time.

He points at Mike.

HOPPER (CONT'D)  
You.

MIKE  
Mirkwood. It's a real road. It's  
just the name that's made-up --

HOPPER  
What's it's real name?

MIKE  
I don't know. It's by Camp Hero.  
Where Crook's Cove and Kerley meet.

Hop jots this information down onto his pad.

HOPPER  
Yeah, I think I know it.

MIKE  
We can show you --

HOOPER  
I said I know it.

MIKE  
We could help look --

Hopper looks up at Mike sharply.

HOPPER  
No -- after school, you go straight  
home. *All of you.*

He looks at the other boys. Making eye contact with each.

HOPPER (CONT'D)

That means no biking around looking for your friend, no investigating, no nonsense. This isn't some Hobbit book. I make myself clear?

(the boys share looks)

I make myself clear?

The boys share looks. Worried. Shaken by his tone.

They nod.

**INT. BENNY'S FISH 'N FRY - KITCHEN - DAY**

SNAP-HISS! An Atlantic Cod fries in oil. Benny tends it.

**INT. DINING AREA - MOMENTS LATER**

Benny slides a plate of FISH AND CHIPS to the Young Girl.

She is seated at a table in the dining room. It is just her now; the regulars are gone. Her gown has been replaced with a "Fish 'N Fry" T-shirt. It droops to her knees like a dress.

The Young Girl stares at the food with wide eyes.

BENNY

Figured you're gonna eat my food anyway, might as well eat it right.

The Young Girl reaches out to pick up the fish but...

BENNY (CONT'D)

I said, *right*.

Benny splashes HOT SAUCE onto the fish. He nods. "Okay."

The Girl snatches up the fish and *devours it*. No utensils.

BENNY (CONT'D)

Your parents forget to feed you?

The Girl doesn't respond. Just keeps eating.

BENNY (CONT'D)

That why you ran away?

Still nothing.

BENNY (CONT'D)

They... hurt you?

Nothing.

BENNY (CONT'D)  
 And... you went to the hospital,  
 that it? But you got scared, ran  
 off, found your way here?

The Girl finally looks up at Benny. *Has he hit close to the mark?* It seems like she is finally going to speak, but instead she nudges her empty plate over to Benny.

The message is clear: "more."

BENNY (CONT'D)  
 How 'bout this: you get more, much  
 as you like, but first, you gotta  
 answer a few 'a my questions. We  
 got a deal?

No response.

BENNY (CONT'D)  
 We'll start easy. My name's Benny.  
 Benny Henderson.

He holds out his hand. Wraps it around her tiny hand.

BENNY (CONT'D)  
 Nice to meet ya. And you are...?

Still no response. Benny sighs. He starts to withdraw his hand when he notices a SMALL TATTOO on the inside of her lower left wrist. It reads in simple black lettering: **011**.

BENNY (CONT'D)  
 "Eleven"?

The Young Girl yanks her hand away.

BENNY (CONT'D)  
 What's that mean?

YOUNG GIRL  
 No.

BENNY  
 Well *I'll be damned*. She speaks.  
 (beat, considers)  
 No? No what?

Still nothing.

BENNY (CONT'D)  
 Alright, guess "no" more fish then.

Benny takes her plate and starts to walks away when:

YOUNG GIRL  
 ...Eleven.

Benny turns back around.

BENNY  
 Eleven. Yeah. What's it mean?

The Young Girl points to herself.

YOUNG GIRL  
 Eleven.

**INT. FISH 'N FRY - KITCHEN - DAY**

Benny is now on a corded phone in the kitchen. Voice hushed.  
 More food SIZZLES behind him.

BENNY  
 ...All I know is, poor thing's  
 scared to death... confused...  
 (beat)  
 I'm tellin' you Flor, she won't  
 talk about her parents. She's been  
 abused or kidnapped or *somethin'*.  
 You gotta get the Chief --  
 (beat)  
 I dont give two shits about a  
 missing kid, I got a *found* kid  
 right here -- I *am* calm --  
 (beat)  
 Yeah, yeah, I got a pen.

Benny grabs a pen from his pocket. Scrawls:

SOCIAL SERVICES. 233-555-4176.

**BACK IN THE MAIN ROOM,**

"Eleven" waits impatiently for the food. Her legs sway  
 beneath the table. Back and forth. Back and forth.

She becomes aware of a soft, high pitched noise. *Eeeee. Eeee. Eeee.*  
*Eeee.* She looks up. It's the SCREEN DOOR. The wind is gently  
 blowing it, causing its hinges to SQUEAK. *Eeeee. Eeee. Eeeee.*

It is incessant. *Annoying.* Eleven narrows her eyes and --

The door stops mid-swing. Like it somehow *froze.*

Eleven looks away. Content now.

**EXT. FOREST ROAD - DAY**

WHOOSH! TWO POLICE CARS speed down the road.

**EXT. FOREST ROAD - DAY**

The cars pull off onto the side of the road.

Hopper, Callahan, and Powell step outside.

**EXT. MIRKWOOD SHORTCUT - A FEW MINUTES LATER**

Hopper trudges down the road, searching for signs of Will.

Behind him, we can see Callahan and Powell. They call out:

CALLAHAN  
Will Byers?! WILL BYERS?!

POWELL  
WILL -- ?!

Hopper pulls a vial out of his pocket. Pops two more of those red and blue pills. And...

He suddenly spots something. Kneels down. There are FAINT SKID MARKS ON THE PAVEMENT. Too narrow for a car. A *bike*.

He calls out to Callahan and Powell.

HOPPER  
Hey, I got something here...

Hopper tracks the skid marks off the road and into...

**THE FOREST.**

Hop makes his way down the slope. Sure enough, he finds WILL'S BICYCLE at the bottom. He brushes leaves away, revealing the front wheel. It is bent, spokes busted.

Callahan and Powell scramble down after him.

CALLAHAN  
Shit. That his bike, Chief?

HOPPER  
(nods)  
Wheel's busted. Musta crashed.

CALLAHAN  
Think he got hurt in the fall?

Hopper looks back up the slope. Squints in the sun.

HOPPER

Not so hurt he couldn't make it home. And a bike to these kids... that's like a Cadillac. Doesn't make sense he'd leave it out here. He'd walk it home.

A beat. Then:

HOPPER (CONT'D)

He was in hurry.

**EXT. MONTAUK BEACH - A FEW MOMENTS LATER**

Hopper and the Deputies walk out onto the beach.

A TRAIL OF FOOTPRINTS lead up a dune toward:

The Byers House.

**INT. BYERS HOUSE - KITCHEN - AFTERNOON**

Joyce paces in the kitchen. Back and forth. Back and forth.

The wall phone is pressed hard to her ear. Its cord stretches as she walks. She drags hard on a cigarette while it rings on the other end. And rings. And...

CLICK. The other line picks up.

JOYCE

Lonnie, Thank God. It's Joyce --

Her face drops. A MUFFLED FEMALE VOICE is on the other end.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

Who is this?

(listens in disgust)

Cynthia?

(beat)

This is Joyce -- *Joyce*, Lonnie's ex-wife. I need to speak to Lonnie --

(beat)

This is an emergency... no, not later, *now* bitch --

CLICK. The phone goes dead. Joyce burns with anger.

She dials the number again, mashing each number with her long fingernails. The phone rings. But this time no one answers.

It goes to message.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)  
 (filtered)  
 Hey, you've reached Lonnie, I'm not  
 here at the moment but...

Joyce's rage rises and rises and...

BEEP. Her turn.

JOYCE  
 Lonnie, it's Joyce. Some teenage  
 whore sayin' she's your girlfriend  
 just hung up on me. You don't call  
 me back in the next goddamn hour  
 I'll report you for not paying  
 child support I swear to God I will  
 and I'll make sure you rot in jail  
 where you belong you FUCKING PIECE  
 OF SHIT --

WHAM! Joyce slams the phone down and --

BRRRRRING! The phone blares again. *That was fast.* She answers.

JOYCE (CONT'D)  
 Lonnie --

But there is no response. Only static. The kitchen lights  
 flicker, then return to normal. Joyce stares. What the -- ?

BAM BAM BAM. THERE IS A SUDDEN POUNDING ON THE DOOR.

Joyce startles.

**MOMENTS LATER.**

Joyce swings open the door. Her face drops.

It is Hopper and the Deputies. Hopper has Will's Bike.

**INT. BYERS HOUSE - VARIOUS - LATER**

Hopper and his Deputies search the Byers' house.

Joyce trails. On edge.

JOYCE  
 I don't understand. Why're you  
 here?! You're wasting your time --

HOPPER  
 He's got a key to the house?

JOYCE  
So what? You think I haven't  
checked my own goddamn house -- !

HOPPER  
Never said you didn't.

Hopper inspects the back door. The adjacent wall is dented, the paint chipped. He opens the door; its handle aligns with the damaged wall. Someone threw it open. *Hard*.

HOPPER (CONT'D)  
This always here?

JOYCE  
Probably. I got two boys. Just look  
at this place --

HOPPER  
But you're not sure?

Joyce hesitates. Starts to respond when:

WHIMPERING ECHOES. COMING FROM OUTSIDE.

**EXT. BYERS BACKYARD - DAY**

Hopper and Joyce step of the screen door.

They find Chester pacing in front of the shed. Whimpering.

HOPPER  
This normal?

JOYCE  
Just hungry I'm sure. Come on...

Joyce leads Chester back to the house by his collar.

But Hopper doesn't follow. Not yet.

His eyes turn to the shed.

**INT. SHED - MOMENTS LATER**

Hopper opens the shed doors. The wood groans.

Even though it is now day, it is still dark in here.

Hop flips a light switch. The naked light bulb hums to life.

He walks up to the rifle wall mount. The rifle is, of course, missing. He inspects the mount. There are fingerprints in the dust. Someone was here... recently.

BZZZZ! THE LIGHT BULB BEGINS TO FLICKER.

Hopper turns and looks up at the light. It fluctuates, growing bright, then dim, then bright, then dim, then --

WHOOM. THE LIGHT CUTS OUT. LEAVING US IN DARKNESS.

WE HEAR A FAINT GUTTURAL SOUND. LIKE SOME KIND OF GROWL.

Hopper looks around. The hell is that coming from?

HOPPER

That you buddy? You hungry?

Hop removes a flashlight from his utility belt, clicks it on, and slowly sweeps its beam across the darkness. He makes out nothing. But that sound, whatever the hell it is, persists.

It grows louder. Louder. LOUDER STILL. Overtaking all sounds.

The hairs on Hop's slowly stand up. And then --

The beam illuminates an APPROACHING FIGURE.

Hop reaches for his gun but --

Deputy Callahan steps into the light.

DEPUTY CALLAHN

You deaf? I've been callin' you.

Hopper is too shaken to respond. He looks back at the light bulb. It flickers back to life. Returning to 48 Watts.

The strange guttural sound is gone. Like it never was.

DEPUTY CALLAHN (CONT'D)

Jesus, Chief. Your ear.

HOPPER

What?

DEPUTY CALLAHN

Your ear.

Hopper touches his ear. It's bleeding.

**EXT. SHED - BYERS YARD - MORNING**

Hopper upends the vial. Dumping the pills onto the ground.

DEPUTY CALLAHN

You sure you're alright, Chief?

HOPPER  
(not fine)  
I'm fine.

He shoves the empty vial back into his jacket.

He strides to the Byers house. Moving fast.

Callahan struggles to keep up.

HOPPER (CONT'D)  
I want you to call Florence, have  
her get a search party together, as  
many volunteers as she can muster,  
flashlights too --

DEPUTY CALLAHAN  
Think we got a problem here?

Hopper doesn't answer. Uncertain. He turns and looks out at  
the woods. The sun is falling. The sky is a bruised purple.

He continues into the Byers house. Callahan follows.

But we don't. Instead, we return our gaze to the shed. We can  
hear that GUTTURAL SOUND again. Low, but definitely there.

We move...

**INTO THE SHED.**

The light bulb hums and flickers again. Growing brighter.

And that is when we see it. There is something strange on the  
far wall. It looks almost like a SPOT OF BLACK MOLD. Only it  
is throbbing ever so slightly, and, slowly but surely...

Spreading.

**END OF ACT THREE**

BEGIN ACT FOUR**EXT. SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT**

HISS! A sprinkler kicks on. Night in the suburbs again.

MIKE (PRELAP)  
We should be out there right now.  
We should be helping look for him.

**INT. WHEELER HOUSE - NIGHT**

The Wheeler family is seated at the dining table.

A hot home cooked meal is before them. But Mike isn't eating.

KAREN  
We've been over this. The Chief  
said --

MIKE  
I don't care what the Chief said.

KAREN  
*Michael* --

MIKE  
He's not even real police, Mom. We  
have to do something -- Will could  
be in danger!

KAREN  
More reason to stay put.

MIKE  
Mom --

KAREN  
End of discussion.

Mike looks away, upset. The family resumes eating in silence. Or, rather, some of them do. Nancy just moves her food around with a fork. Then, in as casual a tone as she can summon:

NANCY  
So... me and Barb... we're gonna  
study for the chemistry test at her  
house tonight. That's cool, right?

Karen looks up from her meal.

KAREN  
No. Not cool.

NANCY  
What?! Why not?

KAREN  
Why do you think? Am I speaking  
Chinese in this house? Until we  
know Will's okay, no one leaves.

NANCY  
So we're under *house arrest*?

KAREN  
Don't be dramatic, Nancy.

NANCY  
This is such bullshit!

TED  
Language!

NANCY  
Barb lives two minutes away, just  
because Mike's stupid friend got  
lost on his way home --

MIKE  
This is Will's fault -- ?!

KAREN  
Nancy, take that back --

NANCY  
No!

MIKE  
You're just pissed because you  
wanna hang out with Steve --

TED  
Steve?

KAREN  
Who is Steve?

MIKE  
Her new boyfriend --

NANCY  
FUCK YOU MIKE --

TED  
LANGUAGE!!!

Nancy shoves out of her chair. Storms off.

KAREN  
Nancy! Come back! NANCY!

But Nancy is already bounding up the stairs to her bedroom.

Karen wants to follow her but can't; the argument has caused Holly to cry. Karen picks her up and rocks her in her arms.

KAREN (CONT'D)  
There, there, shhhh...

TED  
See, Michael. This is what happens.

MIKE  
What happens when what? I'm the only one acting normal here -- I'm the only who cares about Will!

Ted takes a bite out of a chicken drum. Chews.

TED  
That's not fair, Michael. We care.

Mike stares at his dad. He can't take his apathy, not tonight. He stands up from the table and hurries off.

Holly cries louder. Ted continues to chew.

Karen shoots daggers at him.

KAREN  
I hope you're enjoying your chicken, Ted.

She carries Holly out of the room. Ted is now alone.

TED  
Hey? What'd I do? Karen? Karen?!

**EXT. WOODS - NIGHT**

A constellation of flashlights glimmer in the night.

Over two dozen SEARCH AND RESCUE VOLUNTEERS are scouring the forest for Will. They wear orange vests, grave expressions.

We find Hopper. Mr. Clarke walks at his side.

MR. CLARKE  
He's a good student.

Hopper turns. Surprised this man is speaking to him.

HOPPER  
What's that?

MR. CLARKE  
Will. He's a good student. A great one, actually. I can't fathom him getting into any kind of trouble.

Hopper nods. Looks away.

Mr. Clarke offers his hand.

MR. CLARKE (CONT'D)  
I don't think we've met. Scott Clarke. I teach at Montauk middle. Earth and Biology --

Hopper shakes his hand. Then averts his gaze.

HOPPER  
Always had a distaste for science.

MR. CLARKE  
Maybe you had a bad teacher.

HOPPER  
Ms. Ratliff was a nasty piece of work.

MR. CLARKE  
Ratliff? You bet. She's still kicking around, believe it or not --

HOPPER  
Oh I believe it. Mummies don't die, or say they tell me.

Mr. Clarke smiles softly.

MR. CLARKE  
So you're local?

HOPPER  
Class of fifty eight.

MR. CLARKE  
Sixty two. Just missed each other.

They walk for another beat. Hopper seems lost in thought.

HOPPER  
Sara, my daughter. Galaxies, the universe, whatnot, she always understood that stuff. Maybe she got it from her mother, I dunno.

(MORE)

HOPPER (CONT'D)  
 There's enough shit down here, I  
 don't need to go lookin' elsewhere.

MR. CLARKE  
 Your daughter. What grade is she?  
 Maybe I'll get her in my class.

HOPPER  
 She lives in the city. With her  
 mother.

MR. CLARKE  
 Oh.

Hopper slaps Mr. Clarke on the back.

HOPPER  
 Thanks for coming out, teach.  
 Appreciate it.

Hopper picks up his pace, leaving Mr. Clarke behind.

A nearby VOLUNTEER whispers to Mr. Clarke:

VOLUNTEER #1  
 She passed a few years back.

MR. CLARKE  
 Sorry?

VOLUNTEER #1  
 His kid.

Mr. Clarke darkens. He looks back at Hopper.

He is a distant silhouette now.

**INT. MIKE'S ROOM - WHEELER HOUSE - NIGHT**

The Demogorgen gazes at us. Four angry eyes.

Mike is lying down by the Dungeons and Dragons map. He looks  
 worried and restless. He examines the field of miniatures.  
 The Troglodytes... the knight.. the dwarf... and the wizard.

He picks up the wizard. Studies it. Considering.

MIKE (V.O.)  
 Lucas? It's Mike. You copy? Lucas?

**MOMENTS LATER.**

Mike is now at his desk. Calling into a WALKIE-TALKIE.

Lucas finally answers. His voice crackles.

LUCAS (O.S.)  
Hey, it's Lucas.

MIKE  
I know it's you. And say "over"  
when you're done talking or I don't  
know you're done. Over.

LUCAS (O.S.)  
I'm done. Over.

MIKE  
I'm worried about Will. Over.

LUCAS (O.S.)  
No shit. This is crazy. Over.

MIKE  
I was thinking... Will could've  
cast Protection last night. But he  
didn't. He cast Fireball. Over.

LUCAS (O.S.)  
What's your point? Over.

MIKE  
My point is... he could've played  
it safe. But he didn't. He put  
himself in danger to help the  
party. Over.

A very long beat. Then:

LUCAS (O.S.)  
Meet me in ten. Over and out.

**MOMENTS LATER.**

Mike jams a few flashlights into his backpack.

**INT. WHEELERS HOUSE - LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT**

Mike sneaks downstairs. The stairs moan.

He peers into the living room. His dad is once again  
fidgeting with the television. The picture fluctuates  
with static. He pounds the side of the box in anger.

Mike hurries past. Unnoticed.

**EXT. BYERS HOUSE - NIGHT**

Mike wheels his bike out of the garage.

WHAM! A SHADOWED FIGURE suddenly drops down behind him.

He startles, but it's only Nancy. She climbed down a drain pipe.

MIKE

Jesus!

NANCY

How'd you get out here, freak?!

MIKE

The back door.

Nancy looks back at the drain pipe.

NANCY

Shit.

(back to Mike)

You're not looking for Will are you?

MIKE

You're not seeing Steve are you?

A beat.

NANCY

Don't tell mom.

MIKE

You don't tell mom.

Mike spits in his hand. Holds it out.

NANCY

That's disgusting.

A STATION WAGON flashes its lights up ahead. A *signal*.

NANCY (CONT'D)

Barb's here. I gotta go. Don't do anything stupid.

MIKE

You have to shake on it or it doesn't count! Nancy!

But Nancy is already gone. She climbs into Barbara's car.

Mike wipes the saliva off in his jeans, climbs on his bike, and pedals off into the night.

Above him, a street lamp flickers.

**EXT. BENNY'S FISH 'N FRY - NIGHT**

A light flickers inside the FISH N FRY.

**INT. BENNY'S FISH 'N FRY - KITCHEN - NIGHT**

Benny glances at the light. Then returns to cleaning dishes.

Eleven sits cross-legged on the floor. She is feeding his rottweiler strips of raw fish. They're best friends now.

BENNY

Make sure he doesn't get any bones  
now. Don't want him to choke.

Eleven feeds the dog one last strip of meat. The dog gobbles it up, then licks her on the lips. She recoils, then smiles. For the first time this day, she seems like an actual kid.

Benny notices. Knocks off the faucet.

BENNY (CONT'D)

A smile looks good on ya.

Eleven stares at him. Confused.

BENNY (CONT'D)

A smile.

Benny gives a big smile. Eleven smiles back.

ELEVEN

Good.

BENNY

Yeah, it is good.

She shakes her head. "No." Then she points at him.

ELEVEN

Good.

BENNY

*Me?*

Benny can't help but chuckle.

BENNY (CONT'D)

A know a few ladies who'd beg to  
differ.

Benny rolls up his sleeve. There are names tattooed on his arm. SHARON, BETTY, CAROL ANN. His exes. *Mostly.*

Eleven points at a male name: "TOMMY."

ELEVEN

...Brother.

Benny stares. His heart skips a beat. His voice catches.

BENNY

...What'd you say?

ELEVEN

Little brother.

Eleven smiles again. But Benny does not. He is flustered and confused. He finally starts to speak when he hears...

THE SOUND OF TIRES ON GRAVEL. Headlights sweep past the window.

Eleven tenses. Nervous.

BENNY

Just... stay put. Whoever it is,  
I'll turn 'em away, a'ight?

**INT. BENNY'S FISH 'N FRY - DINING ROOM - NIGHT**

Benny lumbers into the dining room. He opens the front door.

A RED-HAIRED WOMAN, 40, approaches. She smiles warmly.

RED-HAIRED WOMAN

You must be Benny. Benny Henderson?

BENNY

'fraid so. Also 'fraid we closed  
shop early tonight. Why don't you  
try back tomorrow --

Benny starts to shut the door, but the woman extends a hand.

RED-HAIRED WOMAN

Connie Frazier. Social services.

Benny stops. Opens the door back up. Embarrassed.

BENNY

*Social services.* Shit. Apologies.

He takes her hand. His grip is firm.

BENNY (CONT'D)

Didn't think you were gonna make it  
here so quick. That's a heckuva  
drive.

CONNIE  
Not too bad this time of night.

Benny nods. Lowers his voice.

BENNY  
Listen. I still haven't told her  
about you. I didn't want her  
runnin' off again. She's a tad...  
skittish.

CONNIE  
Children I work with usually are.  
(smiles)  
Where is she now?

BENNY  
In the back. I'll introduce ya.

Benny turns and lumbers toward the kitchen.

BENNY (CONT'D)  
Apologies again for trying to turn  
you away. It's funny, your voice,  
it sounded different on the --

A HOLE SUDDENLY ERUPTS IN BENNY'S FOREHEAD. BLOOD SPRAYS.

HIS BODY GOES LIMP AND HE CRASHES TO THE GROUND WITH A HEAVY  
THUD. A POOL OF BLOOD SPREADS FROM THE WOUND ON HIS HEAD.

HIS BODY TWITCHES. THEN STILL.

HE IS DEAD.

Behind him: "Connie" holds a silencer pistol.

A GROUP OF ARMED MEN sweep into the door behind her.

These aren't social workers.

These are Agents.

**INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER**

Three Armed Agents sweep into the kitchen.

Two more enter from the back door.

WOOF! The rottweiler suddenly explodes out of shadows and  
lunges at them with an angry roar. Agent One fires and --

POP! Drills the dog's head. It skids to the floor. Dead.

Agent One quietly surveys the kitchen. Looking for Eleven.

His eyes lock onto the STORAGE CLOSET. A dim shadow moves beneath the door. He makes a hand signal, alerting the others. Guns raise. *All this caution for one little girl?*

They take one step toward the closet. Two steps. Three. *Four.*

Agent One holds up his hand. The others stop.

His eyes fix on the hinges of the door. Impossibly, the metal is pushing outward. Bending. As if the door is under immense pressure.

AGENT TWO

Eleven --

WHOOM! THE DOOR EXPLODES -- BLOWING RIGHT OFF ITS HINGES -- THE DOOR SLAMS INTO THE AGENTS -- KNOCKING THEM DOWN LIKE BOWLING PINS -- THEIR GUNS SCATTER ACROSS THE FLOOR -- WOOD SHRAPNEL HITS AGENT ONE IN THE FACE -- TEARING HIS LEFT CHEEK OPEN -- HE FALLS TO THE GROUND WITH A PAINED SCREAM -- AND --

Eleven bursts out of the closet. Her eyes dart.

She spots the dead dog.

Then Benny.

Tears spill down her cheeks. Mixing with the blood.

She looks back at the agents. Rolling on the floor in pain.

ELEVEN

Bad.

And then she turns.

And *runs.*

**END ACT FOUR**

BEGIN ACT FIVE**EXT. MONTAUK BEACH - TURTLE COVE - NIGHT**

A BONFIRE RAGES ON THE BEACH. FLAMES LICK THE SKY.

A GROUP OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS are silhouetted against the fire, drinking, smoking various substances, screwing around. "Call Me" by Blondie blasts from an idling pick-up truck.

We find Nancy and Barbara in the crowd.

They look out of their element, bobbing awkwardly to the tune. Nancy takes a sip of her beer. Grimaces. Not a drinker.

She holds the beer out for Barb. Barb waves it off.

BARBARA

I don't see him -- we should go.

NANCY

We just got here, *relax*.

Nancy motions to TOMMY H, 16, heavysset, scraggly half-beard.

NANCY (CONT'D)

What about Tommy H?

BARBARA

Ew.

NANCY

Oh come on -- he's cute. And I heard he broke it off with Carol --

Nancy shrieks as a PAIR OF HANDS snatch her from behind.

It's Steve. Of course it's Steve. His eyes are bloodshot and flagging. He's drunk or stoned or both. Probably both.

STEVE

Where's Mrs. Kreitzberg?!

NANCY

Shut up!

Steve grabs her hand and pulls her away.

NANCY (CONT'D)

Where are we going?! You just got here! Steve! STEVE!

But Steve doesn't stop. He breaks into a sprint, dragging Nancy with him. She laughs giddily, her hair blowing in the wind. She glances back at Barb with a wide-eyed smile. Sorry!

Barbara sighs. All alone now.

She looks down at her watch. And waits.

**EXT. FOREST ROAD - END OF NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT**

Mike looks at his watch. Waiting.

He hears VOICES. He looks up to find Lucas and Dustin biking his way. They pull up next to him.

MIKE

What happened to ten minutes?

LUCAS

Parents were watching M\*A\*S\*H. No way past.

DUSTIN

Same.

Mike passes Dustin a WALKIE TALKIE.

MIKE

Stay on channel six, just in case, but no splitting up or anything stupid like that, okay?

Dustin nods. "Okay." Mike climbs onto his bike.

LUCAS

Where are we going?

MIKE

Mirkwood.

And with that, Mike pedals out of the neighborhood.

Lucas and Dustin share worried looks.

And then race after him.

**EXT. MONTAUK BEACH - TURTLE COVE - NIGHT**

Steve and Nancy race across the moonlit beach.

The bonfire burns dimly behind them. Far away now.

Nancy is out-of-breath.

NANCY

Steve! Can you just tell me where we're going?! Steve -- ?!

STEVE  
Right... here!

Steve shoves Nancy onto a sand dune. She shrieks, laughs.  
Steve drops on top of her. Begins kiss her all over.  
Nancy is overwhelmed. Her laughter fades.

NANCY  
Steve, hey, can we just... talk for  
a -- a second...

Steve starts to pull her sweater off. She tries to stop him,  
but it's too late. He tosses the sweater off into the sand.  
Nancy covers her bra with her arms. Shy -- and cold.

NANCY (CONT'D)  
It, it's freezing...

Steve isn't listening. He unbuttons her jeans and yanks them  
down below her waist. Nancy's breathing quickens. Her heart  
pounds.

Steve removes a condom from his pocket.

NANCY (CONT'D)  
Steve... I, I've never...

Steve still isn't listening. Or doesn't care.  
He tears open the condom wrapper.

**EXT. MONTAUK BEACH - WIDE SHOT**

Their silhouetted bodies writhe in the moonlight.  
Waves CRASH the shore.

**EXT. BEACH - TURTLE COVE - NIGHT**

An EXPLOSION OF LAUGHTER.

A very drunk Tommy H. is urinating into the raging bonfire.  
Smoke coughs, coals sizzle, everyone think this is hilarious.

Everyone but Barbara. She stares in disgust.

**MOMENTS LATER.**

Barbara charges down the beach. Call out into the darkness.

BARBARA  
NANCE?! I'M LEAVING! NANCE?!

No answer. *Fuck it.*

**EXT. SIDE OF THE ROAD - NIGHT**

Barbara storms back to her car. It's parked on an empty road.

**INT. STATION WAGON - MOMENTS LATER**

Barbara leaps in. Turns the keys.

The engine revs, coughs.

BARBARA

Come one, come on...

Barbara turns the keys again. Again. And --

THE RADIO BLASTS TO LIFE. BARB NEARLY JUMPS OUT OF HER SEAT.

The radio begins to cycle rapidly through the stations. The songs are warped, garbled, static-y. The speedometer rises and falls, the blinkers flash, the dashboard light stutters.

Barbara looks down. Her arm hairs are standing straight up.

She quickly shuts off the engine and --

Everything stops. Returning to normal.

Barbara stares in confusion. Breathing hard. And...

SMASH! THE WINDOW BEHIND HER SHATTERS.

She screams and --

**EXT. VOLKSWAGEN - NIGHT**

The VW headlights grow brighter and brighter, so bright they blind our vision. We hear a SHRIEKING SOUND, pitched so high it's almost painful. Just when we think we can't take it anymore, the sound fades.

The headlights flicker and dim.

The station wagon is empty.

Barbara has vanished.

**EXT. FOREST ROAD - NIGHT**

VROOM! Jonathan rides the moped up to his house.

He dismounts and bounds up the porch. As he does, we turn our gaze to the shed. Chester is once again pacing by the door.

Back and forth. Back and forth. Back and --

**INT. BYERS HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

Jonathan swings open the front door.

He finds his mom sitting cross-legged on the floor. She is working on a MISSING PERSONS POSTER for Will. Bold red letters read: "HAVE YOU SEEN ME?"

PHOTOGRAPHS OF WILL are strewn across the floor.

Joyce looks up at Jonathan. Bleary eyed.

JOYCE

Anything?

Jonathan shakes his head. "No."

JONATHAN

You?

JOYCE

Hopper's out looking, a bunch of people are, but...

Joyce fights back tears. Returns to the photographs.

Jonathan sits down beside her and looks over the photographs. They have been artfully taken by him over the years. There is a photo of Will building a sand castle... riding a raft... eating a hotdog at Coney Island... visiting the city...

Jonathan fights back tears. His voice emerges low, choked.

JONATHAN

...I'm sorry.

JOYCE

Sorry? What're you sorry for?

Jonathan says nothing. Doesn't feel he needs to.

Joyce takes his hand. Squeezes it.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

Hey. This wasn't your fault, baby, you hear me? You *hear me*?

Jonathan averts his gaze.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

He's gonna come home soon. I know it. I know it... because I feel him. I *feel him* in my heart.

(MORE)

JOYCE (CONT'D)  
 He's close. *He's close*. You believe  
 me, Jonathan, right?

Jonathan finally looks at his mom. And nods.

Joyce smiles faintly. She holds up a pair of photographs, one  
 in each hand. Will on the raft. Will at Coney Island.

JOYCE (CONT'D)  
 What do you think?

Jonathan considers. Chooses Coney island.

JONATHAN  
 I... I always liked this one.

Joyce smiles softly.

JOYCE  
 ...Me too.

An emotional beat. Then:

The kitchen phone BLARES TO LIFE.

Joyce and Jonathan look up sharply. *News*.

**MOMENTS LATER - KITCHEN**

Joyce grabs up the phone. Her voice tense, strained.

JOYCE  
 Yes -- hel--hello?

There is no answer. But she can hear the sound of LOW  
 BREATHING on the other end.

JOYCE (CONT'D)  
 Lonnie...? Hopper...?

Still no answer.

JOYCE (CONT'D)  
 Who is this?

Jonathan stands up. Getting worried now.

The SOUND OF BREATHING grows louder.

JOYCE (CONT'D)  
 Who is this?! Answer me!

At last we hear a voice. It sounds very far away.

It is the voice of a boy.

DISTANT VOICE

...Mom...

Joyce pales. Tears rush to her eyes.

JOYCE

Will?!! Will?!!

Jonathan races over to his mom.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

Where are you, baby?! Talk to me!  
WILL?! WILL?!

But Will's voice is now gone. In its place...

Another voice. GUTTURAL. INHUMAN. Shifting in pitch.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

WHO IS THIS? WHAT HAVE DONE WITH MY  
BABY?! WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?!!

Silence. Then --

A HIGH-PITCHED SHRIEK ERUPTS FROM THE RECEIVER.

Joyce gasps in pain and drops the phone. She looks at her hand. Her palm is seared and her arm hair is standing straight up.

She backs away from the phone. Her eyes wide with dread.

Jonathan grabs up phone. His voice shakes.

JONATHAN

Who is this?! WHO IS THIS?!

But the phone line is now dead.

Joyce slumps down to the floor.

She begins to sob.

VOICE (PRE-LAP)

HEELLLLP!

**EXT. UNKNOWN - NIGHT**

Barbara stumbles out onto the beach.

Her face is pale and blood pours from her nose and ears.

She crashes to a halt. Looks around for help. Desperate.

But there is no bonfire. No kids. No party. Yet somehow, impossibly, she can *hear* the sound of music, of kids talking, laughing. Only it all sounds far away. Like a distant memory.

A dense fog has drifted in from the Atlantic and the waves roll in slowly, much slower than normal, as if the world now moves at quarter speed. The wet sand is covered in more of those strange, throbbing growths, and the sky is shrouded in dark clouds. Electric blue lightning flashes, streaking the sky, and --

Barbara hears something. Something wet. Guttural.

She turns. And pales. Obscured beneath the fog:

A HORDE OF SHADOWED FIGURES. TALL. DISFIGURED.

One of them walks on all fours.

They are coming this way.

Coming for *her*.

She screams.

And...

**EXT. MIRKWOOD - LATER**

WHOOSH! Our boys bike onto "Mirkwood."

They scan the trees. Calling out:

MIKE  
Will?! WILL?!

LUCAS  
WILL?!

DUSTIN  
I've got your Uncanny! 269!

There is no response but the chirp of cicadas.

They bike on in silence for a little while.

Lucas grows impatient.

LUCAS  
Why are we even here? My mom says there's a whole search party --

MIKE  
But they don't know Will, and he doesn't know them. He *knows* us.

LUCAS

So?

MIKE

So what if he's scared and --

A SHADOWED FIGURE SUDDENLY APPEARS IN THE MIDDLE OF ROAD --  
RACING ACROSS THE PAVEMENT -- RACING RIGHT FOR OUR BOYS --

Mike's eyes shoot wide -- he spins the wheel to the left --

Too fast -- he loses control -- skids --

Dustin and Lucas crash into him --

They all tumble -- and --

WHOOM! SLAM INTO PAVEMENT.

They roll to stop. Dirt coughs.

LUCAS

...What... what was that? Mike?

Mike doesn't respond. Instead, he climbs to his feet, turns around, and looks back at the darkened road behind them.

The SHADOWED FIGURE is standing there. Staring right at him.

Mike is wide-eyed. Scared. Slowly, very slowly, he raises his flashlight and aims it at the figure. The beam illuminates:

A young girl. Bald head. Wild eyes. Fish 'N Fry T-shirt.

ELEVEN.

She looks at Mike. He looks at her.

Their gaze holds a beat. And then...

A LOW GROWL RUMBLES. Mike hears it.

He looks up at the night sky.

**INT. BYERS HOUSE - NIGHT**

Joyce and Jonathan hear it too.

They look out the window with tear stained eyes.

**EXT. WOODS - NIGHT**

Hopper's radio crackles to life.

CALLAHAN (O.S.)  
(filtered )  
You hear that Chief?

Hopper doesn't respond. His eyes fixed on the sky.

We follow his gaze.

**RISING UP...**

Over his head...

**AND UP...**

Over Camp Hero base...

**AND UP...**

Over the shadowed trees...

**AND UP...**

To the dark silhouetted clouds in the sky above.

A LOW GROWL RUMBLES, just like in the opening scene. But this time, it grows louder, and louder, shaking our eardrums.

An ELECTRIC BLUE light flashes behind the clouds.

The storm is no longer coming.

It's here.

**END EPISODE**