

THE KILLING JAR

Written By

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Inspired by the Short Story "The Shunned House"

By H.P. Lovecraft

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"From even the greatest of horrors irony is seldom absent."
H.P. Lovecraft

EXT. PROVIDENCE, R.I. - BENEFIT STREET - HARRIS HOUSE - DAY

1977.

There is a two story house in Providence, Rhode Island on 135 Benefit Street. It's called the "Harris house" and is located across the street from a small church and graveyard. It's like any other house on the block. Peaked roof. Several front-facing windows. No attic. Storm doors on the side that lead to a cellar. No one gives it a second thought when they walk by.

A "For Sale" Sign hangs over it's white picket fence with a "Sold" sticker on it.

EXT. CHURCH - STEPS - DAY

HAROLD WHIPPLE (60) and his daughter MALORY (17) sit on the steps to the church. There is a cooler between them. He watches the house with great interest. She does not.

MALORY
Fuck this place.

HAROLD
'Mal...

MALORY
Seriously...

HAROLD
Stop swearing.

MALORY
I mean it. Fuck this place.

HAROLD
When did you start swearing so much?

MALORY
It's not new, Dad.

HAROLD
Doesn't matter, Hon.

MALORY
Been doing it for awhile. Mom doesn't mind.

HAROLD
Well I do. So stop. 'Kay?

MALORY
Fucking fine. Whatever.

Harold considers her for a moment.

HAROLD
What's your problem?

MALORY
You really wanna know?

Malory doesn't give him an answer right away, but Harold looks like he's expecting one.

MALORY (CONT'D)
This fucking house.

HAROLD
Malory --

MALORY
Hold up. You asked. You get an answer. Might not like it, but you're gonna get one.

She looks at the empty house across the street.

MALORY (CONT'D)
We come here -- Ever since I can remember. Dawn of Goddamn time. Every year - Every October 25th. Why? I dunno. You won't tell me -- Something to do with paying respects to your parents... Or your uncle... I'm not sure. You keep changin' it.

Harold starts to speak, Malory cuts him off.

MALORY (CONT'D)
Nope. No talking, Dad. We sit here until the fucking sun goes down, then we leave. I used to go play in the graveyard over there, but even that got old. Barely got through last year 'cause I brought "Carrie" to read. This year, though? This year I decided I wasn't gonna sit here and be fucking quiet.

Her eyes dart to the Harris house and then back to her dad.

MALORY (CONT'D)

This year, I want you to tell me why you drag me out here every Goddamn year. Just to stare at that fucking house. And if you don't, I'm walking back to Rumford without you.

HAROLD

Well, if you don't like being here so much, why do you come with me then?

MALORY

That's not an answer to my question, Dad. That's asking me a question to my question. Which is bullshit.

HAROLD

C'mon, 'Mal.

MALORY

It's bullshit and you know it. Just answer me, Dad. Why? Why do you have to come here every year on the same Goddamn day?

Harold considers his words for a few moments then lets out a sigh.

HAROLD

Maybe you're old enough to know a few things, now. Ready for some things, too.

MALORY

Damn right I am.

HAROLD

Malory. 'Mal? Honey, c'mon. Back off a bit, 'kay? You're coming at me pretty hard.

MALORY

Kind of feel like I have to. You clamming up like this is one of the reasons mom left you.

HAROLD

Hey!

MALORY
It's true, Dad. You know it is.
That and the drinking.

HAROLD
Jesus...

Harold looks like he's been slapped.

HAROLD (CONT'D)
You're really angry. Aren't you,
Kiddo?

MALORY
Can you tell?

HAROLD
Yeah. A little.

MALORY
I fucking hate this place.

HAROLD
You said that before.

MALORY
Yeah. I know. Might say it again.

Harold thinks to himself as he looks across the street. He picks up his bottle of Coke and takes swig. He looks at his daughter carefully before speaking.

HAROLD
I started drinking when I was about
twelve and a half.

MALORY
Christ!

HAROLD
Malory... If I am gonna talk to you
about me. About this house. I am
gonna need you to lay off the
swearing for awhile, alright?

MALORY
I'll try.

HAROLD
All I can ask for, I guess. I'm
going to tell you stuff I didn't
even tell your mom. You know...
Before we...

MALORY
Yeah, that part I know, Dad.

HAROLD
Couldn't tell you any of this stuff
last year when you were sixteen,
let alone eleven. But seventeen's
old enough I guess.

MALORY
Eighteen in six months.

HAROLD
Stop reminding me.

He takes another drink of his Coke.

MALORY
You're stalling. Please tell me,
Dad.

HAROLD
Some of this is gonna be tough to
hear, Honey.

MALORY
Been ready for a while.

HAROLD
You sure?

Malory nods.

HA
All right. Here goes.

He finishes off the rest of his Coke before looking toward
the Harris house.

HAROLD
Over twenty-three people died in
that house, 'Mal. Or because of
it. Over a span of thirty years.
Including my parents... My uncle
Elihu... And... And... Well... So
many people.

MALORY
Your parents?

HAROLD
Yeah. In the basement.

MALORY

How?

HAROLD

I'll get to that. But I need you to know that there is something in that house that makes people sick. Feeds off their fears. Makes them do things they don't want to do. Even kills them. I need you to know that first.

MALORY

Christ, Dad, don't try to sound so motherfucking ominous.

HAROLD

Malory. The swearing. Please try.

She softens for the first time.

MALORY

Okay, Dad. I get it. I will. I'll try. I'm gonna sit here and just listen. No swearing.

HAROLD

Thank you. Thank you, Mal. What - What lives in that house, Honey... Thrives in it -- In it's basement -- Killed my family. Killed others. Almost killed me.

Harold's gaze returns to the Harris house and it's "Sold" sign. Out of the corner of his eye he can see a couple of twelve-year-old kids walking down the street and in their direction. They look a lot like him and his friend, Stevie.

EXT. FLASHBACK - 1929 - HARRIS HOUSE - APPROACHING DUSK

YOUNG HAROLD (12) and STEVIE CRANE (12) stop walking and stand in middle of Benefit Street.

HAROLD (V.O.)

*I should never have gone inside.
Never talked my best friend into
coming with me.*

The abandoned Harris House looms before them with the sun starting to fade behind it. Some windows are smashed, while others are boarded over. It's front door looks like many attempts have been made to try and kick it in but failed.

YOUNG HAROLD
Chicken?

STEVIE
Knock it off. You know I'm not.

YOUNG HAROLD
Kinda sounds like you are, Stevie.

Young Harold smiles and starts to cluck like a chicken.

STEVIE
Knock it off, I said!

He stops clucking... Almost.

YOUNG HAROLD
(smiling)
Buh-gawk.

STEVIE
Please? 'Sides, your uncle told
you never to go in there.

YOUNG HAROLD
I'm old enough now.

STEVIE
Who decided that?

YOUNG HAROLD
I did.

Young Harold crosses to the front gate, opens it and goes inside. Stevie hesitates for a moment, then follows.

STEVIE
Aren't you afraid of getting
caught?

YOUNG HAROLD
No one's been in here in for years.
Heck, even the neighbors moved
away.

Stevie looks at the houses surrounding the "Harris house." They are all empty. Not a "For Sale" sign to be seen for almost the entire block.

EXT. HARRIS HOUSE - STORM DOORS - APPROACHING DUSK

He turns back to see Young Harold standing outside of the storm doors to the cellar. He is reaching inside the newspaper bag slug across his shoulders.

STEVIE

What are you doing? There's a front door.

YOUNG HAROLD

Have you seen that thing? No one's getting through it and the windows are boarded up on the ground floor. This is the only way.

Young Harold pulls out two flashlights and shoves one into Stevie's hands.

STEVIE

Yeah, but... Isn't that where -- ?

YOUNG HAROLD

My parents died? Yeah. That's why I wanna see it.

STEVIE

C'mon, Harry. This... This is far enough. Let's go. 'Sides... You're uncle said stay away from here, 'member?

YOUNG HAROLD

Fuck that. I wanna see.

He flings open the doors and they clatter against the ground. Stevie nears Young Harold's side and peers in. Cement stairs disappear into the darkness.

YOUNG HAROLD (CONT'D)

Oh, that is sooooo aces.

He flicks on his flashlight, walks down the stairs and disappears from view; leaving Stevie alone outside with the fading sun.

Young Harold's light moves around the basement for a moment or so before it flickers briefly and goes out.

STEVIE

Harry!??

Silence.

STEVIE (CONT'D)
HARRY!??

YOUNG HAROLD (O.S.)
Calm down, Stevie! Geez! My
flashlight just went out.

Stevie can HEAR a SMACKING SOUND of SOMETHING AGAINST METAL.
The lights blink in the basement a few times before returning
to full strength.

YOUNG HAROLD (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Got it! You comin' down here or
not?! It's really neat looking!

STEVIE
I dunno. I'm really worried.

YOUNG HAROLD (O.S.)
Buck, Buck, Buh-Gawwwk!

STEVIE
Alright, fine! I'm coming down.

INT. HARRIS HOUSE - CELLAR - DUSK

Stevie steps down into the basement. The light on the stairs
behind him is already starting to disappear. He sees Young
Harold standing in the middle of the room with his
flashlight. He points his light around the room for his
friend.

YOUNG HAROLD
Just look at all this!

Moss and fungi have taken over the finished basement. There
is a bricked over fireplace on the far end. The stairs going
up to the main floor look as if they have been removed.

Stevie can see where Young Harold has been throughout the
room as his feet have made impressions in the spongy growth.

YOUNG HAROLD (CONT'D)
Mushrooms!

Tiny mushrooms dot the surface of the moss which has run up
the walls and overtaken the ornate fireplace.

STEVIE
Wow! You are right, Harry, this is
aces. Absolutely aces.

Stevie approaches the fireplace and places his hands on the moss clinging to it's mantle.

STEVIE (CONT'D)

It's warm.

YOUNG HAROLD

Yeah! I felt that, too.

Young Harold stops about halfway between the fireplace and the stairs outside. He scrapes back some moss from something large and in the center of the room. It reveals a crib.

YOUNG HAROLD (CONT'D)

Wooooow!

Light has abandoned the stairwell and the moss begins to glow. It gives off a green phosphorus light which fills the room.

Young Harold is entranced by the sight.

YOUNG HAROLD (CONT'D)

Hey, Stevie! Do you see what I'm --

STEVIE (O.S.)

H-Harry... Please... Please, h-help me.

He turns around to see Stevie standing very still in front of the fireplace. His lip is trembling and tears are forming in his eyes.

STEVIE (CONT'D)

H-Help me... I d-don't want to move. I-It feels like bees!

A glowing, yellow ooze has surrounded Stevie's shoes and made it's way up to his thighs. His eyes are locked with Young Harold's

STEVIE (CONT'D)

It burns!

YOUNG HAROLD

Jump out of it!

STEVIE

I can't move! I'm stuck!

The ooze shifts and moves a little faster up Stevie's legs. It begins to burn through his clothing.

STEVIE (CONT'D)
Aaaaaaaaah! It burns! It burns!

It moves quicker every time he screams.

YOUNG HAROLD
Stop screaming, Stevie. You're
making it worse.

Young Harold reaches out for Stevie.

STEVIE
No. Don't, Harry. Look down.

He does and he can see the moss is gone from beneath his feet. There is more yellow ooze under the floorboards and under his shoes.

STEVIE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Ow, ow, ow, owwwwwww!

He looks up to see that the yellow ichor has made it to Stevie's midsection. The skin around his calves has started to sizzle.

STEVIE (CONT'D)
It huuuuuuuuuuuuurts!

Young Harold panics and bolts for stairs. The ooze has latched to the bottom of his shoes, but that doesn't stop him from running.

STEVIE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Harry!! Harry, don't leave me!!

The light in the room behind Young Harold intensifies as he takes the stairs two at a time.

EXT. HARRIS HOUSE - STORM DOORS - NIGHT

Young Harold bursts out of the cellar.

STEVIE (O.S.)
Haaaaarrrrry!!!

He slams the storm doors shut; cutting off the goo latched onto his shoes. The inertia drives him backwards and his head slams into a cement walkway.

BLACKOUT

INT. OUR LADY OF FATIMA HOSPITAL - ROOM 414 - DAY

Young Harold wakes up in a private room at Our Lady of Fatima Hospital. His uncle DR. ELIHU WHIPPLE (36) is sitting at his side. STEVIE'S MOM (33) and STEVIE'S DAD (34) are sitting near the foot of his bed.

HAROLD (V.O.)
*I woke up in Room 414 at Our Lady
of Fatima Hospital. My uncle Elihu
was there and so were Stevie's
parents.*

Stevie's Mom sees that he is awake and rushes to the room's only door. She sticks her head out the doorway.

STEVIE'S MOM
He's awake!

POLICE OFFICER #1 and POLICE OFFICER #2 enter the room. One of them takes out a notepad. Elihu gets to his feet to stand between them and Young Harold.

ELIHU
Now, wait just a moment. The boy
just woke up.

STEVIE'S DAD
And I want answers.

STEVIE'S MOM
We both do.

POLICE OFFICER #1
We understand that, Folks, but his
uncle has a point.

STEVIE'S DAD
I don't care what his point is. I
want to know where my son is!

POLICE OFFICER #2
Easy, Sir.

STEVIE'S MOM
Greg.

Stevie's Dad points his finger at Young Harold.

STEVIE'S DAD
That - That punk knows where Stevie
ran off to and I'm going to get it
out of him.

ELIHU
How dare you talk that way to my
nephew!

POLICE OFFICER #1
Sir --

STEVIE'S DAD
What?!

POLICE OFFICER #1
Sir, I'm going to have to ask you
to calm down or leave the room
while I talk to this boy.

Stevie's Dad throws up his hands. Stevie's Mother whispers
in his ear while looking at Young Harold.

Uncle Elihu takes his nephew's hand, leans forward and kisses
him on the forehead.

ELIHU
It's gonna be okay, Harry. Just
talk to these nice gentlemen, okay?
Tell them where Stevie is and
everything is gonna be just fine.

POLICE OFFICER #1
Thank you, Mister -- ?

ELIHU
Elihu. Doctor Elihu Whipple. I am
Harry's guardian. His parents
passed when he was a baby.

STEVIE'S MOM
A doctor?

ELIHU
I specialize in chromatography. At
Brown.

POLICE OFFICER #2
Thank you, Sir.

STEVIE'S DAD
Can we please get on with it?

STEVIE'S MOM
Greg... Honey.

POLICE OFFICER #1
 Hi, Harry. My name is Officer
 Stowe. Gonna need to ask you some
 tough questions.

Young Harold looks nervously at his uncle Elihu.

ELIHU
 It's okay, Harry. Just remember to
 tell them the truth. It's the
 easiest thing to remember.

YOUNG HAROLD
 Y-Yes, Sir?

POLICE OFFICER #1
 Do you know the location of these
 two people's son? A boy named
 Stephen Crane?

YOUNG HAROLD
 Stevie?

POLICE OFFICER #2
 Yes, Son... Stevie.

YOUNG HAROLD
 I...

He searches his mind as best he can until a tear rolls down
 his cheek.

YOUNG HAROLD (CONT'D)
 I... Can't remember.

STEVIE'S DAD
 You can't what!?!?

ELIHU
 He can't remember.

STEVIE'S DAD
 That is a lie! That's bullshit!
 He ran away and you know it!

POLICE OFFICER #1
 Sir, I am not going to ask you
 again.

STEVIE'S MOM
 He could be --

STEVIE'S DAD
 You're a liar! A filthy little
 liar! He ran away and you're
 covering for him!!

Police Officer #2 takes the arm of Stevie's Dad and begins to
 hustle him out of the room.

STEVIE'S DAD (CONT'D)
 Let go of me! That little bastard
 knows!

POLICE OFFICER #1
 I'm sorry, but I warned you, Sir.

The two Police Officers force Stevie's Dad out of the room.
 Stevie's Mother catches Young Harold's eyes before she
 follows after. She mouths the word: "LIAR."

Young Harold begins to sob.

YOUNG HAROLD
 I-I'm sorry! I-I can't remember!

Uncle Elihu sits next to him in bed and puts his arms around
 him.

ELIHU
 Shhhhh....Shhhhh... Harry, It's --

YOUNG HAROLD
 Stevie told me about his, Dad,
 Uncle Elihu -- Said he used to hit
 him if he --

ELIHU
 Shhhh... Nephew... You've been
 through a --

YOUNG HAROLD
 We-We went into the basement of the
 "Harris House!" You told me never
 to go in there, but we did and --

ELIHU
 Harry, it's okay, Kiddo... We'll
 talk about that part later.

YOUNG HAROLD
 B-But we did! I'm sorry, but we
 did! We went in there!! And now I
 can't remember! I can't remember w-
 what happened!

He buries his head into his uncle's shoulder.

YOUNG HAROLD (CONT'D)
I'm so s-s-sorry!

Elihu begins to rock Young Harold slowly in his arms.

ELIHU
Shhhh.. Harry... Shhhh... We're
going to figure this out.

Light streams through the window and captures them in a
prison-like shadow.

ELIHU (CONT'D)
We'll figure it out together.

HAROLD (V.O.)
*I loved my Uncle Elihu, so much.
He told me we'd figure it out and I
believed him.*

EXT. PRESENT - 1977 - CHURCH - STEPS - DAY

Harold looks at the ground rather than face Malory. He
finally lifts his head up to her.

HAROLD
The whole school turned on me. No
one believed me. I was ostracized.
It got so bad, that my uncle had me
enrolled in a boarding school in
Boston. He even rented a house near
the campus so I could stay with him
during the summer. Just so I
wouldn't have to come back here.
That's where... When I started
drinking.

Tears well up in Malory's eyes as she looks at her father's
shattered expression.

MALORY
God, Dad. No wonder you drank.

HAROLD
That's just an excuse, 'Mal. I
drank because I wanted to drink and
for no other reason.

MALORY
It's... It's understandable, Dad.
Jesus. Explains so much.

HAROLD
It was a crutch.

MALORY
Dad... There are reasons why some people drink. Your parents dying when you were little --

HAROLD
When I was a baby.

MALORY
A baby, for Christ's sake! When you were a baby. Watching your best friend die.

HAROLD
I didn't remember that until much later....

MALORY
You didn't?

HAROLD
I haven't told you everything, yet, Honey.

MALORY
There's more?

HAROLD
Oh, God, yes.

MALORY
I'm gonna need a drink if you're gonna tell me more shit like that, Dad.

HAROLD
A drink? Are you drinking?

MALORY
For a while now. Mom's good with it.

HAROLD
You're Mom's good with -- ? How long have you been drinking?!

MALORY
A while. But that's not important right now.

HAROLD

It certainly is to me!

MALORY

Not to me. You're more important. Right here. Right now. This house is, too... According to your story. Which is admittedly weirder than fuck.

HAROLD

It's true -- *And we are definitely going to talk about your drinking* -- I'm telling you the truth, Honey, just as much as I was telling it to my uncle when I was a kid. I didn't remember what really happened until he called me home from college and... And... Things... Things got worse.

Malory measures her father's expression for a moment before speaking.

MALORY

What happened when you were in college?

HAROLD

I hid my drinking really well when I was in the boarding school. I drank, but it I couldn't drink much. No way to really hide it there. But I hit it hard my freshman year at Brown and never looked back.

INT. **FLASHBACK** - 1938 - BROWN UNIVERSITY - LECTURE HALL - DAY

October 23rd, 1938

Harold (21) has a thousand foot stare in a two hundred foot lecture hall. He sits in the back so as not to be seen. Not that it would matter, the hall already emptied out after it's lecture.

HAROLD (V.O.)

By the time I started my senior year I was sneaking drinks during the day to maintain my buzz.

DIANE (O.S.)

Harry?

He barely registers DIANE REYNOLDS (21) who is standing in front of him. She starts to snap her fingers in front of his face.

DIANE (CONT'D)
Harry? Harold!?

She slams her books down in front of Harry and he jolts back to reality.

HAROLD
Wha-? Whoa! Heyyy, Diane!

DIANE
Wow, Harry... Wow. It's like you weren't even here.

HAROLD
When?

DIANE
Now. During class. I mean you're eyes were open --

Harold checks his watch.

HAROLD
Oh, shit!

He quickly shoves his books into his satchel, leans over, gives Diane a kiss on the cheek then sprints for the exit.

DIANE
What? No! Hold on, Harry!

Diane runs after him and tries to keep up.

INT. BROWN UNIVERSITY - HALLWAY - DAY

Harold bursts through the lecture hall doors. Diane is right behind him as he makes bee-line down the corridor for his next class.

DIANE
Wait!

HAROLD
Can't! Sorry, Diane, can't! Gonna be late as it is.

DIANE
 STOP! Or I'm breaking up with you
 and you won't even know it
 happened.

He stops in his tracks, turns and glowers at her.

DIANE (CONT'D)
 Just like everything else.

HAROLD
 C'mon, Diane.

Diane returns his "look" as she approaches him.

DIANE
 Don't, Harold. Don't "C'mon," me.

HAROLD
 I've gotta --

DIANE
 Go. Yeah, I know. You always do,
 lately. Anytime I see you on campus
 nowadays you've been half-drunk and
 when I see you --

HAROLD
 I'm not drunk. I can drink and not
 be drunk.

DIANE
 And when I see you at your dorm
 room you are completely drunk.

HAROLD
 That not --

DIANE
 It is true, Harry... And you know
 it.

Harold looks at her sullenly.

HAROLD
 It's the only way I can sleep.

DIANE
 Drunk?

HAROLD
 Knocked out.

DIANE
Same thing, isn't it?

HAROLD
Look, Diane, can we talk about this later? I'm really gonna be late.

DIANE
For "Lit?" You're flunking it anyway. I need answer now, because otherwise you're gonna keep trying to avoid me 'til winter break, right?

HAROLD
It's October.

DIANE
Right?

HAROLD
I wouldn't "avoid" you, Diane.

DIANE
Well, I don't know about that, "Dear." You've been doing a pretty good job of it so far this year.

HAROLD
What's your question?

DIANE
What can I do to help you to stop drinking?

HAROLD
C'mon, Diane...

DIANE
Tell me. Let me help. Please.

HAROLD
You can't.

DIANE
I can't?

HAROLD
No... You can't. Because it's the only thing that hides the nightmares.

DIANE
Oh, Harry... Still?

HAROLD

Every time I don't get black out drunk, they're right there. Stevie says, "Hello," and I can't stop him.

DIANE

Unless you drink?

HAROLD

Unless I get black out drunk...
Yes.

DIANE

Oh, God, Harry...

HAROLD

It's not that bad, Diane. Really. Look at me. I can function. I'm getting by. I'll finish this last year of college and --

DIANE

Oh, Harry... It is that bad.

HAROLD

Why?

DIANE

Because you're right. I can't help you. Won't help you. If your answer is drinking.

The hurt in Diane's eyes is unfathomable.

DIANE (CONT'D)

I have loved you with everything I've got these last couple of years, Harry, but this... This answer of yours? For your nightmares? The drinking? I can't be a part of it.

HAROLD

Why?

DIANE

Because I'm an addict... Just like you are.

Diane lovingly touches Harold's face.

DIANE (CONT'D)
 But I need to cut myself off from
 the thing that's gonna end up
 killing me.

She pulls her hand back and pushes her tears away from her eyes with the heel of her palm.

DIANE (CONT'D)
 It's you, Harry.

HAROLD
 Diane?

DIANE
 Good-bye, Harold. I'll always love
 you.

Diane turns and walks away.

DIANE (CONT'D)
 Better get going. You're gonna be
 late for class.

Harold can see her shoulders trembling. He takes a step towards her then stops. The only SOUND that can be HEARD are DIANE'S FOOTSTEPS as she walks away.

The SOUND SHIFTS to a SLOW HEARTBEAT.

INT. BROWN UNIVERSITY - DORMS - ROOM 217 - AFTERNOON

Harold is passed out on top of his bed. He is fully clothed. The dorm room is a disheveled mess. Two whisky bottles, one empty and one almost full, on the bed next to him.

His eyes twitch and the SOUND of his HEART BEATING increases in speed.

Harold's hands grip his bedsheets as he moves restlessly among his covers.

EXT. **FLASHBACK** - 1929 - HARRIS HOUSE - STORM DOORS - NIGHT

The SOUND SHIFTS AGAIN to become the POUNDING of something AGAINST WOOD.

Harold stands before the storm doors of the Harris house. It is so cold that vapors trail from his mouth and nose.

His attention is fixed on the POUNDING SOUND coming from behind the wooden doors.

They bow outward. The lock holds every time they are push up from the inside.

BAM! BAM! BAM!

STEVIE (O.S.)

Harry?

Harold backs away from the doors.

BAM! BAM! BAM!

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

Haaarry?!

The doors groan outward. They strain against the lock until, finally... Mercifully... They fall back flat and remain silent.

The SOUND of SOBBING can be HEARD from inside the basement.

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

H-Harry?

HAROLD

Y-Yeah, Stevie?

STEVIE (O.S.)

Why did you let me die?

BAM! The doors lift upward.

BAM! They raise higher.

BAM! They burst open!

INT. BROWN UNIVERSITY - DORMS - ROOM 217 - AFTERNOON

Harold sits bolt upright in bed. There is a LOUD BANGING on the DOOR of his dorm room. He panics, shoves the whisky bottles under his bed then leaps up, slides the bolt lock and opens the door.

GARY CHAMBERS (19) is startled by the door opening so quick.

GARY

Gahhh!

HAROLD

Hey, sorry, Gary!

GARY

Scared me.

HAROLD
What'cha need, Buddy?

GARY
The Dean wants to see you.

HAROLD
Dean Garland?

GARY
Only Dean I know.

HAROLD
Did he say, "Why?"

GARY
I dunno. But doesn't usually call
us in, unless...

HAROLD
Yeah... "Unless."

INT. BROWN UNIVERSITY - DEAN GARLAND'S OFFICE - DAY

Dean PHILLIP GARLAND (64) sits behind his enormous mahogany desk. Harold sits opposite him and looks very small in an oversized leather chair.

The Dean leans forward in his chair and rests his arms on his desk.

GARLAND
Do you know why you're here, Son?

HAROLD
I can think of a few reasons. Only
one of them good.

GARLAND
Well, I can tell you that this is
not one of the good ones.

HAROLD
It's not?

GARLAND
No. It is not. Let me be blunt,
Harold.

HAROLD
Please do, Sir?

GARLAND

It has come to my attention that you have been under the influence in class.

HAROLD

Pardon me, Sir?

GARLAND

Inebriated.

HAROLD

Not to my knowledge.

GARLAND

Not to your knowledge?

HAROLD

No, Sir.

GARLAND

No?

Dean Garland opens his desk drawer and pulls out a flask. He slides it across to Harold.

GARLAND (CONT'D)

Are those your initials?

HAROLD

No, Sir.

GARLAND

No?

HAROLD

No, Sir, those are my father's initials. Harold Whipple, Sr. My Uncle Elihu gave me that flask when I went to college because my father was gifted one by his classmates when he was here, Sir.

GARLAND

He graduated from this college?

HAROLD

Brown Class of '14, Sir. My father received his flask when he graduated out as President of Alpha Psi Omega. I'm a legacy student, Sir. His legacy.

GARLAND

I would suggest you get a reign on that sense of humor of yours, Son. You are not in the position to be crass at this point in time.

HAROLD

Understood, Sir.

GARLAND

That flask was found in a lecture hall in the lower quad. Do you know which one that might have been? And please refrain from saying "No, Sir." I've had my fill of hearing that out of you.

HAROLD

Was it Professor Koerger's lecture on discrete mathematics?

GARLAND

Correct.

HAROLD

I would like to point out that I am not a minor, Sir.

GARLAND

Point well taken, Harold. But allow me to point out that this is a dry campus and being in possession of alcohol is an offense punishable by, and not limited to, expulsion.

Dean Garland gets up from his chair and sits on the corner of his desk nearest to Harold.

GARLAND (CONT'D)

Now... How do you think that might affect your father's legacy?

HAROLD

Not well, Sir.

GARLAND

No... Not well at all.

He picks up the flask. Harold watches as he turns it over in his hands.

GARLAND (CONT'D)
 I've taken the liberty of having
 this emptied, cleaned and
 sterilized for you, Young Master
 Whipple.

Dean Garland holds it out for Harold to take.

GARLAND (CONT'D)
 See to it that I never see, nor
 hear of it's existence, again.

Harold takes it and slides it into his jacket pocket.

HAROLD
 Yes, Sir. Does my making sure you
 never see, nor hear of it, again
 indicate that I get to stay?

Dean Garland returns to his chair.

GARLAND
 You're a bright lad, Harold. Was a
 good student. You're staying here
 is going to depend upon your
 performance next semester as you
 are currently on the verge of
 flunking most, if not all, of your
 classes.

HAROLD
 I am?

GARLAND
 You most certainly are. Sober up
 and perhaps you can concentrate on
 the finer details of your
 academia... Like your grades, for
 example.

HAROLD
 I will, Sir.

GARLAND
 See to it that you do.

HAROLD
 Thank you, Sir.

Harold gets up to leave.

GARLAND
 Hold on, Son. This came for you.

Dean Garland takes an envelope out of his jacket and offers it to Harold. He quickly opens it up and reads the contents.

HAROLD

Oh, God.

GARLAND

Everything alright, Son?

HAROLD

My uncle Elihu. It's from him. It says he's really sick and needs me home immediately to help him. He's like a father to me, Sir. Well, is my father. My dad died when I was very young.

GARLAND

That certainly explains the flask.

HAROLD

Yes, sir.

GARLAND

Then you should go.

HAROLD

My grades...

GARLAND

I would suggest you quickly visit your professors and request your assignments for the next few weeks. Will that be enough time?

HAROLD

I'm not sure.

GARLAND

It's a start. You can wire back to me if you need more. I'll make arrangements for you.

HAROLD

Thank you, Dean Garland. I apologize for being trite earlier.

GARLAND

Apologies accepted. As I said before, you were a fine student. Find your way back to who you were. I have faith that you can.

HAROLD
Thank you, Sir.

GARLAND
See to your Professors. Take care
of your uncle. We will see you soon
enough.

*HAROLD (V.O.)
I left as soon as I could and
returned to Providence, Rhode
Island for the first time in over
nine years.*

EXT. PRESENT - 1977 - CHURCH - STEPS - DAY

Harold places an empty Coke bottle next to his first. He
looks at the sun behind the Harris house. It's going to be
dusk soon.

HAROLD
This is where it gets really bad,
Malory. You sure you want to hear
the rest of it?

MALORY
Worse than black out drinking,
nightmares and almost flunking out
of college?

HAROLD
A whole lot worse.

MALORY
I've been waiting a long time, Dad.
I think I need to hear it all. I'm
beginning to understand your
drinking. I'm not sure Mom ever
will, but --

HAROLD
I never told her any of this stuff.

MALORY
Why?

HAROLD
Never thought she'd believe me.

MALORY
Did you know I used to hide your
drinking from Mom? I would take
your empties and put 'em in our
neighbor's garbage.

HAROLD

'Mal...

MALORY

I did. Did the same thing with mine, until she finally caught me drinking. After that, she said I could only drink with her so she'd know I was safe.

HAROLD

I'm sorry.

MALORY

Not your fault. Well, kinda it is... I wanted to see why you liked it so much. But you didn't force me to drink once I got a taste of it.

HAROLD

I'm really, really sorry.

MALORY

Apology accepted, Dad. We will figure it out. 'Kay?

HAROLD

That's what my uncle told me.

MALORY

Tell me the rest... I'm ready.

Harold cracks open his third Coke. He takes a long swig as he looks across the street.

HAROLD

My Uncle.. Dr. Elihu Whipple... Was obsessed with that house. Ever since my parents died in it. I just didn't realize how obsessed he was. That house almost killed him before I got home.

INT. FLASHBACK - 1938 - ELIHU'S HOUSE - STUDY - DAY

October 24th, 1938

Dr. Elihu Whipple (45) welcomes Harold into his office and closes the door behind them. He looks gaunt. Much thinner than Harold was prepared for.

HAROLD (V.O.)

*But we both know now that the house
ended up killing him in the end,
don't we?*

He sits down at his overflowing desk and indicates that Harold should take a seat. There is a scrapbook open between the two of them. It is bursting with newspaper articles and pictures.

ELIHU

By my count, Harold, the Harris house has taken the lives of eighteen individuals. Most succumbed to a lengthy illness, others just went mad.

HAROLD

It can't be the house's fault, Uncle.

ELIHU

Of course it can. In fact I know that it is. Your parents were it's final victims. Until Stevie, that is. Your Mom and Dad died there, shortly after you were born, in 1917.

He turns to the first page of the scrapbook and spins it around to face Harold.

ELIHU (CONT'D)

Look here, Nephew... The house was built in 1763 by Stephen Harris. He was a prominent Merchant who --

HAROLD

Uncle...

ELIHU

Amassed his fortune by investing in Privateers --

HAROLD

Uncle, please.

ELIHU

Some of these Privateers were responsible for capturing prize ships and their cargoes. Isn't that something?! Almost like paying pirates to steal for you.

HAROLD
Uncle!

ELIHU
What, Harold? What?!

HAROLD
Look at you.

ELIHU
What about me?

HAROLD
How long have you been sick?

ELIHU
Well, you certainly don't beat
about the bush do you?

HAROLD
I prefer to be blunt and to the
point. I learned it from you.

ELIHU
That you did. That you did. Drink?

Elihu stands and crosses to the small bar in his study.

HAROLD
It's barely past ten in the
morning, Uncle.

ELIHU
That it is. Best time to start.

He pours himself a drink and double for Harold.

ELIHU (CONT'D)
And judging by your skin's pallor,
and the look of your eyes, starting
this early shouldn't come as
something new to you, should it?

HAROLD
Now, Uncle...

He hands Harold his drink and sits in the chair next to him.

ELIHU
So, don't pretend to lecture me on
my health when you barely have a
grasp on your own.

HAROLD

I may be drinking too much, but you look as if you are near death.

ELIHU

Bluntness is a good trait, Boy...
But so is tact.

Elihu raises his glass and Harold clinks it with his own.

ELIHU (CONT'D)

I am on the road to recovery,
Harold. Improving every day.

HAROLD

What is it, then? Your ailment? Are you - ?

ELIHU

The house, Boy. I'm recovering from the house.

He takes a slow, careful drink and measures Harold's reaction as he does so.

ELIHU (CONT'D)

I've been visiting it, off an on, for the past two years. Researching it. Over the last three weeks, I've even stayed overnight... Upon occasion.

HAROLD

You've what?

ELIHU

I had to experience it myself. Test my theory. Wouldn't be a proper doctor if I hadn't would I?

Elihu gathers the scrapbook from the desk and hands it to Harold.

ELIHU (CONT'D)

This is the history of the house. It's life breathes in those pages. It also traces all the deaths connected to the Harris family and their home.

HAROLD

Including my parents?

ELIHU

They came much, much later. After the Harris' had abandoned their house.

Harold studies the first page of the scrapbook. It proclaims that a wealthy Merchant, Stephen Harris, has established his home in Providence, Rhode island.

ELIHU (CONT'D)

It all starts in 1763 when Stephen Harris built his house on what was a French Huguenot burial ground.

Each subsequent page contains another article. Images begin to appear before Harold as Elihu describes the events that have occurred.

ELIHU (CONT'D)

He moved into the home with his pregnant wife Rhoby Dexter and their four children. Elkana, Abigail, Ruth and Stephen, Jr.

The next page is a tragedy.

ELIHU (CONT'D)

In December they suffered a stillborn birth in the house.

As is the next.

HAROLD

Oh, dear God.

ELIHU

Afterwards, both Abigail and Ruth refuse to take any kind of nourishment. By April of 1764 they both perish after wasting away.

HAROLD

I'm not sure I want to keep reading, Uncle.

ELIHU

I must insist. You have to understand that what happened to you in your youth was not isolated.

Harold hesitantly turns the page. Elihu takes his glass on the way to refresh their drinks.

ELIHU (CONT'D)

Two months later, in June, Hannah Bowen - a servant taken on to help care for Stephen who had grown enfeebled - dies. She took her own life by hanging. Shortly after, their other servant - her husband, Eli - takes his in the same room and in the same manner.

HAROLD

I-I...

Tears begin to form in Harold's eyes as he views the next page.

ELIHU

Not long after the passing of their servants, the Harris' third daughter, Elkana, is found drowned in an upstairs tub during the spring of 1772. Stephen Jr is discovered at the foot of the tub - alive - but with an almost devastating fever.

He hands Harold his drink. He shakily grasps it and gulps it down quickly. Elihu turns the page for him.

ELIHU (CONT'D)

To no one's surprise, the children's mother, Rhoby, is overcome with melancholy and moves into the attic.

He sits across from Harold and keeps a careful watch on his nephew's emotional state.

ELIHU (CONT'D)

Her sister Mercy moves into the house in order to care for her sister. Rhoby's only remaining child - Stephen Jr - is sent to live with his cousin, Peleg. His health improves significantly within weeks.

HAROLD

Oh, thank heavens.

Harold can see that he is not even halfway through the tome and looks up at his uncle.

HAROLD (CONT'D)
I don't know if I can --

ELIHU
You're almost there. You don't
have to read it all, Harold.

HAROLD
Thank God for that.

ELIHU
I don't think God had anything to
do with this, Harry. Go on,
please.

He slowly turns the page. It is a police report.

ELIHU (CONT'D)
That is a report from the Rhode
Island Police Department. It had
been buried for quite some time...
Until I found it.

HAROLD
This states that there was a
murder?

ELIHU
Yes. A servant, hired by Mercy - A
young woman named Zenas - Is found
with her throat torn out. Rhoby
told her sister that she saw a
"staring thing which bit and chewed
at Zenas." Rhoby, like her
daughters before her, refuses to
eat after "witnessing" this
horrific event and wastes away.
Just like her children before her.
She dies in February of 1773.

HAROLD
The Harris'... All of them... with
the exception of Stephen Jr... Dead
within ten years of moving into
that house.

ELIHU
Yes.

HAROLD
And Stephen Jr? What happened to
him?

ELIHU

Turn the page and find out.

Harold does.

ELIHU (CONT'D)

Stephen Jr retired a Captain and married Phebe Connor. They moved into the Harris house to help care for his ailing aunt Mercy. Stephen and Phebe become pregnant and within six months their child is stillborn in 1780. Fifteen days later, Mercy passes. One last page, Harold, then you can stop.

HAROLD

Thank you.

ELIHU

Don't thank me until you've read it.

He turns the page.

ELIHU (CONT'D)

Stephen Jr and Phebe shutter the Harris house and move to Angel Street where their son - Dutee - is born in 1785. In 1797, at the age of twelve - the same age as you when you lost your friend Stevie - Dutee's parents, Stephen Jr and Phebe succumb to yellow fever. Dutee is then brought up by Rathbone Harris.

(beat)

No member of the Harris family will ever step foot in that house again.

Elihu takes the scrapbook from Harold and returns to the chair behind his desk.

ELIHU (CONT'D)

The house was abandoned and is eventually renovated by Dutee who rented out. As did subsequent members of the Harris family. Four more deaths occurred in that house over the next century. One of them, a school teacher, tried to bite the throat out of her private physician.

HAROLD

Jesus...

ELIHU

Try not to swear, Harold. It's beneath you.

HAROLD

This would explain your health.

ELIHU

It would. As I said I had been visiting there far too much.

HAROLD

And the death of my parents?

ELIHU

What of it?

HAROLD

What happened?

ELIHU

That is something that you may not be prepared to hear, Harry. Perhaps when you are older.

HAROLD

I just experienced a litany of monstrous articles about that Goddamn house of horrors and you think that I'm not prepared to hear what you have to say about what happened to my parents? I'm twenty-one for Christ's sake!

Elihu looks at him over his glasses.

HAROLD (CONT'D)

Apologies for the language, Uncle.

ELIHU

Accepted.

He considers his nephew for a moment.

ELIHU (CONT'D)

Please forgive me, Harold, but I never wanted to tell you this part. I just wanted you to understand why I had taken ill during my research of the house.

HAROLD

I realize that, Uncle, but... I must beg of you... Please, tell me.

ELIHU

You have shown a penchant for bluntness, Nephew, so please allow me to do the same. You were found as an infant, inside your crib, in the cellar of the Harris house. Your parents were dead and leaning against it. Moss, laced with fungus and mold, had overtaken the room.

HAROLD

Why was I told that they had died in an auto accident?

ELIHU

That was simpler. Without the context of everything that you have been told today, how could you possibly understand the truth as a child?

HAROLD

The room? You said it was overtaken by moss?

JUMP CUT TO:

INT. **FLASHBACK** - 1929 - HARRIS HOUSE - CELLAR - DUSK

Young Harold point his flashlight around the room.

YOUNG HAROLD

Just look at all this!

Moss and fungi have taken over the finished basement. His footsteps have made impressions in the spongy growth.

YOUNG HAROLD (CONT'D)

Mushrooms!

JUMP CUT TO:

INT. **CURRENT TIMELINE** - 1938 - ELIHU'S HOUSE - STUDY - DAY

Harold's eyes grow wide.

ELIHU
Are you alright, Harold?

He nods meekly, reaches for his empty glass and takes it, unsteadily, to the bar.

BAM! BAM! BAM!

The SOUND of the POUNDING OF SOMETHING AGAINST WOOD echoes in his ears.

HAROLD
Please, Uncle...

ELIHU
The rest of the details are very grisly, Harry.

BAM! BAM! BAM!

STEVIE (V.O.)
Harry!! It huuuuuuuuuuuurts!

Harold pours himself a double. He downs half of it.

HAROLD
Please... Please, go on.

ELIHU
You were starving. But not emaciated. You're mother... Both your parents... Looked as if they had been there for weeks and weeks. They had - Had begun to mummify. The moss had begun to overtake them as well. Your... Father... Had a pistol in one hand and your mother's remaining hand in his other. It was obvious that he had shot her in the head and then turned it upon himself.

HAROLD
"Remaining hand...?"

ELIHU
Your mother's left arm was severed from the elbow down... As was most of her left side. It looked as if it had melted away.

INT. **FLASHBACK - 1929** - HARRIS HOUSE - CELLAR - DUSK

Young Harold can see the yellow ooze under the floorboards under his shoes.

STEVIE (O.S.)
Ow, ow, ow, owwwwwww!

He looks up to see that the yellow film has made it to Stevie's midsection. The skin around his calves has started to sizzle.

STEVIE (CONT'D)
It huuuuuuuuuuuuurts!

INT. **CURRENT TIMELINE - 1938** - ELIHU'S HOUSE - STUDY - DAY

Harold drops his glass. It bounces off the wooden floor. It's contents spiral everywhere.

His legs go out from underneath him and he sits on the floor with a hard THUD!

ELIHU
Harold!?

Elihu makes his way over to him as quickly as he is able.

ELIHU (CONT'D)
Harold!? Harry!? Are you alright?

Harold looks up at his uncle. His eyes awash with tears.

HAROLD
I remember! Oh, God! I remember...

He buries his face in his trembling hands.

HAROLD (CONT'D)
I fucking remember everything!

And just as he had when his nephew was a child, Elihu takes Harold into his arms and allows him to empty his grief into his shoulder.

EXT. **PRESENT - 1977** - CHURCH - STEPS - DAY

Harold's eyes are locked with Malory's. It is taking everything he has to keep a wave of emotions from bursting through.

MALORY
Oh, Dad... Daddy, I'm sorry.

He takes her hand. Malory can feel it shaking in hers.

HAROLD

It's... This... This is a lot.

MALORY

I understand. I get the drinking, now. I really do. You really should have told mom.

HAROLD

There were a lot of things I wanted to tell her -- Never did.

MALORY

Still can.

HAROLD

P-Probably not, Honey.

He doesn't remove his hand, but looks in the direction of the Harris house again.

HAROLD (CONT'D)

Can I ask you a question, 'Mal?

MALORY

Sure, Dad.

HAROLD

Why do you drink?

MALORY

I just drink to get wasted. For fun, you know? Makes me laugh my ass off when I need it.

HAROLD

Do me a favor, Honey?

MALORY

Stop drinking.

HAROLD

No. Wasn't gonna say that.

MALORY

Then what, Dad?

HAROLD

Find a better reason to drink. Find a better "Why" to drink. See what happens, then.

MALORY
Find a better -- ?

HAROLD
I didn't say it would be easy. I'm
only asking you to try.

Malory considers his words for a moment. She is about to answer him when her attention is drawn to a SOUND ACROSS THE STREET.

EXT. HARRIS HOUSE - DAY

A truck filled with furniture pulls into the driveway of the Harris house. HELEN (28) climbs out of the driver's seat and meets her husband MIKE (27) at the back of the truck. They start to unload boxes and take them into the house.

EXT. CHURCH - STEPS - DAY

Malory leaps to her feet as if to go talk to them, but Harold grabs her hand.

HAROLD
Don't.

MALORY
Don't?!? According to you there's a
monster in their basement!

HAROLD
I'm not sure.

MALORY
Not sure? You seemed to be pretty
sure with your uncle!

HAROLD
Oh, there was one. I'm not so sure
there's one in there right now.

MALORY
What do you expect me to do then?
Wait?!

HAROLD
Yes.

MALORY
Fucking "yes?!"

HAROLD

I've been waiting for almost forty years, honey... Been here every year just to check in.

MALORY

"Check in?" You drug me here to "check in" and not do anything about it?

Harold smiles and stands next to his daughter. He keeps a steady eye on Helen and Mike as they continue to unload their truck.

HAROLD

I've watched this place fall apart, 'Mal. Almost get torn down. Watched it get restored a few times, too. But nothing has happened here... Especially in that cellar... Since October 25th, 1938.

MALORY

I still think we should go over there. Tell them.

HAROLD

Tell them what exactly? That there might be a monster in their cellar? That the house might drain the life from you if you stay in it too long?

MALORY

I --

HAROLD

How's that gonna sound, Honey?
(beat)
Ever wonder why I didn't take this to the police?

Malory looks at her father and then to the couple across the street. They're hustling and have already got most of their truck unloaded.

HAROLD (CONT'D)

I was wrong to wait this long to tell you about all of this, Malory. I can see that now.

MALORY

No shit.

HAROLD

I just had to be sure of a few things first. One of those things was making sure that you knew everything that happened. I had to make sure that you believed me, too.

MALORY

Well, I'll tell you one thing. If dusk comes and those cellar windows light up..? All bets are off.

HAROLD

I don't think that's going to happen, Malory.

MALORY

Because what? That you've feeding me a ballad of bullshit for almost an hour and those windows are not gonna light up?

HAROLD

No. Because I think I killed what was down there in 1938... But not before it took my uncle from me first.

INT. **FLASHBACK** - 1938 - ELIHU'S CAR - FRONT SEAT - DAY

Elihu is driving and Harold is in the passenger's seat.

HAROLD (V.O.)

We headed to the Harris house as soon as possible. But made a stop at Brown University for supplies first.

INT. ELIHU'S CAR - BACK SEAT - DAY

Six metal cannisters fill the back of the car. Some stretch out the length of the seat while the rest fill the footwell. A large suitcase, the size of a vacuum cleaner, slides back and forth on top of them.

HAROLD (V.O.)

Because of his connections at the college, Uncle Elihu was able to get the equipment he told me he needed.

(MORE)

HAROLD (V.O.) (CONT'D)
*He wouldn't tell me what it was,
though, until we were almost at the
house.*

INT. FRONT SEAT - DAY

Elihu grips the steering wheel a little harder before he speaks.

ELIHU
It's sulfuric acid.

HAROLD
What is?

ELIHU
The cannisters. They're filled
with sulfuric acid.

HAROLD
Acid?

ELIHU
Only way to destroy that thing in
the basement. The case on top of
them contains a Crooke's tube.
It's a device I can use to try and
isolate its location.

He turns his attention to Harold. There is wildness in his
uncle's eyes.

ELIHU (CONT'D)
I couldn't be sure of what the
thing was until you remembered it
enough to share it with me. I
thought that providing you with a
history of the horrors that took
place in the Harris house might jar
something loose.

HAROLD
But that wasn't the case.

ELIHU
No. It wasn't. Strangely enough it
was the one thing that I was
holding back that did the trick.

HAROLD
Finally telling me the truth about
how my parents really died.

ELIHU

I honestly wasn't ready to share that with you, but I am glad you pushed for it.

HAROLD

(quietly)

I'm glad I did, too.

ELIHU

Oh, Harry... I am sorry, beyond words, about the events that occurred in that basement with you and your parents. But hearing it allowed you to remember what really happened to your friend Stephen.

HAROLD

Stevie.

ELIHU

Stevie. Yes. Stevie. You're telling me about the circumstances surrounding his death only affirmed some of the theories that I had come to. It also affirmed the correspondence I had been having Howard in Arkham, Massachusetts. Not to mention that my subsequent visits there, were not a fool's errand.

EXT. PROVIDENCE, R.I. - BENEFIT STREET - DAY

Elihu's car turns quickly on to Benefit street. They are almost to the Harris house.

ELIHU (V.O.)

Howard told me that there had been a similar set of circumstances in his hometown.

INT. ELIHU'S CAR - FRONT SEAT - DAY

Harold steadies himself on the front seat as the car finishes it's quick turn.

ELIHU

A creature had been had been summoned inside of the private home of an occultist.

(MORE)

ELIHU (CONT'D)

Once Howard and his associates had gotten wind of it, they were able to gain entrance to the home and were successful in destroying the monster. I didn't believe him and his wild stories, at first, of course.

HAROLD

You didn't?

ELIHU

I'm a man of science. Why should I? It wasn't until I went to his home in Arkham, and he showed me photographic evidence, that I eventually came to believe him.

HAROLD

What kind of photographic -- ?

ELIHU

That doesn't matter now. What matters is I know how to destroy the creature that took the lives of your friend Stevie and, more importantly, your parents.

HAROLD

And so many others.

ELIHU

Yes, of course, and so many others.

HAROLD

This sounds as if you are taking this very personal, Uncle.

ELIHU

They harmed my family. Took their lives and ruined yours. This is absolutely personal to me and I intend to finish this thing off once and for all.

HAROLD

At the cost of your own health.

ELIHU

My health be damned. Now, please ready yourself, Nephew. We have arrived.

EXT. PROVIDENCE, R.I. - BENEFIT STREET - HARRIS HOUSE - DAY

Elihu's car pulls up in front of the abandoned Harris house. He is already out of the car, opened the door and in the back seat before Harold has opened his.

ELIHU

Quickly! We must move quickly,
Harry, before the sun sets!

He snatches up the case holding the Crooke's tube and runs towards the house as fast as his body is able.

Harold opens his back door, but stops long enough to look up the Harris house.

The building has become a long-neglected blight on Benefit street. It's front door is completely kicked in. Most of it's windows are long gone, leaving it's interior to be exposed to the elements. Rot has begun to set into it's siding and the floorboards within.

It is the last place that anyone would want to visit, but Harold scoops up two of the cannisters from the back seat and does just that.

EXT. HARRIS HOUSE - STORM DOORS - NIGHT

Harold stands transfixed in front stairs leading into the dimly lit cellar. It looks like a hungry maw.

STEVIE (V.O.)

Harry?

He looks back to his uncle's car. It's not that far away.

HAROLD

Y-Yeah, Stevie?

STEVIE (V.O.)

Why did you let me die?

HAROLD

Because I didn't want to.

STEVIE (V.O.)

Maybe you should have.

The wind catches Harold's hair. It whispers across his frightened face.

ELIHU (O.S.)

Harry?!

Harold snaps out of it and sees Elihu standing right front of him. His uncle puts his hand on his shoulder.

ELIHU (CONT'D)

Are you okay?

HAROLD

Y-Yes. Yeah. Sorry uncle, It's just that - Well - It's been awhile.

ELIHU

It's going to be alright, Harry.
I'm here. We're going to stop this thing together.

Elihu turns and disappears down into the cellar. Harold hesitates for a moment and then follows slowly behind him.

EXT. BENEFIT STREET - HARRIS HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

TIME PASSES: The sun sinks lower behind the house; silhouetting it against the fading light.

INT. HARRIS HOUSE - CELLAR - NEAR DUSK

Harold and Elihu have been busy getting the cellar ready for the evening ahead. The cannisters have been placed throughout the room. All within easy reach. The case holding the Crooke's tube sits between a folding chair and a military cot. It serves as a makeshift table and has a lit lantern on top with a thermos next to it.

The moss which covers the floor of the small room, and most of the walls, has grown so thick that the legs of cot can barely be seen.

Elihu stands behind the chair and braces himself with it. He proudly surveys their work.

ELIHU

Well done, I believe.

Harold turns and looks in the direction of the cellar stairs.

HAROLD

There it goes...

The sun ebbs away like the tide pulling away from the shore, leaving inky darkness in it's place.

The moss and fungi begin to glow.

HAROLD (CONT'D)

Uncle..?

Elihu can hear the hoarseness in his nephew's throat.

ELIHU

Don't worry, Harry. You said that thing took your friend when you weren't looking at him... Weren't paying attention, right?

HAROLD

Yeah...

ELIHU

Well, I'm not going to take my eyes off of you and I remind you to do the same for me. Alright?

HAROLD

Alright...

Elihu reaches out and touches the lid of a cannister. It is loose and ready.

ELIHU

These are all ready for action, are they not?

HAROLD

Yes, Sir. Yes, they are.

ELIHU

Then so are we.

Light flows in patterns throughout the moss on the ground; intermittently illuminating the bottoms of toadstools as it does.

Elihu scans the floor near himself and beyond his nephew. Nothing appears to be coming through the floorboards under the moss.

They stare at each other for a few moments. They are tense and waiting for something to happen.

But nothing does.

ELIHU (CONT'D)

Interesting.

He sits and picks up the thermos.

HAROLD
 "Interesting?"

ELIHU
 I'm admiring the Moss. I've never
 been down here before.

Elihu unscrews the lid and pours coffee into it.

ELIHU (CONT'D)
 The glowing is exactly as you said
 it would be.

HAROLD
 Why would I lie about something
 like that?

ELIHU
 I never considered that you may
 have. Why do you think I have
 dedicated so much of my life to
 researching this place?

He marvels at the fungus. It looks as if starlight is
 dancing through it.

ELIHU (CONT'D)
 Just look at all of this!
 Absolutely fascinating.

HAROLD
 Are you mad? I've lost three people
 to this room! My - *What's probably*
left of - My crib is still there,
 Uncle!

He points at a small mound of moss in the middle of the room.

HAROLD (CONT'D)
 And.. And you find all of this
 fucking fascinating?

ELIHU
 Please refrain from talking to me
 that way, Harold. I realize you
 are under a lot of strain being
 here --

HAROLD
 Quite!

ELIHU
 But I am responding to what I am
 experiencing... In the moment...

(MORE)

ELIHU (CONT'D)
As any scientist worth their salt
would.

Harold's mouth remains open for a moment, but he closes it before sitting on the cot. It is so low to the spongy ground that his knees almost touch his chest.

He looks down and slides his feet back and forth in the moss. He can see the floorboards and but there is nothing to be seen through it's cracks.

ELIHU (CONT'D)
Would you like some coffee?

HAROLD
How can you be so calm about this?

ELIHU
We have nothing to do but wait and be vigilant. And if that means doing so until the sun comes up, then that is what we will do.

HAROLD
What if nothing happens?

ELIHU
Then we will return tomorrow night, and every night after, until something does happen or proves we never have to come here again.

HAROLD
I hate this place.

ELIHU
I understand, Harry. You have every right to. But just know we are here for one reason only. To --

HAROLD
Kill this Goddamn thing.

ELIHU
Precisely. Well said, Nephew.

TIME PASSES: the oil in the lantern has crept downward. The light flowing through the moss has grown even brighter.

Harold checks his watch.

HAROLD
It's almost one a.m.

Elihu pulls out his pocket watch and consults it.

ELIHU

So it is.

He reaches down into the open case holding the Crooke's tube and pulls out another thermos.

ELIHU (CONT'D)

Good thing I came prepared.

Elihu smiles at his nephew. The light catches his face and Harold can see how truly sunken his uncle's features have become.

HAROLD

How many times did you come here?
To this house?

ELIHU

I almost lost count, but...

He pulls a small notebook from the inside of his jacket.

ELIHU (CONT'D)

I always keep notes.

Elihu flips through a few pages.

ELIHU (CONT'D)

One hundred and thirty-six. Thirty-seven now.

HAROLD

And you said you never came down here?

ELIHU

Not once. I felt it wasn't safe to venture down here alone.

HAROLD

Why?

ELIHU

If there was something down here, I wasn't going to give it the honor of surprising me.

HAROLD

And too late to escape it. Like I did.

ELIHU

Exactly.

He finishes off his coffee and offers the lid to Harold.

HAROLD

No thank you.

ELIHU

Well, in that case, you can have the first nap.

HAROLD

What happened to "we were not to take any eye off of one another?"

ELIHU

Stop, Harold. I have cannisters well within reach and you will be even closer to me on that cot. I can handle a thirty minute watch.

HAROLD

I'm not going to be able to sleep here.

ELIHU

Your eyes tell me a different story, Harry.

HAROLD

You - You look exhausted. You should go first.

ELIHU

I have just finished my third cup of coffee. If anything, I am going to have ask you to watch my back as I take care of some business.

Elihu gets up and stands in the nearest corner. He begins to relieve himself.

HAROLD

You're amazing.

ELIHU

How so?

HAROLD

Look at what you are doing and where you are doing it.

ELIHU

I'm human. I'm going to need to perform the functions of being such.

He finishes, pulls up his zipper and turns to face Harold.

ELIHU (CONT'D)

And perhaps my watering the toadstools could be considered a gentle "fuck you" to whatever dwells beneath these floorboards.

Harold laughs for the first time in what feels like forever.

HAROLD

I love you, Uncle.

ELIHU

I love you, too, Harry... Always have... With all my heart --

HAROLD

"And a dollop more." You told me my mother always said that.

ELIHU

That she did. She was the best sister I could have ever had. Gave me the best gift I ever could have hoped for, too.

HAROLD

Let me guess. Me?

ELIHU

Oh no, it was her Bundt cake recipe. Glorious.

He sits back down across from Harold.

ELIHU (CONT'D)

Of course it was you. Now, do me a courtesy and take a nap. Even if just a half hour.

HAROLD

Are you sure?

ELIHU

I shall be ever vigilant.

Harold lies face-down on the cot with his head turned toward his uncle. He is so tall that his shoes hang out over the end of the bed and his toes dip into the moss.

HAROLD
I've got my eye on you.

ELIHU
Not for long, it would seem.

Harold is already asleep.

EXT. PRESENT - 1977 - BENEFIT STREET - CHURCH - CHURCH STEPS - APPROACHING DUSK

Harold eyes are filled with tears as he stares at the Harris house. Helen and Mike are taking their last load inside.

HAROLD
I'm - I'm so sorry...

MALORY
Dad?

HAROLD
I never should have listened to him...

MALORY
Your uncle Elihu?

Harold nods meekly. Malory slides closer to her father and puts her arms around him. She give him the deepest hug that he will allow.

MALORY (CONT'D)
Oh, God, Dad... Dad, are you alright?

His shoulders start to shake and the tears turn into sobs.

HAROLD
S-Sorry... S-Sorry, Honey. I really didn't wanna cry. I'll pull myself outt'a this. Promise. Got-Gotta finish this. We're running out of time.

MALORY
It's okay, Dad. You'll get there.

She won't let go of him now. Even as she consoles her father, she can still catch a glimpse of the couple across the street. They are standing on their porch are staring at them with a look of concern.

Malory mouths the words: "*It's okay. I've got this.*" to them. They nod kindly, get into their truck and drive away presumably for their next load.

She squeezes her Dad's shoulder.

MALORY (CONT'D)
Can you finish your story, now?
You don't have to for me. You've
told me enough.

Harold looks at her pleadingly.

HAROLD
I h-have to, 'Mal. You need to
know.

MALORY
Okay, Dad... Okay.

HAROLD
I had a nightmare when I fell
asleep... I had no idea what was
happening to your great uncle until
I woke up.

INT. **NIGHTMARE** - **FLASHBACK** - 1938 - HARRIS HOUSE - CELLAR - NIGHT

Harold is woken from his slumber by the gentle caress of a hand on his adult shoulder.

MOTHER (O.S.)
Time to wake up, Honey.,
Sweetheart.

FATHER (O.S.)
No time to be sleeping now, Young
Man.

He scrambles to sit up. A WOMAN (33) and a MAN (35) are sitting across from him in two chairs where his uncle Elihu had been before.

HAROLD
You're - ? Who are you exactly?

FATHER
Your father, Son. It's about damn
time you woke up.

MOTHER
He was tired, Honey.

FATHER
Doesn't matter. He has some
explaining to do.

STEVIE (O.S.)
Yeah...

Stevie is standing at the foot of his cot. His legs are a tangled mess of cloth, exposed muscle and torn flesh.

STEVIE (CONT'D)
He sure does.

HAROLD
Fuckfuckfuckfuck!

Harold jumps off the cot and backs away from the three of them. He bumps hard into something and spins around to see what it is.

It's his crib.

All of the moss and fungi are gone leaving Harold to stare at nothing but his empty crib.

FATHER (O.S.)
You need to wake up.

MOTHER (O.S.)
Destroy it.

STEVIE (O.S.)
Yeah --

Harold looks to his left. Stevie is right there.

STEVIE (CONT'D)
So no one else has to go through
this.

He can hear the SOUND of SIZZLING before he looks down at his friend's legs. The ooze is making it's way up Stevie's legs again. Skin and muscle are dissolving before his eyes and this time he can see all the way to the bone.

MOTHER (O.S.)
Or this...

Harold turns and sees that the yellow, brackish ooze has covered the left side of his mother. It has begun to chew through her body. His father sits calmly next to her with a gun in his hand and resting on his lap.

FATHER
 Why would you let this happen,
 Harry?

His father raises the gun and places the barrel next to his own temple.

FATHER (CONT'D)
 You killed us all.

He pulls the trigger and there is an EXPLOSION OF LIGHT.

WHITEOUT

ELIHU (V.O)
 Wake up!!!!

JUMP CUT TO:

INT. **FLASHBACK - 1938** - HARRIS HOUSE - CELLAR - NIGHT

October 25th, 1938

Harold wakes up screaming and realizes that they are mixed with Elihu's. He tries to see where he is in the room but it is covered in a low hanging mist.

He is covered by his uncle's jacket. He must have placed it over him as he slept.

ELIHU (O.S.)
 Your feet!!

Harold looks at his feet. They have dipped into the moss. The ooze has begun to seep into the soles of his shoes.

He leaps off of the cot and follows the SOUND of ELIHU'S SCREAMING.

Harold finally finds Elihu who is on his side and sinking into a pool of yellow ichor. Panic has become etched into his uncle's every feature. The SOUND of SIZZLING is mixed with his SCREAMING. The smell is overwhelming.

HAROLD
 I'm here!!

Harold reaches for his uncle's outstretched hand.

ELIHU
 NO!!! Not me! Too late! Kick over
 that cannister, Quickly --
 Eeeeyyyaaaagh!

He runs to the closest cannister and spins off the top.

HAROLD
 Did you fall asleep?!!

ELIHU
 Never mind that! Knock it over!

HAROLD
 But you'll --

ELIHU
 Of course I will! I'm already
 dead!

Harold kicks over the cannister. The sulfuric acids gushes from the top and covers Elihu's midsection in a sizzling, frothy wave.

ELIHU (CONT'D)
 AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAHHHH!

He watches in horror as the acid consumes everything in it's path. It replaces Elihu's torso with a bubbling red chum and burns quickly through the yellow ooze.

ELIHU (CONT'D)
 Ahhhhhh!! Leave me! Get out of
 here!

Harold reaches to pull Elihu away. The ichor separates from uncle's body and move swiftly to cover his Elihu's face.

It pools into Elihu's open mouth. The ooze dislodges his teeth and tongue as it slides down his throat. It pops his eyes like balloons. They disintegrate with alarming speed.

Harold runs for the cellar doors as fast as he can. His feet plop up and down in the ooze as he tries to dislodge the clinging horror from his feet.

He throws himself at the cement stairs and steals one last look back - Elihu is nowhere to be seen.

Harold scrambles up the stairs.

EXT. HARRIS HOUSE - STORM DOORS - NIGHT

Harold bursts out of the cellar.

He slams the storm doors shut, which cuts off the goo latched onto his shoes. The inertia drives him backwards. He slides across the cement and onto the lawn.

Harold sits up, struggling to find his breath, as he watches the pulsating glow that lights up the cellar windows.

His tears come almost immediately, but they are filled with anger and resolve.

MALORY (V.O.)
DAD!? Dad? Daddy?!

EXT. **PRESENT - 1977** - BENEFIT STREET - CHURCH - CHURCH STEPS - APPROACHING DUSK

Harold's vision is filled with Malory's red-rimmed eyes as she squats in front of him. He can HEAR his own TEETH GRINDING.

MALORY
Daddy, are you okay?

He is drenched in sweat and breathing heavily. Just as he was thirty-nine years ago.

Harold refocuses his fixed stare and pulls himself back to the present. He realizes that Malory has taken his hands in hers.

HAROLD
(shaking it off)
Yeah - Yes. Yes, Honey. I'm okay.

Harold can see that the driveway of the Harris house is The empty again.

HAROLD (CONT'D)
They're gone?

MALORY
Left awhile ago, Dad.

He shakily reaches for the rest of his Coke.

HAROLD
I'm sorry I waited so long to tell you.

MALORY

God, Dad, I understand a little better now, but yeah... I wish you would've shared this shit with me a little sooner.

HAROLD

Been carrying it for awhile.

MALORY

Fuck yeah, you have.

HAROLD

'Mal, please.

MALORY

It's gonna have to be what it is for while, Dad. Can't keep it in. This is a lot.

Harold smiles at her weakly.

HAROLD

'Kay.

MALORY

What do you think happened with your uncle?

HAROLD

I told you.

MALORY

No, I mean, how could he have been caught off guard like that.

HAROLD

Well, when I went back in there --

MALORY

You went back in?!?

HAROLD

Had to. Had to try and kill it, didn't I?

EXT. **FLASHBACK - 1938** - HARRIS HOUSE - STORM DOORS - DAWN

Harold paces back and forth as he alternates between watching for the sunrise and checking the cellar windows.

HAROLD (V.O.)

*I had to wait for two things: Dawn
and for the windows to stop
glowing.*

As sunlight starts to crest over the horizon behind the house, Harold moves closer to the stairs to the cellar. He watches the pulsating windows carefully until they grow dark. Even then he waits to make sure they stay that way.

HAROLD (V.O.)

*When I was sure that the moss had
stopped glowing, I went back
downstairs to finish the damned
thing off.*

INT. HARRIS HOUSE - CELLAR - DAWN

Harold stops on the bottom stair. He waits there, cautiously, and give the room a quick once over.

The moss dark once more and the mist has evaporated.

The cot where he fell asleep and his uncle's chair are both where he left them. Elihu's jacket laid on the cot where he threw it. The case that had served as a table still had the lantern sitting on it. It was lit and next to it was the Crooke's tube.

Uncle Elihu was nowhere to be seen. The chaos of last night had given way to the hollow silence that had taken it's place.

Harold takes a hesitant step into the cellar.

His sadness grows more palpable the closer he gets to the cot and chair. A large exposed area dominates front of the hearth of the fireplace where his uncle had been laying. The sulfuric acid has melted away the moss and the floorboards beneath, leaving a patch of exposed earth.

HAROLD (V.O.)

*I can only guess what happened
while I was asleep.*

Harold turns and stares at his cot and his uncle's jacket laying on it.

INT. **HAROLD'S IMAGINATION** - **FLASHBACK** - CELLAR - NIGHT

Elihu takes off his jacket and covers his sleeping, twitching nephew with it.

*HAROLD (V.O.)
Uncle Elihu probably saw that I was
having some sort of nightmare and
covered me with his jacket.*

INT. **CURRENT TIMELINE** - HARRIS HOUSE - CELLAR - DAWN

Harold's attention turns to the Crooke's tube on top of the case.

*HAROLD (V.O.)
He must have tried testing the air
with the Crooke's tube.*

INT. **HAROLD'S IMAGINATION - FLASHBACK** - CELLAR - NIGHT

Elihu has set the Crooke's tube on top of the case and next to the lamp. It gives him enough light to be able to start using the sensitive equipment.

*HAROLD (V.O.)
It's a device that scatters
electrons in front of it and works
like an x-ray --*

The dusty light lingering throughout the basement allows a beam of light emanating from the Crooke's tube to be seen.

*HAROLD (V.O.)
Exposing matter that may not be
able to be seen by the naked eye.*

A yellow mist begins to form above of the moss.

*HAROLD (V.O.)
The electrons could have caused a
some sort of reaction from the
moss.*

Elihu's eyes are focused on the beam projecting from the Crooke's tube. They begin to droop and flutter.

*HAROLD (V.O.)
I can only guess it must've knocked
him out.*

He leans forward and falls into the moss.

INT. **CURRENT TIMELINE** - HARRIS HOUSE - CELLAR - DAWN

Harold stands in front of the bare patch of earth.

*HAROLD (V.O.)
Then that monster took him away
from me.*

He walks over to his uncle's jacket, picks it up and throws it on the stairs.

*HAROLD (V.O.)
I knew where it was hiding now,
though.*

Harold returns to the cot and starts to tear it apart. He breaks one of its metal rods in half and turns it into a digging tool.

*HAROLD (V.O.)
And I would be damned if I was
going to let it get away from me.*

He begins to dig where the exposed earth is in front of the fireplace.

TIME PASSES: Harold has placed two of the metal cannisters near the edge of the shallow pit he has dug under the open floorboards.

Suddenly the end of the metal rod begins to sizzle and melt.

Harold can see a flash of something yellow under the dirt.

He jumps back - Ready to dump the acid into the pit before something lunges at him.

It doesn't.

*HAROLD (V.O.)
I can't begin to tell you why that
thing didn't move, but it didn't.
Maybe it was like a vampire.
Didn't want to be exposed to
sunlight, right? But I will tell
you this...*

Harold looks at the metal cannister he has set next to him and all the way back to the entrance to the cellar. They stand like sentries awaiting their orders.

*HAROLD (V.O.)
I didn't care. It was gonna die
one way or another.*

Harold edges forward and looks down into the pit. The yellow mass is undulating under the dirt. Almost as if it is breathing.

For a split second, he can see his uncle's loose teeth bob to the surface.

HAROLD
FUCK YOU!!!

Harold dumps the two closet cannisters into the pit.

A HIGH PITCHED DEAFENING SQUEAL can be HEARD.

He backs up and knocks over the next two. The acid washes out of them just as the yellow ooze begins to crest the lip of the pit.

HAROLD (CONT'D)
That's right! DIE, YOU BASTARD!

Harold keeps knocking over the cannisters until he is standing on the bottom stair. They fall over with LOUD CLANGS as they crash through the moss and bounce on the floor.

The ooze tries to move towards him but sizzles away as it encounters the sulfuric acid. It can't escape the cascading waves that have engulfed the floor of the room. The moss turns black and dies everywhere it touches.

Harold leans forward and screams at the top of his lungs.

HAROLD (CONT'D)
DIIIIEEEEEE!!

He looks down and sees small puddles of the yellow ichor on the bottom of his shoes again.

It doesn't burn through.

Harold grabs his uncle's jacket off the stairs and runs towards the light.

EXT. HARRIS HOUSE - STORM DOORS - DAWN

He quickly exits the cellar and slams the storm doors shut.

The goo under his shoes quickly dissipates.

Harold runs to one of the cellar windows and peers inside.

POV - HAROLD LOOKING INTO THE CELLAR - DAWN

The cellar floor is sizzling. A fine haze floats above the floorboards that have melted away from over half of the room.

The pit at the far end of the cellar is an open maw. The light hitting it reveals nothing more but a hollow hole in the ground.

EXT. HARRIS HOUSE - CELLAR WINDOWS - DAWN

Harold sits down in front of the cellar windows waits.

*HAROLD (V.O.)
I waited there... All day... Until
the sun went down.*

EXT. HARRIS HOUSE - CELLAR WINDOWS - DUSK

TIME PASSES: The sun fades around him.

*HAROLD (V.O.)
I left only to grab a flashlight
from my uncle's car.*

He turns on the flashlight and peers into the cellar.

POV - HAROLD LOOKING INTO THE CELLAR - DUSK

Light floods the room, replacing the sunlight quickly disappearing sunlight.

The room remains still and quiet.

The moss doesn't glow. Nor does the pit at the end of the room.

*HAROLD (V.O.)
I stayed there all night...*

EXT. HARRIS HOUSE - CELLAR WINDOWS - NIGHT

TIME PASSES: The sun rises and light touches the grass around him.

*HAROLD (V.O.)
I made sure it was dead.*

EXT. **PRESENT - 1977** - BENEFIT STREET - CHURCH - CHURCH STEPS - DUSK

Harold sits on the church steps in the same position. Malory is right next to him.

MALORY

And that is why you come here every year?

HAROLD

Every October 25th. The anniversary of my uncle's death.

MALORY

Just to make sure it fucking stayed dead.

HAROLD

Yeah.

MALORY

Yeah.

HAROLD

But this year's different. Somebody bought the damned house. Moving in. I need to get in there. Need to make sure.

MALORY

Is that why you kept bringing me? As back-up?

HAROLD

I can't do this alone. I mean, I could, but two...

MALORY

Two people are safer. I get it. What would you have done if I was younger?

HAROLD

I'm not sure I could have gone through with it with you here. It would have been too much for you to... Yeah.. No... Probably would've taken you home and come back here by myself.

Malory pats her father's leg and gives it a squeeze.

MALORY

I'm glad you didn't.

HAROLD

Me, too, Honey.

Harold stands up and brushes the dirt off the back of his jeans. Malory joins him.

HAROLD (CONT'D)
Wanna finish this with me?

MALORY
Sure the fuck do.

He smiles and shake his head in disbelief at her commitment to swearing.

MALORY (CONT'D)
What? From the way you told it,
you swore just as much as me.
Maybe more.

HAROLD
Yeah, but I only did it to piss of
my uncle.

MALORY
Duh.

Her smile lights up his world.

HAROLD
C'mon. Gotta stop by the car first.

EXT. BENEFIT STREET - HAROLD'S CAR - TRUNK - DUSK

Harold pops the trunk as they approach the car.

HAROLD
Let me ask you something.

MALORY
Sure.

HAROLD
Don't hold back, okay?

MALORY
Dad...

HAROLD
Just wanna make sure I'm not
getting some ballad of --

MALORY
Bullshit?

HAROLD

Exactly.

He reaches into the trunk and pulls out a shotgun.

MALORY

Jesus.

HAROLD

First question: You ever used one of these?

MALORY

No! Why the hell would I?!

Harold hands it to her.

HAROLD

Okay... Good to hear, I guess. Well... It's easy. You point the barrels in the direction of the thing that needs to be shot and you pull the trigger.

MALORY

Oh... Oh, okay. S-Sure. Why didn't you and your uncle bring one?

HAROLD

Little tougher to get guns in 1938.

MALORY

Makes sense. What's your second question?

He looks Malory square in the eyes. She can feel the weight of the expectation of her answer.

HAROLD

I know why I've come here year after year. I've told you now why I brought you here. But why did you come here with me? Every.. Single... Time?

Malory doesn't answer at first.

HAROLD (CONT'D)

Oh, sure, you complained - *And I mean a lot* - The last couple of years I dragged you out here. But you still came. Why?

MALORY
Sun's going down, Dad, shouldn't we
get --

HAROLD
C'mon, 'Mal. Why? Before we go in
there... Why?

She hesitates again, but just for a moment. Malory looks at
the Harris house and then back at her father.

MALORY
I... I didn't want you to be alone.
Ever again.

HAROLD
Oh, 'Mal...

MALORY
You're always alone. When I'm not
there - *Ever since Mom left and
took me with her* - You're always
alone.

HAROLD
I got used to it.

MALORY
Fuck if you did. You've got two
bowls, two plates and two sets of
silverware at your house, Dad.
That's you. That's me. That's it.

Harold isn't sure how to respond.

MALORY (CONT'D)
Alone. No one else, right?

He nods in agreement.

MALORY (CONT'D)
Just you and me. No way I'm gonna
let you sit your ass on those steps
- *Alone* - And stare at this Goddamn
house. You lost your parents, your
uncle... Your Mom.
(beat)
I love you, Daddy. You don't have
to be alone anymore. I'm here,
okay?

Harold smiles at her humbly and with love in his eyes.

HAROLD
Okay, Honey...

MALORY
Good! Fuck an "A," right?

The sun has set and the lights have come up on Benefit Street.

MALORY (CONT'D)
Cool! Let's go see if I get to shoot something tonight!

EXT. BENEFIT STREET - NIGHT

Malory takes a few steps towards the Harris house then stops, turns around and shakes the shotgun at her father.

MALORY
Hey, where's yours?

EXT. BENEFIT STREET - HAROLD'S CAR - TRUNK - NIGHT

Harold reaches into the trunk and pulls back a blanket.

HAROLD
I've got this.

He pulls out two metal cannisters tied to one another with shoulder straps attached to the front. There is a metallic hose connected to it with a spray nozzle. It looks like the sort of thing an exterminator might use.

HAROLD (CONT'D)
Wanna help me strap this thing on?

Malory runs over to him and leans the shotgun against the car.

She starts helping Harold to put it on.

MALORY
I'm guessing this is that acid stuff, right?

HAROLD
Just in case.

MALORY
Yup. Just in case.

She cinches it tight and buckles the last buckle.

MALORY (CONT'D)
You look like something outt'a *The Twilight Zone*.

HAROLD
That fits. Feels like I've been living in one.

He grabs two headlamps and hands one to Malory.

HAROLD (CONT'D)
Just in case, Hon. I have no idea what kind of light source is down there.

Harold reaches back into the trunk and pulls out a sledgehammer.

MALORY
What's that for?

HAROLD
A little home demo. I'll explain in a little bit.

He slams the trunk closed and smiles at her.

HAROLD (CONT'D)
Let's finish this.

They head for the Harris house and it's cellar.

EXT. HARRIS HOUSE - STORM DOORS - NIGHT

A padlock has been strung through the storm doors.

MALORY
Fuck. Me.

HAROLD
Not a problem.

Harold sneaks a glance at the house next door. It's only five o'clock, but the lights are off. He swings at the padlock with his sledgehammer. It doesn't budge, but one of handles comes loose.

MALORY
Man, they didn't think that through, did they?

She reaches forward and pulls back the broken handle. The padlock slides right off.

Harold yanks on the other handle and both the storm doors ease back. He reaches down and pulls them open. They BANG backwards against the ground and shudder for a moment.

The dark, uninviting gullet of the cellar dares them to enter it.

HAROLD
Ready?

MALORY
Hell, yeah.

Malory takes a step forward and Harold stops her.

HAROLD
Hold up.

Harold pulls a small, leatherbound notebook from his back pocket. He seems troubled when he hands it to her.

HAROLD (CONT'D)
This was my uncle Elihu's. I want you to have it.

MALORY
Dad...

HAROLD
You know, just in case things go sideways down there.

He starts to take a step forward before Malory stops him.

MALORY
Hold up, Yourself. "Things go sideways down there?" You know something I don't know. Something else you haven't told me?

HAROLD
I know a lot of things that you don't know, 'Mal. That's why I'm your Dad.

He smiles at her and heads downstairs before she can get a word in.

MALORY
(laughing)
Asshole...

Harold disappears under the doorway to the cellar.

HAROLD (O.S.)
 Hold on a 'sec. I wanna see if
 there's a --

Light floods the room past it's entrance.

HAROLD (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 Light switch! Hot damn! They really
 went to town on this place down
 here! Hey! Come on down!

INT. HARRIS HOUSE - CELLAR - NIGHT

Malory is almost to the bottom of the stairs when she sees
 her Dad standing a few feet away from her.

HAROLD (CONT'D)
 Wait, 'Mal! Don't step on the
 floor.

She hesitates.

HAROLD (CONT'D)
 It's lava!

MALORY
 C'mon, Dad...

HAROLD
 (smiling)
 I crack jokes when I'm nervous.
 You know that. Do me a favor and
 take a seat there on the stairs? I
 wanna make sure the coast is clear.
 Keep that shotgun handy, 'kay?

Malory sits down and holds the shotgun across her lap.

HAROLD (CONT'D)
 Keep an eye on my feet, just in
 case? This thing never liked
 cement. It's what kept it off the
 stairs. So we're in luck.

She looks down at the floor of the empty room. The dirt and
 floorboards from her father's story have been replaced with
 smooth, featureless cement. The rest of the room has been
 completely finished and the walls painted white. A stairway
 has been restored to it's original place. Presumably going up
 to the main floor of the house.

Harold reaches the fireplace on the other end of the room and
 leans the sledgehammer against it.

The front of it is still sealed with brick, but has been painted white to match the room.

Malory's attention moves from her father's feet to his hands which are tracing the bottom edge of the mantle.

MALORY

What are you looking for?

His hand stops about a third of the way from the right hand side of the mantle. Harold reaches in further and finds a hole.

HAROLD

This...

He hooks his finger into a hole and presses upward.

The wall sealing the fireplace slides sideways and reveals a small shrine. There is a statue of a hideous creature in it's center.

Malory gets up to join her Dad.

HAROLD (CONT'D)

Don't! Move!

His voice startles her.

HAROLD (CONT'D)

Please, Honey. I'm sorry I shouted, but stay put, please.

MALORY

What the fuck is going on? What is that, Dad?

Harold turns to answer his daughter. Malory can see that his is overcome with a mixture of love and dread.

HAROLD

That notebook that I gave you - *My uncle Elihu's* - is filled with his research. There are a lot of things he found out about this house and didn't tell me. Things I haven't told you until now...

MALORY

Why?

HAROLD

Because I knew you would leave me if I told you.

(MORE)

HAROLD (CONT'D)
 Just, like everyone else...
 Including your mother. Yes, I told
 her. But she thought I was just a
 crazy drunk. It was the last
 straw. That's why she left.

MALORY
 But I told you I never would.

HAROLD
 I wasn't sure before, Honey. But -
 But I am now. That's why I brought
 you down here with me.

MALORY
 You are really freaking me out,
 Dad. Let me --

Malory sets down the shotgun, stands and tries to step down
 onto the floor.

HAROLD
 STOP, GODDAMMIT!

She does.

HAROLD (CONT'D)
 I-I'm sorry, Honey. I don't want
 to yell at you. You - You're safer
 there. Please - Please pick up that
 shotgun.

Malory doesn't take her eyes off her father as she slowly
 reaches down and picks up the shotgun.

MALORY
 I-I don't understand.

HAROLD
 I haven't told you the complete
 truth about any of this,
 Sweetheart, and I - *I'm sorry I*
didn't - I had to be sure. Sure
 you'd stay and sure about what my
 Uncle wrote. He said there was a
 hidden shrine here.

Harold points at the creature in the center of the shrine.

HAROLD (CONT'D)
 I think that is what lived under
 the floorboards. The thing that
 dominated this house. That killed
 so many people.

(MORE)

HAROLD (CONT'D)
 Infesting it's walls. I think he
 was looking for it every time he
 came here without me... To see if
 he was right.

MALORY
 Do you hear how crazy that sounds?

HAROLD
 It's all in his journal.

MALORY
 But the last time he came here *he*
came with you and it killed him.

HAROLD
 But not me.

MALORY
 But not --

HAROLD
 Just like every other time I was in
 this basement. In here with "it."

Malory can HEAR the SOUND of her HEART POUNDING in her ears.

MALORY
 Dad?

HAROLD
 I'm in his journal, too.

She starts to lean the shotgun against the stairwell in order
 to reach for the journal.

HAROLD (CONT'D)
 Don't put down that gun, Malory...
 Please. I'm - I'm not entirely sure
 what happens next.

Malory stops and tightens her grip on the shotgun. Her
 fingers have moved near the trigger.

MALORY
 What do you mean every time you
 were "with it?"

HAROLD
 My uncle thought that I was
connected to it... My uncle
 believed that my parents were
 followers of that "thing."
 Cultists, I guess.

Harold starts to cross the room towards Malory. As he does *an image of his parents appears to his right - as if it was in his imagination. They are standing above BABY HAROLD (1) in his crib.*

HAROLD (CONT'D)

When they heard about the Harris house and it's... Dark secrets... My parents moved in, got into this basement and prayed to whatever that creature was. Baptized me in blood to it.

They cut the finger of their infant with an ornate knife. He wails as they squeeze the blood from it. Drops fall through the floorboards below.

Harold stops next to where the crib would have been. *It changes into Baby Harold asleep in his crib and his dead parents leaning against it.*

HAROLD (CONT'D)

It probably took my Mom's life pretty quickly and then Dad took his own.

MALORY

But other people came down here, I'm sure!

HAROLD

There were no other documented losses of life in this basement. Just my parents.

Uncle Elihu appears next to Malory at the bottom of the stairs. He runs to the crib and the bodies, horrified by what he finds.

HAROLD (CONT'D)

It was my uncle that found them here. Dead. Found the knife, too. Over a decade later, I came down here with Stevie... Didn't I?

Harold turns and heads in the direction of the fireplace where Stevie died. *His friend appears before him, frozen in agony. Young Harold is standing a few feet from him. There is a puddle of the yellow goo around his feet.*

HAROLD (CONT'D)

It killed Stevie. Right here. We both thought it was after me, too.

(MORE)

HAROLD (CONT'D)

But now I think my being here was the catalyst to summon it. Feed it. I told you it was attached to my feet, didn't I?

Young Harold runs past His Older Self, and through Malory, up the cellar stairs. There is a long stream of the yellow goo flowing from his feet and connected to the creature.

HAROLD (CONT'D)

As soon as I cleared the stairs and shut those doors...

MALORY

It was gone.

HAROLD

Yeah... It was wasn't it? I killed my friend, Malory. It was my fault - *Unknowingly* - But it was my fault just the same. I was sent away. By my uncle. I'm sure now, somehow, he knew I'd never come back.

MALORY

Until he brought you back down here with him...

HAROLD

Yeah... Until then.

Harold looks to his right. He and his uncle appear. He on his cot and Elihu in his chair.

HAROLD (CONT'D)

I bet you he tried to find the shrine behind the wall in the fireplace - *That's why he asked me to sleep first* - But he never found it...

His uncle collapses onto the floor into the mist as Harold sleeps.

HAROLD (CONT'D)

The thing under the floorboards took care of that.

The yellow ichor starts to seep through Harold's shoes while he is unconscious on the cot. It drips downward between the cracks and under the floorboards.

HAROLD (CONT'D)

But it wouldn't have been able to
do it --

MALORY

Unless you were here.

Malory's voice has begun to tremble in the weight of the moment.

HAROLD

That's right, Honey... Unless I was
here.

Her eyes flit down to her father's shoes. Nothing is there.

MALORY

Why isn't it coming after me?

HAROLD

It's either dead under there -
Because I killed it way back when -
Or it doesn't have a way to get to
you. No floorboards. No cracks in.
Just cement.

Harold backs away from his daughter. His is almost to the fireplace.

HAROLD (CONT'D)

And I won't let it.

Malory can see the sweat that has beaded up on his father's forehead. His shirt is drenched.

MALORY

Dad?

HAROLD

I can feel it wants to break out of
me. Been fighting it since I got
down here. Wasn't aware of it
before I walked into this damn
cellar. But I... I am now.

His hand starts to reach for the shrine and he strains to pull it back.

HAROLD (CONT'D)

I beat the alcohol, Honey. Thought
I could beat this. I brought you
here, just in case I couldn't.

Malory looks down at the shotgun in her hands.

MALORY

Fuck. That.

HAROLD

This has to stop. No one has to die anymore. People are moving into this house and the shrine needs to be destroyed.

Harold picks up the sledgehammer and smiles weakly.

HAROLD (CONT'D)

"A little home demo" and then I need your help, Malory.

MALORY

You're asking me to shoot you?

HAROLD

No. I'm asking you to shoot these.

Harold turns away from Malory to expose the two metal cylinders on his back.

HAROLD (CONT'D)

When I smash whatever the fuck that shrine is... All hell's gonna break loose.

MALORY

Daddy... No.

HAROLD

It will escape from me, Honey... It will. Then the acid will kill it.

MALORY

And you.

HAROLD

And me.

MALORY

Fuck that. No.

HAROLD

It's the only way, 'Mal. I know it. You know it, too. A new family is moving into this house. I can't...

He turns the sledgehammer over in his hands.

HAROLD (CONT'D)

I - I Can't.

MALORY
Nooooooooo, DON'T!

Harold swings the hammer at the shrine.

MALORY (CONT'D)
Daaaaadddyyy!!

It shatters instantly. Pieces litter the fireplace and the floor like rain. Splinters of it dance around his shoes.

He immediately doubles over in pain and begins to convulse.

Malory fights every fiber of her being to run to her father.

Harold looks up at his daughter one last time. His eyes are filled with love and trembling with tears.

HAROLD
I love you with all of my heart...

MALORY
"And a dollop more..." I love you,
Daddy. Oh, God...

HAROLD
You can do this, Honey. Save them.

He keeps his eyes on his daughter as long as he can, before turning his back on her.

Harold bends over and screams in agony. Yellow ooze begins to puddle around his shoes.

HAROLD (CONT'D)
Pull the trigger and run!!!

MALORY
Daddy!!

HAROLD
Now, Honey! NOW!

Malory points the shotgun in the direction of the two silver cylinders and fires both barrels.

She sees enough to know that she hit the mark. They explode in a rain of sulfuric acid.

Malory turns and runs before she sees anymore.

Harold's terrified screams of agony are enough to know she has succeeded. She keeps running and never looks back.

EXT. HARRIS HOUSE - STORM DOORS - NIGHT

Malory bursts out of the cellar.

She turns around quickly and slams the storm doors shut.

Malory can hear her father's screams.

HAROLD (O.S.)
YES! Die you motherfucker!!

Although tears are streaming down her face, Malory smiles at her father's swearing and the sound of triumph in his voice.

MALORY
Get 'em, Dad! Kill that fucker!

HAROLD (O.S.)
Ahhhhhh! It's working, Honey! It's -
It's...

Harold's screams subside, then slowly ebb away.

Malory collapses into a sitting position, just as her father did decades ago. She watches the storm doors for any movement.

After what seems like an eternity, all of the emotions that Malory has been trying to hold back burst through. Her slow tears turn to heavy sobbing and Malory wraps her arms around her knees and buries her head there. She begins to rock back and forth.

TIME PASSES: She doesn't move from that spot. Eventually she begins to read her great uncle Elihu's journal from cover to cover.

EXT. HARRIS HOUSE - STORM DOORS - MORNING

Malory is still sitting in front of the storm doors when a familiar truck pulls up in the driveway behind her. She can HEAR the SOUND of its DOORS OPENING and CLOSING.

MIKE (O.S.)
Hey, there! Can I help you?

HELEN (O.S.)
You okay over there?

Malory doesn't acknowledge them and stares at the storm doors to the cellar. Her eyes are red, but her jaw is clenched.

MALORY

I... I fucking hate this place.

The first chords of the *"The Passenger" by Iggy Pop Begin to Play.*

Fade to Black

THE END