

Don't Speak

written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD- NIGHT

Crickets CHIRP as AMARA walks down the sidewalk with her friends LYLA and SOPHIE. They're in casual clothes. Amara is in the middle- Lyla on her left, Sophie on her right.

SOPHIE

(laughing)

Can you believe that drunk guy
passed out right in front of us?
Fucking hilarious!

LYLA

(laughing)

Oh my God, I know! That was
priceless!

SOPHIE

If I didn't break my damn phone
that shit would have blown up on
TikTok!

(to Amara)

Huh, Amara?

Amara smiles and chuckles silently.

They continue walking, bantering, until they reach Amara's house. They stop.

BEAT.

Amara's smile fades.

She stares at the house- anxiety creeping in.

She glances toward a window- a shadowy SILHOUETTE of a woman lingers behind the curtain.

INT. AMARA'S HOUSE- NIGHT

From inside, we see Amara through the woman's POV.

She watches Amara.

Her breath is sharp.

Harsh.

Heavy.

EXT. SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD- NIGHT

Lyla and Sophie look toward the window with the same expression as Amara.

Sophie looks at Amara.

SOPHIE
(sympathetically)
You sure you don't want to come
back to my place with us? We all
could hang out, watch a movie if
you want?

Amara keeps her eyes on the house- that same anxious expression still lingering.

BEAT.

She hesitates...then turns to Sophie.

She forces a sad smile and nods.

AMARA
Yeah. I'm fine. Thanks anyway.

Sophie puts her hand on Amara's shoulder, locking eyes with her.

SOPHIE
(reassuringly)
Just...don't be afraid to call us,
okay? You know you can talk to us
anytime you need to.

Lyla nudges Amara's shoulder with a smile.

LYLA
Yeah, we got your back girl.
Always.

Amara smiles and waves goodbye, then turns back toward the house.

She glances at the same window- but this time, the silhouette is gone.

She closes her eyes, takes a deep breath...then heads inside.

INT. AMARA'S HOUSE- LIVING ROOM

Amara walks through the door.

As she does- the SILHOUETTE darts across the frame, right to left just behind her. Only visible for a blink. Just as she enters.

Amara slowly walks to the kitchen, pausing at the doorway.

INT. AMARA'S HOUSE- KITCHEN

Her MOTHER stands at the stove, stirring a bubbling pot. Her movements are slow, deliberate- something unidentifiable stews inside.

We push in on a framed photo on the counter- Amara in the middle, her mother on the left, her father on the right. She looks like she's forcing a smile.

But there's a dark stain over the mother and father's faces- smudged, dark. Their features are completely obscured.

We cut to the mother from the front- but the shot only reveals her mouth. Tight. Expression cold.

BEAT.

MOTHER
(coldly)
You're late. I told you to be back
by eight.

Amara nods. She walks over and sits at the kitchen table.

Mother sets the stove to low and ladles a spoonful of an unidentifiable black liquid into a dirty cup- thick, slow, almost tar-like. It moves slow- almost alive.

She picks up the cup and crosses the room, placing it in front of her. Then she sits opposite to Amara.

We now see her face- partially hidden by long, dirty, unkempt hair. It obscures most of her features.

Amara takes a deep breath, opens her mouth to speak-

AMARA
Mother, before you say anything-

Mother cuts her off.

MOTHER
(commanding)
Sit up straight before speaking to
me.

Amara straightens.

She takes a gulp- a hard, nervous gulp.

AMARA
(softly)
We were just walking back from-

MOTHER
SPEAK UP, GIRL.

Amara swallows again. Her hands grip the edge of the table.

AMARA
(slightly louder)
I didn't mean to take that long. We
didn't mean to come back so late.

Mother sips her drink.

MOTHER
(interrupting)
Yes...we...

PAUSE.

Mother stirs the cup with a teaspoon. The sound is slow.
Repetitive.

MOTHER
Who were those girls anyways?
Didn't I tell you not to bring
anyone near this house?

Amara hesitates. Her eyes flicker.

AMARA
Its not like that Mother. They
wouldn't tell anyone-

Mother SLAMS her fist on the table- HARD. The sound cuts her
off. Amara jolts.

She points directly at her.

MOTHER
(commanding)
When I tell you something, you
listen! You don't get to make your
own decisions! Understand?

Amara nods quickly.

AMARA
(anxiously)
Yes, Mother. I'm sorry. It won't
happen again.

BEAT.

Mother stares at her for a moment.

Her lips curl into a slow, sadistic smile. The light above
the table begins to flicker.

Amara stiffens- the fear crawling back in.

MOTHER
But you still defied me...didn't
you?

Mother begins to laugh- slow, sadistic. The sound is
invasive, unnatural.

Amara closes her eyes. A deep breath.

She opens them again, steady now. Determined.

AMARA
(quiet but firm)
I'm not afraid of you, Mother.

Suddenly- The flickering light above STOPS. Silence.

Mother's smile fades. Her face hardens.

MOTHER
You will be.

Mother suddenly grabs the cup and starts gulping it down-
sloppily and aggressively, the thick reddish-black liquid
spilling from her mouth, dripping down her chin.

Amara's fear comes rushing back. She starts to breathe more
rapidly.

We then switch to a BIRD'S-EYE VIEW. Mother SLAMS the cup
back down.

Her smile is wide. Sadistic. Her eyes turn BLACK. Black veins
begin to pulse and spread beneath her skin, creeping across
her face.

Suddenly, Mother YANKS her to the ground. Amara screams as
she's DRAGGED BY HER HAIR- Mother gripping tight with one
hand as she marches down the hall.

INT. HALLWAY- CONTINUOUS

AMARA
(yelling)
Mother, no! Stop!

Amara starts sobbing.

AMARA (CONT'D)
Ow! Ow! Mother, it hurts!

MOTHER
(speaking over her with a
demonic undertone)
You will learn not to disobey me! I
am your mother!

We push down the hallway- toward the door at the end.

Darkness creeps in from the edges of the frame, swallowing
the walls.

The door CREAKS open slowly.

The camera tilts slightly- pushing forward.

The entire room glows with a deep, unnatural PULSING red hue-
as it bleeds through a single window on the left side wall.

In the center sits a wooden chair, alone. Strapped with
restraints.

Amara kicks, thrashes. Mother keeps dragging her forward.

INT. PUNISHMENT ROOM- CONTINUOUS

Mother lifts Amara by her hair. Amara yelps, her feet
dangling-

-Mother SLAMS her into the chair, STRAPPING her in place.

Amara STRUGGLES.

AMARA
(sobbing)
Please, Mother! I promise I'll
listen.

AMARA (CONT'D)
Don't hurt me again. Please!

We look at Amara- crying, broken, trembling.

Suddenly, Mother jerks her head to the back wall and is hypnotized by it.

BEAT.

She stares at the wall- deadpan, hypnotized. Motionless. Everything goes silent for a moment.

She freezes, then smirks- something evil flashing behind her black eyes.

She turns and exits.

A moment later, she returns- holding a leather belt, slick and black, like it's made of tar. It shifts in her hand, like it's alive.

Amara cries harder. She begins to struggle more.

Mother slowly walks over and lowers her face- until she is directly in front of Amara's. Their eyes locked.

MOTHER

Don't speak.

Amara snuffles, trembling. She lowers her eyes to the ground.

We watch as Mother begins to slowly circle her- until she's behind her.

Mother raises the belt. Slow. Deliberate.

CRACK.

Mother strikes her across the back.

Amara muffles a scream.

Mother keeps circling- like a predator.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

Such a disgrace. You think you can talk back to me, huh? That you can do what you want?

CRACK.

She strikes Amara across the face.

Amara sobs, still muffling her cries.

MOTHER (CONT'D)
Not after what you've done! Not
after all this pain you've caused
me!

CRACK.

Amara's muffled screams intensify.

MOTHER (CONT'D)
(Her voice deepens-
demonic, overpowering. It
warps into something)
Your father is dead, because of
you!

CRACK.

We push in Amara's face- trembling, tears streaking down.

As it lands, Amara's head jerks up- she looks straight into
the camera, eyes wide with agony- and let's out a muffled,
broken scream.

BEAT.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. AMARA/SOPHIES APARTMENT -AMARA'S BEDROOM- MORNING

Amara jolts up in bed. Breathing heavy. Soaked in sweat.

She rubs her eyes, trying to calm herself.

ON SCREEN: "10 YEARS LATER"

She glances at the clock on her nightstand- 10:43.

With a sigh, she flops back onto the bed, eyes drifting shut
for a moment.

She rubs her forehead, overwhelmed.

AMARA
Shit.

BEAT.

EXT. AMARA'S WORKPLACE- MORNING

A modest building on a busy street. Cars zip by. Horns BLARE. FOOTSTEPS, CHATTER, and CITY NOISE blend into the morning chaos.

INT. AMARA'S WORKPLACE -MANAGER'S OFFICE- CONTINUOUS

Amara sits across from the desk, looking tired. Hollow. Exhausted.

Her manager sighs from off-screen.

MANAGER (O.S.)

I know you've been going through a lot, Amara. But this is the fifth time you've been late since you started working here.

Amara nods- eyes down.

AMARA

I know. I just... I've just been so stressed lately. But I promise I'll be on time from now on.

MANAGER (O.S.)

I don't think I'm making myself.

He lets out a deep, slow sigh.

MANAGER (CONT'D)

Amara, I'm letting you go.

Amara scoffs and sneers.

AMARA

You're serious? You're just gonna fire me on the spot?

MANAGER (O.S.)

I'm sorry, but my decision is final. I'll give you until the end of the day to clean out your stuff.

Amara shakes her head slowly and scoffs again.

BEAT.

EXT. AMARA'S WORKPLACE- AFTERNOON

City noise buzzes-traffic hums, horns honk.

Amara stands outside the building, a cardboard box of office junk beside her.

She pulls out a pack of cigarettes, lights one, and takes a long drag.

A taxi pulls up.

She climbs in without a word.

The taxi drives off.

INT. AMARA/SOPHIE'S APARTMENT- AFTERNOON

The sound of keys jiggling.

The door opens- Amara steps inside, leans against it. Her shoulders slump.

She exhales, eyes closed, the weight of the day heavy on her.

AMARA

Fuck.

EXT. SKY NIGHT

The moon glows dim behind drifting clouds. City lights flicker below.

INT. AMARA/SOPHIE'S APARTMENT- LIVING ROOM

Amara sits on the couch, scrolling through job listings on her computer. A metal baseball bat leans casually against the doorway.

A knock at the door.

SOPHIE (V.O.)

Amara? Hello?

She knocks again.

SOPHIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

You in there?

She groans, gets up, and opens it.

Sophie- her roommate- steps inside, brushing past Amara with a sigh. She drops her purse on the counter, heads into the kitchen, and slips off her jacket.

SOPHIE
Christ, you'd think by now I'd have
a spare key.

She picks up the bat and smirks.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)
Guess I should use this for more
than just protection, huh?

Amara raises an eyebrow and smirks.

AMARA
(sarcastic)
Oh yeah, 'cause you always use the
front door.

Sophie gasps dramatically.

SOPHIE
(mock offended)
Amara! Are you accusing me of
breaking into my own home?

AMARA
Unless that was your evil twin who
snuck in last Friday- then yeah, I
am.

They both laugh.

Sophie sets the bat down.

She pulls out her phone and flips to the selfie camera,
angling it at her chest.

SOPHIE
God, my tits are huge.

Amara rolls her eyes.

AMARA
And I'm walking away now.

Amara turns and heads back to the couch, plopping down and
resuming her job search on the laptop.

BEAT.

SOPHIE
(munching on an apple)
Sorry about your job, by the way.

Amara sighs.

AMARA

That's childhood trauma for you.
Creeps back up on you when you
least expect it- and wrecks your
life.

BEAT.

Sophie looks at Amara. Her expression softens.

She walks over and sits beside her.

SOPHIE

You know you can talk to me, right?
I've literally known you since
middle school.

She takes one of Amara's hands and holds it.

Amara looks at her, then squeezes back gently, offering a
small, sad smile.

AMARA

I know.

They sit in silence for a beat, locked in each other's eyes.

Suddenly, Sophie's phone dings.

She pulls her hands away, checks it, and groans.

SOPHIE

Goddammit. That's the second time
this week they've asked me to come
in on my day off. I should start
calling out too.

Amara chuckles.

AMARA

Yeah? You gonna go live in L.A.
with Lyla? Because I've seen your
acting- and girl, it's not great.

Sophie smirks.

SOPHIE

(playfully)
You're such a bitch.

Amara chuckles again.

Sophie places her hands on her knees and stands.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)
Well, time to go work my ninth day
in a row.
(sarcastic)
Yay me.

She grabs her purse off the table and heads toward the door.

Just before exiting, she pauses and turns back.

BEAT.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)
Call me whenever you want, ok?

Amara gives her a small smile and nods. Sophie heads out.

Amara resumes her job search, typing for a few moments.

She sighs and closes it.

She pulls her feet up, leans into the right side of the couch, and takes out her phone.

She scrolls through it absently- expression blank.

We focus on the kitchen ceiling light behind her- it flickers once.

Amara turns slightly, noticing. It stops.

She frowns, shrugs it off, and returns to her phone.

The light flickers again- this time more violently- until it finally goes out.

Amara looks back, uneasy. She hears heavy breathing.

She freezes.

That same eerie red-black glow from her childhood now bleeds through the window across from her- unmistakable, unnatural.

She slowly turns her head back.

Dread creeps into her face.

The curtain sways- gently, rhythmically.

In the folds of the fabric, we catch glimpses of something behind it- a shadow. A sliver of an arm. The outline of a face.

Mother.

Nothing outside the curtain is visible. Her body doesn't extend past the veil.

The parts not covered by the curtain...aren't there. She exists only behind it- like a shadow burned into the fabric.

Amara stares- frozen. Her breath catches.

She opens her mouth to scream-

The lights flicker back on- then off again.

Mother is now inches from her, one hand clamped around Amara's throat.

MOTHER
Don't speak.

Amara struggles, petrified.

Mother's features are hidden behind a mess of unkempt hair- but she's smiling.

Amara claws at her arm gasping. Finally, she wrenches Mother's hand away- and lets out a scream as she pulls the hand away.

The second she's free the lights flicker on.

Mother is gone.

Amara stumbles back, collapses onto the couch- and breaks. Sobbing. Trembling. The weight of it all finally hitting her.

INT. AMARA/SOPHIES APARTMENT- KITCHEN- MORNING

Sophie and Amara sit at the table. Each has a cup of coffee in front of them.

Amara stares down into her lap. She hasn't touched her cup.

SOPHIE
You want to talk about it?

Amara doesn't move.

Sophie takes a sip, then sets the cup down and shakes her head.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)
Yeah no... I need something
stronger.

She gets up, heads to the fridge, grabs a beer. She sits back down, cracks it open, takes a sip,

SOPHIE (CONT'D)
(exhaling)
Ahh...God, whoever said not to
drink in the mornings clearly
hasn't done it.

Amara stares at the beer. She starts to fidget- nervous, uneasy.

Sophie glances at her sensing the shift.

Amara starts to cry.

BEAT.

AMARA
(softly)
Sophie...there's something I have
to tell you. Something I should've
told you a long time ago.

PAUSE.

Sophie turns toward her, concerned. She gently takes Amara's hand.

SOPHIE
Hey...hey. I'm here, okay? I'm
listening.

Amara takes a deep breath. She looks at Sophie, a tear sliding down her cheek.

BEAT.

FLASHBACK:

INT. AMARA'S HOUSE- LIVING ROOM- NIGHT

From off-screen we hear Mother screaming- muffled, distant. It sounds like she's locked in a room somewhere.

We see Amara's FATHER sitting down, back turned to the camera as he watches TV. But there's no program playing- just static.

He holds the same kind of beer Sophie drank from earlier-only this one is filled with the strange substance Mother drank.

Amara stands in the doorway, tense.

AMARA
(stuttering)
Y-you called for me...father?

Father turns his head slightly- we still don't see his face.

FATHER
Sit.

Amara takes a gulp and slowly walks over. She sits next to him. He doesn't look away from the static.

He takes a long sip of his beer; then sets it on the table beside him. He wipes the residue from his mouth with the back of his hand.

They sit for a beat, listening to the muffled screams. Father chuckles.

FATHER (CONT'D)
She never knows when to shut up,
does she?

He takes another sip. Doesn't even glance at Amara.

She doesn't answer.

He finally turns, looks at her- then strokes the back of her hand with his fingers.

She tenses. Frozen.

FATHER (CONT'D)
Such a pretty girl. Unlike your
mother.

Amara starts to shake. He smiles- slow, deliberate, evil.

FATHER (CONT'D)
Daddy's had a long day. I think you
know what he needs.

PAUSE.

FATHER (CONT'D)
Get in front of me...and strip.

Amara begins to cry.

AMARA
Father, please...I don't want to-

FATHER
Do it.

She stands- sobbing.

She turns away, trembling, her face breaking. His eyes locked on her, hungry.

She begins to undress- slowly, shamefully.

Off-screen, we hear a ZIPPER UNDOING.

FATHER (CONT'D)
Now...let daddy take what's his.

Amara closes her eyes. Tears stream down her cheeks.

BEAT.

INT. AMARA'S HOUSE- AMARA'S BEDROOM

Hours later.

Father is passed out on the couch with his head leaned back. The beer tipped over, droplets of the substance pooling on the ground.

She lies awake in bed, eyes wide. She sits up, thinks- and a flicker of vengeance flashes across her face.

BEAT.

Amara carefully slips out of bed and creeps into the hallway.

INT. AMARA'S HOUSE- HALLWAY

She pauses in the doorway, glancing at Father- still snoring. Then continues into the kitchen.

INT. AMARA'S HOUSE- KITCHEN

She stops in front of a drawer and pulls it open slowly. She hesitates for a moment before picking up a chef's knife.

She stares at it for a second as she holds it, unsure.

Father snores again, and she turns as it reminds her what he has done to her.

INT. AMARA'S HOUSE- LIVING ROOM

She slowly and carefully walks over with a deadpan expression, until she stops behind the couch- behind Father.

AMARA
(softly but angry)
Goodbye, Father.

She stabs the knife into his throat.

Father jolts awake- choking on his blood, clawing at the knife.

Amara stumbles back, terrified. She watches as Father trembles to the floor- knife still lodged in his throat. Red-black blood pools beneath him.

He looks at her- black eyes. Evil smile.

FATHER
(gurgling)
You...have...no idea what you've done.

PAUSE.

Amara stands frozen in shock. The hallway light flickers on.

FATHER (CONT'D)
See you...real...soon.

He dies.

Amara stares- speechless.

MOTHER (V.O.)
Honey? Are you okay?

Amara whips her head toward the voice.

She bolts out of the house, sprinting into the night- trembling and crying.

As she runs, Mother SCREAMS (O.S.)

She runs faster.

She runs off toward the distant city ahead.

END FLASHBACK.

Sophie stares at Amara- shocked and concerned.

She gets up, starts pacing.

SOPHIE

Fuck... I'm so sorry...I should've
done something... I-we need to call
the police.

Amara jumps up- trembling, desperate

AMARA

No! Please, you can't... She'll
find me!

Sophie freezes, confused.

SOPHIE

Who?

Amara stares at her- hesitates.

AMARA

I...I can't...tell you.

She turns away, shaking her head- rubbing her temples.

SOPHIE

I...I need a minute.

Amara watches as Sophie walks to her room and shuts the door.

She looks down at the pack of cigarettes on the counter.

BEAT.

EXT. AMARA/SOPHIES APARTMENT- MORNING

Amara stands on the sidewalk, smoking a cigarette- staring at
the traffic.

She takes another drag- then puts it out and heads inside.

INT. AMARA/SOPHIES APARTMENT- FIRST FLOOR

As she steps in, her shoe crushes a cicada with a loud
SQUELCH.

She looks down at the mess, disgusted.

AMARA

Aw, gross!

She suddenly freezes.

A faint, distant chorus of cicadas hums in the air. She looks around, confused.

She slowly climbs the stairs and peers down the hallway.

INT. AMARA/SOPHIES APARTMENT- SECOND FLOOR

The noise grows louder with each step.

She walks forward, slow and cautious, the sound swelling-piercing.

She reaches her apartment door...and stops.

She pats her pockets.

No keys.

AMARA

Shit.

AMARA (CONT'D)

(worried)

Sophie? Open the door. Sophie!

She starts BANGING harder, fists slamming against the door. Her panic rises. She turns, presses her back to it, breathing fast, eyes squeezed shut.

AMARA (CONT'D)

Fuck.

The door clicks.

Amara freezes. Her hand hovers over the handle for a moment.

She opens the door slowly and is horrified.

INT. AMARA'S APARTMENT- MORNING

Cicadas are crawling all over the house- HISSING, squirming, covering everything.

Amara stares in shock and disgust as they swarm the FLOOR, the WALLS, the CEILING- EVERYWHERE.

AMARA

What the fuck!?!

She looks around, panicked.

AMARA (CONT'D)
Sophie?! Sophie, where are you?!

She notices a TRAIL OF CICADAS winding through a pile of clothes and blood, leading to Sophie's bedroom door.

AMARA (CONT'D)
Sophie?

She follows slowly, each step landing with a sickening CRUNCH.

She reaches the door.

A long BEAT.

She opens it.

Her face twists. She GASPS- then SCREAMS.

INT. AMARA/SOPHIE'S APARTMENT- SOPHIE'S ROOM

Sophie is nailed to the BACK WALL. NAKED. DEAD. Her hands are pinned with RUSTED NAILS as well as her ANKLES. Her EARS ARE MUTILATED. Her MOUTH IS SEWN SHUT.

All over the walls, written in her blood, are the words:
"DON'T SPEAK".

AMARA
(screaming)
Nooooooooo!

Amara breaks down, collapsing to her knees. She sobs uncontrollably, rocking forward.

The last thing we see is Sophie's mutilated body.

EXT. AMARA'S APARTMENT- MORNING

Amara sits on the apartment steps, silent, hollow.

An ambulance pulls away in the distance.

Her hands are clenched. Her eyes stay fixed on the ground.

Two COPS linger nearby.

One of them takes notes as he approaches her.

COP

And you're sure nobody else was in
the house?

Amara doesn't look up.

She sniffles.

AMARA

(bitter)

How many fucking times are you
gonna ask me the same goddamn
thing?

The cop looks at her for a moment- softening.

He sighs, flips a page in his notebook, and scribbles
something.

He rips it off and hands it to Amara. She takes it.

COP

We'll need you to come down to the
station tomorrow to answer some
questions. Im sorry for your loss.

She doesn't respond. The cop walks away.

Amara stares at the paper- then crumples it in her fist.

She looks up- straight at us.

A tear streaks down her cheek. Her eyes burn with rage.

AMARA

No more.

BEAT.

BLACK.

FADE IN:

EXT. AMARA'S HOUSE- NIGHT

A taxi pulls up from the right and stops in front of the
house. We don't see the house yet- the taxi blocks it from
view.

Amara steps out, holding the metal bat.

The taxi drives off behind her, disappearing to the left.

We finally see it.

The house is rotting. Windows cracked. Paint peeling. It looks like no one's been here in years.

Amara looks up- her breath goes shaky. She closes her eyes.

She starts walking forward- stops at the door.

She takes a deep breath- and steps inside.

INT. AMARA'S HOUSE- LIVING ROOM

We hear the door creak open as Amara steps inside.

The entire place is a wreck- cracked walls, rusted silverware, mold crawling across everything. Debris litters the floor.

Amara clutches the bat tightly- hands trembling. She slowly moves forward.

AMARA
(anxious)
Mother?

She continues on, eyes scanning the place.

AMARA (CONT'D)
Mother? Are you in here?

She turns, holding the bat low but ready. Her eyes dart around- checking every angle.

INT. AMARA'S HOUSE- HALLWAY

She steps into the hallway, facing the kitchen.

She stops- frozen.

Her breath hitches. She trembles. Fear locking her in place.

We push down the hallway...

...toward the closed door at the end. A faint red-black hue pulses through the seams.

The punishment room.

We stay low- watching Amara's legs from the knees down as she slowly walks toward the door.

Her steps are shaky. She pauses. Hesitates.

We see her hand reach out- slowly, trembling.

Just as she's about to touch the handle-

CLICK.

The door creaks open on its own. Slow. Heavy. Like it's been waiting.

The red-black hue is gone.

Amara steps inside. She looks around the room- everything covered in dust, but not forgotten.

She stops, staring at the old wooden chair.

She closes her eyes. And the memories crash in.

She pauses as she stares at the chair, now old and dusty

FLASH CUT: PAST- INT. PUNISHMENT ROOM

A leather belt slices through the air-

CRACK.

It hits her back.

Amara screams.

BACK TO: PRESENT- INT. PUNISHMENT ROOM

Her breath quickens. She stares at the chair- fists trembling at her sides.

BEAT.

Her expression shifts- sadness into rage.

Her eyes snap open- wild, furious.

She SCREAMS-

And SWINGS the bat with everything she has.

CRACK.

CRACK.

CRACK.

She bashes the chair again and again- splinters flying- until there's nothing left but broken wood and pain.

A framed photo topples off the shelf near the window.

Amara, still trembling with rage, walks over and picks it up. It's the photo from her childhood- the smudged faces of her and her parents stare back.

She glares at it. Then lets out a guttural scream-

CRASH.

She smashes the frame against the shelf. Again. Again.

The shelf splinters- just like the chair.

She loses it.

She begins tearing the room apart- screaming, crying, destroying everything in sight. The bookshelf. The wardrobe. The walls. All of it.

She throws the bat against the back wall with one final, furious swing-

CRACK.

The wall gives. Just a little.

Amara blinks, stunned. The spot where the bat hit is different- softer, weaker.

She steps forward. Presses her hand to the crack. She can just barely see through it.

A faint red-black hue pulses inside.

REVERSE ANGLE- THROUGH THE CRACK

We see her eye peeking through. The room beyond throbs with a red-black glow.

She steps back. Looks down at the bat. Clutches it tight.

Then-

WHAM.

She starts hammering the wall again. Over and over until-

SMASH.

It breaks.

Amara stares.

BEAT.

Her jaw drops. Her eyes widen. The bat slips from her hand and clatters to the floor.

INT. AMARA'S HOUSE- SECRET ROOM

In front of her...

A massive, gelatinous, ball-like mass throbs in the center of the space.

The same red-black substance- thick, wet, alive.

It pulses a dim, glowing red hue- and inside, barely visible through the translucent muck...

...is the silhouette of a man curled like a fetus.

As she stares, frozen in shock, Amara slowly steps back- one trembling foot at a time.

CRACK.

The baseball bat slams into the back of her head. She drops.

BLACK.

FADE IN: (BLINKING, LIKE OPENING EYES)

Amara's vision is blurry. Her breath is shallow.

She touches the back of her head- her hand comes away bloody.

She blinks again. Focus returning.

And then- she sees it.

Mother, standing before the pulsing mass. A soft, almost loving smile on her face.

The baseball bat rests in her right hand. Her left hand is placed gently against the mass.

A tear slips down her cheek.

MOTHER

It's almost time my love.

Amara regains her vision.

AMARA
(weakly)
Mother? What...is this?

Mother doesn't look at her- she keeps her gaze on the mass,
still smiling.

PAUSE.

MOTHER
...Your father.

Amara's eyes widen.

AMARA
What? How? He's dead.

Mother finally tilts her head slightly toward Amara.

MOTHER
Was dead.

Amara groans and slowly sits up. She struggles, one shaky
hand cradling the back of her head. She winces- then stares
at her mother in disbelief.

AMARA
I don't understand.

Mother turns to her.

MOTHER
This....thing... showed up not long
after we moved in. At first, it was
just there. Watching. Waiting. Then
your father and I- we let it in.
The more we consumed, the more we
became obsessed with its power.

BEAT. Amara looks at her confused.

MOTHER (CONT'D)
That night...after you killed him-

FLASHBACK:

INT. AMARA'S HOUSE- LIVING ROOM- NIGHT

Mother screams. Her face crumples as she collapses beside her
husband's lifeless body, sobbing violently.

She pulls him close, burying her face into his chest- smeared
with red-black blood.

MOTHER (V.O.)
I held him for hours...waiting for
something. Anything. But I knew he
was gone.

She rocks back and forth. Her sobs fade into a chilling
quiet.

MOTHER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
And then...I heard it.

BEAT.

Everything goes silent. A low, pulsing sound begins- distant,
inhuman.

A faint red-black glow flickers from the hallway.

Mother looks up. Drawn to it.

She rises slowly, steps forward.

She stands in the doorway, listening.

MOTHER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I don't know how...but it's like it
knew me. Knew what I wanted. And
somehow...I understood what I
needed to do to bring him back.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. PUNISHMENT ROOM- CONTINUOUS

AMARA
...What did you do?

Mother stares in Amara's eyes- deadpan. Almost scared of what
she's about to admit.

FLASHBACK:

INT. PUNISHMENT ROOM

She claws at the back wall with bloody hands, trying to tear
it down. Desperate. Father's naked body next to her.

Veins swell black beneath her skin. Her eyes darken.

She screams in a demonic tone- unnatural- and slams her fists
into the wall.

The wall collapses.

Her eyes fade back to normal. The veins vanish. She exhales, trembling.

The mass is there, pulsing that same red-black glow.

She kneels beside his body, lifts him into her arms bridal-style. Her hands shake. A tear runs down her cheek.

She kisses his forehead.

MOTHER

I'll be back my love... I promise.

BEAT.

INT. AMARA'S HOUSE- SECRET ROOM

She stands and carries the limp body toward the mass.

The mass splits open, wet and slow, revealing an empty space within.

She steps forward. One final look.

Then she places him inside.

The mass closes around him- sealing him away.

She backs up and sniffles as the glow pulses once more.

END FLASHBACK.

Amara slowly shakes her head.

AMARA

How could you do this?

MOTHER

(snapping)

Because he was supposed to love me!

Mother's eyes water. She drops the bat to the ground.

BEAT.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

He was supposed to love me. Not you.

BEAT.

She looks at Amara bitterly.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

But you took him from me! Before I
had a chance to make things right.

AMARA

(yelling)

Mother, he was sick! I shouldn't
have killed him, but... what was I
supposed to do? I couldn't live
like that. He would never let me
leave.

Mother shakes her head, eyes now fixed on the mass as it
pulses. She smiles.

MOTHER

It doesn't matter now. Soon I'll
see him again. And this time...I'll
fix it.

Amara glares, determined.

BEAT.

AMARA

I can't let you do this, Mother.

Mother turns to Amara, her smile turning evil.

MOTHER

Watch me.

Suddenly, Mother telekinetically hurls the bat. It slams
Amara against the left-side wall, pinning her.

Amara struggles and screams.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

It's time.

Suddenly, the mass comes undone- the silhouette within melts
away as a long, fleshy tendril lashes out.

It launches straight into Mother's mouth.

She gasps as it forces its way down her throat. She chokes,
eyes bulging, but the tendril keeps slithering in.

Her body begins to rise. Shattered furniture flies around the
room in a chaotic storm, the tendril still forcing its way
inside her mouth.

The walls and ceiling begin to crack, sending large chunks of debris crashing down.

Amara struggles, gritting her teeth, and finally shoves the bat aside.

She just barely dodges as a massive chunk of debris slams past her and shatters against the wall, exploding into pieces.

She screams in fury, grabs the bat, and charges at Mother--but the window behind her shatters, and the pieces blast into Amara's back. She yelps as she's knocked to the floor. She can barely move.

She crawls toward the bat, dragging herself weakly.

She grabs it...and slowly, shakily, rises to her feet.

With everything she has, she screams and swings the bat at Mother's head.

CRACK.

Mother collapses sideways, debris tumbling as gravity finally wins.

As Amara limps toward her, breathing heavy, the rest of the tendril slides into Mother's mouth.

She uses her leg to roll Mother onto her back. Mother chuckles and smirks evilly.

MOTHER

Look at you. You think you have power now? You will never escape, you pathetic girl. And when he returns, I will finally--

Amara places the end of the bat against her Mother's lips.

AMARA

(panting)

Don't...fucking...speak.

BEAT.

With a final rage-filled scream, we watch Amara from the front as she begins bashing the bat into her mother's face, who is off-screen beneath her.

She slams it down over and over, crying and yelling as blood splatters across her face and clothes.

She keeps going- until her screams quiet- and she finally throws the bat aside.

Her breathing slows. She looks over as sunlight begins to spill in. It's morning.

She slowly limps toward the broken window, eyes wide and smiles, a small, peaceful smile. It's finally over.

She sighs.

BEAT.

INT. AMARA'S HOUSE- KITCHEN- SOME TIME LATER

Amara sits at the kitchen table, soaked in her mother's blood.

Bloodied glass shards are scattered on the table- the same ones she pulled from her back. She winces as she pulls the last shard out and tosses it aside.

A beer sits in front of her. The same kind Sophie and her father used to drink.

She grabs it. Drinks. Sighs.

Her eyes close. A soft smile.

BLACK.

Title card: Don't speak.

POST-CREDITS SCENE

INT. AMARA'S HOUSE- PUNISHMENT ROOM- NIGHT

We pan up Mother's body, starting from her feet and rising slowly. Her entire head is obliterated- pieces of brain and skull scattered in a pool of red-black blood.

BEAT.

Mother's body begins to convulse. She seizes violently as a thick black substance pours out from the ragged stump where her neck ends- gurgling up and writhing across the floor.

The substance oozes across the floor as it continues to spill out- until it finally stops.

We then watch as the substance rises- shifting, twisting- starting to form into something vaguely human. Something that looks like Father, except it's not fully formed- still amorphous and dripping.

On all fours, head lowered in the darkness...

It slowly lifts its face and looks directly at us...and smiles.

BLACK.