

# **NOISE**

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FADE IN:

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET – NIGHT

A quiet Texas neighborhood, the kind with manicured lawns, porch lights glowing, and the faint hum of cicadas. The air is thick with late-summer heat.

A TRICYCLE rolls across the asphalt, riderless, wheels spinning.

A DOG barks. A WINDOW SLAMS shut.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM – NIGHT

A modest family home. A muted TV flickers on a news anchor's face. The sound is low, a muffled hum against the silence.

The headline across the screen reads:

“MYSTERIOUS SOUNDS PLAGUE CITY RESIDENTS.”

CLOSE ON —

MIA CALDWELL (32), single mom, sharp, resourceful, her eyes carrying too much exhaustion for her age. She sits on the couch, laptop open, scanning through job listings.

From upstairs: a faint, rhythmic \*\*TAP. TAP. TAP.\*\*

Mia freezes.

She listens. The house settles. Silence.

She shakes her head, forces a smile at herself, returns to typing.

Then—louder now—

\*\*TAP. TAP. TAP.\*\*

Upstairs. Same rhythm. Same insistence.

MIA

(calling out)

Ellie? You're supposed to be asleep!

No response.

Mia sighs, closes the laptop, and stands.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY – NIGHT

The hallway is long, lined with family photos. Shadows crawl where the nightlight doesn't reach.

At the end of the hall, a DOOR is cracked open. Light spills out.

Mia approaches, careful, maternal. She pushes the door open.

INT. ELLIE'S BEDROOM – NIGHT

ELLIE (6), sweet, imaginative, sits cross-legged on the floor, crayons scattered around. She's tapping one crayon against the hardwood in that hypnotic rhythm.

Mia exhales with relief.

MIA

Honey, it's bedtime. Crayons don't work past nine o'clock.

Ellie looks up, her eyes wide, whispering.

ELLIE

He told me to.

Mia frowns.

MIA

Who?

Ellie points to the dark corner of the room.

Mia turns. Nothing there.

Just shadows. Empty space.

MIA

(soft, reassuring)

Ellie, there's no one—

Suddenly—

**\*\*THE CRAYONS SCATTER\*\*** as if swiped by an invisible hand. They clatter across the floor in every direction.

Mia grabs Ellie, heart hammering.

MIA

That's it. Bed. Now.

She tucks Ellie in quickly, kissing her forehead, forcing calm she doesn't feel.

MIA

We'll talk about this in the morning, okay?

ELLIE

(whispers)

He said you'd say that.

Mia stiffens. Forces a smile. Turns off the light.

INT. KITCHEN – NIGHT

Mia stands at the sink, staring out the window at the darkened backyard. She grips a glass of water.

Her reflection in the glass shifts — just for a flicker — a SHADOW standing where she is not.

She gasps, spins around. Empty kitchen.

The faucet drips. \*\*Drip. Drip. Drip.\*\*

INT. BEDROOM – NIGHT

Mia lies awake in bed, scrolling on her phone. News articles about strange noises, unexplainable events across the city. Residents reporting voices, phantom tapping, shadows that don't belong.

Her phone buzzes — a text from her neighbor:

“Did you hear it too?”

Before she can reply, the house GROANS. The lights flicker. The faint tapping starts again — this time, not upstairs.

It's inside her bedroom wall.

\*\*TAP. TAP. TAP.\*\*

Mia sits up, paralyzed.

Suddenly — the power CUTS. The house plunges into darkness.

Ellie SCREAMS from her room.

Mia bolts upright.

INT. ELLIE'S BEDROOM – NIGHT

Mia rushes in, phone flashlight shaking. Ellie is sitting upright in bed, trembling, pointing at the closet.

ELLIE

He's in there.

Mia steels herself. Walks to the closet. Hand trembling on the knob.

She yanks it open. Empty. Just clothes and toys.

She exhales shakily, turns back toward Ellie—

Behind her, in the closet — a DARK FIGURE SHIFTS. Barely perceptible, but there.

The tapping begins again, from \*every wall at once.\* Surrounding them.

Mia SLAMS the closet shut, scoops Ellie into her arms.

MIA

We're leaving. Now.

INT. FRONT DOOR – NIGHT

Mia fumbles with her keys, clutching Ellie. The tapping is EVERYWHERE now. Ceiling. Floors. Windows. Like a thousand hands drumming all at once.

The door WON'T UNLOCK. The deadbolt jams.

Ellie clings tighter.

ELLIE

He doesn't want us to go.

The SOUND BUILDS, deafening, a roar of tapping that shakes the walls.

The chandelier above them rattles violently—

—AND CRASHES DOWN, shattering at their feet.



Silence.

Mia gasps for air, drenched in adrenaline.

She drops to her knees, holding Ellie tight. The house falls eerily calm.

Then — from the shadows — a low, rasping WHISPER fills the room:

“You can’t leave me.”

Mia’s face drains of color.

She looks at Ellie — whose tiny lips part, whispering the words too.

Her daughter’s voice overlapping the phantom one.

CUT TO BLACK.

TITLE SEQUENCE.

FADE IN:

EXT. CALDWELL HOUSE – MORNING

Bright sunshine. Birds chirp. Suburban calm as if the night never happened.

The CALDWELL HOUSE stands innocuous, white siding gleaming, porch neat.

But inside—

INT. KITCHEN – MORNING

Mia, bleary-eyed, sips coffee like it's medicine. Ellie eats cereal at the table, doodling with crayons. The TAPPING incident is unspoken but heavy in the air.

On the fridge, a job interview reminder: 2PM TODAY.

Mia's phone BUZZES. A message from her neighbor, JOAN (40s, sharp-tongued, religious).

JOAN (TEXT): "You hear THEM last night? We're not crazy."

Mia exhales, tucks the phone away. She doesn't need crazy right now.

ELLIE

Mommy?

MIA

Yeah, baby?

ELLIE

He said you'll believe soon.

Mia freezes. Forces a smile.

MIA

How about no more spooky talk, okay? Just... cartoons.

Ellie shrugs, returns to her doodle. Mia glances—

It's a CRAYON DRAWING of their house, surrounded by hundreds of black stick figures. All tapping.

Mia's stomach twists.

INT. JOB INTERVIEW OFFICE – AFTERNOON

Mia sits in a sterile office across from MR. GRANT (50s, HR director, polite smile). She clutches her resume like a lifeline.

GRANT

You've got the experience. You've got references. I just need to know... can you handle high-stress situations?

Mia chuckles, brittle.

MIA

I'm a single mom. Stress and I are... intimate friends.

Grant smiles. Approves. The interview flows.

But then—

**\*\*TAP. TAP. TAP.\*\***

Mia stiffens. It's faint, like inside the walls.

GRANT

Sorry?

MIA

What?

GRANT

You looked like you heard something.

She forces composure.

MIA

No. Just... nerves.

But her hands tremble in her lap.

INT. CAR – PARKING LOT – DAY

Mia sits behind the wheel, gripping the steering wheel. Silent panic. The tapping followed her here. She can't outrun it.

Suddenly, her PHONE RINGS. Caller ID: UNKNOWN.

She answers.

MIA

Hello?

A DEEP, DISTORTED VOICE whispers:

“Stop ignoring me.”

Mia’s breath catches.

MIA

Who is this?

The line CLICKS dead.

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL – AFTERNOON

Mia picks up Ellie. Other parents chat casually. Normality everywhere.

Ellie runs up, smiling. For a moment—just a normal kid.

Mia hugs her tight. Too tight.

INT. CALDWELL HOUSE – NIGHT

Dinner. Mia and Ellie eat quietly. The TV news hums in the background.

ANCHOR (V.O.)

Authorities continue investigating citywide reports of unexplained phenomena. Psychologists suggest mass hysteria, while others point to...

Mia mutes it.

ELLIE

(quietly)

He's louder at night.

Mia slams her fork down.

MIA

Ellie. Enough.

Ellie shrinks back, frightened—not of Mia, but of the thing only she seems to hear.

INT. MIA'S BEDROOM – NIGHT

Mia scrolls her phone—message boards, conspiracy forums, articles about “The Sound.”  
Hundreds of posts: people describing tapping, whispers, shadows.

Headlines flash:

- “City Haunting?”
- “Phantom Sounds Drive Residents Mad.”
- “Is This the Beginning of Something Worse?”

Mia rubs her temples, exhausted.

From downstairs: \*\*A SINGLE TAP.\*\*

She stiffens. Grabs a flashlight. Quietly heads down.

INT. LIVING ROOM – NIGHT

Dark. Silent.

Then—\*\*TAP. TAP. TAP.\*\* From the WALL.

She presses her ear against it. Heart racing.

Suddenly, the SOUND SHIFTS—moving from one wall to another, like it’s circling her.

Fast. Predatory.

Mia stumbles back.

From behind her—

**\*\*THE FRONT DOOR CREAKS OPEN.\*\***

She whirls—

The door stands ajar, night air drifting in.

She locks it tight, backs away, breathing hard.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY – NIGHT

Mia hurries toward Ellie's room, flashlight beam shaky.

But halfway—she freezes.

Ellie is standing in the hallway, eyes glassy, SLEEPWALKING.

She's TAP-TAP-TAPPING her hand against the wall, in perfect rhythm.

MIA

Ellie?

No response. Ellie continues, tapping, whispering.

ELLIE

(whispers)

Let him in... let him in...

Mia grabs her, shakes gently.



MIA

Ellie! Wake up!

Ellie blinks, groggy. Confused.

ELLIE

Mommy?

Mia hugs her tight. Trembling.

INT. KITCHEN – MORNING

Mia on the phone with JOAN. Pacing.

MIA

(whispered, urgent)

It's happening here. In my house.

JOAN (V.O.)

(low, serious)

Of course it is. They pick families. Always families. They feed on the noise, the fear.

MIA

Who? Who feeds?

JOAN (V.O.)

Meet me tonight. Church basement. Midnight. You'll see.

CLICK. Joan hangs up.

Mia grips the phone. Her life has officially tipped over the edge.

EXT. CHURCH – NIGHT

An old Baptist church, its steeple cutting into the night sky. Parking lot empty. Lights dim.

Mia clutches Ellie's hand, leading her toward the basement door.

INT. CHURCH BASEMENT – NIGHT

Dim lights. Folding chairs in a circle. A dozen PEOPLE sit, anxious, haunted faces.

Support group vibes—except this is for survivors of something unspeakable.

Joan stands at the front, Bible in hand.

JOAN

(to the group)

We're not cursed. We're chosen. The tapping is the beginning. If you hear it... it means they've marked you.

Mia frowns, skeptical, terrified.

MIA

Who marked us?

The group looks at her with pity. One man, MR. HAYES (60s, gaunt), speaks.

HAYES

Not who. What.

The room falls heavy with silence. Everyone listens for something unseen.

Then—

The TAPPING STARTS. Louder. All around. Even here, in the church.

People shift nervously. Some cover their ears. A woman sobs.

Ellie clutches Mia's hand, whispering.

ELLIE

He found us.

Suddenly—every light in the basement BLOWS OUT.

The group SCREAMS in darkness.

And in the pitch black—

A CHORUS OF VOICES whisper in unison:

“You can’t leave me.”

CUT TO BLACK.

INT. CHURCH BASEMENT – NIGHT – CONTINUOUS

Absolute darkness.

A dozen PEOPLE suck air through clenched teeth. Someone sobs. Another whispers a prayer. Child fingers clutch a parent’s sleeve.

Then—RED EMERGENCY LIGHTS stutter on, bathing the room in blood-glow.

Mia kneels, shielding Ellie behind her. Joan clutches her Bible so hard her knuckles blanch. MR. HAYES stands statue-still, eyes wet, like he’s been here before.

Around them, the TAPPING migrates—floor to pipes to ceiling tiles—circling, stalking.

JOAN

(whispering to the room)

Do not answer it. Do not knock back. Do not speak its words.

LUCAS (17), hoodie, raw nerves, tries to play tough.

LUCAS

It's pipes. Old building. That's all.

HAYES

(never taking eyes off ceiling)

Don't.

\*\*TAP. TAP. TAP.\*\* A precise rhythm. Then another—replying from the opposite wall. Then another—behind the folding chairs.

ELLIE

(softly, to Mia)

He's not alone.

MIA

Only listen to me, baby. Just me.

RICK (40s), ex-cop vibe, jaw set, grips a MAGLIGHT. He starts toward the back storage corridor.

RICK

We need to check the doors. Make sure we got an exit.

JOAN

Stay in the circle.

RICK

If this is a prank, I'm putting an end to it.

He moves. The tapping follows him like a pack of animals.

The filmy plastic WINDOW in the basement door BREATHES INWARD like lungs. Air pressure drops.

Mia rubs her ears; the pressure makes them ache. Ellie grimaces.

ELLIE

(whimpering)

It hurts.

The EXIT SIGN above the door flickers.

RICK reaches for the handle. He pulls—

—THE DOOR DOESN'T BUDGE.

He yanks again. Nothing. It's like something on the other side is holding it shut.

RICK

(to the room)

Blocked. Maybe jammed from the other side.

HAYES

Not jammed.

He turns. For the first time, we see HAYES's forearms—lined with old, circular BRUISES. Like finger marks. Old claims.

HAYES (CONT'D)

Kept.

Mia hears it like a diagnosis. Kept.

MIA

Kept what?

HAYES

Us.

The ceiling tiles above the group BOW DOWN, as if dozens of hands are pressing from the crawlspace. We see the clear outlines of fingers through the dusty tile.

Ellie buries her face in Mia's shoulder.

**\*\*TAP:\*\*** Directly behind Mia's head now—coming from the column she's crouched beside.

She jerks away.

JOAN

Eyes up. Stay together.

LUCAS

I'm not afraid of a wall.

He raps his knuckles back—three quick knocks. Mocking.

The entire basement FREEZES.

For a half-breath, there's nothing.

Then the room EXPLODES with sound.

**\*\*TAP-TAP-TAP-TAP-TAP—\*\*** hundreds of strikes from every surface at once. The fluorescent tubes along the ceiling BUZZ back to life then SHATTER, glass raining down like sleet.

People SCREAM, ducking.

RICK covers his head. JOAN crouches, still praying.

JOAN

(through gritted teeth)

Don't answer. Don't answer. Don't—

The wall behind LUCAS BLOOMS with BLACK HANDPRINTS, seeping through paint as if printed from inside the concrete. They appear one after another, a growing constellation of grasping palms.

LUCAS



(voice breaking)

Okay—okay—okay—

A length of copper pipe RATTLES loose from its bracket, swings like a pendulum. The bracket SCREW unthreads itself with an unholy squeal.

The cross on the far wall TWISTS on its nail until it hangs upside-down, then DROPS, clanging on the tile.

Ellie peeks out, eyes vast.

ELLIE

He's hungry.

MIA

Who is he?

Ellie listens. The tapping shifts patterns—like syllables, like breath.

ELLIE

(whispers)

Not a he.

The red emergency lights strobe, slower now. The sound compresses into one point—the broom-closet door at the far wall.

It VIBRATES subtly, as if something inside is knocking itself back together.

RICK moves toward it, Maglight up.

JOAN

Rick—

He opens the closet door.

Inside: darkness. Mops, a bucket, cleaning supplies. A coil of extension cord.

He angles the flashlight down.

A LITTLE BOY'S HANDPRINTS—small, dark, fresh—march up the inside of the door, from floor to eye-height, ending in a smeared streak as if the hand was pulled away.

RICK swallows.

Behind him—LUCAS'S PHONE begins RECORDING by itself. The screen toggles to the voice memo app. The red waveform stutters, then fills with jagged peaks.

LUCAS

I didn't touch that—

The phone SPEAKER plays back instantly, even as it records. The room hears a slowed, warped version of the tapping—pitched down into VOICES, layered:

VOICES (PHONE)

(distant, overlapping)

Don't... leave... me...

A new layer enters—higher, a childlike lilt:

CHILD VOICE (PHONE)

Maaahh—mm—

The phone's glass SPIDER-WEBS in a perfect circle and POPS, the sound shorting out. Smoke curls from it. Lucas drops the dead phone.

The red lights HUM. Everyone looks to Mia, who looks like she's going to be sick.

MIA

(to herself, barely audible)

Mom.

Ellie stares at the walls, head cocked as if listening to invisible headphones.

ELLIE

(whispering)

They're not asking. They're telling.

The EMERGENCY LIGHTS die.

With them, the tapping stops.

Silence. The kind that rings.

The room doesn't dare breathe.

Then—so soft it could be imagination—A SINGLE TAP from under the floor, directly beneath Mia's feet.

She flinches.

Another. Closer to Ellie.

Mia pulls Ellie into her lap, heart racing.

JOAN

(to the group, fierce)

They thrive when you chase the noise. They want you to hunt it. To give it shape. To speak its name. That's how it keeps you.

HAYES

(nodding)

It keeps the ones who try to leave. The ones who turn away. It wants you to look. Or to run. Either way—it keeps you.

MIA

That doesn't make sense.

HAYES

That's how traps work.

From the far end of the basement HALLWAY, an old PIPE ORGAN wheezes to life. No one is near it. The keys depress themselves, dusty felt groaning under phantom fingers.

A single note holds. Then another, lower, dissonant, grinding against the first.

The organ begins to pulse, building a sick chord that vibrates the air.

Walls THROB in time. The group huddles smaller, like a boat in a storm.

LUCAS

(yelling to be heard)

What does it want!

The organ cuts off. Dead. The absence of it is a slap.

In the vacuum, a whisper threads through the basement, not from any one wall, but from every mouth of every vent, from every drain, from the teeth of the radiators:

WHISPER (EVERYWHERE)

You can't leave me.

Ellie's lips part. The same words fall out of her—quiet, involuntary.

Mia clamps a hand over her daughter's mouth, gently, like stopping a bleed.

MIA

(to Ellie, soft)

Shhh... shhh... breathe with me.

Ellie nods, tears slipping sideways.

RICK shoulders the stuck EXIT again, veins bulging. He roars, throws his weight.

The door GIVES an inch. Cold air whips in.

RICK

One more!

He rams it. HAYES lurches to help. JOAN too. Others rise, adrenaline overriding terror.

The door JERKS open enough for a body to slip through.

RICK

Go! Go!

People funnel toward freedom, clawing, pushing, crying.

As Mia ushers Ellie forward, she glances back—at the closet, at the ceiling, at the cross on the floor—

—and sees, just for an instant, a FIGURE where no figure should be:

A silhouette of a person standing in the far corner, only it's made entirely of SHADOW and DUST motes. No edges. No face. The suggestion of shoulders. Of a head tilted wrong.

It lifts an arm. Its hand is just a THICKER DARK.

It taps its wrist where a watch would be.

The lights hiccup. The figure is gone.

Mia shoves Ellie through the gap. They spill into—

INT. CHURCH HALLWAY – NIGHT

Institutional linoleum. Vending machine hum. The normal world, somehow obscene.

The hallway bulbs FLICKER but hold.

The group staggers up the stairs to—

INT. CHURCH NAVE – NIGHT

The sanctuary. Stained glass saints stare down in blues and reds. The organ up on the loft sits innocent and dead.

The city's distant sirens bleed in from outside.

People collapse into pews, sobbing, laughing, praying. Immediate survival giddiness.

RICK leans against a column, gulping air. Looks at Mia, nods like “we made it.”

Mia nods back, not convinced.

JOAN kneels, kisses her cross, looks up—steel in her.

JOAN

We take this seriously now. Rules. You hear me? We don’t speak its words. We don’t answer the knocks. We don’t chase the sound. We don’t leave anyone alone. Ever.

HAYES

(soft)

And we keep the hours.

MIA

What hours?

HAYES

Midnight to three. They’re the hungriest. You don’t sleep in those hours. Not if you’re marked.

Mia looks down at her wrist—startled.



A faint, grime-gray RING has formed around the skin where she's been clutching Ellie. Like something held her there. A smear she can't wipe away.

Ellie touches the ring, frowning.

ELLIE

He said time's different underneath.

MIA

Under what?

Ellie listens, like catching a station between static.

ELLIE

(whispers)

Under us.

Off Mia, as a church bell clangs the hour, loud and close and suddenly terrifying—

CUT TO:

EXT. CHURCH – NIGHT

The parking lot under sodium vapor. A wind picks up. Plastic bags scuttle like crabs.

Across the street, a row of HOUSES sit in darkness. One by one, in rhythmic succession, their PORCH LIGHTS blink—three on, three off—like the whole block is answering.

Mia's phone VIBRATES. She looks. A new VOICEMAIL from "UNKNOWN." Time-stamp: 12:01 AM.

She puts it to her ear. Listens.

We don't hear what she hears, but her face drains. Her knees nearly buckle.

She lowers the phone. Meets Joan's eyes.

MIA

(shaken)

That was my mother's voice.

JOAN

She dead?

MIA

Since I was nine.

Joan nods, unflinching, as if the universe just confirmed a long suspicion.

JOAN

They keep what you can't.

Mia stares back toward the basement door, jaw tightening, something fierce igniting under the fear.

MIA

Then I'm taking her back.

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

EXT. CALDWELL HOUSE – DAWN

First light creeps across the street. Birds sing, pretending the night never happened.

The CALDWELL HOUSE looks normal. Too normal.

INT. CALDWELL KITCHEN – MORNING

Mia scrubs at her wrist, raw, trying to erase the faint GRIME-GRAY RING. Soap. Steel wool. Nothing works.

Ellie sits at the table, munching toast, still drawing. Today's picture: A CLOCK FACE, hands frozen at 3:00. Around it, little stick-figures hammering.

Mia stares. Can't look away.

DOORBELL RINGS.

INT. FRONT DOOR – MORNING

Mia opens the door to a man in rumpled clothes, glasses, messenger bag: DR. ADRIAN VEGA (40s). Sharp-minded, skeptical eyes. A professor at the local university. He holds a folder.

VEGA

Mia Caldwell?

MIA

...Yeah?

VEGA

Adrian Vega. Your neighbor Joan called me. Said you needed context.

Mia bristles.

MIA

Context for what? The devil?

VEGA

For noise. Unexplained acoustic phenomena.

He lifts the folder. Inside: newspaper clippings, seismograph charts, audio spectrograms.

VEGA (CONT'D)

I've been tracking this across three states. It isn't just you. Or Joan. Or this block. It's bigger.

Mia hesitates, then lets him in.

INT. LIVING ROOM – MORNING

Vega sets up a small AUDIO RECORDER on the coffee table. Ellie watches from the couch, wary.

VEGA

People describe it as tapping. But patterns repeat. Three knocks. Rhythmic intervals. Always between midnight and three.

(beat)

And the whispers? They ride the noise, like modulation. The “voice” is just your brain finding language in interference.

Mia crosses her arms.

MIA

Tell that to my daughter.

VEGA

I intend to. Science keeps people sane.

ELLIE

(flat)

Science won't keep him out.

Vega frowns. Mia glares at him.

MIA

Don't dismiss her.

Vega raises his hands.

VEGA

Alright. Let's run an experiment.

INT. BASEMENT – LATER

Vega sets up a tripod, pointing the recorder at the concrete wall. He places a digital watch beside it.

VEGA

We'll see if the sound interacts with time. Patterns, interference. Rational cause.

(to Mia)

I'm not here to mock you. I want data.

Mia watches, arms around Ellie.

Vega presses RECORD. Silence, except the hum of the fridge upstairs.

Nothing. Minutes pass. Mia shifts, impatient.

Then—\*\*TAP. TAP. TAP.\*\*

The recorder spikes. Ellie stiffens.

Vega notes it calmly.

VEGA

See? Not random. Pulse intervals are exact.

The tapping shifts—closer. Right behind Mia. She spins, flashlight up—nothing.

The digital watch on the table begins to GLITCH. Its digits BLUR, then JUMP BACKWARDS:  
6:42... 6:41... 6:40...

Ellie gasps, clings tighter to Mia.

VEGA

(staring, whispering)

That's... not possible.

The wall HUMS like a tuning fork. Dust rains from the ceiling.

Mia yanks Ellie toward the stairs.

MIA

Experiment's over.

But Vega stays, fascinated. He leans close to the recorder, whispering.

VEGA

Can you understand me?

(giddy)

If you can, give me three knocks.

\*\*TAP. TAP. TAP.\*\*

Perfect. Answering him.

Mia stops cold. Her face drains.

ELLIE

(terrified)

You're feeding him.

Mia grabs Vega's arm.

MIA

Shut it off.

VEGA

This is evidence!

The recorder SPEWS STATIC. Beneath it—whispers form, layered and distorted:

WHISPERS (RECORDER)

You can't leave me.



You can't leave me.

You can't leave me...

The digital watch SPINS violently backward, stopping at exactly 3:00.

The basement LIGHTBULB BURSTS.

Glass rains down. Ellie screams.

Mia drags her daughter upstairs. Vega scrambles after them, clutching the recorder.

INT. KITCHEN – DAY

Mia SLAMS the basement door, locks it. She's shaking.

VEGA

You don't understand—this is repeatable! Testable! We can measure it.

MIA

(near shouting)

It's not a science project! It's in my daughter's room, in her head—!

Ellie tugs Mia's sleeve.

ELLIE

(quiet, almost trance)

He likes when people listen.

Mia crouches, grips Ellie's arms.

MIA

Don't listen. Do you hear me? Not one word. You don't answer.

Ellie nods, frightened but resolute.

Vega sets the recorder down, hands trembling.

VEGA

I... I heard it too. Not just noise. Words. My own name.

(beat)

It said "Adrian."

Mia stares at him. He's shaken, undone. No longer smug. Exactly what she feared.

INT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET – DUSK

Mia walks Ellie down the street. Porch lights flicker on in unison, like fireflies. Neighbors peek nervously through curtains.

A SHERIFF'S CAR cruises by. Sheriff KLEIN (50s, gruff, small-town weary) steps out.

KLEIN

Evening, Mia. Everyone's jumpy. You two okay?

MIA

Define okay.

KLEIN

We've had twenty-nine noise complaints. My deputies are stretched. Whole damn city's losing sleep.

His radio squawks:

"Unit 12, report to Elm and Foster, disturbance—doors slamming, witnesses say—"

Klein turns back, eyes hollow.

KLEIN (CONT'D)

Whatever this is... it's getting louder.

Mia swallows. Ellie hides behind her.

She knows he's right.

INT. CALDWELL HOUSE – NIGHT

Ellie asleep on the couch, clutching her stuffed rabbit.

Mia stands at the window, staring into the dark yard.

The air is too still.

The silence feels staged.

She whispers to herself, furious.

MIA

If you want me... come for me. Leave her.

A SINGLE TAP answers—from the glass right in front of her face.

She recoils.

Behind her, Vega records again, obsessively listening through headphones, muttering.

VEGA

Consistent. Always consistent.

(beat)

They're not haunting. They're signaling.

Mia spins, rips the headphones off him.

MIA

You're going to get us killed.

He stares at her, wild-eyed.

VEGA

Or I'm going to prove what this is. And then we'll know how to end it.

Mia stares back—part of her almost wants to believe.

But Ellie STIRS on the couch. Murmurs in her sleep.

ELLIE

(whispers)

He says you'll believe soon.

Mia looks down at her daughter—horrified, protective, determined.

Her eyes harden.

MIA

Then I'll learn the rules. And I'll break them.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. CALDWELL STREET – NIGHT

A still, eerie silence hangs over the neighborhood. Every porch light is ON, every window glows faintly — no one sleeping.

Mia stands at the curb, arms folded. Beside her, Vega adjusts a portable SOUND METER, the little red needle twitching.

Across the street, JOAN steps out of her house, cross dangling from her neck, clutching her Bible.

JOAN

(quiet, urgent)

It's starting.

VEGA

(to Mia, muttering)

Every household reports the same patterns. If they synchronize across the block, we'll know it's not coincidence.

MIA

It's not coincidence. It's hunting.

Ellie peeks out from behind Mia, clutching her stuffed rabbit. Her eyes wander upward. She listens, like she hears something no one else can.

ELLIE

They're lining up.

Everyone stares at her.

Then—

\*\*TAP. TAP. TAP.\*\*

From the left side of the street. A neighbor's GARAGE DOOR shakes with it.

Then—\*\*TAP. TAP. TAP.\*\* from another house.

Then another.

Soon, the entire street is responding in staggered unison — like a monstrous percussion ensemble.

The SOUND METER in Vega's hands spikes so violently it BEEPS red. He drops it. Static fuzzes through the air, invisible but \*felt.\*

Mia kneels, grips Ellie's shoulders.

MIA

Don't listen. Don't watch. Eyes on me.

ELLIE

But he's right there.

Mia freezes.

MIA

Where?

Ellie points across the street—

To nothing. Just shadows between two houses.

But Vega squints, startled.

VEGA

Wait. Did you—?

Before he can finish—

The PORCH LIGHTS begin to blink in sequence, house by house. A wave of three quick flashes. Then silence.

Then again. Three more.

JOAN

(terrified)

He's knocking through the lights.

Mia pulls Ellie close, backing toward the house.

MIA

We stay inside. Now.

INT. CALDWELL LIVING ROOM – NIGHT

The neighborhood NOISE pounds through the walls. The whole house reverberates. Glasses rattle in cupboards. Picture frames shimmy on their hooks.

Vega paces, manic.

VEGA

They're communicating. Call-and-response. It's structured.

MIA



It's not communication. It's feeding.

VEGA

If I can capture a full cycle—maybe even mimic it—we could learn what it wants.

Mia SNAPS.

MIA

We know what it wants. It said it a thousand times.

(beat)

It wants to keep us.

Ellie hugs her rabbit tighter, whispering.

ELLIE

He wants to \*wear\* us.

Mia stares, shaken. Vega stares too — scribbling it down, like a data point.

INT. CALDWELL HOUSE – UPSTAIRS HALL – NIGHT

The lights FLICKER. The tapping moves up the walls, circling them, like something inside is choosing a place to break through.

Ellie sleepwalks forward. Mia grabs her.

MIA

Ellie—wake up.

ELLIE

(dreamlike)

They're coming to the middle.

MIA

The middle of what?

Ellie lifts a hand—points downward. To the floor.

The basement.

The SOUND BUILDS beneath them. Tapping fuses into POUNDING. The wooden boards flex, nails squealing.

Vega shoves his recorder into Mia's hand.

VEGA

If it comes through, we \*need this captured.\*

MIA

You're insane.

The pounding STOPS. A pause so long it feels worse than the noise.

Then—

A SINGLE KNOCK on the FRONT DOOR.

Everyone freezes.

Knock again. Calm. Deliberate.

Mia shakes her head, whispering.

MIA

Don't answer it. Don't answer.

The door handle JIGGLES, slow. Deliberate. Then—

**\*\*BANG!\*\*** The entire door SHUDDERS.

INT. CALDWELL KITCHEN – NIGHT

Dishes CRASH as cabinet doors swing open and shut, violently. The faucet blasts water, then shuts off. The fridge HUMS, then dies.

The lights CUT OUT.

Darkness.

Mia fumbles for a flashlight, flicks it on. The beam catches Vega's face—sweat, wild-eyed.

A THIRD KNOCK. Louder. Almost breaking the wood.

Ellie clutches Mia.

ELLIE

He's asking. This time he wants you to let him in.

Mia clamps her daughter close.

Her flashlight beam lands on the window—

Across the street, every neighbor's CURTAIN is pulled aside in unison. Dozens of faces—families, children, old couples—all staring out, blank, motionless. Watching the Caldwell house.

The knock again. A low whisper threading the air.

WHISPER (EVERYWHERE)

You can't leave me.

The basement DOOR downstairs rattles violently. A counter-beat, like something inside wants out.

Joan bursts in, wild-eyed, clutching her cross.

JOAN

(urgent, whispering)

Don't open it. Don't acknowledge. We ride it out.

Vega argues, furious.

VEGA

We can't ride it out! It's scaling! Look around you—this is citywide. If we don't interact, we'll never understand it. We'll never stop it.

JOAN

You don't stop it. You survive it.

VEGA

That's ignorance!

He lunges for the recorder. Mia blocks him.

MIA

Enough! No more feeding it!

But Ellie steps forward, trance-like, her little hand reaching toward the door.

MIA

Ellie—NO!

She grabs her just as—

THE DOOR CRACKS down the center, wood splitting, as if punched from the other side by something colossal.

Everyone SCREAMS. Mia pulls Ellie back. Joan prays furiously.

Mia's flashlight flickers—

Through the crack in the door we glimpse IT:

A BLACK SHAPE, formless yet humanoid, pressed tight against the wood. Fingers like shadows, probing through the split. Searching.

The SOUND crescendos—tapping, pounding, lights strobing. The whole neighborhood in unison.

Mia SCREAMS at Vega.

MIA

Fix it! If your science can do anything—do it now!

Vega hesitates. Then his face sets.

He yanks the recorder, dials the gain, and plays back the earlier knock-pattern.

\*\*TAP. TAP. TAP.\*\*

The house responds—falls silent for one beat.

Vega tries again. \*\*TAP. TAP. TAP.\*\*

Everything goes dead quiet. Even the neighbors freeze at their windows.

It's working.

Mia holds Ellie, trembling. Hope.

Then the recorder GLITCHES—static bursts, the taps warp into a grotesque digital distortion.

The WHISPER comes back louder, furious.

WHISPER (EVERYWHERE)

You can't leave me.

The FRONT DOOR BLOWS OPEN. Splinters everywhere. Darkness pours in—not absence of light, but something heavier, smothering. The SHAPE presses through.

Mia SCREAMS, grabs Ellie, pulls her upstairs. Joan follows, cross raised. Vega stays, recording, transfixed.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY – NIGHT

Mia shoves Ellie into the bedroom, slams the door, barricades with a dresser.

The SOUND shakes the walls. Footsteps—wrong, disjointed—drag across the floor below.

Ellie clutches Mia's shirt.

ELLIE

(whispering, terrified)

Mommy... he's inside.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. CALDWELL UPSTAIRS HALLWAY – NIGHT – CONTINUOUS

The house TREMBLES like an earthquake. Shadows streak unnaturally across the walls.

From downstairs: heavy, deliberate FOOTSTEPS — out of sync, like multiple people walking in mismatched rhythm.

Mia shoves the dresser tighter against Ellie's bedroom door. Joan presses her cross to the wood, whispering prayers.

Ellie hugs her stuffed rabbit, pale with fear.

JOAN

(low, urgent)

He's in. But it's not full yet. If it could wear flesh outright, it wouldn't need the noise.

MIA

So what the hell does it want?

JOAN



It wants an anchor.

They look at Ellie. Mia pulls her closer, protective.

MIA

(over my dead body)

No.

From the hallway — the LIGHTS FLICKER violently. One by one, bulbs POP in cascading sequence. Darkness closes in.

Vega stumbles up the stairs, clutching his RECORDER like a shield. His glasses are cracked, face streaked with sweat.

VEGA

(half delirious)

I got it! The pattern. I can talk to it.

MIA

Are you insane? Talking is what it wants!

VEGA

If it's intelligent, we can negotiate.

He lifts the recorder, presses PLAY.

\*\*TAP. TAP. TAP.\*\* His pre-recorded knocks echo.

The room goes SILENT. Even the footsteps stop.

Mia freezes. Joan grips her cross tighter. Ellie buries her face in Mia's side.

The silence stretches, oppressive.

Then — a reply. \*\*TAP. TAP. TAP.\*\* From every wall. Perfect unison.

The house SHUDDERS with it. The dresser against the door slides an inch by itself.

Mia shoves it back, panicked.

MIA

(turning on Vega)

Shut it off!

VEGA

(entranced)

Don't you see? It's listening.

Suddenly — the RECORDER SPARKS in Vega's hand. He screams, drops it. The device hits the floor, still playing distorted static.

The WHISPER seeps from the walls, louder now, like the house itself is speaking:

WHISPER (EVERYWHERE)

You... can't... leave... me...

The bedroom window SLAMS open on its own. Curtains whip like hands. The outside is pitch-black, not night — something darker.

The stuffed rabbit rips from Ellie's hands, dragged toward the window. She screams.

Mia lunges, snatches Ellie, pulls her back. The rabbit is SUCKED out, vanishing into the void beyond.

Mia SLAMS the window shut, locks it, breathing hard.

JOAN

(to Vega, furious)

You fed it! You brought it in!

VEGA

(defensive, breaking)

I just needed proof! Data! Without data it's just—just madness!

MIA

It IS madness! Look at my kid!

Ellie shivers, whispering.

ELLIE

He says Daddy's here.

Mia stiffens. Her face hardens.

MIA

Your daddy's gone, Ellie. Don't listen.

ELLIE

(crying)

But he sounds like him.

Mia's heart cracks. She holds Ellie tighter.

From the hallway — a NEW SOUND. Heavy breathing. Not human. Wet, ragged, like lungs filling with gravel.

The SHADOWS under the door darken, pooling. The wood itself begins to warp, softening, like rot spreading.

JOAN

(terrified)

It's coming through.

Mia's eyes dart to the CLOSET.

MIA

In there. Now!

She herds Ellie inside. Joan follows. Vega hesitates, then dives in too.

INT. BEDROOM CLOSET – CONTINUOUS

Tight, suffocating. Clothes brush their faces. Mia presses Ellie into her chest.

The door cracks open slightly. Through the gap, they see—

The BEDROOM DOOR BURSTS OFF ITS HINGES. Splinters everywhere.

The FIGURE enters. A shifting silhouette of black dust and shadow, vaguely human but bending wrong at the joints. Fingers too long. A head tilting, listening.

It moves with twitchy stillness — one moment across the room, the next only feet from the closet.

Inside, Vega clamps his hands over his mouth, eyes wide.

The entity stops. LISTENS. The tapping begins again — this time from inside its body. Hollow, resonant, like a drum.

The SOUND VIBRATES through the closet walls. Ellie clamps her hands over her ears, crying.

Mia squeezes her tighter.

The entity moves closer. The CLOSET DOOR begins to SHUDDER, rattling on its hinges. Dust rains down.

Joan clutches her cross, whispering louder.

JOAN

(whispering)

Deliver us from evil. Deliver us from evil—

The shadow pauses. Tilts its head toward the prayer.

Then, slowly, it tilts its head the OTHER WAY — mocking her.

The closet HANDLE begins to TURN on its own. Slowly. Deliberately.

Mia's eyes burn with terror. She spots a COAT ROD above her. Grabs it. Yanks it loose.

The handle jiggles more violently now.

Mia grips the rod like a spear, her whole body shaking but resolved.

The door CREAKS open. Just an inch of blackness. A hand of pure shadow slips through, groping.

Mia JABS the rod into it with a feral scream.

The SHADOW SHRIEKS — an ear-splitting, inhuman wail. The entire house SHUDDERS. The rod burns like ice in Mia's hands.

The figure RECOILS, slamming backward into the wall. The plaster cracks.

The tapping stops. Silence again.

The entity withdraws, melting into the corner shadows. Fades. For now.

Mia collapses in the closet, trembling, rod still clutched.

Ellie sobs into her chest. Joan's prayers sputter, half-belief, half-shock. Vega shakes uncontrollably, glasses askew, his rational armor completely shattered.

Finally, Mia breathes. Looks at all of them. Fierce.

MIA

We're not waiting for rules. Or data. Or faith.

(beat)

We're going to kill it.

Her voice is steady. Cold. Certain.

Ellie looks up at her, wide-eyed.

ELLIE

(whispers)

But Mommy... what if it's already wearing us?

Off Mia's frozen face—

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. CALDWELL LIVING ROOM – MORNING

Sunlight pierces the curtains. The house looks wrecked: splintered front door patched with plywood, shattered glass on the rug, overturned lamps. The aftermath of a siege.

Mia kneels on the floor, wrapping Ellie's scraped knee. She is calmer now — steel in her movements, jaw clenched. Survival has hardened into strategy.

VEGA

(pacing, muttering)

It recoiled. When you struck it, it withdrew. That means it can feel pain.

(beat, wild)

If it can feel pain, it can die.

JOAN

(stern, exhausted)

You don't kill the devil with sticks. You endure. You outlast.

VEGA



(derisive laugh)

Endure? Until it hollow-skins your neighbors? Until it drags kids into walls? No. You fight it.

MIA

(cutting in, cold)

We already are.

She holds up the broken CLOSET ROD — blackened at the tip, as though scorched by shadow. The weapon hums faintly, like it still vibrates with the entity's touch.

JOAN

That's not salvation. That's provocation.

MIA

Good. I want it provoked.

Ellie looks up, whispering.

ELLIE

He says it only hurts when you remind him he isn't real.

Everyone freezes. Mia crouches eye-level with her daughter.

MIA

Baby... what do you mean?

ELLIE

When you stabbed him... he flickered. Like a dream when you wake up too fast.

Vega's eyes blaze.

VEGA

Not a dream. A projection. A construct riding vibration. If she's right... disrupting its coherence is the key.

MIA

So how?

Vega digs into his bag, pulling out charts, waveform printouts, schematics.

VEGA

I've been recording its knocks, mapping the intervals. It's not random. It's fractal. Self-replicating.

(beat, ecstatic)

It's wearing us because it needs us as carriers — like an instrument. Our walls, our voices, our children — resonance chambers. If we can \*jam\* the frequency, overload it—

MIA

(leaning in)

We don't scare it. We erase it.

Vega nods, shaking with adrenaline. Joan looks horrified.

JOAN

You're playing with damnation.

MIA

(quiet, sharp)

No. I'm playing to win.

INT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET – AFTERNOON

The block is a war zone of paranoia. Neighbors stand outside in clusters, pale, sleepless. Some nail crosses above doors. Others tape up windows. A few set loud radios blaring, trying to drown out the phantom noise.

Across the street, a MAN (30s, disheveled) kneels in his yard, hammering nails into the dirt — building some kind of crude box. He whispers fervently. His WIFE screams from the porch for him to stop. He doesn't. He just keeps nailing.

Mia, Ellie, Vega, and Joan watch from their porch.

ELLIE

(softly)

He's already wearing him.

The MAN freezes mid-hammer. Then slowly turns his head. His face slack, eyes blackened, mouth curved in an unnatural smile. He LIFTS THE HAMMER, taps it against his own temple.

\*\*TAP. TAP. TAP.\*\*

His wife shrieks. Neighbors rush toward him. Mia grabs Ellie, pulls her inside.

INT. CALDWELL KITCHEN – AFTERNOON

Mia paces, shaking. Vega scribbles equations furiously on a pad. Joan kneels by the table, praying under her breath.

MIA

(to Vega)

You said “jam it.” What does that mean? Spells? Tech?

VEGA

Sound. Pure sound. If it lives in vibration, then the right frequency could destabilize it permanently.

(beat)

We need equipment — amplifiers, speakers, tone generators. University has them.

JOAN

You’ll drag it there. Infect everyone.

VEGA

Or kill it there. Contain it, fight it where we can control the variables.

MIA

(considering)

If it wants us to carry it... maybe it’ll follow us anyway. We use that.

Ellie looks up at her mother, voice trembling.

ELLIE

What if it's already inside us? How do you kill something... if you're part of it?

The room falls into silence. The question no one wants answered.

INT. CALDWELL BASEMENT – NIGHT

Mia descends the stairs alone, flashlight beam cutting the dark. The basement hums faintly, like the house is breathing.

She kneels beside the recorder Vega left earlier. Plays back the last capture.

STATIC. Then whispers.

RECORDER VOICE

(her mother's voice, faint)

Mia... Mia, don't leave me...

Her whole body shivers. Tears prick her eyes. She SLAMS the recorder off.

From the far wall: \*\*TAP. TAP. TAP.\*\* Answering. Mocking.

Mia grips the blackened CLOSET ROD tighter.

MIA

(quiet, furious)

You don't get to wear her voice. You don't get to keep her.

The shadows ripple along the wall, pulsing toward her. She jabs the rod into the concrete. The sound cuts. The basement goes still.

Mia stares, breathing hard. Determined.

INT. CALDWELL LIVING ROOM – NIGHT

The group huddles around a table covered in maps and equipment lists. Vega lays out a rough plan: lure it, overload it with resonance, end it.

Mia listens, steady. Joan shakes her head in disbelief.

JOAN

You can't kill a storm with math.

MIA

Then pray while we try.

Suddenly — ALL THE LIGHTS IN THE HOUSE TURN ON. Blazing. Every lamp, every bulb. Too bright.

Everyone shields their eyes. The bulbs BUZZ, heat pouring from them.

Ellie gasps.

ELLIE

He's here.

The bulbs one by one EXPLODE, showering sparks. The house plunges into red-tinged gloom.

And in the center of the room, where no one stood a moment ago — THE FIGURE. Tall, shifting, bent. Its face flickers between shapes: strangers, neighbors, and finally—MIA'S MOTHER.

The entity SMILES with her mother's mouth.

MOTHER-SHADOW

(whispering, layered)

You can't leave me.

Mia freezes. Tears threaten. But she lifts the CLOSET ROD, firm.

MIA

(through gritted teeth)

Then watch me.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. CITY SKYLINE – NIGHT

The city glitters under a hazy orange glow. For a beat, it looks alive. Normal.

Then the grid FLICKERS. Entire blocks plunge into darkness. A wave of lights extinguishes across the skyline like dominoes falling.

Sirens wail. Car alarms blare. And beneath it all — the unmistakable \*\*TAP. TAP. TAP.\*\*  
Echoing from skyscraper windows, from parking garages, from every dark hollow.

CUT TO:

EXT. CALDWELL HOUSE – SAME

Mia, Vega, Joan, and Ellie cram equipment into the trunk of Mia's battered car. The plywood patch on the front door rattles with unseen knocks.

VEGA

(rapid-fire)

We need signal generators, amplifiers, oscilloscopes. If we can hit it with resonance—push it past coherence—it could collapse.

JOAN

Or it'll bleed into everything. Your machines will only spread it.



MIA

(to Joan, snapping)

Then pray it spreads just long enough for us to kill it.

Ellie stands still in the driveway, staring down the street. Neighbors are out again — dozens of them, silent, blank-eyed, tapping hands against fences, mailboxes, their own foreheads. All in rhythm.

ELLIE

(soft, eerie)

They're all pieces now.

Mia grabs her hand, shoving her into the backseat.

INT. MIA'S CAR – MOVING – NIGHT

The car weaves through darkened streets. Vega's laptop glows on his knees, spitting out waveforms. Joan clutches her cross, murmuring prayers. Ellie stares out the window, wide-eyed, watching people on porches all moving in sync.

Every house they pass: residents stand outside, TAP-TAP-TAPPING. Hundreds of them. Children, old men, mothers with infants — all staring at the car as it passes. Their eyes blank. Their rhythm unbroken.

VEGA

(whispering, shaken)

They're conduits.

MIA

Shut up.

INT. DOWNTOWN STREETS – NIGHT

Chaos. Traffic lights dead. Cars crashed at intersections. Strangers wander the streets, glassy-eyed, knocking their fists against street signs.

One MAN smashes his forehead repeatedly against a lamppost. Blood streams down his face, but he keeps rhythm. TAP. TAP. TAP.

Joan cries out, horrified.

JOAN

It's wearing them faster.

MIA

Then we move faster.

EXT. UNIVERSITY CAMPUS – NIGHT

Mia screeches the car to a stop. The campus is dark except for a faint EMERGENCY LIGHT glow in the science building. Papers litter the quad, doors wide open. Silence is everywhere.

They hurry out, dragging equipment bags.

INT. SCIENCE BUILDING – HALLWAY – NIGHT

Their footsteps echo. Lockers rattle faintly. From behind doors, faint knocks — professors' offices, classrooms, storage closets. All alive with tapping.

VEGA

(quiet, reverent)

It's everywhere.

They reach the PHYSICS LAB. Vega swipes a keycard. Door clicks open.

INT. PHYSICS LAB – NIGHT

Banks of equipment, speakers, oscilloscopes. Rows of wires and coiled cables. It smells of dust and ozone.

Vega rushes in like a man possessed. Starts firing up machines.

VEGA

(energized)

If we can generate a standing wave at its frequency, and then invert it—noise-cancel it—we can erase its coherence field.

JOAN

You talk like it's just a sound file. This thing has faces. It wears voices. Souls.

VEGA

And it feeds through resonance. So we choke it. End of story.

Mia sets Ellie on a stool, crouches down, eye-level.

MIA

Baby, you stay with me. You don't answer. No matter what voice it uses.

Ellie nods, trembling.

Vega's laptop hums, spitting frequencies through a set of industrial SPEAKERS. A low TONE fills the lab. The walls vibrate. The lights flicker.

For a moment — silence. It's working.

Then — the frequency shifts itself. The tone becomes distorted, twisted into the rhythm of the tapping. The machines are hijacked.

**\*\*TAP. TAP. TAP\*\***

The speakers BLARE it back at them. Louder. Inescapable. The lab itself starts drumming.

VEGA

(shouting over it)

No — no, I can match it, I can—

He twists dials frantically. Sweat pours. His hands shake.

JOAN

(turning on Mia)

You see? You can't use its weapons against it!

MIA

(to Vega, screaming)

Shut it down!

The glass wall of the lab CRACKS from the vibration. Papers WHIP into the air. Desks RATTLE across the floor.

Ellie SCREAMS, covering her ears.

ELLIE

(crying out)

He's inside the wires!

Suddenly, every MONITOR in the lab flickers on. Static. Then faces — their OWN faces. Mia. Vega. Joan. Ellie. Warped, distorted, whispering in unison:

MONITORS (WHISPER)

You can't leave me.

Mia grabs the CLOSET ROD, jabs it into a monitor. Sparks fly, screen explodes. The others keep whispering.

VEGA

I need more power. The generator—

He dashes to a control board, throws a switch.

The lights EXPLODE overhead. Sparks rain. The low frequency surges, overwhelming.

The floor TREMBLES. A fissure splits down the middle, opening into darkness. From it, SHADOW HANDS surge upward, grasping, searching.

Joan screams prayers, clutching Ellie.

Mia stabs the CLOSET ROD into the fissure. The shadow hands RECOIL, shrieking, withdrawing. The crack slams shut with a thunderous echo.

The room stills. Silent, except the faint hum of dying machines.

Mia pants, drenched in sweat. Vega slumps, shaking, his obsession broken by failure. Joan collapses to her knees, praying through sobs. Ellie clings to Mia.

For a long moment, it feels like victory.

Then the EMERGENCY SIREN outside howls. Red strobes flash through the windows. A voice crackles through a campus loudspeaker system:

LOUDSPEAKER VOICE

(calm, mechanical)

Remain inside. Curfew in effect. Do not respond to external sounds.

Mia, Joan, Vega, and Ellie exchange a look. Terror.

VEGA

(hoarse)

That's not the university.

The loudspeaker crackles again. This time — Ellie's voice. Distorted, but clear.

LOUDSPEAKER (ELLIE'S VOICE)

Mommy... open the door.

Ellie buries her face in Mia's shoulder, sobbing.

Mia stares at the speaker, fury rising. Her jaw clenches.

MIA

(through her teeth)

We're not running anymore.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. UNIVERSITY CAMPUS – NIGHT

Red emergency lights sweep the quad. Sirens wail in the distance. The loudspeakers still drone Ellie's distorted voice:

LOUDSPEAKER (ELLIE'S VOICE)

Mommy... open the door. Mommy... open the door.

Mia grips Ellie tighter, glaring at the speakers as though she could burn holes in them.

MIA

(to Vega)

Cut the power. Now.

VEGA

I can't — it's not running on the campus grid anymore. It's hijacked the PA.

JOAN

(whispering)

It's in the air now.

Mia steadies herself. Looks toward the city skyline — half-dark, half-flickering like a broken heartbeat.

MIA

We move. Before it fills the whole city.

CUT TO:



EXT. CITY STREETS – NIGHT

Mia drives. The car barrels through an intersection. STOPLIGHTS flicker red, then black. Dozens of PEOPLE stand motionless in the crosswalk, tapping their palms against their thighs.

The car swerves around them. Vega watches, horrified. Joan prays under her breath.

Ellie's small hand clutches Mia's arm.

ELLIE

(soft, frightened)

They're waiting for him to wear them.

MIA

Don't look, baby.

But Ellie can't stop staring.

As they pass, several of the blank-eyed figures \*\*snap their heads toward the car in unison\*\*. Their mouths open. No sound comes out — only the muffled THUD of \*\*taps from inside their chests.\*\*

CUT TO:

EXT. POLICE BLOCKADE – NIGHT

A police barricade blocks the main street. Patrol cars line up. OFFICERS in riot gear stand, weapons drawn.

KLEIN, the sheriff from earlier, approaches the car, flashlight up. His face is gray with exhaustion.

KLEIN

Mia. You shouldn't be out here.

MIA

We're heading to the lab. It's the only chance.

KLEIN

(gravely)

There is no chance. The city's collapsing. Dispatch is gone. State lines lit up with the same reports. It's not local. It's everywhere.

Vega leans out the window, desperate.

VEGA

If we can broadcast a counter-frequency—

KLEIN

Counter what?

(beat, voice breaking)

It's inside my men. Half of them won't stop knocking. The rest... the rest shot themselves trying to shut it out.

As if on cue, one OFFICER at the barricade begins tapping his baton against his helmet. TAP. TAP. TAP. His fellow officers flinch, terrified, but don't move to stop him.

Joan crosses herself. Mia grips the wheel, trembling with anger.

MIA

Then let us through. Or shoot us trying.

Klein stares at her. Finally — he waves them through.

KLEIN

Go. And if you find a way to kill it...

(beat)

Kill it for all of us.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY CORE – NIGHT

The car crawls through a downtown nightmare. Fires burn. Stores smashed open. People wander glassy-eyed, tapping against walls, dumpsters, their own skin.

Billboards FLICKER. Every digital sign in the city now blares the same message in blocky white text:

YOU CAN'T LEAVE ME.

Vega mutters, frantic, recording with his laptop.

VEGA

It's a mass signal. Low-frequency. Hijacking every circuit, every frequency band. It's rewriting the city.

JOAN

(near breaking)

This is Revelation. Trumpets in the night.

MIA

No. It's not holy. It's just hungry.

CUT TO:

INT. MIA'S CAR – NIGHT – MOVING

Ellie stares out the back window, her breath fogging the glass.

ELLIE

(quiet, trance-like)

He's getting bigger.

MIA

Don't listen.

ELLIE

He doesn't want the city. He wants us.

(beat, trembling)

He's inside me.

Mia's blood runs cold. She pulls the car to the curb, brakes screeching.

MIA

(whirling to her)

Don't say that. Don't you dare say that.

Ellie bursts into tears, clutching her head.

ELLIE

(crying out)

He keeps talking! He won't stop!

Mia pulls her into her arms. Fury mixes with terror.

MIA

Then we'll make him stop. I promise.

Vega scribbles frantically, muttering equations, sweat dripping. Joan watches Mia with haunted eyes.

JOAN

(soft, to Mia)

What if she's right? What if he's already wearing her?

Mia glares at her, ice cold.

MIA

Then I'll tear him out with my bare hands.

CUT TO:

EXT. CIVIC PLAZA – NIGHT

The car screeches to a halt. Ahead: CHAOS. Hundreds of possessed citizens stand in the square, moving in rhythmic sync. Their hands pound walls, pavement, even their own bodies.

A GIANT DIGITAL BILLBOARD above the plaza flickers to life. The crowd stops tapping, all eyes lifting.

The billboard shows a distorted VIDEO FEED — Mia's MOTHER, alive, smiling softly. Her voice booms through the plaza speakers:

MOTHER (BILLBOARD)

Mia. Baby girl. Don't run anymore. Open the door. Let me in.

Mia's knees buckle. Tears streak her face. Ellie clutches her arm, whispering:

ELLIE

Mommy, don't look.

But Mia can't tear her eyes away.

Vega yells, panicked.

VEGA

Don't engage! It's targeting you specifically!

The CROWD below the billboard begins tapping in unison. Louder. Faster. The pavement itself VIBRATES under the rhythm.

JOAN

(terrified)

It's making the city its drum.

The billboard-image of Mia's mother LEANS CLOSER, breaking the frame, too close to the camera.

MOTHER (BILLBOARD)

(whispering)

You can't leave me.

The entire plaza ERUPTS. The crowd SCREAMS — a unified, distorted wail. They surge forward, rushing the car.

Mia SLAMS the gas. Tires screech. The car plows through the mob, bodies bouncing off the hood but never breaking rhythm. They claw at the windows, tapping palms against the glass, cracking it.

Ellie SCREAMS. Vega fumbles for his recorder. Joan grips her cross, chanting.

The car bursts free, skids around the plaza, escapes into a side street.

CUT TO:

EXT. BRIDGE INTO INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT – NIGHT

The car speeds across a bridge. Behind them, the CITY GLOWS with chaos: fires, flickering signs, and the endless TAP-TAP-TAP rising like thunder.

Mia grips the wheel, face hard. Determined.

MIA

(to herself)

No more running. No more hiding.

Vega clutches his laptop, staring at the screen. For the first time, his manic obsession gives way to awe.

VEGA

(soft, horrified)



It's not just in the city. It's using the whole grid. The whole country.

(beat)

If we don't stop it here, it's going everywhere.

Joan's eyes widen, tears falling.

JOAN

Then the world is already lost.

Mia shakes her head, voice sharp, fierce.

MIA

Not while my daughter's still breathing.

CUT TO:

EXT. ABANDONED POWER STATION – NIGHT

The car pulls up to a hulking industrial POWER PLANT, its towers looming against the skyline. Dark except for a faint, pulsing glow inside.

Mia stares up at it, knuckles white on the wheel.

MIA

(quiet, deadly)

This ends here.

Ellie looks up at her mother, whispering, almost hopeful.

ELLIE

But Mommy... what if he ends us first?

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

EXT. ABANDONED POWER STATION – NIGHT

The hulking structure looms like a dead cathedral. Rusted smokestacks claw at the night sky. A faint, rhythmic pulse glows from deep within — like the heart of a sleeping beast.

Wind whips through broken chain-link fencing. Every gust carries a ghost of tapping. TAP. TAP. TAP.

Mia cuts the engine. The silence afterward is worse.

MIA

(steeling herself)

We go in. We end it.

Ellie squeezes her hand. Joan clutches her cross so tightly her knuckles are bloodless. Vega shoulders his bag of gear, jittery but electrified.

VEGA

This place ran half the city once. If it's using the grid as a carrier... this is ground zero.

CUT TO:

INT. POWER STATION – MAIN FLOOR – NIGHT

Their footsteps echo as they move through the cavernous space. The air is thick with dust, metallic and sharp. Massive turbines stand silent like ancient gods.

Emergency lights flicker red. The shadows pulse with every beat.

Mia leads, closet-rod gripped like a spear. Vega drags cables, setting up portable equipment. Joan mutters prayers. Ellie listens, her head tilted as though tuning into a station only she can hear.

ELLIE

(soft, trembling)

He knows we're here.

MIA

Good.

Suddenly, the massive TURBINES SHUDDER. Their blades spin once, groaning, though no power flows. The sound reverberates through the hall — a low, thunderous \*\*TAP\*\*

Vega scrambles to his laptop, frantic.

VEGA

It's piggybacking on the magnetic fields. If it floods the grid, it won't just be this city — it'll be everywhere.

MIA

Then we choke it here.

JOAN

And if you can't?

Mia glances at Ellie. Cold fire in her eyes.

MIA

Then I burn with it.

CUT TO:

INT. CONTROL ROOM – NIGHT

Banks of shattered monitors. Control panels flicker alive one by one, though the building is disconnected from the grid. Each screen shows distorted faces. Sometimes strangers. Sometimes people they know.

Mia's MOTHER again. Vega's reflection. Joan herself, whispering prayers in reverse.

ALL SCREENS (IN UNISON)

You can't leave me.

Ellie trembles, tears brimming. The voices lace over her own lips. She clamps her hands over her mouth.

Mia SLAMS a chair into the bank of monitors. Sparks explode. The voices stop.

The silence doesn't last.

The walls themselves start to pulse — black stains spreading like veins across the concrete, keeping rhythm.

VEGA

(urgently)

If I can push a counter-signal through the station's emergency generators, it might destabilize it. But I need time.

MIA

You've got it.

Joan clutches Ellie, pulling her into the corner. Mia positions herself between them and the spreading shadow.

CUT TO:

INT. POWER STATION – TURBINE HALL – NIGHT

The turbines ROAR to life, impossibly. The blades spin faster and faster, screeching metal. Sparks spit from shattered control boxes.

The air HUMS with pressure. The sound builds to deafening. The tapping fuses into a single, overwhelming DRUMBEAT that shakes the foundation.

Ellie screams, covering her ears.

Mia shouts over the roar.

MIA

Vega!

VEGA

Almost there!

He slams switches, dials frequencies. His laptop waveform spikes wildly.

The SHADOW spreads across the walls, gathering, forming shape. A MASSIVE FIGURE — faceless, stretched, spanning the hall. It bends across walls and ceiling at once, wrong angles, impossible scale. Its fingers drag across steel beams, leaving burning handprints.

Joan gasps, falling to her knees.

JOAN

(whispering)

It's the prince of air. The deceiver.

Mia glares at the giant figure, defiant.

MIA

No. It's just noise.

She lunges, ramming the closet-rod into a beam coated in shadow. The entity SHRIEKS — the turbine blades JERK, metal twisting. For a second, the figure flickers.

Ellie cries out.

ELLIE

Again, Mommy! Again!

Mia strikes again. And again. Each blow tears pieces of shadow away. The figure stutters, shrieking louder, pressing harder into the hall.

VEGA

Got it!

He slams a final switch. The SPEAKERS blast a counter-frequency — a piercing tone. The room vibrates violently. Dust rains down.

The shadow convulses, flickering, like film burning in a projector. For a second, it seems to dissolve.

But then — it MATCHES the tone, twisting it, morphing the sound back into tapping. Louder. Overpowering.

The speakers BURST, exploding into flames. Vega is thrown backward, smashing into a console.

MIA

VEGA!

Vega coughs, dazed, bleeding from his temple. He stares at his broken machine, devastation sinking in.

VEGA

(hoarse, crushed)

It adapts... it's smarter than us.

Ellie stares at the massive figure, shaking.

ELLIE

No... he's not smarter. He's stealing. He only repeats. He doesn't make.

Mia turns to her daughter, realization dawning.

MIA

What did you say?

ELLIE



He only copies. He doesn't know how to start anything new.

Mia's eyes blaze with sudden clarity. She grips the rod tighter.

MIA

Then we give him something he can't copy.

CUT TO:

INT. CONTROL ROOM – NIGHT

The entity looms through broken windows, filling the turbine hall, pressing into the control room. Its face flickers between thousands of stolen visages.

It taps against the glass with endless black fingers.

Mia steps forward, planting herself in front of it. Rod in hand. Fury in her eyes.

MIA

(steady, fierce)

You want us? You want my daughter?

(beat)

Then stop copying. Make your own sound.

The entity freezes. The tapping falters, just for a heartbeat.

Mia grips the rod, voice rising.

MIA

Come on. Do something new. Show me you're real.

The silence is deafening. Even the turbines slow, whining.

Ellie stares, breath held. Joan clutches her cross. Vega watches, stunned.

The figure twitches, distorted. Its head tilts, like a machine glitching. Then it SLAMS the glass, furious. The tapping resumes, deafening.

But Mia smiles, grim and sharp.

MIA

That's what I thought.

She drives the rod into the console, causing sparks to explode. The whole room erupts in fire and sound.

The entity SHRIEKS, dissolving into a whirlwind of black. The glass SHATTERS inward, shards flying. Joan shields Ellie. Vega dives.

Mia stands her ground, battered by wind and shadow, refusing to flinch.

MIA

(snarling)

You can't wear me. You can't wear her.

(beat, louder)

You can't keep us.

Her words CUT through the noise. The shadow hesitates — falters — flickers, unstable.

For the first time... it looks afraid.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. POWER STATION – CONTROL ROOM – NIGHT

The shattered glass crunches under Mia's boots. Sparks pop from broken consoles. Smoke hangs thick.

The SHADOW, massive and fractured, writhes around the turbine hall. Its stolen faces flicker faster — neighbors, strangers, Mia's mother, Ellie herself.

Ellie clutches Joan's waist, trembling. Vega wipes blood from his temple, dazed but staring at the phenomenon with awe.

VEGA

(whispering)

It's fracturing... losing coherence.

MIA

Good. Let it bleed.

The entity FREEZES on one face — Mia's MOTHER. It smiles, warm, cruel. The voice booms through the hall, layered with a hundred whispers.

MOTHER-SHADOW

Mia. Baby girl. I missed you.

Mia's lip trembles despite herself. The sound rips through her.

MOTHER-SHADOW (CONT'D)

You don't have to be alone anymore. Let me hold you. Let me hold her. We'll never leave.

The SHADOW leans closer. Its mouth \*splits\*, stretching too wide. From inside the cavernous throat — Ellie's voice.

ELLIE'S VOICE (FROM SHADOW)

Mommy, please... let me in.

Ellie gasps, hiding her face. Mia's fury ignites.

MIA

(through clenched teeth)

You don't get to use her voice.

She lunges, jabbing the rod into the wall of black. The shadow SHRIEKS, convulsing. The turbines SCREAM as their blades seize.

For a moment, silence. Then—

The SHADOW SHRINKS. Contracts. Pulls itself inward — like retreating water. But it's not gone. It's condensing.

It reforms, smaller, denser, more humanoid. Roughly human size. Still faceless, flickering shapes sliding across its surface like broken TV channels.

JOAN

(terrified, whispering)

It's choosing a vessel.

The figure turns — directly toward Ellie.

Her small body stiffens. Her eyes glaze, lips parting.

ELLIE

(soft, trance)

He wants to stay in me. Forever.

MIA

(feral scream)

NO.

She yanks Ellie behind her. But the figure is already moving — fast, fluid, like shadow poured across the floor. It rises before them, towering over Ellie.

Joan thrusts her cross forward, voice cracking with prayers.

JOAN

By the blood of Christ, depart!

The figure twitches, slows... but does not retreat. Instead, it begins to MIMIC Joan's prayer, syllable by syllable, warped, reversed, until her own voice is thrown back at her. Joan's faith wavers, terror cracking through her.

Vega stumbles forward, clutching his laptop like a shield.

VEGA

(yelling)

Don't listen! It's just noise — it steals, it repeats, it's nothing!

He slams a key. A harsh STATIC BURST roars from the broken speakers. The shadow flinches — but then mimics the static perfectly, amplifying it until the entire hall shudders.

Vega is thrown backward, crashing into a beam. He coughs, broken but alive.

The entity leans closer to Ellie. Its shifting surface slows. Faces blur until only ONE remains steady — her father's face.

A man Ellie barely remembers, dead years before. Kind eyes. Familiar jawline.

The voice is perfect.

FATHER-SHADOW

Ellie. I'm here. I've been waiting for you.

(beat)

All you have to do is let me in.

Ellie's tears stream down her cheeks. Her small hands twitch upward as if reaching.

Mia yanks her back, desperate.

MIA

Ellie, no! That's not him! That's *\*never\** him!

Ellie sobs.

ELLIE

(whispering)

But I want it to be.

The figure leans lower, hand stretching, fingers long, sharp. Its palm presses against Ellie's chest — directly over her heart. She gasps, convulsing.

Mia SCREAMS, ramming the rod into the arm. The figure SHRIEKS, but doesn't release her. Ellie's body shudders, her lips whispering:

ELLIE

You... can't... leave... me...

Mia's eyes blaze with fury. She twists the rod, screaming.

MIA

You don't get my daughter!

The figure recoils, finally. Black smoke bellows. Ellie collapses into Mia's arms, gasping for breath.

The shadow stumbles back, writhing, flickering between faces. For the first time, it looks... weak.

VEGA

(hoarse, desperate)

It can't hold a form when it's reminded it's false. We have to strip it. Force it to admit it's nothing!

JOAN

You can't strip the devil with logic!

MIA

(ferocious)

Then watch me.



She steps forward, Ellie safe behind Joan. The rod glows faintly now, blackened tip vibrating. Mia brandishes it like a sword.

MIA (CONT'D)

You're not my mother. You're not her father. You're not anything.

(beat, screaming)

You are NOTHING.

She SLAMS the rod into the floor. The vibration echoes like a gong.

The shadow SHRIEKS, shattering into dozens of smaller fragments. Each fragment flickers a stolen face — neighbors, coworkers, children — all screaming.

They swirl around the hall, circling, disoriented.

Ellie stares, wide-eyed.

ELLIE

Mommy... he's breaking.

VEGA

(urgent, pointing)

Push it! Don't let it gather again!

Mia raises the rod, trembling but resolute.

The fragments WHIRL tighter, swirling into a cyclone. Faces screaming, whispering, tapping all at once.

Then — silence. They freeze mid-air, suspended, faces gaping.

The voices merge into one last whisper:

WHISPER (EVERYWHERE)

If I am nothing...

(beat)

Then so are you.

The fragments PLUNGE toward Mia, a torrent of shadow and sound. She braces, rod raised.

The impact slams her backward into the console. Black smoke engulfs her, clawing, pressing into her mouth, ears, eyes.

Mia screams, choking.

ELLIE

Mommy!

Ellie runs toward her. Joan grabs for her, too late.

Ellie SLAMS her small palms against the turbine floor.

\*\*TAP. TAP. TAP\*\*

The whole station vibrates. The fragments hesitate — stunned by a rhythm not theirs.

Ellie looks up, fierce through her tears.

ELLIE

(crying out)

That's mine. Not yours.

The fragments twitch violently, confused, unable to copy.

Vega, eyes wide, realizes.

VEGA

(hoarse, awestruck)

She made her own sound...

The shadow SHRIEKS, destabilizing. Its cyclone of faces splits apart, bleeding into the air like smoke.

Mia gasps, breaking free, dropping to her knees. She stares at her daughter, stunned.

MIA

Ellie... you fought him.

Ellie sobs, shaking, but nods.

ELLIE

He can't make. He can only take.

The last fragments whirl into the ceiling, vanishing like smoke up a chimney. Silence falls. Real silence. No tapping.

The turbines stop spinning. The lights flicker and hold steady.

The entity is gone... for now.

Mia gathers Ellie into her arms. Joan kneels, weeping with relief. Vega slumps against the wall, trembling with both terror and exhilaration.

For the first time since it began, the station is still.

But outside — faint, distant — the sound begins again. \*\*TAP. TAP. TAP.\*\*

Not one voice. Not one building. But thousands. The whole city.

Joan looks up, pale, devastated.

JOAN

It's not dead. You only drove it out of here.

Mia holds Ellie tighter, jaw clenched, eyes burning.

MIA

Then we hunt it. Every last echo. Until there's nothing left to wear.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. POWER STATION – NIGHT

The air outside THUMPS with rhythm. Not faint anymore. The city itself is drumming — buildings, streets, thousands of bodies pounding together.

\*\*TAP. TAP. TAP.\*\*

Mia steps out of the power station with Ellie at her side, Joan clutching her cross, and Vega limping behind. They stare across the industrial valley.

Every window in the skyline flashes in sequence. On-off, on-off.

Every car alarm bleats in time.

Every living soul that can stand — stands, tapping in rhythm.

The city is possessed.

JOAN

(whispering, broken)

This is the end of days.

MIA

No.

(beat, fierce)

This is the fight.

CUT TO:

EXT. POWER STATION YARD – NIGHT

The four move cautiously across cracked pavement. The chain-link fence rattles — dozens of blank-eyed PEOPLE press against it from the outside. Men, women, children. All tapping. Their knuckles bleed, but they don't stop.

Ellie clutches Mia's hand, trembling.

ELLIE

(quiet)

They're hollow now. He's wearing all of them at once.

MIA

Then we rip him out.

The CROWD outside the fence suddenly STOPS tapping. Dead silence.

Then, in perfect unison, they turn their heads to look directly at Mia and Ellie.

VEGA

(hoarse)

It knows who the threat is.

The CROWD SURGES, smashing against the fence. The posts CREAK, metal bowing.

Mia pulls Ellie toward the car. Joan stumbles, praying louder. Vega clutches his laptop like a relic.

The fence COLLAPSES. The crowd pours through like a tidal wave.

Mia throws open the car door, shoving Ellie inside.

MIA

Go! Go!

She slams the car into gear, tires SCREAMING as they tear out of the yard. The mob CHASES, hundreds of feet pounding pavement in rhythm.

CUT TO:

INT. MIA'S CAR – NIGHT – MOVING

The car barrels down an avenue. The streets are full of blank-eyed citizens. They don't scatter — they turn and march toward the headlights, tapping their bodies, their skulls, the pavement.

BANG! The windshield cracks as a woman hurls herself headfirst into the hood, bouncing off like a ragdoll. Mia swerves, knuckles white on the wheel.

ELLIE

(screaming)

Don't stop!

VEGA

They're converging — it's driving them like a hive!

JOAN

(chanting over the chaos)

Deliver us from evil, deliver us from evil—

A MAN leaps onto the roof, pounding the glass in perfect rhythm. \*\*TAP. TAP. TAP.\*\*

Another crawls onto the hood, face bloody, grinning, whispering through broken teeth:

HOODED MAN

You can't leave me.

Mia roars, slamming the brakes. The man catapults forward, body crumpling against the asphalt. She guns the gas, plowing through the mob.

CUT TO:

EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET – NIGHT

The car skids around a corner. But the sight ahead makes Mia slam the brakes.



A WALL OF PEOPLE blocks the avenue. Hundreds, shoulder to shoulder, tapping in unison. Their eyes glow faint white. Their mouths move together, whispering.

CROWD (IN UNISON)

You can't leave me.

The words carry like thunder. Ellie whimpers. Mia slams the car in reverse — only to see ANOTHER CROWD closing from behind.

They're trapped.

Mia grips the wheel. Her chest heaves.

MIA

(whispering to herself)

Think. Think.

Vega stares at Ellie, realization dawning.

VEGA

She made her own sound. That's why it flinched. That's why it broke.

MIA

You're saying... she's the weapon?

VEGA

I'm saying she's the only one it can't wear.

Ellie looks between them, terrified.

ELLIE

I can't do it again. I don't know how.

Mia turns, cupping her daughter's face. Her voice is steady, fierce, maternal fire blazing.

MIA

Yes, you do. It's yours. Not his. That's why he's afraid of you.

(beat, softer)

Baby, you're louder than him.

Ellie shakes, fighting tears. But something inside her hardens.

She nods.

CUT TO:

EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET – SAME

Mia throws the car door open. She steps out, rod in hand. Ellie climbs out too, standing small but unflinching beside her mother.

The crowds close in. Tapping grows deafening. The ground itself TREMBLES.

Mia lifts the rod high. Shouts at the entity that now owns the city.

MIA

ENOUGH!

(beat, screaming)

Come and get us!

The CROWD freezes. Then, as one, every single person raises their hand and points at Mia and Ellie.

The noise vanishes. Dead silence.

Ellie's breath catches. Her small hands curl into fists. She shuts her eyes.

She begins to TAP. Not the entity's rhythm. Her own. Off-beat. Unpredictable. A child's chaotic music. \*\*TAP TAP... TAP-TAP-TAP... TAP...\*\*

The sound ripples. The CROWD STAGGERS. Their rhythm breaks. Heads twitch. Mouths gape.

VEGA

(awed)

She's jamming them...

The people clutch their skulls, writhing. The unison collapses into chaos.

Then the SKY ITSELF PULSES. Clouds churn. Lightning splits the horizon. And from the storm, the SHADOW descends — colossal, city-sized, folding across buildings. Its voice rattles windows.

ENTITY (EVERYWHERE)

You can't leave me.

Mia steps forward, rod raised, standing like a general before an army.

MIA

We're not leaving. We're ending you.

The entity ROARS, the sound of a billion taps colliding. Buildings shudder, glass implodes.

But Ellie keeps tapping her own pattern, louder, faster. The entity falters, its voice stuttering. Faces ripple across its vast body, all SCREAMING.

Joan drops to her knees, crying prayers. Vega films frantically, overwhelmed.

Mia grips Ellie's hand, shouting over the cacophony.

MIA

(through the storm)

Don't stop! Make it yours, baby! Make it ALL yours!

Ellie slams her fists against the pavement, creating her wild rhythm. The ground itself VIBRATES with it. Her taps echo off the towers.

The crowd convulses, collapsing. The entity SHRIEKS, glitching, flickering. Its colossal shape breaks into fragments, raining black across the skyline.

But the storm isn't over.

The fragments swirl, pulling together again — angrier, louder, monstrous.

VEGA

(terrified)

It's adapting!

Mia bares her teeth, unyielding.

MIA

Then so do we.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. DOWNTOWN – NIGHT

The skyline quakes under the ENTITY'S colossal shadow. Its body bends across skyscrapers, faceless, ever-shifting. Windows burst as if lungs exhaling. Every surface vibrates with its endless rhythm.

**\*\*TAP-TAP-TAP. TAP. TAP.\*\***

On the ground, Mia and Ellie stand defiant. Joan kneels, clutching her cross, praying. Vega films and types furiously, shaking, his eyes wide with scientific mania and terror.

The CROWD of hollow-eyed citizens convulses, some collapsing under Ellie's broken rhythm. But others begin to mimic *\*her\** tapping, trying to turn her creation into another copy.

ELLIE

(terrified)

He's stealing mine!

MIA

Then change it! Keep changing!

Ellie slams her fists against the ground in a new, jagged sequence. **\*\*TAP-TAP... TAP... TAP-TAP-TAP.\*\*** Irregular, human. The crowd stumbles again, unable to sync.

The ENTITY bellows from above, its voice a skyscraper-deep vibration:

ENTITY (EVERYWHERE)

You... can't... leave... me.

Mia glares upward, raising the closet-rod like a sword.

MIA

Then come down here and stop me.

CUT TO:

EXT. MAIN STREET – CONTINUOUS

The asphalt SPLITS. Black hands surge up from the cracks — dozens, hundreds — clawing at the pavement, reaching. The ground becomes a drum.

Mia pulls Ellie back, swinging the rod at the hands. Every strike makes them SHRIEK, flicker, dissolve. But more keep coming.

VEGA

(shouting over the chaos)

It's multiplying! Every street, every building — it's making more bodies!

MIA

Then we keep breaking them!

Joan rises to her feet, trembling, voice cracking but fierce.

JOAN

(chanting loudly)

Deliver us from evil! Deliver us from evil!

The hands falter around her. Shadows recoil from the light of her faith, shrieking. Joan's prayers work — for now.

But the ENTITY adapts. Its voice bends, warped, and begins to MIMIC her prayer, syllable for syllable, whispering it in reverse.

JOAN

(stumbling, horrified)

No... no, no—

Her prayer cracks. The shadow surges back at her. She screams.

Mia lunges, driving the rod into the nearest hand. It detonates in a burst of black smoke, giving Joan just enough space to scramble back.

MIA

(to Joan, fierce)

Don't stop praying. Even if it repeats you — don't stop. Make it yours.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY SQUARE – NIGHT

The group flees into the open plaza. Collapsed billboards spark. Fires burn unchecked. The ground is littered with unconscious citizens, their bodies twitching in broken rhythm.



The ENTITY’S massive form towers above, stretching from block to block. Its torso bends down toward the square. Its “face” flickers between thousands of stolen visages — Mia’s mother, Ellie’s father, Vega’s colleagues, Joan’s parishioners.

All whispering at once.

ENTITY (FACES)

You belong to me. You belong to me.

Mia plants her feet, unshaken. Her voice cuts through.

MIA

We don’t belong to anyone.

The ENTITY’S head tilts. The whispers stop. Then it BOOMS with laughter — the sound of glass shattering, buildings crumbling.

VEGA

(shouting, desperate)

It doesn’t understand belonging! It only understands keeping! We have to overload its memory — force it to collapse under everything it stole!

MIA

Then how?

VEGA

(half-crazed)

More noise than it can carry!

He slams his laptop to the ground, wires sparking. He pulls a portable speaker from his bag and cranks it to max. Distorted feedback SCREAMS into the night.

The ENTITY writhes, flickering violently. Its vast form fractures for a moment.

But then, impossibly, the FEEDBACK becomes rhythmic. The entity bends it, reshapes it into another tap-sequence. It steals Vega's attack instantly.

The speaker EXPLODES. Vega is hurled backward, smoke rising from his hands.

Mia snarls, clutching the rod tighter.

MIA

Stop feeding it things it can copy! That's what it wants!

Ellie stares at her mother, tears shining. She understands. She steps forward, tiny fists clenched.

ELLIE

Then it only gets me.

She slams a NEW rhythm into the concrete. Chaotic, furious, childlike. \*\*TAP TAP TAP... TAP... TAP-TAP.\*\*

The ground vibrates. The crowd screams, collapsing. The ENTITY'S vast form glitches, whole sections dissolving into black rain.

But the strain hits Ellie. She stumbles, nose bleeding, body shaking.

Mia catches her, frantic.

MIA

No! Don't burn yourself out!

ELLIE

(whispering, weak)

If I stop... he wins.

Mia presses her forehead to her daughter's, fierce and broken.

MIA

Then we fight together. You and me. Always.

CUT TO:

EXT. PLAZA CENTER – CONTINUOUS

Mother and daughter kneel together. Mia slams the rod into the ground in sync with Ellie's fists. Their rhythms merge — jagged, human, unpredictable.

\*\*TAP... TAP-TAP... TAP TAP TAP.\*\*

The ENTITY roars, destabilizing. Its colossal form bends backward, skyscrapers splitting under its weight. The air burns with static. Faces across its body scream, glitch, dissolve.

Joan adds her voice, chanting louder, louder. Her prayer bends and wavers, but it's hers. The shadows reel.

Even Vega, broken and coughing, begins to laugh through the pain — manic, triumphant.

VEGA

(hoarse, shouting)

Yes! Yes! Strip it bare! Show it it's NOTHING!

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY SKYLINE – SAME

The ENTITY'S body fractures. Chunks fall away, raining black fragments like ash. Entire districts go silent as the tapping fades. Windows shatter outward. Streetlamps explode.

The entity is coming apart.

But it's not finished.

CUT TO:

EXT. PLAZA – SAME

The fragments swirl inward, condensing above the square. The colossal form shrinks — tighter, denser, heavier. Until what hovers above them isn't a giant but a \*perfect copy\*.

A duplicate of MIA herself. Rod in hand. Eyes blazing. Voice identical.

COPY-MIA

(snarling)

You can't leave me.

The real Mia stares up at it, teeth bared.

MIA

(steady, defiant)

That's the last thing you'll ever copy.

She grips Ellie's hand. Together, they raise their rhythm again. Their sound. Their noise.

The duplicate flickers, snarls, lashes down with shadow.

Mother and daughter brace, ready to strike.

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

EXT. CITY PLAZA – NIGHT

The world holds its breath.

The ENTITY condenses into a perfect COPY of MIA. Same eyes, same clenched jaw, same weapon clutched in its hand. Every detail identical — except its movements are just *\*too\** precise. Too confident.

COPY-MIA

(calm, cold)

I am you. I am stronger without the fear. Without the weakness.

(beat)

Give me the child. And I'll keep her safe.

The real Mia stares, chest heaving. Ellie grips her hand tight, terrified.

MIA

(low, furious)

You'll never touch her.

COPY-MIA tilts her head, smirking.

COPY-MIA

You already did. Every scream she heard... every shadow in her closet... that was me inside you.

Mia trembles — rage, fear, doubt. But she plants her feet, rod raised.

MIA

Then I kill you, I kill all of it.

CUT TO:

EXT. PLAZA CENTER – CONTINUOUS

The two Mias circle each other. The city burns and groans around them. Joan prays at the plaza steps, voice cracking but steady. Vega drags himself upright, recording with shaking hands.

Ellie watches, tears brimming, caught between horror and awe.

Suddenly, COPY-MIA lunges, rod flashing. The real Mia blocks. Steel-on-shadow CLANGS like thunder. The shockwave ripples out, blowing papers, debris, ash into the night.

Mia shoves forward. COPY-MIA shoves back. They're equally matched — strength, stance, fury.

COPY-MIA

(snarling)

You can't beat yourself.

MIA

You're not me.

She twists, headbutts the copy. It staggers, but laughs — Mia's laugh, cruel and echoing.

COPY-MIA

You fight like me. You bleed like me.

(beat, whispering)

You *\*are\** me.

Mia growls, charging again. Rods clash, sparks erupt. The ground splits under their weight. Every strike echoes in rhythm, the ENTITY trying to drag her into its pattern.

Ellie screams.

ELLIE

Mommy, don't follow its beat!

Mia freezes mid-swing, realizing: the copy *\*wants\** her to fall into sync. She breaks off, stepping back, rod trembling in her hands.

COPY-MIA lunges, overconfident. Mia dodges, striking at odd, chaotic angles. Not rhythmic. Not predictable. *\*Human.\**

Her blows land. The copy flickers, glitching. Its face stutters between hers and dozens of others. Its voice distorts.

COPY-MIA

(glitching)

You... can't... leave—



MIA

(yelling, striking again)

Watch me.

She drives the rod into its chest. The copy SCREAMS, staggering. Shadow bursts, dissolving into fragments.

But it regathers, reforming in seconds, angrier. This time, its face is pure steel. No flicker. Perfect Mia. Perfect calm.

COPY-MIA

(quiet, deadly)

You're wasting her.

It gestures to Ellie, trembling behind Joan.

COPY-MIA (CONT'D)

She's already mine. She tapped my rhythm before she tapped yours. You didn't protect her. You let me in.

Mia falters. Pain lances across her face. For a moment — she almost believes it.

Ellie's voice cuts through, sharp, clear.

ELLIE

That's a lie! Mommy never let you in!

COPY-MIA whirls, glaring at her. But Ellie steps forward, tiny fists clenched.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

She kept you out. Every night. Every time I was scared. She fought you! You only ever stole!

Mia stares at her daughter, heart swelling. Fury boils into strength.

MIA

(to the copy, roaring)

That's right. You don't create. You don't love. You don't \*mother.\*

She charges. Their rods CLASH again, harder, louder. Sparks shower.

This time, Mia fights like a storm. Not in rhythm. Not in patterns. She fights messy, chaotic, human.

The copy falters. It mimics her swings — but it can't mimic her \*heart\*. Every strike burns deeper.

Mia SLAMS the rod into its shoulder. The arm EXPLODES into shadow. She slams it into its ribs. Black smoke gushes out.

The copy staggers, screaming. Its face flickers — Mia's mother, Ellie's father, strangers — before snapping back to Mia's likeness.

COPY-MIA

(broken, snarling)

You'll die without me. You need me.

MIA

(through gritted teeth)

I'd rather die human... than live hollow.

With a primal scream, she DRIVES the rod straight through the copy's chest.

The entity SHRIEKS, shattering the air. Its body flickers violently, collapsing inward. For a heartbeat, it clutches Mia's face — her own eyes staring back, filled with something almost like fear.

Then it EXPLODES into fragments, raining black ash across the plaza.

CUT TO:

EXT. PLAZA – NIGHT

Silence.

The crowd of possessed citizens collapses, unconscious. The rhythmic tapping dies. Buildings stop vibrating. The storm-cloud sky clears.

The city is still.

Mia drops to her knees, chest heaving. The rod clatters beside her, scorched black. Ellie runs into her arms. They cling, sobbing.

Joan stares upward, weeping, whispering thanks. Vega sinks to the ground, laughing, broken, manic.

For a moment, it's over.

Then — faint. So faint it could be imagination.

**\*\*TAP. TAP. TAP.\*\***

Mia freezes. The sound doesn't come from the city. Not from the ground.

It comes from \*inside her own chest.\*

Her breath catches. She presses a hand over her heart.

MIA

(whispering, terrified)

No...

Ellie looks up at her, wide-eyed. Tears fill her eyes.

ELLIE

(softly)

Mommy... he's still wearing you.

Mia's face goes pale. She clutches Ellie tighter, caught between terror and resolve.

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

EXT. CITY PLAZA – NIGHT

Smoke drifts. The once-possessed citizens lie scattered, unconscious but breathing. Sirens wail distantly, faint compared to the silence pressing on the square.

Mia kneels in the ash, clutching Ellie. Her hand still grips her chest, feeling the rhythmic pulse inside.

\*\*TAP. TAP. TAP.\*\* Faint. From her own heartbeat.

Her eyes brim with terror.

VEGA

(hoarse, trembling)

It's in you... it chose you.

Mia glares up at him, fury barely containing fear.

MIA

No. I'm not his vessel. I won't be.

Joan stumbles closer, cross raised, eyes hollow with dread.

JOAN

(whispering, devastated)

It marked you. You're carrying it now.

Mia shakes her head violently.

MIA

I'm carrying my daughter. That's it. Nothing else.

But her body betrays her. A tremor. Her chest rising and falling too fast. The faint tapping, echoing in her ribs.

Ellie clings tighter, sensing everything.

ELLIE

(pleading)

Don't let him in, Mommy. Don't listen.

Mia squeezes her daughter, whispering fiercely.

MIA

I won't. Ever. I swear.

CUT TO:

EXT. SIDE STREET – NIGHT

The group limps away from the plaza, moving through wreckage. Fires burn, car alarms blare. Citizens lie unconscious against walls, twitching, moaning.

Mia leads, rod dragging at her side. Ellie clings to her hand. Joan follows, lips moving in broken prayer. Vega trails, filming, muttering equations, eyes on Mia.

VEGA

(to himself, manic)

She's the perfect conduit. Direct infection. If I can measure it... replicate it... I can build the exact counter-frequency.

Mia wheels on him, snarling.

MIA

Say that again and I'll put this rod through your skull.

VEGA

(pleading, wild-eyed)

Don't you see? You're the key! It's \*inside\* you, but you're resisting. That means we can weaponize it!

JOAN

(outraged)

Weaponize? She's cursed! Marked by the devil himself! You don't study that — you cast it out.

VEGA

There is no devil! There's only signal, resonance, patterns we don't yet understand!

JOAN

Tell that to every hollow body in this city!

They scream at each other. The air hums with tension.

Mia suddenly doubles over, gasping. Her chest POUNDS. Her hand grips her ribs.

\*\*TAP. TAP. TAP.\*\* Louder. Faster.

Ellie grabs her shoulders, panicked.

ELLIE

Mommy! Don't let him speak!

Mia's jaw clenches. She fights it. Her own voice splits — overlapping. One part hers, one part warped.

MIA / ENTITY

(in unison)

You... can't... leave—



She slams the rod against the pavement, roaring.

MIA

SHUT UP!

The echo dies. The tapping fades, back to faint.

Mia straightens, sweat dripping. Terrified but defiant.

MIA (CONT'D)

(steady, to both of them)

Neither of you decide what I am. Not you, Vega. Not you, Joan.

(beat)

I'll decide.

Joan stares, trembling.

JOAN

(soft, broken)

That's what it wants you to think.

Mia moves past her, dragging Ellie along. No more arguing.

CUT TO:

EXT. CHURCH RUINS – NIGHT

They pass the old Baptist church where they first faced it. The roof has collapsed, pews scattered into the street. Black stains crawl up the stone walls, as if the entity branded it.

Joan stops, transfixed, whispering.

JOAN

We should burn what's left. Purge it.

Mia doesn't slow.

MIA

We don't have time for fires. This thing isn't in the wood. It's in us.

Ellie looks up at her mother, voice fragile.

ELLIE

(quiet)

He's quiet right now... because he's listening.

Mia swallows hard. She doesn't respond.

CUT TO:

EXT. ABANDONED SUBWAY ENTRANCE – NIGHT

They descend into the underground, seeking shelter. The city above is chaos — sirens, screams, flickering lights. The tunnels are damp, echoing.

#### INT. SUBWAY PLATFORM – NIGHT

They settle on the cracked platform. Vega sets down his scorched laptop, still recording. Joan kneels, praying in whispers. Ellie curls in Mia's lap, exhausted.

For a brief moment, peace.

Mia strokes Ellie's hair, whispering.

MIA

You're safe. As long as I breathe, you're safe.

Ellie's eyes close. She drifts.

But Mia's hand trembles. Her chest thrums faintly, unstoppable. She closes her eyes — and finds herself elsewhere.

#### DREAM/ENTITY REALM – DARK VOID

Mia floats in a black expanse. Tapping echoes all around. Faces loom — her mother, Ellie, strangers — all whispering.

VOICE (EVERYWHERE)

You can't leave me.

Then — from the dark — her COPY emerges again. Perfect Mia. Smiling cold.

COPY-MIA

(softly)

You can't kill me without killing yourself. We're one heartbeat now. One rhythm.

Mia trembles, fury and fear clashing.

MIA

Then I'll break the rhythm.

COPY-MIA laughs. The sound is deafening, fractured.

COPY-MIA

Break yourself, then.

The void collapses inward — the tapping compresses into her chest, louder, harder, pounding until she screams.

CUT TO:

INT. SUBWAY PLATFORM – NIGHT

Mia jerks awake, gasping, clutching her chest. Ellie stirs, frightened. Joan watches, eyes burning with judgment.

JOAN

(whispering, to Vega)

You see it, don't you? She's already gone.

VEGA

No... not gone. Not yet.

(beat, obsessed)

But if she lets me measure it...

Mia glares at both of them, panting.

MIA

You try anything while I'm breathing, and I'll end you both.

They fall silent. Only Ellie's soft breathing fills the space.

CUT TO:

EXT. SUBWAY ENTRANCE – DAWN

The first light creeps into the ruined city. Smoke drifts through the streets. Distant tapping echoes, faint but endless.

Mia carries Ellie up the stairs, rod in her free hand. Her face is pale, hollow-eyed. Every step is war.

Ellie clings to her, whispering.

ELLIE

Mommy... you're louder than him.

Mia swallows. Nods. But her eyes betray the truth: the rhythm in her chest is growing louder.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. RUINED CITY STREET – MORNING

Ash drifts like snow. Burned cars line the street. Windows gape, shattered and black. The city is wounded but not silent.

Faint. Everywhere. \*\*TAP. TAP. TAP.\*\*

Mia leads Ellie through the wreckage, rod clutched in her other hand. Joan trails behind, cross in a death grip. Vega limps, laptop hanging open, his eyes burning with obsession.

Mia winces with every step. Her chest thrums louder now. The taps line up with her heartbeat.

\*\*THUMP-TAP. THUMP-TAP.\*\*

Ellie looks up, frightened.

ELLIE

(soft)

Mommy... he's knocking from inside.

Mia presses a hand to her chest, trembling.

MIA

(through gritted teeth)

Then he'll stay locked in.

CUT TO:

EXT. OVERPASS – DAY

The group crosses a cracked overpass. Below them, collapsed cars choke the freeway. A sea of unconscious, twitching bodies sprawls across the asphalt. Every so often one stirs, their hands tapping faintly.

Joan stops, staring down, whispering in awe.

JOAN

An entire city, hollowed. How can we fight this?

VEGA

By turning her into the signal.

He nods at Mia, voice low but feverish.

VEGA (CONT'D)

She's carrying it. That makes her the strongest transmitter. If I can measure the resonance, amplify it, then invert it—we could kill it everywhere at once.

Mia spins on him, fury blazing.

MIA

You want to use me like an antenna? While it's clawing in my chest?

VEGA

(pleading, manic)

You're the key! Don't you get it? You can end this. But not if you keep pretending you're clean.

JOAN

(interjecting, harsh)

She's not clean. She's cursed. She's infected, marked. Every moment she breathes puts us all at risk.

Mia stiffens. Her grip on Ellie tightens. Joan's words cut like knives.

JOAN (CONT'D)

(icy, trembling)

She must be sacrificed. Better one soul damned than a city devoured.



ELLIE

(screaming)

NO!

Ellie runs in front of Mia, arms outstretched, shielding her.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

You can't take her! You can't! She's my mom!

Mia swallows hard, touched and broken.

MIA

(soft, to Ellie)

Baby...

But Joan's voice rises, desperate and righteous.

JOAN

If we end her, we end him! It's the only way!

VEGA

No. She's not sacrifice. She's salvation. She can \*weaponize\* this thing.

The group erupts into chaos — shouting, fear clashing with faith and obsession.

Mia suddenly doubles over, screaming. Her body convulses. Her chest POUNDS.

Her voice splits. Two tones, overlapping — hers and the ENTITY'S.

MIA / ENTITY

(in unison)

You can't leave me.

The ground TREMBLES. Windows in nearby buildings shatter. Black veins spread across the pavement, pulsing with rhythm.

Joan stumbles back, horrified.

JOAN

(whispering)

It's already wearing her.

Vega stares, entranced.

VEGA

(awestruck)

Do you see? It's using her body as the chamber. She's resonating. If we harness this—

Mia claws at her chest, gasping. Ellie clutches her, sobbing.

ELLIE

Mommy, fight it! Don't let him speak!

Mia forces herself upright, rod trembling in her hand. Her eyes blaze through tears.

MIA

(hoarse, fierce)

I'm still here. He's inside, but I'm still me.

She slams the rod against the pavement. The tapping stops. The veins retract. Silence.

Everyone stares at her, stunned.

Mia exhales, shaking. Looks at Vega, then Joan.

MIA (CONT'D)

(steady, low)

You want to use me? You want to kill me? Neither of you get to decide. I do.

CUT TO:

EXT. ABANDONED TRAIN YARD – AFTERNOON

The group moves into an abandoned rail yard. Rusted engines loom. Freight cars stand derailed, graffiti-smeared. The silence here is heavier.

They settle inside an empty car, exhaustion written on every face.

Joan glares at Mia, keeping her cross raised as if warding her off. Vega types furiously, muttering. Ellie curls in Mia's lap, her tiny heartbeat steady against her mother's chest.

For a moment — peace.

Then Mia hears it. Clear. From inside her own skull.

ENTITY VOICE (INSIDE)

Soft, seductive:

You don't need them. They fear you. They'll betray you.

Mia shuts her eyes, jaw tight.

ENTITY VOICE (INSIDE)

But the girl... the girl already belongs. Give her to me, and I'll leave you in peace.

Mia whispers under her breath.

MIA

Not happening.

But the entity LAUGHS inside her, a sound that makes her whole body tremble.

CUT TO:

INT. FREIGHT CAR – LATER

The group argues in the dim light.

VEGA

We need a plan. If she loses control again, we're done.

JOAN

The plan is simple. End her before she ends us.

Mia snaps, rod in hand, her voice trembling but firm.

MIA

Enough! You want me gone? Fine. But if I go, I take this thing with me. I'll drag it into the grave myself.

Ellie clutches her tighter, sobbing.

ELLIE

Don't say that! You can't leave me!

Mia kisses her forehead, whispering fiercely.

MIA

Then I won't. Not until I've burned him out.

CUT TO:

EXT. TRAIN YARD – NIGHT

The group sleeps fitfully inside the car. Moonlight spills across the yard.

Mia lies awake, staring at the ceiling. Her chest rises and falls. The rhythm inside grows louder.

\*\*TAP. TAP. TAP.\*\*

Her eyes flutter. For a moment, they're not hers. They glow faint white.

ENTITY VOICE (INSIDE)

(whispering through her lips)

You can't leave me.

She clamps her mouth shut, biting her lip until it bleeds. A drop falls onto Ellie's sleeping cheek.

Mia strokes her daughter's hair, whispering.

MIA

(soft, broken)

I'll find a way. I swear. I'll end him... or I'll end me.

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

EXT. TRAIN YARD – DAWN

A pale sunrise bleeds over the rusted railcars. The air is cold, wet with dew.

Inside one car, the survivors stir. Vega fumbles with his equipment, Joan grips her cross like a weapon, Ellie rubs her eyes.

Mia hasn't slept. She sits against the wall, staring at her hands. They twitch, tapping against the metal in rhythm.

**\*\*TAP. TAP. TAP.\*\***

Her face contorts in anguish. She clutches her chest, trying to force the rhythm still.

VEGA

(quiet, watching)

You can't hold it forever. The resonance is accelerating.

Mia glares at him, eyes bloodshot.

MIA

Then help me stop it, not measure it.

Vega hesitates. His hands tremble on the keyboard.

JOAN

(low, bitter)

It can't be stopped. She's infected. She's a walking siren.

ELLIE

(fierce)

She's my mom! She's not him!

Joan meets Ellie's gaze. For once, she falters.

CUT TO:

EXT. TRAIN YARD – MORNING

They move between rusting engines. The air hums faintly. Then — from the distance — a sound rises.

**\*\*TAP-TAP-TAP\*\***

Dozens of footsteps. In rhythm. Growing louder.

Vega pales. Joan's lips move in prayer.

VEGA

(whispering)

It's calling them.



Mia stiffens. Her chest pounds, the same rhythm. Her infection is pulling them in.

MIA

(through gritted teeth)

He's using me as the beacon.

ELLIE

(terrified)

Then shut him out!

Mia clutches her rod, shaking.

CUT TO:

EXT. TRAIN YARD GATES – CONTINUOUS

From the ruined city streets, they come: citizens with hollow eyes, twitching hands, feet dragging in eerie sync. A tide of the “worn.”

Their bodies jerk like puppets. Their faces blank. They tap against walls, rails, the ground — the rhythm echoing like a war drum.

Joan gasps, horrified.

JOAN

(whispering)

It's an army.

VEGA

Not an army. A transmitter field. And she's the tower.

The worn advance.

CUT TO:

EXT. TRAIN YARD – CONTINUOUS

The survivors sprint between cars. The worn move fast, faster than before, jerking in staccato bursts. Their tapping echoes like thunder.

Mia swings her rod, striking one across the skull. Black vapor bursts. Another lunges — Ellie screams — Joan smashes it with her cross like a club.

Vega records even while fleeing, muttering equations, half-mad.

VEGA

If the pattern scales... if I invert the wave...

Mia slams another worn into the gravel, snarling. But with every strike, the rhythm inside her grows louder. Her chest pulses, in sync with theirs.

She staggers, clutching her ribs.

MIA

(panicked)

He's syncing me. I can't—

Her eyes glaze. For a second, she moves *\*with\** the worn. Her rod rises in perfect rhythm.

ELLIE

(screaming)

Mommy! Stop!

Mia freezes mid-swing. Her body trembling, almost overtaken.

Ellie runs to her, tears streaming, clutching her leg.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

(pleading)

He doesn't love me! You do! He can't be you!

Mia blinks. Her body jerks, fighting two masters. The entity's rhythm pounds in her chest. But Ellie's tiny voice cuts through.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

(soft, desperate)

He can't hold your heart. Only I can.

Mia gasps, tears spilling. She clutches Ellie close, breaking the rhythm. Her heartbeat falters, irregular, human.

The worn nearest them SCREAM, staggering back as their sync collapses. For a moment — chaos in their ranks.

Mia shoves Ellie behind her, snarling.

MIA

(through gritted teeth)

You don't get her. Not now. Not ever.

She swings the rod in wild, messy arcs. Not rhythmic. Not predictable. Human chaos. The worn recoil, twitching, struggling to follow.

Joan stares, awe-struck.

JOAN

She's breaking the pattern.

VEGA

(whispering, frantic)

It's her... and the girl. They're disrupting the field.

CUT TO:

EXT. TRAIN YARD EXIT – CONTINUOUS

The group pushes toward the far gates. The worn swarm from all sides, but the closer they get to Mia and Ellie, the more they falter — like the pair emit a static the entity can't process.

Still, the tide presses. For every worn that collapses, two more stumble forward.

Mia roars, swinging until her arms ache. Joan drags Ellie through a narrow gap. Vega follows, filming even as he bleeds from a cut across his face.

Finally, they burst free of the yard, sprinting into the open streets.

CUT TO:

EXT. COLLAPSED HIGHWAY – DAY

They stumble onto a cracked highway overpass. Half of it hangs over a chasm of wrecked cars below.

The worn swarm the streets behind them, tapping in thunderous unison. The sound rattles the concrete.

Mia leans against the railing, chest pounding. Sweat pours down her face.

MIA

(hoarse)

I can't keep them off forever.

Vega's eyes burn with revelation.

VEGA

You don't have to. You just have to invert it. Your daughter's voice — your chaos against his rhythm. Together, you're the interference.

Joan shakes her head, trembling.

JOAN

That's blasphemy. You don't weaponize a child.

VEGA

(near-manic)

It's not weaponizing. It's harmonizing.

Ellie clings to her mother, whispering.

ELLIE

I'll help you, Mommy. I'll be loud with you.

Mia looks at her daughter — small, terrified, brave. Her heart cracks.

MIA

(soft, broken)

You shouldn't have to.

Ellie grips her tighter.

ELLIE

But I want to.

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY EDGE – CONTINUOUS

The worn close in, hundreds now. The tapping shakes the air.

Mia raises her rod, trembling. Her chest pounds in rhythm. She looks at Ellie, nods once.

MIA

On three. Scream with me.

Ellie nods, tears brimming.

The worn climb the overpass. Their blank eyes fix on the pair.

MIA (CONT'D)

One... two...

She and Ellie inhale.

MIA (CONT'D) / ELLIE

(ROARING)

THREE!

They SCREAM together, voices ragged but raw. Mia swings the rod wildly. Ellie's voice cuts sharp through the rhythm.

The entity's pulse wavers. The worm convulse, twitching violently. The highway itself shudders.

The swarm collapses, writhing, their rhythm broken. One by one they fall, unconscious, twitching against the pavement.

Silence.

Mia and Ellie collapse, gasping, clinging to each other.

Joan and Vega stare in stunned silence. The tide is broken — for now.

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY – MOMENTS LATER

The survivors gather. Mia holds Ellie in her arms, trembling with exhaustion.

Joan grips her cross, staring at Mia like she's both miracle and abomination. Vega films obsessively, whispering equations.



Mia looks out over the collapsed city. Ash drifts. The silence feels heavy, wrong.

Then — faint. Deep. From below the asphalt.

**\*\*BOOM. BOOM. BOOM.\*\***

Not tapping. Heartbeat.

But not human-sized. *\*Colossal.\**

The concrete trembles underfoot.

Ellie buries her face in Mia's chest, terrified.

ELLIE

(whispering)

Mommy... he's waking up bigger.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. COLLAPSED HIGHWAY – DAY

The survivors cling to the trembling concrete. Dust falls in thin streams as the entire overpass shivers.

From beneath the asphalt:

**\*\*BOOM. BOOM. BOOM.\*\***

Like a heart the size of a skyscraper.

The city skyline trembles in the distance, windows vibrating. Birds take flight in panicked swarms.

VEGA

(staring, awestruck)

It's not just in us... it's in the ground. The whole city's a body.

Mia clutches Ellie, eyes wide with dread.

MIA

(hoarse)

No. It's worse. It's in *\*me\**. That's why he won't let me go.

JOAN

(terrified, clutching her cross)

The devil wears the city like a shroud.

The ground CRACKS. A fissure splits the street behind them, belching black vapor. The vapor twists upward into a towering silhouette — barely formed, monstrous.

Ellie whimpers.

ELLIE

Mommy, he's... standing up.

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY EDGE – CONTINUOUS

Concrete falls away. Beneath them, something shifts — not flesh, not stone, but both. A colossal ribcage of black bone pushing through the earth, drumming with rhythm.

The survivors scramble to stay balanced.

VEGA

(snarling, frantic)

It's tethered through you, Mia. The infection in your chest— it's the anchor. That's why he's rising now.

Mia grips her rod, sweat dripping down her temples. Her heartbeat pounds with the colossal rhythm, syncing against her will.

MIA

(through clenched teeth)

If I'm the anchor... then maybe I'm also the key.

JOAN

(snarling)

No! You'll drag us all down with you!

VEGA

(ignoring Joan, desperate)

Think! If you can disrupt him from inside, we invert the whole frequency. You could  
\*dismantle him\*.

Mia looks down at Ellie, trembling in her arms. The choice rips her apart.

ELLIE

(pleading)

Don't leave me, Mommy.

Mia cups her daughter's cheek, tears falling.

MIA

(soft)

I'll never leave you. Not even if I have to burn with him.

CUT TO:

EXT. RUINED CITYSCAPE – CONTINUOUS

The silhouette towers higher, its form writhing, made of shattered buildings and shadow. Its hands scrape the sky. Its hollow face is a mask of windows and smoke.

It breathes. The wind howls.

The sound: \*\*TAP-TAP-TAP.\*\* Now magnified to thunder across the horizon.

The survivors stagger back. Joan falls to her knees.

JOAN

(crying out)

It's Judgment. The end of all flesh.

VEGA

(wild, exhilarated)

No — it's the \*birth\*! And she's the womb!

Mia roars, pointing her rod at Vega.

MIA

(sharp)

Shut your mouth!

The ground lurches. They topple. Cars tumble into the abyss as the entity's chest rises fully into view.

The city screams as if alive.

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY CENTER – DAY

Mia staggers upright, chest heaving. Every beat inside her ribs matches the titan's. Her veins pulse black, glowing faintly through her skin.

Ellie grabs her hand, sobbing.

ELLIE

Fight him, Mommy! Be louder than him!

Mia grips her daughter's face, eyes blazing.

MIA

Then we scream together. Until he hears nothing but us.

Vega clutches his laptop, screaming equations into the wind.

VEGA

Yes! Scream in chaos! Break the cycle! Interference!

Joan staggers forward, cross raised high.

JOAN

(feral, desperate)

Sacrifice yourself! End it now before it devours us all!

She lunges for Mia with a shard of rebar. Ellie SCREAMS.

Mia twists, slamming Joan back with her rod. The impact rings like a bell, sending Joan sprawling.

Mia's voice splits again, ENTITY overlapping hers.

MIA / ENTITY

(dual-toned, booming)

You can't leave me.

Ellie slaps her mother's chest, screaming.

ELLIE

You're not him! You're mine!

The rhythm stutters. For a moment Mia gasps, her voice her own again.

MIA

(hoarse, sobbing)

I'm here, baby. I'm still here.

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY LEDGE – CONTINUOUS

The titan rears higher. Its shadow swallows the survivors. Its colossal hand reaches toward the overpass, fingers of rubble and smoke.

Mia grips Ellie, pulling her close.

MIA

(whispering)

If I'm his anchor... then I'll be his knife.

She presses her forehead to Ellie's.

MIA (CONT'D)

I'll cut him from the inside. But you— you stay *\*loud\**. Louder than me. Louder than him.

ELLIE

(terrified, whispering)

How?

Mia kisses her forehead, trembling.

MIA

Scream my name. Don't stop.

Ellie sobs, nodding.



CUT TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY – MOMENTS LATER

Mia steps forward, rod raised, chest blazing with black light. Her veins thrum in sync with the titan.

The colossal form bellows, tapping thunder shaking skyscrapers to dust.

Mia spreads her arms, defiant.

MIA

(roaring)

YOU DON'T OWN ME!

Her body jerks violently. The entity tries to take full control. Her arms move against her will, twitching to the rhythm.

Ellie screams from behind.

ELLIE

MOMMY! MOMMY! MOMMY!

The sound cuts through. The entity falters. Mia's face splits in agony — half twisted, half human.

She slams the rod against her chest, screaming.

MIA

(through blood and tears)

You can't stay— if I don't let you!

The rod GLARES white-hot, vibrating. Her chest explodes with searing light.

The titan SHRIEKS, its rhythm collapsing, form shuddering.

VEGA

(screaming over the chaos)

She's doing it! She's breaking the tether!

Joan shields her face, praying louder, sobbing.

JOAN

Lord have mercy! Lord have mercy!

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY COLLAPSE – CONTINUOUS

The overpass begins to crumble. The titan thrashes, massive limbs cracking skyscrapers. Its body shatters in chunks of rubble and vapor.

Mia drops to her knees, still glowing, veins burning white now. She screams into the sky.

MIA

(feral, defiant)

I WON'T CARRY YOU ANYMORE!

Ellie's tiny voice rises above the thunder.

ELLIE

(pleading, shrill)

MOMMY! COME BACK!

The titan convulses. Its chest caves inward. Its hollow face splits apart. The tapping ceases.

For the first time — silence.

Mia collapses, motionless.

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

EXT. COLLAPSED HIGHWAY – AFTERMATH

Silence. The world holds its breath.

The titan's colossal form lies scattered across the ruined skyline — skyscrapers and shadows reduced to rubble and smoke. Its chest cavity caves inward, glowing faintly like cooling magma.

The tapping is gone.

The survivors stagger among the wreckage. Vega, bruised and bleeding, films shakily. Joan kneels, muttering prayers, rocking like a child.

Mia lies on the cracked pavement, chest burned black, her rod shattered beside her. Motionless.

Ellie crawls to her mother, frantic.

ELLIE

(crying, shaking her)

Mommy! Wake up! Please wake up!

Mia's face is pale, lips parted. No breath.

Ellie sobs, laying her head against her chest.

For a moment — a faint echo. A rhythm.

\*\*Tap. Tap.\*\*

Ellie gasps, lifting her head.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

Mommy?

A voice slithers through the air, low, rasping. Not Mia's.

ENTITY (V.O.)

(whispered, intimate)

She burned me out... but she's still mine.

Ellie clutches Mia tighter, defiant.

ELLIE

No! She's not yours!

The wind shifts. Shadows coil in the wreckage. They snake toward Mia's body, writhing, trying to seep into her burns.

Ellie screams, throwing her tiny arms over her mother.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

Leave her alone!

The shadows twitch. The entity's voice cracks with malice.

ENTITY (V.O.)

You can scream. But when she breathes again... it will be with \*me\*.

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY EDGE – CONTINUOUS

Vega stumbles forward, clutching his ruined laptop. His eyes blaze with manic hunger.

VEGA

(hoarse, wild)

Don't you see? She's the bridge! Even broken, she's the bridge!

He points at Ellie, trembling with a grin.

VEGA (CONT'D)

But the child — the child can call her back. Interference incarnate!

JOAN

(horrified, clutching her cross)

Blasphemy. Using her like a key— it's witchcraft!

VEGA

(snarling at Joan)

Then let her burn. Let the world end with silence. I won't.

He lunges toward Ellie and Mia, desperate.

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY CENTER – CONTINUOUS

Ellie screams as Vega reaches them. Joan barrels into him, slamming him against a broken guardrail. They grapple viciously.

Joan snarls like a zealot.

JOAN

You'll damn us all!

VEGA

We're already damned!

They claw and strike, both half-mad, rolling dangerously close to the edge. The cracked asphalt CRUMBLES beneath them.

With a scream, both tumble over the railing.

Ellie gasps, peeking — their bodies vanish into the rubble below.

Silence. Then just the sound of distant shifting debris.

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY – CONTINUOUS

Ellie turns back to her mother. Mia's chest flickers faintly, as though a dying ember. The shadows pulse, trying to take root.

ENTITY (V.O.)

(whispering)

One word. Let me in... and she'll open her eyes.

Ellie shakes her head, sobbing.

ELLIE

No. Not you. Never you.

ENTITY (V.O.)

(taunting)

She's gone. You're alone. But I can wear her face. Hold you. Love you. Isn't that enough?

Ellie presses her forehead to Mia's, whispering desperately.

ELLIE

Mommy... it's me. Ellie.

Her small hands clutch her mother's burned fingers.

ELLIE (CONT'D)



Don't let him in. Fight him. Please. For me.

The shadows writhe, furious. They try to drown Mia's body, but Ellie SCREAMS, raw and primal.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

YOU'RE MY MOMMY! NOT HIS!

The ground trembles. The faint ember in Mia's chest sparks — irregular, human.

Her hand twitches.

Ellie gasps, gripping tighter.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

Yes! Yes, that's you! Stay with me!

ENTITY (V.O.)

(booming, furious)

She is mine!

Mia's eyes SNAP open, blazing with white fire. She gasps, inhaling raggedly.

The shadows SHRIEK, recoiling, smoking in the light from her chest.

Ellie sobs with relief, hugging her mother.

MIA

(hoarse, broken)

Baby... I heard you. I came back.

Ellie clings tighter, whispering.

ELLIE

I'll always call you. Always.

CUT TO:

EXT. RUINED CITY – WIDE

From above, the highway is fractured, half-collapsed. The titan's remains stretch across the skyline like a corpse.

But it shifts faintly, twitching. Not gone.

The survivors — only Mia and Ellie — stand small against the vast ruin.

Mia, battered, broken, but alive. Ellie, fierce in her arms.

The entity's voice drifts faint, distant, but still lingering.

ENTITY (V.O.)

(soft, echoing)

You cut me. You burned me. But echoes never die.

Mia glares into the smoking horizon.

MIA

(whispering, defiant)

Then we'll never stop screaming.

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

EXT. RUINED CITY – DUSK

The skyline burns orange under a choking sky. Black smoke coils upward in ribbons. The titan's carcass sprawls across the ruins, but its mass is collapsing inward, dissolving into waves of shadow and ash.

Mia, holding Ellie, stumbles across the fractured highway. Blood stains her shirt. Her chest glows faintly — not black, but white-hot, like a flickering ember.

Ellie clutches her hand, voice small.

ELLIE

Is he gone?

Mia glances back at the ruins. The shadowy ash swirls unnaturally, reforming shapes that twitch like broken puppets.

MIA

(hoarse, steady)

Not yet.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY SQUARE – MINUTES LATER

They emerge into what was once a bustling square. Statues lie toppled. Cracked fountains bleed black water.

The ground trembles faintly.

From the drifting ash, figures emerge — half-formed silhouettes, writhing, all mimicking Mia's body. Their faces are blank hollows, but each one pounds its chest in rhythm.

\*\*TAP. TAP. TAP.\*\*

Ellie gasps, clinging to her.

ELLIE

They look like you...

Mia tightens her grip on the broken rod in her hand, teeth clenched.

MIA

They're his echoes. Pieces he tore from me. Copies.

The silhouettes shamble forward, their movements jerky, dissonant. They chant in warped unison.

ECHOES

(garbled, overlapping)

You... can't... leave... me...

Mia's body shudders involuntarily, almost in sync. She bites down hard, forcing herself still.

ELLIE

(terrified)

They're pulling you back!

MIA

(through gritted teeth)

Then we burn the rest.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY SQUARE – CONTINUOUS

The echoes surge, forming a circle. Their tapping builds, a chorus of hollow heartbeats. The pavement cracks under the rhythm.

Mia staggers, knees buckling. Ellie screams, hugging her waist.

ELLIE

Fight them! Please!

Mia lifts her gaze, fire in her eyes. She raises the broken rod like a torch. Her chest glows brighter, light bleeding through her skin.

MIA

(shouting)

You don't get to wear me anymore!

She SLAMS the rod into the ground. White light ripples outward in a shockwave.

The first row of echoes DISINTEGRATES, their shadows shattering into dust.

Ellie cheers through tears.

ELLIE

You're winning!

But more shadows pour in from the ruins, endless, reforming in greater numbers. Their whispers rise to a howl.

ECHOES

(choral, booming)

You can't leave. You can't leave. You can't leave.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY SQUARE – LATER

The fight rages. Mia, glowing brighter, wields the rod like a sword of fire, cutting down echoes left and right. But each one she destroys leaves scorch marks on her own body, as though the light burns her too.

She stumbles, collapsing to one knee. The glow inside her flickers.

Ellie throws her arms around her.

ELLIE

No! Don't stop! You're stronger than him!

Mia cups Ellie's face, whispering fiercely.

MIA

No, baby... *\*we\** are. He can't touch what's ours.

ELLIE

(confused, tearful)

Ours?

Mia grips her hands tight.

MIA

Our voice. Our bond. He can't take it.

Ellie's eyes widen. She nods, understanding.

ELLIE

Then we scream together.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY SQUARE – CLIMAX

The echoes surge in one last wave, towering and countless, swallowing the square in shadow.

Mia and Ellie stand side by side in the center, hands clasped. Mia's chest glows brighter, Ellie's small body trembling with her.

Together, they SCREAM — not in fear, but in defiance. Their voices overlap, rising higher and higher, cutting through the echoing taps.

The air shakes. The shadows reel, shrieking, their rhythm faltering. The entire city seems to buckle.

ECHOES

(garbled, collapsing)



...c-can't... l-leave...

Their forms rupture, dissolving into ash. The ground splits open, spewing blinding light.

The last of the echoes SHRIEKS — then disintegrates in silence.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY SQUARE – AFTERMATH

Silence. Only the crackle of fire.

Mia collapses, clutching her chest. The glow inside dims, steady but faint.

Ellie falls beside her, holding her hand.

ELLIE

(breathless)

Did... did we end him?

Mia gazes at the empty square, chest heaving.

MIA

(soft, resolute)

We ended his voice. The rest... the rest is ours to carry.

Ellie leans into her, whispering.

ELLIE

Then we'll carry it together.

Mia smiles weakly, kissing her forehead.

MIA

Always.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY RUINS – WIDE SHOT – SUNSET

The skyline smolders. The titan's corpse lies broken, its echoes gone. The wind carries only ash — but no rhythm, no tapping.

On the fractured pavement, Mia and Ellie walk hand in hand. Small, scarred, but alive.

For the first time, the world is quiet.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. CITY OUTSKIRTS – DAWN

The horizon glows with pale morning light. Smoke thins in the air, drifting away like exhausted spirits.

Mia and Ellie move slowly down a cracked highway leading out of the city. Mia limps, leaning on a piece of broken rebar as a cane. Her chest flickers faintly beneath her torn shirt, light dim but still alive.

Ellie, clutching her backpack, walks at her side. She hums under her breath — the same melody Mia once sang to her in the kitchen before everything fell apart.

The silence of the ruined world is deafening. No more tapping. No more whispers. Just wind.

CUT TO:

EXT. ABANDONED SUBURBS – LATER

Rows of houses stand hollow, windows shattered, driveways overtaken by weeds. Burned-out cars line the street.

Mia stops before a half-collapsed porch. Her eyes glaze as she imagines: once, kids on bikes, sprinklers, barbecues.

She lowers herself to sit, wincing. Ellie curls up against her, tired.

ELLIE

(quiet)

Do you think... anyone else is alive?

Mia strokes her hair, thinking carefully.

MIA

Maybe. Somewhere. People always find a way to hide.

ELLIE

(hopeful)

We could find them?

Mia hesitates. The thought of joining others — of bringing her infected glow among them — fills her with dread.

MIA

(soft)

Maybe. If it's safe.

Ellie looks up at her.

ELLIE

But... we're safe now, right?

Mia swallows hard, glancing at the faint pulse of light under her skin. It throbs gently, like a heartbeat not her own.

MIA

(whispering)

We're safer than we were.

CUT TO:

EXT. SUBURBAN BACKYARD – CONTINUOUS

Mia scavenges a garden shed. She finds canned food, a cracked lantern, a rusted hammer. She stuffs what she can into Ellie's bag.

Suddenly — a faint rustle.

She whirls, rod raised.

Only the wind. A swing set creaks, moving slowly back and forth though no one touches it.

Ellie peers from the porch.

ELLIE

Mommy?

Mia lowers her weapon, forcing calm.

MIA

Just the wind, baby. Just the wind.

But her chest flickers brighter, as if agitated. She frowns, unsettled.

CUT TO:

EXT. HILLSIDE OVERLOOK – SUNSET

Mia and Ellie climb a hill outside the suburbs. From the top, they can see the city below: a skeletal corpse of towers, still smoking, shadowless.

They sit on the grass. For the first time in days, Mia breathes clean air. Ellie rests her head on her lap, eyes half-closed.

ELLIE

(soft, almost asleep)

It's so quiet. Too quiet.

Mia brushes hair from her face, humming softly.

The glow in her chest pulses once. Twice. In rhythm.

Her hum falters. She presses her palm against her ribs, wincing.

MIA

(whispering to herself)

Not again. Please... not again.

Ellie stirs, sensing the shift.

ELLIE

(eyes wide, whispering)

He's still there?

Mia shakes her head quickly, forcing a smile.

MIA

No, baby. Just me. Always me.

But behind her eyes — doubt.

CUT TO:

EXT. HILLSIDE – NIGHT

The stars emerge, dim through the haze. Ellie sleeps curled up in a blanket. Mia sits awake, staring at the horizon.

The glow in her chest intensifies faintly, pulsing like a faint drumbeat.

She grips her rod tightly, torn.

For a moment, in the distance, faint black wisps rise from the ruins of the city. They twitch like fingers reaching skyward before dissolving in the wind.

Mia exhales shakily, tears brimming.

MIA

(to herself)

I'll never let you in again. Never.

She looks down at Ellie, sleeping peacefully.

Mia's hand trembles. She presses it to her chest, holding the light in, refusing to let it spread.

CUT TO:

EXT. HILLSIDE – DAWN

First light washes over them. Ellie wakes, stretching. She crawls into Mia's arms, hugging her tight.

ELLIE

(smiling faintly)

We made it to morning.

Mia smiles weakly, kissing her head.

MIA

We'll keep making it.

They sit together, bathed in sunrise.



But the faintest sound rides on the wind — so quiet it could be mistaken for memory:

**\*\*Tap. Tap.\*\***

Mia's eyes flicker with fear — then harden with resolve.

She hugs Ellie tighter, whispering in her ear.

MIA (CONT'D)

Then we'll scream louder.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. FOREST EDGE – DAY

Weeks later.

The city skyline is distant now, a jagged silhouette swallowed by smoke. Nature creeps back — vines curl through broken highways, birds circle cautiously overhead.

Mia and Ellie trudge along a forest path, clothes torn but cleaner, scavenged gear strapped to their backs. Mia looks thinner, her limp more pronounced. Ellie, though weary, hums her lullaby with a quiet resilience.

CUT TO:

EXT. ABANDONED CAMP – CONTINUOUS

They come upon a clearing: fire pits, overturned tents, scattered supplies. Signs of people. Survivors.

Ellie gasps, tugging Mia's arm.

ELLIE

We found them! People!

Mia crouches, scanning. Her chest flickers faintly, uneasy. The camp is silent. Empty.

MIA

Careful. Don't run ahead.

Ellie bites her lip but nods. Together they move through the clearing.

They find charred logs, food cans, and children's toys abandoned in the dirt. A doll's eye stares blankly up.

Ellie clutches Mia's hand tighter.

ELLIE

Where did they go?

Mia studies the ground. Tracks. Drag marks. She frowns.

MIA

They didn't leave by choice.

CUT TO:

EXT. CLEARING – FAR EDGE – CONTINUOUS

A crude wall of sticks and cloth screens a shallow pit. Mia pulls it aside.

Bodies. Survivors piled together, twisted, husks drained of color. Their chests hollow, caved inward as if something had clawed them out.

Ellie clamps her mouth, gagging. Mia covers her eyes quickly.

MIA

Don't look. Don't.

Mia stares, horrified. The wounds are familiar.

The tapping.

Mia presses her hand to her glowing chest, trembling.

MIA (CONT'D)

(under breath)

He's not gone...

CUT TO:

EXT. FOREST PATH – DUSK

They leave the camp behind. Ellie is shaken, quiet. Mia forces strength, though her eyes are haunted.

ELLIE

(softly)

Mommy... what if he follows us forever?

Mia kneels, gripping her daughter's shoulders firmly.

MIA

Then we never stop fighting. He feeds on silence, on fear. But we have a voice. You hear me?

Ellie nods, tears brimming.

MIA (CONT'D)

He wants to be everywhere. But he'll never be us.

CUT TO:

EXT. HILLSIDE OVERLOOK – NIGHT

Mia and Ellie camp beneath the stars. A small fire flickers.

Ellie sleeps beside her mother, head on her lap. Mia strokes her hair, humming faintly.

She stares at the horizon. For a moment, across the dark hills, faint lights flicker — lanterns? Torches? Signs of other survivors.

Her eyes widen. Hope.

She squeezes Ellie gently.

MIA

(whispering)

We're not alone after all.

CUT TO:

EXT. HILLSIDE – LATER THAT NIGHT

Mia wakes suddenly. The fire's embers glow. The night is too quiet.

Her chest pulses, stronger, erratic. She grits her teeth, clutching it.

Whispers rise, curling out of the darkness.

ENTITY (V.O.)

(low, taunting)

You can't escape what you carry.

Mia staggers to her feet, trembling. Across the clearing, shadows ripple at the treeline, stretching like long fingers.

She raises her rod, defiant.

MIA

(through clenched teeth)

I won't let you near her.

The shadows twitch. A faint rhythm pounds in her ears.

**\*\*Tap. Tap.\*\***

Her glow brightens violently. She gasps, nearly collapsing.

Suddenly — Ellie stirs, sits up, eyes wide. She sees her mother shaking, light bleeding from her chest.

ELLIE

(terrified)

Mommy!

Mia gasps, forcing words through the pain.

MIA

Don't... be afraid. Sing.

ELLIE

(confused)

Sing?

MIA

Yes! Loud! Louder than him!

Ellie, trembling, begins humming. The lullaby. Her small voice shakes but grows louder, cutting through the tapping.

The glow stabilizes, Mia's body calming as Ellie's voice rises. The shadows recoil, seething.

ENTITY (V.O.)

(whispering, furious)

Noise... always noise...

The shadows SHRIEK and retreat into the forest, vanishing.

Silence returns.

Mia collapses to her knees, clutching Ellie, who still hums fiercely through tears.

MIA

(breathless, awed)

You did it. You saved me.

Ellie sniffles, hugging her tightly.

ELLIE

I'll always sing for you. Always.

CUT TO:

EXT. HILLSIDE – DAWN

Sunlight pours across the land. In the distance, faint columns of smoke rise from another settlement. Survivors, alive.

Mia and Ellie watch, clinging to each other.

Mia exhales, half-laugh, half-sob. Hope at last.

MIA

We'll find them. Together.

Ellie nods, squeezing her hand.



They step forward, leaving their fire behind.

For a moment, the camera lingers on the fire's last ember. It pulses faintly — once, twice — in rhythm.

**\*\*Tap. Tap.\*\***

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. WOODED VALLEY – SIX MONTHS LATER – DAY

Green shoots push through scorched earth. Rivers run clearer. The world limps forward toward healing.

A small settlement thrives in the valley. Makeshift homes built from salvaged timber and steel. Smoke rises from cookfires. Children chase each other between tents. Adults barter supplies.

Mia and Ellie stand at the edge of the settlement. Their clothes are sturdier now, scavenged into armor of patched denim and leather. Both carry scars. Mia's chest still flickers faintly beneath her shirt. Ellie clutches her backpack, older somehow — eyes sharper, more knowing.

CUT TO:

EXT. SETTLEMENT – MAIN YARD – CONTINUOUS

Survivors greet them warily at first, then with cautious warmth.

A WOMAN (40s, leaderly, kind) steps forward, extending a hand.

WOMAN

You two came from the ruins?

Mia nods, exhausted.

MIA

We kept moving. Followed the smoke.

The woman studies her chest glow briefly, then looks away. She doesn't ask. Survivors don't pry into wounds that deep.

WOMAN

(soft)

You're safe here. For now.

Ellie grips Mia's hand, smiling faintly.

ELLIE

Safe...

CUT TO:

INT. SETTLEMENT LONGHOUSE – NIGHT

Mia and Ellie sit around a fire with others. Survivors share stories — where they hid, what they lost.

A man speaks of shadows that whispered his name. Another remembers tapping on the walls of his shelter until he fled.

Ellie listens, wide-eyed. She notices how their voices falter, haunted. She frowns, then quietly hums her lullaby.

The sound stills the room. People breathe easier, shoulders relaxing. They smile at her.

Ellie glances at Mia. Her mother watches, proud — but also worried. That little voice holds too much power.

CUT TO:

EXT. SETTLEMENT – WEEKS LATER – MORNING

Life settles into rhythm. Mia helps mend fences, scavenges food. Ellie plays with other children, teaching them her song.

But at night, when the valley falls silent, Mia feels it: her chest glow pulsing in rhythm again. Faint. Insistent.

\*\*Tap. Tap.\*\*

She wakes in a sweat, pressing her palm to it, whispering.

MIA

Not here. Not with them.

CUT TO:

EXT. RIVERBANK – DAY

Ellie kneels at the water's edge with other children, skipping stones. She laughs, bright and free.

Suddenly, she freezes. Her hand presses her chest instinctively.

The other children notice nothing, but Ellie's face pales. She feels it: a faint flicker under her ribs. Not a heartbeat. A rhythm.

\*\*Tap. Tap.\*\*

Her eyes widen. She looks back toward the camp where her mother works. Fear and determination war inside her.

CUT TO:

INT. LONGHOUSE – NIGHT

Mia sits alone, repairing gear. Ellie slips inside, quiet. She doesn't speak at first, just sits across from her, watching.

MIA

(soft)

What's wrong, baby?

Ellie hesitates, then touches her chest.

ELLIE

It's... in me too.

Mia's face falls. Her hands shake.

MIA

No. No, I've kept it locked away. You were safe.

ELLIE

(teary, insistent)

I felt it. The tap. Just like you.

Mia fights tears, rising, pacing.

MIA

(angry at herself)

I should've gone farther. I should've—

(trails off, breaking)

—burned it out of me before it spread.

Ellie rushes to her, grabbing her hands.

ELLIE

But I can fight it! Like you taught me. With my voice. With you.

Mia looks at her daughter's fierce little face, trembling with both fear and courage. She collapses to her knees, hugging her tight.

MIA

(sobbing)

I'll never let it take you. Never.

CUT TO:

EXT. HILLSIDE ABOVE SETTLEMENT – DAWN

Mia and Ellie stand alone, overlooking the valley. The sunrise bathes them in gold.

Mia grips Ellie's shoulders firmly.

MIA

Listen to me. What's inside us... it wants silence. It wants fear. But you, Ellie — you're louder than me. Stronger.

Ellie stares at her, tearful but resolute.

ELLIE

Then I'll sing until the whole world hears me.

Mia smiles through tears, kissing her forehead.

MIA

And I'll be right there beside you.

They hug, silhouetted against the rising sun.

Below, the settlement wakes — unaware of the quiet war still burning in two hearts.

CUT TO:

EXT. DISTANT HORIZON – WIDE SHOT

Far away, beyond the valley, faint plumes of shadow swirl into the sky.

The world isn't healed yet.

But in the valley, one small voice begins to sing — soft, defiant, unstoppable.

Ellie.

Her lullaby echoes over the hills.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. VALLEY SETTLEMENT – MONTHS LATER – DAY

The valley bustles with life. Crops sprout in small gardens. Children run between huts. Survivors laugh — brittle but real.

Mia walks the perimeter fence, rod slung over her shoulder, eyes sharp. She looks healthier, stronger. But the glow under her chest still pulses faintly, always present.

Ellie, now taller, hair longer, teaches a group of children to sing her lullaby. Their voices rise in harmony. It echoes across the valley like a shield of sound.

Mia stops, listening, overcome with pride. Then a flicker of fear. That much sound... could draw attention, too.

CUT TO:

EXT. SETTLEMENT YARD – LATER

Leaders gather at a crude table: the WOMAN (leader), a scarred FARMER, and a YOUNG SCOUT.



Mia sits among them. The scout spreads a map, drawn on scraps of cloth.

YOUNG SCOUT

We've seen movement beyond the ridge. Not animals. Not people, either. The trees there... whisper.

The others murmur nervously. Mia's jaw tightens.

MIA

It's spreading again.

The woman sighs, rubbing her temples.

WOMAN

We only just found peace.

MIA

Peace doesn't last with him out there.

Ellie stands in the doorway, listening unseen. Her fists clench.

CUT TO:

EXT. WOODS BEYOND THE RIDGE – NIGHT

Ellie sneaks out alone, lantern in hand. Her small frame moves through thick trees.

Whispers rise around her. The tapping begins.

**\*\*Tap. Tap.\*\***

She freezes, breathing hard. Then, gathering courage, she sings her lullaby.

Her voice trembles at first, then grows. The whispers recoil. Shadows bend back.

But something deeper stirs — a CHORUS of voices, dozens, maybe hundreds, speaking at once.

ENTITY (V.O.)

(whispering)

You are mine... child of the glow...

Ellie falters, tears in her eyes. She nearly drops her lantern.

Suddenly — Mia grabs her from behind, pulling her close, silencing her with a hand over her mouth. Her mother's eyes burn with fear and fury.

MIA

(whispering harshly)

Never come out here alone. Never.

The shadows hiss, then vanish into the dark as Mia drags Ellie back toward camp.

CUT TO:

INT. SETTLEMENT LONGHOUSE – NIGHT

Mia and Ellie sit by the fire, tension between them.

MIA

(angry, terrified)

What were you thinking? You could've been taken.

ELLIE

(tears streaming)

I wasn't afraid! I sang. It worked! I can fight him too.

Mia's hands tremble. She slams them against the table.

MIA

It's not your fight!

Ellie stands, defiant.

ELLIE

Yes it is! You said he's inside us. Both of us. Then he's already my fight!

Mia stares, broken. She sinks into her chair, covering her face.

Ellie watches, chest heaving, then softens. She kneels beside her.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

(quiet)

You won't always be here. But I will. And I won't be quiet.

Mia lowers her hands, staring at her daughter — not as a child anymore, but as something fiercer.

CUT TO:

EXT. VALLEY RIDGE – DAWN

The settlement gathers, preparing for a scouting mission. Mia stands armored, ready. Ellie stands beside her, pack slung over her shoulders.

The woman leader frowns.

WOMAN

You're bringing her?

Mia hesitates, then nods firmly.

MIA

She's louder than all of us.

Ellie meets the woman's gaze, unflinching. The leader studies her, then nods reluctantly.

CUT TO:

EXT. RIDGE – LATER

The group climbs the ridge overlooking dark, twisted woods. The air hums faintly. The sound of many fingers tapping against bark.

The survivors falter, fear overwhelming. Shadows ripple between the trees.

Ellie steps forward, her voice rising. The lullaby cuts through the whispers, pure and strong. The survivors draw courage, gripping weapons.

Mia stands just behind her, rod raised, glowing faintly — the old and new voices together.

The forest SHRIEKS, shadows bursting from trunks, writhing across the ground. The settlement fighters yell, charging in.

CUT TO:

EXT. FOREST BATTLEFIELD – CONTINUOUS

The woods become chaos. Shadows lash out like tendrils. Survivors hack with axes, stab with spears.

Ellie sings, louder, forcing shadows back. Mia fights beside her, crushing black wisps with her glowing rod.

But the entity's voice roars louder, furious.

ENTITY (V.O.)

(booming)

Noise... will not last. Silence is eternal.

The ground splits open, birthing a massive FORM of shadow — towering, skeletal, with endless tapping fingers.

Survivors scatter in terror.

Ellie doesn't stop singing. Her voice shakes but refuses to falter. The giant shadow WRITHES, cracks forming in its body.

Mia rushes forward, joining her daughter's song with a scream — half voice, half war cry.

Their combined sound echoes through the forest like thunder.

The entity SHRIEKS, collapsing into black dust that dissolves into the wind.

Silence falls.

The survivors stare in awe at Ellie, who still hums softly, her glow faint but undeniable beneath her ribs.

CUT TO:

EXT. FOREST – AFTERMATH – DAY

Bodies of fallen shadows evaporate into mist. Survivors regroup, tending wounds.

Mia kneels before Ellie, cupping her face.

MIA

(tearful)

You're right. It is your fight too.

Ellie nods, exhausted but proud.

She looks at the other survivors. Their eyes are fixed on her with reverence — not just a child now, but a leader.

CUT TO:

EXT. HORIZON – WIDE SHOT

The valley is quiet again. Birds return cautiously to the trees.

Mia and Ellie stand together at the forest's edge, hand in hand. Survivors gather behind them.

Ellie hums, her song spreading across the valley like a beacon.

Far away, on another horizon, faint shadows ripple — proof the battle isn't over.

But now the world knows its weapon.

FADE OUT.

TITLE OVER BLACK:

“THE NOISE WILL NEVER DIE.”

FADE OUT.