

RESIDES WITHIN

by
Jerry Robbins

jrscreenwriter60@gmail.com

FADE IN:

INT. MODERN APARTMENT - NIGHT

Modern. Clean. Tasteful. Cold. The kind of apartment where nothing is misplaced... and nothing is lived in.

NORMAN BENNETT (40s), sharply dressed, stares out over a sprawling nighttime cityscape -- composed on the outside, unraveling beneath.

LONI ASHER (40s) lounges on the couch, martini in hand. Designer clothes. Statement jewelry. She doesn't have to say she's above you -- she brought the proof.

NORMAN

So this is how it ends?

LONI

You are writing the ending, darling. Don't pin this on me.

He faces her.

NORMAN

That expression used to scare me. Now it just arms me.

LONI

Going to shoot me, darling?

Norman paces.

NORMAN

Do you actually think you will get away with this? It's extortion, you know.

LONI

Is that what they call it? Didn't you ever hear that all is fair in love and war? We were in love once. This is the war part.

NORMAN

(slight smile)
How could I ever have loved you?

LONI

Oh, I think my bank account had something to do with that.

NORMAN

No... it didn't. You always saw it that way because you never trusted that someone could love you for you. Money and mistrust always danced in your head, preventing you from ever knowing what love truly is. You will never know... and for that, I am profoundly sorry for you.

LONI

And by the time my lawyers get through with you... everything you own will be mine.

Norman reaches into his suit pocket and draws a pistol.

Loni is visibly shaken.

LONI (CONT'D)

What are you doing!? Put that down!

NORMAN

First you. Then me. Then... silence.

LONI

NO!

BANG!

Loni collapses - lifeless.

A sharp GASP from the audience.

Darkness. A split-second FLASH - BANG!

Silence.

Then -- an eruption of APPLAUSE.

Lights up.

ON STAGE

Loni stands center stage, very much alive, bows, soaking in the ovation.

Norman joins her. The Star.

The applause only swells.

A KEY JIGGLES. The door opens and Norman steps in.

NORMAN

Trent?

Silence.

INT. APARTMENT - TRENT'S BEDROOM - DAY

Norman glances in to the empty room. Teenaged posters, neatly made bed.

INT. NORMAN'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Norman dials the landline.

CONCIERGE (V.O.)

Concierge.

NORMAN

This is Norman Bennett.

CONCIERGE (V.O.)

Yes, Mister Bennett. How can I help you?

NORMAN

My son. Did you by any chance see him leave?

CONCIERGE (V.O.)

Yes, sir. About an hour ago.

NORMAN

Thank you.

Norman hangs up, thinks, redials.

MRS. BARNES (V.O.)

Hello?

NORMAN

Mrs. Barnes, this is Mister Bennett. Would Trent be there with John, by any chance?

MRS. BARNES (V.O.)

No... we haven't seen him. Is everything all right?

NORMAN

Yes, thank you.

MRS. BARNES (V.O.)
Your play closes tonight, doesn't
it?

NORMAN
It does.

MRS. BARNES (V.O.)
Such a long run. They were talking
about it on the news today! How
you stayed with it --

NORMAN
Please let me know if Trent
happens to show up?

MRS. BARNES (V.O.)
Of course.

He hangs up.

Lost in thought, Norman gazes out at the city.

His eyes drift to a family photo: Norman beside his wife
JULIA (40s), radiant in a white dress, their daughter
EMILIA (12), dark-haired and beaming, also in white, and
TRENT (14), sharp in a blue suit.

EXT. A CHURCHYARD CEMETERY - DAY

TRENT BENNETT (14) sits cross-legged in the grass,
dwarfed by rows of cold, gray headstones. He's a boy born
into privilege -- now pale, withdrawn, and adrift in a
world that's stopped making sense.

His eyes are red, raw from crying.

In front of him: a large gravestone bearing the names of
his mother and sister:

JULIA BENNETT 1982-2025

EMILIA BENNETT 2013-2025

A DISTANCE AWAY - BEHIND STONES

Trent is seen from afar -- as if being watched. A hushed,
indistinguishable whisper floats on the breeze.

BACK TO SCENE

Trent stares at the headstone.

FOOTSTEPS approach.

NORMAN (O.S.)

Again, Trent?

Trent doesn't respond.

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

We've discussed this. I don't want you here alone.

TRENT

Dad... I'm fourteen, not four.

NORMAN

I know... but... people come here to this grave... people we don't know... and some might be... overzealous fans...

Trent glances at him.

TRENT

Just say it. You think someone's going to snatch me.

NORMAN

Trent, you're not a normal boy. Your father is --

TRENT

A famous actor, yes, I know. You don't have to tell me, Dad.

NORMAN

That makes you a possible target of lunatics. It isn't the friendliest world out there.

TRENT

Did you steal that line from one of your films?

NORMAN

Not to my knowledge -- but it's possible.

Norman tries to lighten the mood with a smile.

Trent starts to cry.

TRENT

I just... I just want them back. Even for one minute.

Norman kneels as Trent falls into his arms.

TRENT (CONT'D)
(through tears)
They wanted me to go with them! I
told them I didn't want to. Emilia
kept pestering me... I told her to
buzz off!

A DISTANCE AWAY - BEHIND THE STONES

They are being watched.

BACK TO SCENE

NORMAN
I know... I know... Trent, you
can't beat yourself up over what
happened. It was an accident.
Your mother and Emilia knew you
didn't mean what you said.

TRENT
How can you be sure?

NORMAN
Years of love can't be replaced by
a single moment of anger.

A beat as Trent composes himself and gently pulls out of
his father's embrace.

TRENT
That was a line from a movie.

NORMAN
It might have been.

Trent manages a smile.

They stand. With slow steps, they head for the gate.

NORMAN (CONT'D)
Where is Mrs. Clark?

TRENT
You gave her the day off.

NORMAN
When?

TRENT

Last month. You probably forgot it was a Saturday. No school and a matinee.

NORMAN

You should have come to the theater.

TRENT

I saw the play opening night... with Mom and Emilia.

They walk in silence a few steps.

NORMAN

Will you come to the closing tonight?

TRENT

Do I have to?

NORMAN

No, you don't have to. If you don't, I'll need to find someone to stay with you.

TRENT

John doesn't have a constant sitter, and he's my age.

NORMAN

John doesn't spend hours in the cemetery, day or night.

TRENT

I was only here once at night.

NORMAN

Once was enough.

TRENT

Nothing's going to hurt you in a cemetery.

NORMAN

Don't be so sure.

EXT. LONDON THEATER - NIGHT

Bright marquee lights.

NORMAN BENNETT in ELEGY FOR A MARRIAGE.

NORMAN (V.O.)
So this is how it ends?

LONI (V.O.)
You are writing the ending,
darling. Don't pin this on me.

INT. THE THEATER - STAGE RIGHT - NIGHT

Hollow-eyed, Trent watches from the wings.

A STAGE MANAGER (20s) follows along at a podium lit by a stand light.

NORMAN (O.S.)
That expression used to scare me.
Now it just arms me.

LONI (O.S.)
Going to shoot me, darling?

NORMAN (O.S.)
In court. With the law as my gun.

LONI (O.S.)
Be careful, Thomas. My lawyers
have much better aim.

The Stage Manager flips a page.

INT. NORMAN'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

The morning sun washes the room.

The clock reads ten.

WHOOSH!

An unnatural, sharp gust of air knocks the family photo off the shelf.

Silence.

Norman enters from the hallway, newspaper tucked under his arm.

He crosses to the kitchen counter, pours himself a coffee, and sits near the window.

Trent, half asleep, enters and beelines to the kitchen area where he pours a glass of juice.

He enters the living room area and notices the picture on the floor.

Norman watches as Trent carefully lifts the photo.

NORMAN
How did that happen?

TRENT
I don't know...

Concern is on his face as he puts it back on the shelf.

Norman puts his paper down.

NORMAN
Take a seat, I want to run something by you.

Trent sits as Norman leans over and takes a tablet from the desk.

NORMAN (CONT'D)
Couldn't sleep after the show last night...
(searches the tablet)
I got to thinking... you and I should get out of the city for a bit.

TRENT
What?

NORMAN
School's out, and I've got two months before the next picture.

He holds the tablet up for Trent to see.

ON SCREEN:

An impressive gothic mansion. Stone, huge, and meticulously kept grounds.

NORMAN (CONT'D)
A little summer cottage. Fifteen acres of paradise.

Trent stares at the tablet.

TRENT
That's your idea of little?

NORMAN
(shrugs)
Well...

EXT. ENGLISH COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

Norman's car drives along a country road.

INT. NORMAN'S CAR - DAY

Norman drives, eyes hidden behind sunglasses.

Next to him, Trent gazes out the window -- a blur of countryside passing.

Faint, indistinguishable music leaks out of his earbuds.

NORMAN
Wind down the window and breathe
that fresh air!

No response.

NORMAN (CONT'D)
Or don't.

A glance to Trent.

NORMAN (CONT'D)
I've been talking to myself for
three hours. The least you could
do is wave once in a while.

Norman taps his shoulder. Trent pulls a bud out -- the music suddenly louder.

TRENT
Yeah, Dad?

NORMAN
You're going to go deaf.

TRENT
That's dramatic, even for you.

He puts the earbud back in.

TRENT (CONT'D)
And I don't want the window open.

Norman shoots him a look and a smile.

NORMAN
You little shit. You've heard
everything I've said.

Trent smiles and stifles a giggle.

Norman chuckles and CLICKS on classical music. Loud.

TRENT
No, Dad!

EXT. ENGLISH COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

The car continues along the road as trees grow denser.

INT. NORMAN'S CAR - DAY

The car clears the wooded road and ahead stands the imposing Wraithmore House.

A stately Victorian manor that rises from manicured lawns. Its stone façade tangled with ivy. Picturesque -- yet oddly still.

Norman removes his glasses for a better look as Trent pulls the buds from his ears.

TRENT
That's the place?

NORMAN
That's it.

TRENT
Whoa. That's way bigger than the pictures.

NORMAN
We might get lost in there.

He smiles as the car nears the mansion.

EXT. FRONT DOOR - DAY

Norman rings the doorbell.

Trent surveys the countryside behind them.

TRENT
You said there's a tennis court?

The door opens to reveal ANDREWS (50s), the butler. Polished, professional, hair dark and thinning.

ANDREWS
Mister Bennett?

NORMAN
Yes.

Andrews opens the door wide and welcoming.

ANDREWS
Please.

Norman and Trent step into the foyer.

ANDREWS (CONT'D)
Welcome to Wraithmore House.

INT. FOYER - DAY

Even Trent is impressed -- suits of armor, elegant red walls, paintings, ornate furniture.

NORMAN
Thank you. This is my son, Trent.

ANDREWS
Sir.

TRENT
Hello.

NORMAN
Magnificent. When was it built?

ANDREWS
Eighteen forty-six, Sir.
Extensions followed throughout the years.

MRS. WEBB (70s) enters from a side room. Warm, plump, rosy cheeks, maternal.

MRS. WEBB
Andrews, you should have told me they arrived! I'm Mrs. Webb, the housekeeper.

NORMAN
Mrs. Webb. I'm Norman Bennett --

MRS. WEBB

Oh, I know that, sir! I've seen all of your pictures!

NORMAN

Why, thank you! And this is my son, Trent.

TRENT

Ma'am.

MRS. WEBB

Aren't you the handsome lad! Are you an actor, too?

TRENT

(smiles)

No, Ma'am.

ANDREWS

If you'll excuse me, I'll bring your luggage to your rooms.

Andrews walks past them and out the front door.

TRENT

I'll help.

He runs after Andrews.

NORMAN

No one lives here full-time, Mrs. Webb? Besides you and Mister Andrews?

MRS. WEBB

Not in many years. Lord Alistair Blackvale and Lady Blackvale lived here until they passed on, some twenty years ago. Their son owns the property, but he lives in America now. He decided to rent it. Weddings are very popular here.

NORMAN

(slight smile)

There aren't any weddings planned, I hope.

MRS. WEBB

Oh, no, Mister Bennett. It's all yours for the summer. Let me give you a little tour.

INT. FORMAL DINING ROOM - DAY

A long oak table commands the space, framed by red-cushioned chairs.

Gray daylight filters through a bay window, dulled by the dark wood paneling.

MRS. WEBB

This is the formal dining room.
The table seats ten.

NORMAN

I don't think I'll be throwing any
dinner parties.

She moves through the archway. Norman follows.

MRS. WEBB

In here...

INT. SMALL DINING ROOM - DAY

A cozier, gold-toned room with a smaller table --
intimate and warm.

MRS. WEBB

This is the smaller dining room.
Some use it for cards. Most guests
take meals in here.

NORMAN

It's very quiet, isn't it?

MRS. WEBB

The stone walls are quite thick. A
plane can fly over and you will
struggle to hear it.

Norman nods in approval.

INT. THE MAIN STAIRWAY - DAY

A grand staircase draped in red-and-gold carpet: twelve
steps, a landing, twelve more to the top.

Norman follows Mrs. Webb up the stairs.

MRS. WEBB

There are ten bedrooms altogether,
and three full baths.

INT. SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY

They pass the first room. A grand four-poster bed anchors the richly wallpapered room, steeped in dark wood, velvet, and old-world opulence.

Norman looks inside and sees Trent, unpacking.

NORMAN

That's some room!

TRENT

Andrews said I could stay here. I can switch out if you like.

NORMAN

No, not at all! It suits you!

He smiles and follows Mrs. Webb as Andrews steps out.

ANDREWS

I placed your luggage on the bed, Sir.

NORMAN

Thank you, Andrews.

Andrews heads downstairs.

Norman enters his new bedroom.

INT. NORMAN'S BEDROOM - DAY

Crimson walls and velvet drapes enclose a grand canopy bed. Sunlight warms an immaculate vanity near the bay windows. Three suitcases are on the bed.

MRS. WEBB

You can change, of course, if you like -- but this is the largest room.

NORMAN

It will do just fine. Thank you, Mrs. Webb.

MRS. WEBB

Shall I unpack for you, sir?

NORMAN

No, thank you. I'll take care of it.

MRS. WEBB

What time would you like dinner served?

NORMAN

You cook as well as housekeep?

MRS. WEBB

Usually just breakfast and a light supper. Any large parties, we have a chef in town.

INT. TRENT'S BEDROOM - DAY

Trent has his earbuds in as a thin wisp of music spills from them. He is drawn to the window.

He lingers on an armless statue -- shadows pooling in the hollows of its missing limbs.

EXT. WRAITHMORE HOUSE - NIGHT

The manor looms under a starless sky, its gothic edges cast in silhouette. A faint glow from the tall windows flickers across the garden path, where fountains sit dry and forgotten.

INT. THE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A grand, vaulted chamber draped in crimson and carved oak. Stained glass glows behind heavy chairs, taxidermy birds stand sentinel, and a chandelier glitters above the tapestry-draped hearth.

Norman holds the family portrait in his hands. He stares at it... motionless.

He is jolted from that memory with a light TAPPING on the side of the archway entrance.

He looks up to see Andrews.

ANDREWS

I was about to retire for the evening, Sir. Would you require anything else?

NORMAN

No. No, thank you, Andrews. Goodnight.

ANDREWS

Goodnight, Sir.

He exits.

Norman turns back to the photo. His eyes well with tears.

With gentle care, he places the photo on a side table, sits in a chair next to it... and continues to stare.

INT. TRENT'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Moonlight pours through tall windows, casting a silver wash across the room.

Trent lies under the covers -- wide awake. Earbuds in. A faint thread of music the only sound.

His eyes lock on the heavy, carved canopy above.

Still. Staring.

A glance toward the window.

His lids begin to close...

They shut.

Silence.

The latch lifts with a soft metallic CLICK -- as if pressed from the inside.

Curtains stir gently in the breeze.

A thin, cold draft moves across Trent's face -- his breath fogs in the air.

He winces... opens his eyes.

Trent slowly sits up as he sees the open window.

INT. SMALL DINING ROOM - DAY

Andrews has placed breakfast before Norman and is pouring coffee from a silver pot.

ANDREWS

Did you sleep well, sir?

NORMAN

Yes, Andrews, thank you. I was wondering if you and Mrs. Webb might like to take a week off at some point this summer.

ANDREWS

Sir?

NORMAN

I believe Trent and I could benefit from a little privacy this summer.

ANDREWS

Mrs. Webb and I could remain and not be seen. It's a very large house, Sir. It needs tending.

Norman reflects on this a moment.

NORMAN

I suppose.

TRENT (O.S.)

(alarmed)
Dad!? Dad!?

NORMAN

Trent!?

Norman sprints from his seat and rushes from the room.

INT. THE MAIN STAIRWAY - DAY

Norman bounds up the stairs.

TRENT (O.S.)

Dad! Help!

Norman reaches the first landing and continues up the final twelve steps.

INT. TRENT'S BEDROOM - DAY

A quick KNOCK and Norman enters. The SHOWER is running as he opens the door.

He hears Trent SINGING in the shower.

TRENT
"SHE SAID I TALK TOO FAST AND
LAUGH TOO LOUD, SO I CHANGED MY
VOICE AND TONED IT DOWN.
STILL WATCHED HER LEAVE WITH SOME
OTHER GUY,
GUESS NICE JUST DOESN'T
QUALIFY..."

Norman pauses, confused.

He quietly closes the door.

INT. SMALL DINING ROOM - DAY

Norman's breakfast dish has been cleared except for the coffee. He is stoic.

FOOTSTEPS are heard on the stairs as Trent enters.

TRENT
Morning. Sorry I slept in.

He takes a seat.

TRENT (CONT'D)
Had trouble falling asleep.

Andrews enters and places a plate and a glass of juice in front of Trent.

TRENT (CONT'D)
Thank you.

Andrews nods and exits.

NORMAN
What was wrong?

TRENT
I kept hearing things. Probably
just the house... but it freaked
me out a bit.

NORMAN
I meant just now. You called for
me and you sounded agitated.

TRENT
I didn't.

NORMAN

I ran upstairs and you were in the shower.

TRENT

I didn't call you, Dad.

NORMAN

Andrews heard it as well.

TRENT

Then... something's wrong, because it wasn't me.

INT. NORMAN'S BEDROOM - DAY

Mrs. Webb makes the bed.

TRENT (O.S.)

Mrs. Webb? Can you come here for a moment?

She stops what she is doing and exits the room.

INT. TRENT'S BEDROOM - DAY

Mrs. Webb enters the empty room.

MRS. WEBB

Did you call, Master Trent?

Silence.

She goes toward the bathroom.

The door closes slowly. She stops.

A beat.

Another few steps, and she opens the door.

The bathroom is empty - a towel on the floor. She moves the door back and forth. It stops as soon as she lets go.

NORMAN (O.S.)

Mrs. Webb? Might I have a word?

A little on edge, she hurries from Trent's bedroom.

INT. NORMAN'S BEDROOM - DAY

She enters to find all the bed sheets and blankets disheveled on the floor.

MRS. WEBB
Mister Bennett?

Overcome with nerves, she rushes from the room.

INT. THE MAIN STAIRWAY - DAY

Mrs. Webb hurries down the stairs.

INT. SMALL DINING ROOM - DAY

Trent eats his breakfast as Norman gazes out the window. A shocked Mrs. Webb appears in the doorway.

Norman sees her.

NORMAN
Mrs. Webb? Is everything all
right?

She is speechless with fear as she manages a smile, and exits from the doorway.

EXT. WRAITHMORE HOUSE - DAY

Pale sunlight cuts through the mist still clinging to the hedges. The grounds are quiet. Dew sparkles on the lawn as the manor stands, still and stately, beneath a washed-out sky.

EXT. TENNIS COURT - DAY

An aging court tucked beneath a canopy of evergreens, its surface cracked and moss-dappled. Morning sun filters through the trees, casting long shadows across the net.

A bored Trent paces the court, muffled music spills from his earbuds.

He lunges into some pretend tennis swings and moves before boredom overtakes the moment.

More pacing.

Something catches his eye -- he squints to see Wraithmore House in the distance.

A figure stands in an upstairs window.

A young girl in a white dress with black hair. Her face too distant to make out.

Trent pulls the earbuds out as he continues to stare with a wrinkled brow.

He bolts off the court and runs for the house.

EXT. SLOPING FIELD - DAY

Trent races uphill across the wide, sunlit lawn -- the grand house rising ahead of him beyond the trees, the tennis court shrinking in the distance behind.

INT. FRONT DOOR - MAIN FOYER - DAY

The door bursts open as Trent flies in and races up the stairs -- not even seeing Andrews taking a newspaper down the hallway.

INT. TRENT'S BEDROOM - DAY

Trent comes to a screeching halt as he enters the room.

He checks everywhere.

Nothing.

A beat.

Defeated and out of breath, he sits on the bay window bench... and buries his face in his hands.

INT. THE KITCHEN - DAY

A warm, well-worn kitchen brimming with antique charm. Copper pans hang above a black cast-iron range, while a crystal chandelier glints over a carved wooden table.

With a vacant expression, Mrs. Webb sits beside a steaming teapot.

Andrews enters.

ANDREWS

Are you all right?

MRS. WEBB

Yes. Why do you ask?

ANDREWS

Because I've known you long enough
to know that you're not.

MRS. WEBB

It's nothing I wish to talk about.

Andrews puts his hand on the side of the teapot.

ANDREWS

This is cold.

MRS. WEBB

It wasn't when I made it.

Concerned, Andrews sits across from her.

She can't make eye contact.

MRS. WEBB (CONT'D)

You'll think I'm barmy. In fact...
I can't even explain it...

She lifts her eyes to him.

MRS. WEBB (CONT'D)

Perhaps I am.

ANDREWS

I can tell you that you are
certainly not barmy.

MRS. WEBB

I was making the bed in Mister
Bennett's room. Master Trent
called to me from his own room. I
went to see what he needed... but
he was not there. And then Mister
Bennett called me from his room...
I returned... and it was empty...
and all the sheets and blankets
were strewn about the floor.

A beat.

ANDREWS

Mister Bennett heard Master Trent
call to him from upstairs.

(MORE)

ANDREWS (CONT'D)

He went to check... and came down
as if he had seen a ghost.

Andrews holds Mrs. Webb's gaze -- no words -- just a
flicker of understanding. Fear, maybe.

INT. TRENT'S BEDROOM - DAY

Trent lies sprawled on the bed, earbuds in, muffled music
humming. His eyes are locked on the ceiling.

CLICK.

He hears it. Turns his head.

The closet door has cracked open -- just an inch.

He sits up, wary.

Slips out the earbuds.

Stares at the door.

He rises. Slow steps.

Reaches the knob. Hesitates. Then, opens it wide.

Inside -- hanging neatly from end to end -- are identical
white dresses. A dozen. Maybe more.

Trent stares, stunned.

TRENT

What the hell!?

He pulls one free. Stares at it like it might bite.

INT. THE MAIN STAIRWAY - DAY

Trent races down the stairs, the dress flaring behind him
like a white flag.

TRENT

Dad! Dad!

INT. THE LIVING ROOM - DAY

Norman sits with the newspaper as Trent bursts in, the
hanger raised -- whatever's on it hidden from view.

TRENT
How did this get in my closet!?
There's fifty of them!

Norman, unfazed.

Trent checks again -- the dress is gone.

On the hanger -- his blue suit.

NORMAN
You only have one suit, lad.

TRENT
No! No, this isn't happening! I
saw it!

He whirls and storms out, passes the table with the
framed family photo.

In it, Emilia wears *that* white dress.

NORMAN
Trent?

Norman rises, follows.

INT. THE MAIN STAIRWAY - DAY

Trent bounds up the stairs, the blue suit fluttering to
the floor behind him.

Norman hurries after.

INT. TRENT'S BEDROOM - DAY

Trent rushes to the closet -- the door is now shut.

He grabs the knob, staring at it.

Norman enters, holding the suit.

Trent, shaking, faces him.

Norman gently moves Trent's hand off the knob.

Trent steps back. Norman opens the door.

Inside: only Trent's usual clothing.

Trent drops to the bed, rattled.

TRENT

I know what I saw! You've got to believe me! It was full of dresses.

Norman, at a loss, quietly hangs the suit in the closet.

TRENT (CONT'D)

Tell me you believe me.

NORMAN

I believe... you saw what you think you saw.

TRENT

"Think?" They were there. I took one downstairs -- it was like Emilia's.

Norman eyes the sleeve of the suit he just hung.

TRENT (CONT'D)

It changed! Somehow it changed! I don't know how!

Norman sits beside him.

NORMAN

We've both been under a lot of stress... and grief.

Trent isn't buying it.

NORMAN (CONT'D)

The mind plays tricks... makes us see what we want to see --

TRENT

I don't want to see a bunch of dresses in my closet.

NORMAN

But you said it looked like one of Emilia's.

A long beat.

TRENT

Yes.

NORMAN

Could you have... imagined it?

TRENT

No.

Norman rests a hand on his shoulder.

INT. FOYER - DAY

Mrs. Webb stands at the foot of the staircase, listening.

Andrews approaches.

ANDREWS

I thought you were going to your room.

MRS. WEBB

I no sooner stepped into the hall than Master Trent ran up in a dither... and Mister Bennett close behind.

They listen to the silence above.

ANDREWS

Everything appears to have calmed down.

MRS. WEBB

Something's not right in this house.

ANDREWS

If something were not right, we would have noticed it a long time ago.

A beat.

Mrs. Webb heads for the front door.

ANDREWS (CONT'D)

Not going to your room?

MRS. WEBB

I need some fresh air.

She exits the front door.

Andrews tosses one last look up the stairs, then heads down the hallway toward the kitchen.

As he passes a tall mirror --

Julia flashes in the reflection.

A woman in white.

Still. Hollow-eyed.

Gone in a breath.

Andrews walks on, unaware.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - DAY

Norman has paused in the doorway as he exits Trent's bedroom. A glance over his shoulder to see Trent sitting at the window, looking out.

INT. LANDING PARLOR - DAY

A cozy sitting area at the top of the stairs. A vintage sofa faces a marble fireplace beneath glittering chandeliers. Sunlight spills through tall bay windows, framed by heavy gold curtains.

Norman sinks into the sofa, worry etched across his face as he stares out the window.

MRS. WEBB (O.S.)

Might I have a word, Mister
Bennett?

He startles slightly, turning to see Mrs. Webb standing at the top of the stair landing.

NORMAN

Yes, of course, Mrs. Webb.

She approaches.

NORMAN (CONT'D)

Please, sit down.

She joins him on the sofa.

NORMAN (CONT'D)

Actually, I was hoping to have a
word with you.

MRS. WEBB

Oh?

NORMAN

I'll be very direct.

She tenses, uncertain.

NORMAN (CONT'D)
Is this house haunted?

She shows no reaction.

NORMAN (CONT'D)
I've never placed much stock in
ghost stories... but certain
things have happened that defy
explanation.

She chooses her words carefully.

MRS. WEBB
I've been here five years, sir.
Not once in all that time did the
thought of a haunting enter my
mind. Until now.

Norman processes this.

NORMAN
Go on.

MRS. WEBB
I haven't seen anything, mind you,
but I've heard things.

NORMAN
What?

She hesitates.

MRS. WEBB
Voices. Don't think I'm daft --
hearing "voices in my head" and
all that. I heard them as if they
were in another room -- clear as
day.

NORMAN
What kind of voices?

A pause.

MRS. WEBB
You, sir. One of them was you. The
other was Master Trent.

NORMAN
I was probably calling him.

MRS. WEBB

No, sir, you were not.

Norman, unsettled, says nothing.

MRS. WEBB (CONT'D)

The same happened with Master Trent, sir. I can't explain it... but I hope there is some... logic behind it.

NORMAN

You and me both, Mrs. Webb. You wanted a word with me.

MRS. WEBB

Yes, sir. Is the lad all right, sir? I only ask because I saw him run up the stairs, quite upset.

(beat)

I was wondering if... he heard the voices, too.

A quiet moment.

NORMAN

Not to my knowledge.

INT. TRENT'S BEDROOM - DAY

Trent stands at the window. In the distance: the tennis court -- empty.

His eyes slide to the closet. Closed.

He steps over, opens it.

Clothes. Nothing more.

He shuts the door, troubled, and exits.

EXT. SLOPING FIELD - DAY

Trent walks toward the tennis court. Behind him, Wraithmore House rises.

In his bedroom window: a girl. White dress. Dark hair.

Watching.

He doesn't notice her.

She fades.

EXT. TENNIS COURT - DAY

Trent steps onto the court.

TRENT
I know you're here.

Silence.

TRENT (CONT'D)
I know I am not losing my mind.

He tosses a tennis ball over the net. It rolls to a stop.

TRENT (CONT'D)
Throw it back.

Nothing.

TRENT (CONT'D)
You can fill my closet with
dresses -- but you can't pick up a
tennis ball?

Still nothing.

He wheels around --

A HARSH WHISPER -- like a violent gust of wind.

WHACK!

The tennis ball smacks into his back.

He spins. Looks down -- the ball at his feet.

He scans the court -- empty.

Trent, flustered, heads toward the house.

He stops cold.

The girl stands in his bedroom window. White dress.

Face in shadow. Featureless.

She lifts an arm... and waves. Just her fingers.

Trent goes still.

He jerks his gaze back to the court -- empty.

Back to the window again --

She's gone.

INT. FRONT DOOR - MAIN FOYER - DAY

Norman enters from another room as Trent comes in from outside, agitated.

NORMAN

Trent? What's wrong?

TRENT

I want to leave, Dad. I want to go back to London. I want to go back now.

NORMAN

I signed a lease...

TRENT

Can't you break it?

A flicker of alarm crosses Norman's face.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Norman sits with the phone, taking notes.

DR. ERICSON (V.O.)

Norman, you know I care about you. What Trent is experiencing isn't madness, per se, but a kind of grief-induced perceptual distortion -- the mind filling in unbearable absences.

NORMAN

Perceptual distortion?

DR. ERICSON (V.O.)

When loss is that deep, the brain can blur the line between memory and reality, projecting loved ones almost as vividly as if they were still here.

NORMAN

I see. So what's the answer?

DR. ERICSON (V.O.)

There isn't a cure, Norman. Just patience. Stability. Routine.

(beat)

Let him talk, if he's willing. But don't challenge what he sees. That'll only isolate him further.

NORMAN

And if it's not just him seeing or hearing things? What if it's... something I'm missing? Something that isn't purely psychological?

DR. ERICSON (V.O.)

No. People in grief often look for outside explanations -- mediums, psychics, "sensitives."

(beat)

You were on a talk show with a famous one once, weren't you?

NORMAN

Veronica Lynch, yes. I don't put any stock in that kind of thing.

DR. ERICSON (V.O.)

Shared delusions are rare, Norman. Very rare. They usually require extreme psychological dependency or isolation. You... are... isolated?

NORMAN

We're in the countryside, not on the moon. The phones work. There's Wi-Fi. I wouldn't call that isolation.

DR. ERICSON (V.O.)

It's not about connectivity -- it's about environment. A city apartment keeps the mind engaged. Background noise, casual interactions, structure...

(beat)

A large, unfamiliar house surrounded by silence? That is isolation -- especially for someone deep in grief.

Brief pause.

DR. ERICSON (V.O.)
 Be careful what conclusions you
 draw. The mind wants patterns.
 It'll build them, even from
 shadows.

Another pause.

DR. ERICSON (V.O.)
 Patience. Stability. Routine.

Norman takes it all in -- expression blank.

INT. OUTSIDE TRENT'S BEDROOM - DAY

Norman stops at the door, hand raised to knock.

A faint giggle inside.

NORMAN
 Trent?

EMILIA (O.S.)
 (whisper)
 Shhhh.
 (pause)
 He's coming.

Norman opens the door. No one is there.

He checks the closet. Nothing. Crosses to the window --
 sees Trent rounding the house outside.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - DAY

Norman steps out and starts toward the stairs.

JULIA (O.S.)
 Leave him alone.

Norman turns - no one.

NORMAN
 Hello?

Silence.

A voice from another room --

JULIA (O.S.)
 Don't.

Norman snaps around quickly.

A bedroom door opens at the far end of the hall.

INT. THE BLUE BEDROOM - DAY

Decorated in plush blue and white, Mrs. Webb hums to herself as she dusts the dresser.

Norman appears.

NORMAN

Mrs. Webb?

MRS. WEBB

Mister Bennett?

NORMAN

Did you call out?

MRS. WEBB

Call out, sir?

NORMAN

Did you say, "Leave him alone?"

MRS. WEBB

Leave who alone, sir? No, it was not I.

She studies him.

MRS. WEBB (CONT'D)

You heard it too... was it Master Trent?

NORMAN

Female.

A pause.

MRS. WEBB

The voices I heard... sounded like you and Master Trent.

EXT. GARDEN - DAY

A formal garden of low, manicured hedges surrounds a weathered stone fountain. Statues line the edges like quiet sentries.

TRENT

I lied.

Norman studies him.

NORMAN

What made you change your mind?

TRENT

My mind didn't change. I never wanted to leave.

NORMAN

So you're feeling better?

TRENT

When was I not?

NORMAN

The dresses in your closet?

TRENT

Oh, that.

(smiles)

I made it all up. For fun.

NORMAN

Fun.

TRENT

A joke.

(beat)

That's all.

NORMAN

So... we stay?

TRENT

I love it here. I'd hate to leave.

Trent springs up.

TRENT (CONT'D)

I'm going down to the tennis court!

Trent runs off.

TRENT (CONT'D)

See you later!

Norman watches him go, troubled.

INT. THE KITCHEN - DAY

Andrews sits at the table polishing silverware -- meticulous, methodical.

Norman enters.

ANDREWS

Excuse me, sir. Might I get you something?

NORMAN

I thought I'd have some tea. I'll make it.

Norman crosses to the counter and begins filling the kettle. Andrews pauses mid-polish.

ANDREWS

Did Master Trent find you, sir?

NORMAN

Yes, I just spoke with him outside.

Andrews tenses.

NORMAN (CONT'D)

Something wrong?

ANDREWS

When did you speak with him, if you don't mind my asking, sir?

NORMAN

Just now.

Andrews rises slowly. Uneasy.

ANDREWS

Master Trent is not here, sir.

NORMAN

What do you mean?

ANDREWS

Mrs. Webb was headed into the village for groceries. Master Trent wished to go with her and sought you out for permission.

Norman looks at him -- thrown.

ANDREWS (CONT'D)

He saw you on an important call
and didn't want to interrupt. He
assumed you wouldn't mind... and
went.

NORMAN

Mrs. Webb... is upstairs. Dusting
the blue bedroom.

ANDREWS

No, sir. Today is Thursday --
grocery day. Dusting is Monday.

Norman doesn't answer.

His hand quietly tightens on the edge of the counter.

INT. THE BLUE BEDROOM - DAY

Norman steps inside. Empty.

He wipes a finger across the dresser -- dust.

Sits on the bed, lifeless.

EXT. WRAITHMORE HOUSE - NIGHT

The manor looms under a slate sky. A few windows glow --
the only light for miles.

NORMAN (V.O.)

How was your trip into the village
today?

INT. SMALL DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Norman and Trent sit at a small, elegantly set table.

Andrews places their plates before them, quiet as ever.

TRENT

Uneventful. It's very small.

NORMAN

Villages usually are.

He waits for Andrews to exit.

NORMAN (CONT'D)

You... still want to leave?

TRENT

Yes.

Norman takes that in.

NORMAN

When you left today...

(beat)

before you left... did we speak?

TRENT

No.

Norman sips from his wine glass.

TRENT (CONT'D)

You were on the phone.

NORMAN

What about the garden?

TRENT

What do you mean?

NORMAN

You weren't in the garden?

TRENT

Not today.

NORMAN

There's an explanation for everything... they say.

TRENT

What have you seen?

Norman doesn't answer.

TRENT (CONT'D)

White dresses in the closet... a girl in the window... voices... talking... no one there.

(beat)

Is that what you have seen?

NORMAN

Trent --

TRENT

(quietly)

We need to leave here. The sooner, the better.

INT. NORMAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Moonlight spills across the bed. Norman sleeps.

From somewhere below -- a piano begins to play.

SCHEHERAZADE: MOVEMENT III.

Soft at first. Precise.

Norman stirs... then again.

He wakes. Listens. Eyes adjust to the dark.

The MUSIC continues, rich and fluid.

He rises, slips into his robe and slippers, and opens the bedroom door.

The melody -- "THE YOUNG PRINCE AND THE YOUNG PRINCESS" grows clearer. Played with stunning precision.

EXT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Norman steps into the corridor. Moves slowly.

At the top of the stairs, he stops -- listening.

The MUSIC swells.

He descends, careful and drawn.

INT. THE MUSIC ROOM - NIGHT

A dim lamp casts long shadows across the room.

Norman hesitates in the archway.

At the piano sits Trent -- back turned, dressed in the blue suit. Hands move like a concert pianist's -- flawless and fluid.

Norman steps forward, uneasy.

He passes the family photo: Trent in the blue suit, Julia and Emilia in white, himself in gray.

He circles around... sees the boy's face.

Trent's voice is measured. Controlled.

TRENT

I hope I didn't wake you, Father.

NORMAN

You did... you're in that suit again.

TRENT

Mm-hm.

(playing)

One should always dress for Scheherazade.

He continues -- flowing -- unnerving.

TRENT (CONT'D)

Do you remember when we saw Lang Lang at the Royal Albert?

NORMAN

Yes...

The elegance he plays with only deepens the unease.

TRENT

I believe this is the tempo he used... slow... like breathing...

Norman searches for footing.

NORMAN

That was a long time ago, Trent.

TRENT

I remember every detail.

(beat)

I can pull it up from the dead parts of my mind. Resurrection, as it were.

(beat)

Do you remember Mother that night... in her white dress?

NORMAN

She didn't wear a white dress that evening.

Trent glances sidelong.

TRENT

I could have sworn.

NORMAN

You play... quite well.

TRENT

What can I say? It's a gift.

Norman walks to the brandy decanter.

Pours. Drinks.

The piano music stops.

His head darts back --

No sign of Trent.

Gone.

INT. THE MAIN STAIRWAY - NIGHT

Norman hurries up the stairs.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

He rushes to Trent's door -- flings it open --

INT. TRENT'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Trent lies sound asleep. Pajamas on.

Norman stares. Then rips open the closet --

Trent's blue suit hangs where it should.

Norman slowly backs out. Shuts the door.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

He slumps against the wall.

ANDREWS (O.S.)

Is everything all right, Sir?

Norman turns. Mrs. Webb and Andrews approach, both in robes, concerned.

NORMAN

You heard it?

MRS. WEBB

Heard what, Sir?

NORMAN
The piano?

ANDREWS
Piano?

MRS. WEBB
I didn't hear a thing.

NORMAN
Then why are you up?

ANDREWS
I heard you call me, Sir.

MRS. WEBB
There was such panic in your
voice.

NORMAN
I didn't call you!

ANDREWS
Sir -- it was quite clear.

NORMAN
I was downstairs. Trent was
playing the piano.

TRENT (O.S.)
What's the shouting about?

Trent steps out of his room, sleepy-eyed.

Mrs. Webb and Andrews share a glance.

Norman -- trapped in something he can't explain.

INT. THE KITCHEN - MORNING

Mrs. Webb plates breakfast. Andrews waits nearby.

They don't speak. Don't look at each other.

Something's shifted -- a silent fracture.

INT. SMALL DINING ROOM - MORNING

Norman and Trent sit across from one another.

Neither speaks.

Empty eyes. No appetite.

The only sound: the relentless TICK of the clock.

Norman stares into his coffee cup.

Trent stares only at him.

Andrews enters with the plates.

ANDREWS

Will there be anything else, Sir?

Nothing.

Andrews waits -- then quietly exits.

No one moves.

INT. THE LIVING ROOM - DAY

Norman sits facing the fireplace.

A whiskey glass in hand -- full. He takes a long drink.
No flinch.

The TICKING CLOCK persists.

EXT. GARDEN - DAY

Trent sits alone on the covered bench.

Lost in thought.

His cell phone rings.

He lifts it to his ear -- says nothing.

JULIA (V.O.)

Trent?

A long pause.

JULIA (V.O.)

Trent, darling. It's Mother.

His eyes widen.

INT. THE KITCHEN - DAY

Mrs. Webb sits at the table, a cup of tea in hand.

A teapot rests before her, cloaked in a cozy warmer.

Andrews enters.

MRS. WEBB

Take a cup -- the pot is full.

He sidesteps the offer and joins her at the table.

MRS. WEBB (CONT'D)

Still nothing?

ANDREWS

Not a word since last night.
Didn't touch his breakfast.
Neither of them did.

MRS. WEBB

I think he's gone starkers,
Andrews. What's he doing now?

ANDREWS

Drinking.

MRS. WEBB

The other day I heard his voice,
and Master Trent's... but they
were not there... and now with the
piano...

ANDREWS

He must have dreamt it. The house
isn't haunted, Mrs. Webb.

MRS. WEBB

How do we know?

ANDREWS

In all the years we've been here --
not a single boo or a levitating
lamp. The house is not haunted.

MRS. WEBB

I'm not barmy. Something in this
house is not right.

INT. TRENT'S BEDROOM - DAY

Norman enters, a whiskey glass in hand. His eyes sweep
the room -- aimless, searching.

He drifts to the window. Looks out.

He sees a woman in a long white gown on the tennis court.

Trent is halfway across the field, moving toward her.

Norman jolts to life.

The glass drops -- shatters.

He bolts for the door.

EXT. TENNIS COURT - DAY

Trent approaches the court.

At the far end stands Julia Bennett, dressed in white.
Still. Expressionless.

He stops. Eyes welling.

TRENT
Mom?

JULIA
Trent.

Her arms open to him.

TRENT
Mom... how are you... here?

JULIA
I want to hold you.

He steps onto the court.

TRENT
You're not dead?

Julia smiles faintly -- arms still outstretched.

Another step -- then, a hand grabs his shoulder.

Trent snaps his head around to see Norman behind him,
eyes locked on the woman ahead.

NORMAN
(quietly)
Wait here.

Julia lowers her arms.

NORMAN (CONT'D)
Julia...

He steps toward her -- slow, cautious.

Her face remains unreadable as he nears the right side of the net.

A quick glance back at Trent... and Julia is gone.

He stops.

TRENT

She just -- wasn't there anymore.

NORMAN

Are you all right?

TRENT

She called me on my phone... she told me to meet her here...

Norman scans the court -- tense, searching. Nothing.

INT. NORMAN'S BEDROOM - DAY

Norman sits alone -- phone to his ear.

VERONICA (V.O.)

Hello?

NORMAN

Is this Veronica Lynch?

VERONICA (V.O.)

Yes. Who is this?

NORMAN

This is Norman Bennett. We were both guests on *London Tonight* a few months ago.

INT. VERONICA'S APARTMENT - DAY

A warm, bohemian flat cluttered with books, plants, and a vintage sofa beneath a lofted bed.

VERONICA LYNCH (40s), beautiful in an off-center way, calm and intuitive, as if she listens to more than the room around her.

VERONICA

Oh! Yes, Mister Bennett. Of course, I remember you.

(MORE)

VERONICA (CONT'D)
(with a smile)
The skeptic.

NORMAN (V.O.)
Yes... that's correct, Miss Lynch.

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION - NORMAN/VERONICA.

NORMAN
I no longer hold that opinion.

VERONICA
What changed your mind?

NORMAN
Wraithmore House.

VERONICA
Sounds ominous.

NORMAN
I need some help, and I was hoping
that... I could hire you to find
out what's going on.

VERONICA
What have you been experiencing?

A long pause.

NORMAN
I saw my wife. My dead wife.

VERONICA
You saw her clearly? In the room
with you?

NORMAN
She was standing in front of me.
And suddenly she wasn't.

VERONICA
Has there been a history of
hauntings in the house?

NORMAN
I'm told no.

VERONICA
Does it always happen at the same
time of day or night?

NORMAN

It happens both day and night. It doesn't seem to be on a schedule.

VERONICA

I understand.

EXT. WINDING ROAD - LATE AFTERNOON

A car snakes through a narrow country road, flanked by crumbling stone walls and steep, windswept hills.

VERONICA (V.O.)

Has anyone else experienced the same thing?

NORMAN (V.O.)

My son... and our housekeeper.

A beat.

VERONICA (V.O.)

I'll leave now and should be there tonight. What's your address?

EXT. WRAITHMORE HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

Golden sunlight drapes the grounds of Wraithmore. Long shadows stretch across the clipped lawns and winding paths. Beyond the house, the tennis court sits unused -- still, expectant.

INT. THE KITCHEN - LATE AFTERNOON

Mrs. Webb tends the stove as Norman enters.

NORMAN

Mrs. Webb, I hate to spring this on you so late, but there will be three for dinner.

She eyes him.

NORMAN (CONT'D)

We have a guest arriving. She'll be staying the night. Could she have the Blue Bedroom?

Her politeness collapses like a pulled rug.

MRS. WEBB
Go fuck yourself.

She heads out through the rear door, leaving Norman frozen in place.

Andrews enters behind him.

ANDREWS
Excuse me, Sir.

He hurries to the pot on the stove.

ANDREWS (CONT'D)
Ah! Good, it hasn't boiled over!
(pause)
It's the only thing I cook around here. My late mother's Irish Stew.

NORMAN
Mrs. Webb --

ANDREWS
I believe she's upstairs, Sir, folding the laundry.

Norman stares at him.

NORMAN
She was just here.

Andrews studies him -- gently puzzled.

INT. THE MAIN STAIRWAY - LATE AFTERNOON

Norman arrives as Mrs. Webb descends with a laundry basket in her arms.

MRS. WEBB
All the bed linen has been changed, Sir.

Norman holds it together as best he can.

She reaches the bottom step -- polite, but something rings off-key.

MRS. WEBB (CONT'D)
My sister has taken poorly, Sir, and I was hoping to get some time away.

A beat.

NORMAN

Is that the real reason?

Her expression tightens -- the truth slipping through.

MRS. WEBB

No, Sir.

NORMAN

Then what is?

MRS. WEBB

It's this house. I don't think I
can stay here any longer.

A longer beat.

NORMAN

(barely contained)

I understand.

She shifts her gaze, steps past him.

Norman calls after her:

NORMAN (CONT'D)

Would you tell Andrews there will
be three for dinner tonight?

She keeps walking.

NORMAN (CONT'D)

And that we'll need the blue
bedroom prepared.

MRS. WEBB

Yes, Sir.

Norman watches as she continues on in silence.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

The family photo lies face down on the floor.

Norman enters just as Trent kneels to pick it up.

He turns the frame -- the glass is webbed with cracks.

Norman takes it, troubled.

NORMAN

We'll replace the glass.

He sets it back on the table. Trent notices the other small knick-knacks -- perfectly undisturbed.

TRENT
Nothing else fell.

Norman doesn't respond.

He gestures Trent to the sofa.

They sit.

NORMAN
We're going to have a visitor.

TRENT
Who?

NORMAN
She's going to find out what's happening in this house... why we're seeing and hearing things.

TRENT
How?

NORMAN
She's what's called a "sensitive."

TRENT
Easily offended?

NORMAN
No. She can pick up on spiritual energies and emotions most people can't.

TRENT
She'll know why we saw Mother... and the girl in the window?

NORMAN
Did the girl in the window look like Emilia?

TRENT
It was too far away. But it looked like Emilia's dress. The dress in that photograph.

A voice calls from upstairs --

JULIA (O.S.)
Norman?

Trent grasps Norman's arm -- their eyes locked in the direction of the voice.

EMILIA (O.S.)

Trent -- tell Dad Mom wants to see him.

Trent's grip tightens.

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

Answer me, Trent -- or do you still want me to buzz off? Isn't death enough for you?

Tears spill down Trent's face.

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

Do you still want me to buzz off!?

TRENT

(crying out)

I didn't mean it! I didn't mean to say that!

Norman pulls him close.

NORMAN

Stay here. Don't move.

TRENT

Dad -- don't go up there!

Norman stands.

His hands firm on Trent's shoulders.

NORMAN

Stay here. Understand?

Trent nods.

Norman walks out -- focused. Determined.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - LATE AFTERNOON

Norman reaches the landing.

At the far end -- Julia slips into the Blue Bedroom.

He bolts after her.

INT. THE BLUE BEDROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

He bursts in -- scanning every corner.

Empty.

JULIA (O.S.)

You invited some tart to stay
under the same roof as you? The
worms haven't even started eating
my body yet.

Rage flashes across Norman's face.

A HEAVY THUD from downstairs.

Norman snaps toward the sound.

He rushes out.

INT. THE LIVING ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

Norman finds Trent, unconscious on the floor -- A nearby
lamp is toppled -- still rocking.

NORMAN

Oh, God!

He drops to his knees, frantic.

NORMAN (CONT'D)

Trent!

With effort, Trent stirs, opens his eyes.

TRENT

I must have fainted... I felt
strange and... I don't know what
happened.

NORMAN

It's all right. It's going to be
all right.

EXT. WRAITHMORE DRIVEWAY - DUSK

The sun dips low as Veronica's car rolls out of the
trees. Wraithmore House looms in the distance -- dark,
immense, waiting.

The car stops.

Veronica steps out.
 Walks to the front of her car.
 She stares at the house.
 From the woods -- a faint, demonic LAUGH.
 She listens... expression unreadable.
 Another sound --
 the laugh sours into a low, throaty GROWL.
 She doesn't flinch.

EXT. WRAITHMORE HOUSE - DUSK

Veronica rings the bell. Waits.
 She observes the grounds -- wide, silent, and empty.
 The tennis court sits far in the distance, half-lost in
 the dimming light.
 The door opens.

VERONICA
 Hello. I'm here to see Mister
 Bennett.

ANDREWS
 Miss Lynch?

VERONICA
 Yes.

ANDREWS
 Won't you come in?

INT. FRONT DOOR - MAIN FOYER - DUSK

Veronica steps inside.
 A subtle shift in her posture -- alert, attuned.
 Andrews gestures with practiced courtesy.

ANDREWS
 The living room is this way, Miss
 Lynch. May I bring you some tea?

No response.

Her eyes are already drifting -- down a side hallway...
to a closed door.

She walks slowly toward it.

ANDREWS (CONT'D)

Miss Lynch?

She reaches for the knob... and opens the door.

Wooden steps disappear into pitch black.

She reaches for the pull cord.

Tugs.

Nothing.

She takes out her phone, clicks on the flashlight, and
starts down the creaking steps, brushing past cobwebs.

INT. BASEMENT - DUSK

She reaches the bottom step.

Her light sweeps across the space -- a graveyard of
draped furniture and stacked boxes.

She moves deeper into the gloom.

In the far corner -- a figure.

Wearing Trent's blue suit.

It resembles him... almost.

The face is pale and hollow. The eyes are red, slit like
a reptile's. The ears taper to subtle points.

It smiles -- teeth sharp and yellow.

They stare at each other.

Neither moves.

The silence holds.

A loud SNAP from the stairs.

NORMAN (O.S.)

Miss Lynch!?

Veronica jolts, dropping her phone.

She scrambles to pick it up -- swings the light toward the corner.

The figure is gone.

She spins, scanning every corner.

Empty.

NORMAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Are you all right?

FOOTSTEPS on the stairs -- slow, heavy.

Veronica backs away from the corner until her heel touches the bottom step.

She turns --

Norman stands above her.

NORMAN (CONT'D)
I was just --

She lifts a hand -- silencing him.

INT. MAIN FOYER - NIGHT

Veronica steps out of the basement. Norman follows.

She says nothing -- her attention fixed somewhere ahead, already moving.

INT. THE MAIN STAIRWAY - NIGHT

Veronica ascends. Measured. Silent.

Norman, a few steps behind -- watches her, unsure.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Veronica moves to Trent's door and knocks -- three soft, deliberate taps.

Norman lingers behind her, hands clasped, uncertain.

A beat.

Trent opens it -- guarded but polite.

NORMAN

Trent... this is Miss Lynch.

Trent manages a small smile.

She places a hand on his shoulder, closes her eyes.

A quiet beat.

Veronica removes her hand.

Trent steps aside.

She enters.

INT. TRENT'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Veronica moves with quiet intent, noticing everything.

Her attention settles on the closet.

She opens the door.

Finds the sleeve of the blue suit.

Lifts it. Studies it.

A long beat.

She hangs it back.

Closes the door.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Veronica and Norman exit. Norman closes the door gently.

VERONICA

You've heard voices... and seen things?

NORMAN

My late wife.

Her eyes drift toward the end of the hallway.

A beat.

Her expression softens.

VERONICA

Your butler mentioned tea?

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Andrews pours tea. Norman sits rigid on the sofa.

Veronica holds the fractured family photo, careful with the broken glass.

NORMAN

It fell... I don't know how.

VERONICA

It was pushed.

NORMAN

How do you know?

VERONICA

It carries a lot of energy.

She studies Trent's face in the photo.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

The blue suit upstairs. That was his.

NORMAN

Yes.

VERONICA

And the same suit he once insisted was... a dress.

NORMAN

He swore it was.

VERONICA

And Julia -- your wife -- when she appeared...

(holds photo)

...she wore this?

NORMAN

She was.

VERONICA

Was she buried in it?

He hesitates.

NORMAN

No. She wasn't.

Andrews slips out.

Veronica lowers the photo.

NORMAN (CONT'D)
There was something else.

VERONICA
Go on.

NORMAN
Last night... I woke to the piano
playing. It was Trent.

A beat.

NORMAN (CONT'D)
He's never touched a piano.

VERONICA
And he played like a maestro.

Another beat.

NORMAN
Yes.

Veronica sits beside him.

VERONICA
And when he was playing the piano,
he was wearing his blue suit.

NORMAN
He was.

VERONICA
The suit in the photograph.

NORMAN
Miss Lynch... may I call you
Veronica?

VERONICA
Of course.

NORMAN
Do you have any idea what the hell
is going on here?

She lifts the teacup -- steady, calm.

VERONICA
Yes.
(beat)
You have a Mimic.

NORMAN

A what?

VERONICA

A Mimic.

NORMAN

What's a Mimic?

VERONICA

It's not a ghost. Or a spirit.
Something worse.

NORMAN

What does that mean?

VERONICA

It doesn't haunt. It watches.
Studies you. Learns where your
weak points are.

(beat)

Then it wears the people we love
like a mask.

NORMAN

(whispers)

What?

VERONICA

It's not in the walls, Norman.
It's in the memories. In the
cracks. I think it's attached to
Trent.

NORMAN

Attached how?

VERONICA

It copies from memory at first --
a photograph, a moment. Old
clothes. Old faces. But once it
decides to replace someone... it
becomes them completely. Clothes,
voice -- everything.

A beat.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

It doesn't understand life -- only
the echo of it.

NORMAN

What does it want?

VERONICA

To stop pretending. To take his place.

Norman rises. Moves to the window, unnerved.

NORMAN

It's used my face. Mrs. Webb's.

VERONICA

It wears whoever opens the door. Grief makes us generous.

NORMAN

You said once it decides to replace someone... it becomes them completely?

VERONICA

Yes.

NORMAN

How?

Veronica hesitates.

VERONICA

For the copy to live... the original has to die.

Norman falters... regroupes.

NORMAN

How do we kill it?

VERONICA

You don't. You corner it. Expose the lie it hides behind. Then it fights.

NORMAN

And we fight back -- how?

VERONICA

By telling the truth. Again and again.

TRENT (O.S.)

You're going to die, you know.

They turn.

Trent -- in the blue suit -- stands in the archway. Still. Calm.

TRENT (CONT'D)

You told him my little secret...
or at least, as much as you know.

VERONICA

You're not Trent.

TRENT

Silly bitch. Try harder.
(to Norman)
Dad, could you not have hired
someone competent?

NORMAN

Don't call me Dad.

TRENT

You hurt my feelings.

EMILIA (O.S.)

Daddy, don't listen to him.

Emilia sits on the sofa, in her white dress.

A glance back -- Trent is gone.

EMILIA (CONT'D)

After all, he told me to buzz off.

VERONICA

Nice trick. What else?

EMILIA

I can do a lot more. But be
careful what you wish for.

MRS. WEBB (O.S.)

It might come true.

Mrs. Webb now stands where Trent had been.

Emilia has vanished.

MRS. WEBB (CONT'D)

Who will be doing the actual
cooking? Me, or Mrs. Webb? You
can't taste arsenic, you know.

A piano begins -- the first soft notes of SCHEHERAZADE.

INT. THE MUSIC ROOM - NIGHT

Norman and Veronica enter fast, stopping dead in the doorway.

The piano finishes the phrase --

the last two notes play themselves, hanging in the air...

Silence.

The keyboard is motionless.

No one sits at the bench.

A long, unsteady beat.

VERONICA
 (more shaken than she
 wants him to see)
 That's... not mimicry. That's
 intention.

Norman doesn't respond -- he stares at the piano.

VERONICA (CONT'D)
 You said it appeared as Trent.
 But Trent doesn't play.

NORMAN
 No.
 (beat)
 I do.

From somewhere deep in the house -- Emilia LAUGHS.

Sharp. Cruel. Childlike.

INT. THE MAIN DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Norman, Veronica, Trent sit at the long table.

TRENT
 A Mimic.

VERONICA
 Remember -- it's not real. And you
 have to tell it so.

TRENT
 The girl in the window... the
 dresses... Mom....

VERONICA

Illusions.

The doors open.

Andrews enters with two bowls.

Mrs. Webb follows with the third -- cheerful, composed.

She sets Norman's bowl down, smiling too wide.

MRS. WEBB

Lobster bisque. My own special
recipe. I hope you all enjoy it.

They exit.

Trent lifts his spoon.

NORMAN

Don't eat that.

Trent pauses, mid-motion.

NORMAN (CONT'D)

Have a roll instead.

EXT. WRAITHMORE HOUSE - NIGHT

The manor looms in silence, its windows dim beneath a
cloud-streaked moon.

INT. TRENT'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Trent lies on the bed, fully dressed.

Music low in his earbuds.

He stares at the ceiling, somewhere else entirely.

After a moment, he slips the earbuds out.

Sits up. Listens.

He moves to the window.

Outside -- moonlight spills across the hills and the
tennis court below.

Still. Barren.

His gaze lingers... scanning the dark.

He reaches up --

CLICK.

-- locks the window.

Then pulls the curtains shut.

A glance toward the closet.

He crosses the room and opens it.

Leaves it open.

Back across the room -- he locks the bedroom door.

CLICK.

He pauses. Scans the room once more.

Satisfied, he returns to bed, pops his earbuds back in.

The faint thump of music bleeds into the silence.

CLICK.

The bedroom door unlocks.

It opens.

In the mirror -- Trent sees it.

He jerks upright, yanks out an earbud --

Emilia stands in the doorway.

Her eyes are jet black. Her white dress matches the one in the photograph.

She smiles.

EMILIA

Hello, Trent.

He barely breathes.

Emilia steps inside.

The door swings shut behind her.

CLICK.

It locks.

She glides forward -- smooth, deliberate.

EMILIA (CONT'D)
Want to go outside? I do.

TRENT
You're not real. I don't believe
in you! You're not real!

EMILIA
You see me, don't you? Of course,
I'm real.

She lifts a hand.

Behind her, the curtains part.

CLICK.

The window latch unlocks.

The window slides open.

EMILIA (CONT'D)
It's not that high. We can walk on
the ledge.

There is nothing human in her eyes.

Trent slowly rises.

Takes a hesitant step toward her. Then another.

TRENT
You were always afraid of heights.

EMILIA
Not anymore.

She reaches out her hand -- almost tender.

Trent reaches for it --

-- and charges out of the room.

INT. THE MAIN STAIRWAY - NIGHT

Trent barrels down the steps.

TRENT
Dad! She's in my room!

He hits the first landing -- Emilia waits.

Before he can react, she shoves him.

THUMP!

He slams onto the stairs.

NORMAN (O.S.)

Trent!

Norman and Veronica rush toward him.

Emilia -- gone.

Trent sits up on the step, breath ragged. Norman kneels beside him.

NORMAN (CONT'D)

Are you hurt?

TRENT

Emilia -- she tried to make me go outside my window... and then she pushed me...

VERONICA

I'll go. Take him downstairs.

She moves past them, already heading up.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Veronica reaches Trent's door --

BANG!

It slams shut in her face!

She grabs the knob, rattles it -- locked.

Won't budge.

She lets go.

A beat.

The door CREAKS open on its own.

She stops in the doorway, gathers herself, then moves in.

INT. TRENT'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Emilia stands at the open window, humming a lullaby.

Her features have shifted -- face hollowed, skin tight, ears subtly pointed.

VERONICA

You must leave this house. You must leave Trent.

Emilia hums on -- untouched.

Veronica inches forward.

EMILIA

Think, little lady.

Veronica stops suddenly.

EMILIA (CONT'D)

You don't even understand what I am.

VERONICA

You're nothing but a parasite wearing skin.

(beat)

I deny you. You're not real.

Emilia smiles -- slow and sharp.

EMILIA

Fear is truth.

VERONICA

I don't fear you!

EMILIA

Then stop shaking.

Emilia chuckles.

VERONICA

I deny you! Deny you!

EMILIA

You deny me?

(smiles)

Let's put that to the test.

Emilia tilts her head, almost curious.

A chair lifts behind Veronica -- floats for a split second --

-- and hurls across the room.

Veronica dives -- it clips her hard and she CRASHES to the floor.

She scrambles upright --

the Mimic is gone.

INT. THE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Trent and Norman sit on the sofa. Concerned, Trent glances at his father.

TRENT

Did you hear that thud?

NORMAN

Wait here.

Norman springs up and rushes out.

INT. THE MAIN STAIRWAY - NIGHT

Norman takes the stairs two at a time.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

He reaches Trent's door -- sees Veronica on the floor inside. She sees him.

He starts toward her --

A chair lifts and hurtles toward the door --

The door SLAMS shut before impact --

THUD!

The chair smashes against the other side.

NORMAN

Veronica!

Norman grabs the handle -- locked.

He pounds with both fists.

NORMAN (CONT'D)

Veronica! Can you open the door?

JULIA (O.S.)

Norman, darling.

He draws a breath and glances back.

Julia waits at the end of the hallway.

Emotionless. Tranquil.

NORMAN

Get the hell out of here.

JULIA

What?

She glides forward, arms outstretched.

JULIA (CONT'D)

Come here, baby...

NORMAN

You're not my wife. She's dead.
You're a demon. You're nothing!
Nothing!

JULIA

How can you say that? Look at me.
Flesh and blood. I want to hold
you.

Norman backs away.

NORMAN

You don't scare me.

JULIA

I think I do.

NORMAN

Don't confuse being scared with
being bloody furious!

Julia stops.

Norman now stands at the top of the stairs.

NORMAN (CONT'D)

You're a joke! Do your demon
bullshit somewhere else! Go where
they'll be afraid! You're nothing
but a freeloader!

Julia's eyes flare red.

She surges forward -- SLAMS into him.

Norman goes tumbling down the stairs.

A brutal fall.

THUD!

Trent's door bursts open.

Veronica rushes out -- hallway empty.

She glances down -- sees Norman motionless at the bottom.

Trent is already at his side.

She hurries down after them.

INT. THE MAIN STAIRWAY - FLOOR LEVEL - NIGHT

Trent kneels beside Norman, gently shaking him.

Andrews arrives.

ANDREWS

Oh, my God!

TRENT

Call an ambulance! Hurry!

Andrews rushes out.

Veronica drops beside Norman, checking pulse and breath.

INT. THE KITCHEN - NIGHT

Andrews races in -- reaches for the phone.

NORMAN (O.S.)

Don't even think of it.

He locks up.

Norman stands in his gray suit -- eyes dead -- a knife to Mrs. Webb's throat.

Stunned -- Andrews points in the direction of the stairs.

ANDREWS

You're...

NORMAN

Says who?

ANDREWS

Let her go!

A flick of Norman's arm --

The knife jets out of his hand and across the room --

THWACK!

It buries halfway into Andrews' shoulder.

He gasps --

Norman raises a hand... and shoves toward Andrews.

The blade drives deeper -- all the way to the hilt.

Andrews screams, stumbles and collapses as blood pours from the wound.

In an instant -- Norman vanishes.

Mrs. Webb drops to her knees beside Andrews, hands scrambling to stanch the bleeding.

INT. THE MAIN STAIRWAY - NIGHT

Norman still lies unconscious at the bottom.

TRENT

Dad, please! Wake up!

Veronica calls out:

VERONICA

Andrews! Did you get the ambulance!?

Silence.

TRENT

I'll go see --

VERONICA

Trent -- wait --

But he's already gone.

INT. THE KITCHEN - NIGHT

Trent bursts through the door.

No one is there.

Blood smears lead to the rear door.

He reaches it only to see taillights disappearing down the drive.

TRENT

Wait! Stop!

He grabs the kitchen phone.

Dead.

Pulls out his cell.

Checks the screen.

TRENT (CONT'D)

I just charged you!

INT. THE MAIN STAIRWAY - NIGHT

Trent rushes back.

TRENT

House phone is dead. My cell, too!
Mrs. Webb and Andrews left!

VERONICA

Left!?

TRENT

Drove off. There's blood
everywhere.

VERONICA

Trent, get my purse -- living room
table.

Trent takes off.

From above --

Emilia LAUGHS.

Veronica raises her eyes.

Emilia sits at the top of the stairs.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

It's not working. We don't fear
you!

EMILIA

Yes, you do... because I'm getting
stronger.

Trent returns with the purse. Veronica grabs it -- digs out her phone --

Dead.

TRENT
How can they all be dead!?

VERONICA
It's draining energy from them.

Norman stirs... opens his eyes.

TRENT
Dad!

NORMAN
Trent... are you all right?

TRENT
I'm fine. You fell!

Norman manages a weak smile.

NORMAN
Just got the wind knocked out of me.

JULIA (O.S.)
Norman. You tripped. How clumsy.

Julia stands at the top of the stairs.

JULIA (CONT'D)
Come here. I need you, darling.

Norman stares up at the Mimic.

A beat.

NORMAN
Veronica, take Trent. Get the car started.

VERONICA
Norman --

NORMAN
You said it was attached to him. I want him out of here while I deal with this thing.

JULIA
"Thing?" Norman, really.

VERONICA
What can you do!?

NORMAN
Just go. Now.

TRENT
Dad, I won't leave you --

NORMAN
Please. We'll get out. All of us.

JULIA
Yes, all of us.

Norman glares at Julia.

NORMAN
Veronica -- now.

She grabs Trent and pulls him toward the door.

Norman waits...

He hears it open -- then close.

Julia vanishes.

Norman rises, starts up the stairs -- slow.

Emilia appears. Smiling.

EMILIA
Daddy! Come play with me.

NORMAN
No... I'm going to kill you.

Emilia LAUGHS -- her voice splitting into something low and guttural.

NORMAN (CONT'D)
There you are. The real you.
Something ugly. My daughter was
beautiful. Kind.

She disappears.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

All the doors stand open.

Norman steps forward --

BANG! BANG! BANG!

They SLAM shut in sequence.

BANG! BANG! BANG!

Norman stops short.

At the end -- his bedroom door CREAKS open.

Norman walks toward it -- unwavering.

INT. NORMAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Julia lies on the bed in a seductive pose -- wearing the white dress from the photo.

Norman enters.

NORMAN

Couldn't you have found something sexier?

She says nothing.

NORMAN (CONT'D)

You can only wear what you've seen her in.

JULIA

Come on, baby. One last screw for the road.

Norman's expression turns to steel.

NORMAN

That's where you fail. My wife had class. You're nothing. Just a piece of shit.

The door SLAMS shut --

BANG!

Julia now stands beside the bed, eyes glowing red, ears pointed, teeth jagged.

JULIA

Big, brave actor! This isn't a play! You're going to die.

Norman grabs the doorknob --

A hand clamps his arm.

He spins --

Emilia stands next to him, her face flickering with demonic distortions.

EMILIA

Please, don't leave me, Daddy! I love you! How can you leave me in here with her? Please, Daddy!

Norman SHOVES her back.

Her mouth opens wide -- rows of jagged teeth.

She SCREECHES.

Norman hauls back and punches her across the face -- she crashes into the wall.

Norman yanks the door open and runs.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

He slams the door behind him and heads for the stairs.

From below --

SCHEHERAZADE: MOVEMENT III -- begins to play.

He quickens his pace.

INT. THE MUSIC ROOM - NIGHT

Norman enters.

At the piano sits Trent -- in the blue suit, his face split: half Trent, half demon.

NORMAN

Look at you! You're losing your power! You can't even transform...

Trent keeps playing -- calm, fluid.

NORMAN (CONT'D)

Because you're losing! Because I'm not afraid of you! Every time I say it, you feel it. And every time, you lose a little more... and a little more...

TRENT

I want to play this one day at the Royal Albert. Do you think I'm good enough, Dad?

NORMAN

You are not my son! He can't even play the piano!

TRENT

No. But you can.

Norman whirls and bolts from the room.

INT. FRONT DOOR - MAIN FOYER - NIGHT

Norman grabs the front door -- yanks it open --

SLAM!

It shuts in his face.

From deep within the house, Julia's twisted LAUGH echoes, bouncing off the walls.

INT. THE KITCHEN - NIGHT

Norman bursts in, racing for the rear exit --

His foot hits the trail of blood --

He slides --

BAM!

He hits the floor hard.

The rear door SLAMS shut.

ANDREWS (O.S.)

Pardon my blood, Mister Bennett.

Norman lifts his head.

Andrews sits at the kitchen table, a knife buried in his shoulder, face ghost white, eyes empty.

ANDREWS (CONT'D)

Don't you understand? There is no escape.

NORMAN
Did you kill Andrews?

ANDREWS
No. But I gave him something to
remember me by.

Norman staggers to his feet, defiant.

Andrews' form shifts -- warps --

Trent now sits in the chair.

TRENT
Don't you understand? There's no
escape for you.

NORMAN
Leave my son alone!

Trent hovers his fingers over the table -- as if playing
invisible keys.

The table vibrates -- SCHEHERAZADE: MOVEMENT III.

NORMAN (CONT'D)
You can copy his face -- but
you'll never be my son.

TRENT
Who wants to be?

The "music" stops.

Trent's smile curdles.

TRENT (CONT'D)
I didn't attach myself to that
snot-nosed little brat.

Trent shoots his arm into the air.

Norman is pushed back into the wall.

Norman -- his body frozen, eyes distant.

He's trapped in a trance.

VISION - EXT. LONDON CEMETERY - DREAMLIKE

Everything is soft, hazy, suspended in grief.

Norman kneels on the grass, arms open as Trent collapses into him, sobbing.

TRENT
(through tears)
I never got to say goodbye....

BEYOND THE GRAVESTONES --

A dark shape lurks.

Low. Still.

MIMIC (V.O.)
I was never after the boy. But
you? Your grief is richer... and
you stand on a world-wide stage...
imagine what I can do wearing your
face.

A low GROWL rises as the unseen Mimic glides faster toward Norman.

THE VISION ENDS.

NORMAN
Oh my God...

INT. NORMAN'S CAR - NIGHT

Veronica sits in the passenger seat.

Trent leans forward in the back, both of them locked on the house.

TRENT
He should have been out by now.

VERONICA
We'll give him a little more
time...

Veronica stares at the house.

Norman stands in an upstairs window.

Motionless.

He lifts a hand, beckoning.

Veronica narrows her eyes, trying to see through the glare of the glass.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

There he is... I think...

TRENT

Dad?

VERONICA

Trent, wait here. Don't go
anywhere -- when we come back we
may need to move in a hurry.

She opens her door.

TRENT

No!

(anxious)

How can you be sure?

VERONICA

It will be all right.

She steps out.

EXT. WRAITHMORE - FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

Veronica reaches for the knob --

The door creaks open on its own.

INT. FRONT DOOR - MAIN FOYER - NIGHT

She steps inside.

Silence. Stillness.

From above --

NORMAN (O.S.)

Veronica! I need your help.

Her expression tightens --

Suspicion creeping in.

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

I need your help!

She hesitates. Then, cautious, begins to ascend.

INT. THE KITCHEN - NIGHT

Norman stirs on the floor.

He pushes himself up, groaning, off balance.

His hand touches the back of his head --

He winces. Looks at his palm.

Blood.

INT. THE MAIN STAIRWAY - NIGHT

Veronica nears the top.

Norman appears above, calm in his gray suit.

NORMAN

Hurry! I think I've got it
cornered!

She stops cold. She's not fooled.

VERONICA

Is this what took so long? You had
to change?

The Mimic grins, saying nothing.

From below --

NORMAN (O.S.)

Veronica! Come down! It's not me!

She glances over a shoulder.

Real Norman stands at the bottom of the stairs --
unsteady, one hand pressed to the back of his head where
blood rims his fingers.

NORMAN (CONT'D)

It's not me!

A beat -- Veronica's panic rising.

TRENT (O.S.)

Hey, you're supposed to be the
"sensitive," the one who can fix
all this.

She whips back around --

Half-Trent, half-demon now sits casually on the top step.

TRENT (CONT'D)

Let's see you fix it.

Veronica climbs fast, eyes locked on him.

VERONICA

You're fake. A parasite in a
borrowed face. You're not real --
just an echo.

Below, Norman tries to climb, but stumbles.

NORMAN

No! Come back down, Veronica!

She reaches the top. It's empty.

Nothing there.

A split-second of stillness --

Then the Demon erupts from Trent's room -- its true form
slamming into her and yanking her inside.

BANG!

The door shudders in its frame.

Norman reaches the top -- grabs the knob -- locked tight.

INT. NORMAN'S CAR - NIGHT

Trent watches the house. Nothing stirs.

INT. TRENT'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Moonlight spills across the floor.

The Demon stands, looming -- watching Veronica.

Outside, Norman POUNDS on the door.

NORMAN (O.S.)

Veronica!

MIMIC

I think he likes you.

EXT. TRENT'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Norman raises a fist to pound again --

VERONICA (O.S.)
I'm all right, Norman!

He stops.

INT. TRENT'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Veronica holds steady.

The Demon now sits on the bed, in Trent's form.

VERONICA
What is your real name?

TRENT
Mor'ghaal.

VERONICA
"The Mirror Tongue."

TRENT
I see you know your demons.

VERONICA
I know they belong in hell.

TRENT
You're actually pretty smart.
Psychics are usually bullshit.

He springs up from the bed.

TRENT (CONT'D)
But you're not as good as you
think you are.

VERONICA
I'm good enough to know you can be
sent back to hell.

TRENT
The problem with psychics is
you're all about theory. "Sent
back to hell?"
(chuckles)
Put your life on it?

A crack in her defiance.

TRENT (CONT'D)

There it is... I see it now...
that little shadow of doubt.

She gathers.

VERONICA

Everyone's on to you. It doesn't
work anymore. You have nothing to
do but grow weaker.

TRENT

You're trying too hard.

VERONICA

Drop the face. Talk to me as
yourself.

The Mimic pauses --

VERONICA (CONT'D)

Too weak?

In an instant, he shifts back -- grotesque, towering --

His hand clamps her head --

The Mimic leans close to her -- its long, black tongue
snapping in the air.

In a low, deadened, demonic voice --

MIMIC

Little mirror, little tongue,
Speak the words the dark has sung.
Whisper once and whisper true,
Say who's me... and say who's you.

VERONICA

Go to hell.

SNAP.

Her body drops, lifeless.

EXT. NORMAN'S CAR - NIGHT

From the back seat, Trent watches the upstairs window.

CRASH!

Suddenly, Veronica explodes through the glass -- plummets
two stories and SLAMS onto the gravel below.

THUD.

Trent SCREAMS!

TRENT
Veronica!

INT. OUTSIDE TRENT'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Norman POUNDS the door.

BANG! BANG! BANG!

NORMAN
Veronica! Open the door!

TRENT (O.S.)
Dad! Help me! Help!

Norman hurries for the stairs.

INT. THE MAIN STAIRWAY - NIGHT

Norman rushes down, stumbling, but growing stronger.

NORMAN
Trent!

TRENT (O.S.)
It's got me, Dad! Help!

INT. THE MAIN STAIRWAY - FLOOR LEVEL

Norman flies off the last step.

NORMAN
Where are you!?

TRENT (O.S.)
Down here! The basement!

Norman spins -- charges down the hall.

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

The door CREAKS open above.

A narrow shaft of light cuts down into the black.

Norman reaches for the dangling cord.

CLICK.

The lone bulb sputters alive -- flicker-flicker -- then holds with a feeble HUM.

He starts down slowly. Testing each step.

The bulb above twitches -- weak, pulsing.

His footsteps fade beneath the low electrical BUZZ...

He reaches the last step --

SLAM!

The basement door snaps shut.

The bulb gutters.

Norman moves forward.

Total darkness.

Norman stands still, listening.

From the dark --

TRENT

Please, Dad. It's me. It's really me.

Norman's jaw tightens.

"Trent" appears.

NORMAN

I should have known. You're not my son.

"Trent" backs into the dark... dissolving into it.

EXT. WRAITHMORE - FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

The front door opens.

"Norman" appears -- the gray suit from the photograph -- staggering, pale.

A faint distortion flickers behind him... gone instantly.

Trent leaps from the car, flooded with relief, and hugs him tight.

"Norman" turns -- sees Veronica's broken body on the gravel. Eyes frozen wide.

He kneels beside her. Soft. Almost tender.

NORMAN

Trent, go back to the car. I'm going to call an ambulance.

TRENT

But the phones --

NORMAN

I think the landline is working again.

Trent hesitates, nods -- then runs for the car.

"Norman" watches him go.

He stands... and slips back inside the house.

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

Real Norman drives his shoulder into the basement door -- it doesn't budge.

From below --

EMILIA (O.S.)

Is it stuck?

Emilia stands at the bottom of the stairs, half-lit by the sickly bulb.

Norman descends, fury rising.

EMILIA (CONT'D)

You look angry.

He raises a fist --

Flicker.

The light dies.

NORMAN

You won't attach to me. I'm not afraid of you!

Flicker.

Light returns.

She's gone.

From above --

JULIA (O.S.)
It's not all about fear.

Norman sees Julia, at the top of the stairs.

Calm. Wrong.

JULIA (CONT'D)
You can't outrun grief, Norman.

Flicker... flicker... Out.

When the light snaps back --

She's vanished.

EMILIA (O.S.)
Daddy's got a temper.

Norman pivots -- scanning the dark.

Emilia crawls into view along the ceiling, upside down,
insect-fast.

Norman snatches the broken remains of a chair --

HURLS it --

CRASH!

Emilia drops to the floor in a twisted heap.

She looks up at him -- smiling.

EMILIA (CONT'D)
We wear loved ones like a mask.

Flicker. Off.

Flicker. On.

Gone.

MIMIC NORMAN (O.S.)
This is getting old, Norman.

From the shadows, another Norman emerges -- in the gray
suit, immaculate and impossible.

A perfect mirror.

Norman charges -- SLAMS into him --

They crash into a tower of rotted boxes.

Debris explodes around them.

The overhead bulb spasms, flashing on and off -- strobing violently through the shadows.

Flash.

Norman drives a fist into the Mimic's jaw.

Flash.

The Mimic whips a broken broomstick --

THWACK! -- across Norman's ribs.

Flash.

The Mimic grabs Norman by the hair --

SLAMS his face into a metal shelf.

Tools rain down.

The bulb swings -- filament jittering.

Darkness.

A guttural CRY cuts through.

Flash.

Norman head-butts the Mimic -- both men stagger.

Flash.

They grapple -- brutal, breathless, mirror images locked together as they SLAM against the shelves.

Flash.

Norman snatches a rusted garden trowel --

The Mimic blocks him -- arms trembling with force.

Their faces twist in the strobe:

blood, dirt, sweaty reflections of the same man.

A Flash --

the Mimic's eyes go red, reptilian --

and instantly human again.

The bulb weakens... fading...

Two silhouettes shift in darkness.

A swing, metal hitting bone --

CRACK!

A body hits the floor.

The bulb HUMS... then bursts back to life.

Norman stands -- bloodied, shaking, barely upright.

At his feet lies the other Norman -- twisted, broken.

Norman staggers backward to the stairs.

NORMAN

(quietly)

It's over...

EXT. WRAITHMORE - FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

Norman staggers out of the house -- battered, bloodied, not wearing the gray suit.

Trent bolts from the car, relief breaking across his face as he throws his arms around him.

They hold the embrace.

NORMAN

It's all right.

TRENT

You're hurt!

NORMAN

We need to go.

TRENT

We can't leave her there... lying like that...

NORMAN

We have to... for the police. Still can't call from the house... so we'll drive there now.

EXT. ENGLISH COUNTRYSIDE - NIGHT

The headlights of Norman's car: two white specks
swallowed by an ocean of black.

INT. NORMAN'S CAR - NIGHT

Trent slumps in the back seat, exhaustion finally
dragging him under. His eyes close.

Up front, Norman drives -- steady. Composed. Peaceful.

NORMAN
(quietly, to himself)
What a night.

Trent stirs. His lashes twitch.

He shifts enough to glimpse the rearview mirror.

In it -- Norman's eyes flare yellow -- then constrict
into long, red, reptilian slits.

Trent jolts awake but doesn't move.

NORMAN (CONT'D)
Just got the wind knocked out of
me.

A thin smile curls across his lips.

Terror washes across Trent's face -- frozen, silent.

CUT TO BLACK.