

THE PHROGGER

**FADE IN:**

**EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - NIGHT**

RAGGED BREATHS. RUNNING ON PAVEMENT. A FIGURE in a hoodie and backpack veers off the sidewalk into the backyards of houses, across lawns, past swimming pools.

Motion sensor lights come on, DOGS BARK.

A Police Cruiser drives down a quiet street, no flashers.

**EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT**

The Hooded Figure finds an open window and climbs in.

**INT. HOUSE - BASEMENT**

Dark, unfinished. Washer and dryer at one end. Stacked boxes in a corner. The boxes move. The Hooded Figure emerges.

**PRIMARY BEDROOM**

The HOODED FIGURE watches the Parents sleeping. SNORING.

**CHILDREN'S BEDROOM**

The HOODED FIGURE watches Kids asleep in their beds.

**KITCHEN**

The Hooded Figure pulls a BANANA off a bunch, peels and devours it. Takes an ENERGY BAR from the pantry. Refills a water bottle at the sink.

**BASEMENT**

The Figure crawls back behind the corner boxes.

**INT. KITCHEN - DAY**

A MOTHER fills a water bottle at the same sink. The FATHER and two KIDS eat cereal at the kitchen table.

The Mother sees a banana peel in the trash. She frowns.

MOTHER  
Who had a banana?

SON  
Not me!

DAUGHTER  
I want a banana!

MOTHER  
What do you say?

DAUGHTER  
Please!

#### **INT. FOYER - LATER**

At the front door, the Parents, dressed for work, help the kids with their school bags, usher them out the door.

#### **BASEMENT**

The Hooded Figure rises from behind the stack of boxes and climbs the stairs.

#### **HALLWAY**

The Hooded Figure pushes the hood back to reveal RILEY, 15, trans female, pixie cut, thin, a fearful intensity in her eyes and a bruise on her cheek.

#### **KITCHEN**

Riley opens the refrigerator, drinks from a carton of milk. She grabs a jar of peanut butter and takes a fingerful.

#### **BATHROOM**

Riley looks in the mirror, touches the bruise on her face.

#### **BEGIN FLASHBACK**

#### **EXT. WOODS - DAY**

Riley stands in the woods, dirty and terrified.

MAN (O.S.)  
You're a man. Say it!

**END FLASHBACK**

**BATHROOM**

Riley washes her face, uses a yellow toothbrush next to the sink. Pale self-harm scars are visible on her wrist.

**BASEMENT**

Riley crawls into her hiding place amongst the storage boxes and moves the boxes back into place.

**INT. PRIMARY BEDROOM - NIGHT**

The Mother, in nightgown, stands in the bathroom brushing her teeth with the yellow toothbrush.

**BATHROOM - LATER**

All is dark except for a night light illuminating the Mother on the toilet.

**BASEMENT - SAME TIME**

Riley creeps up the basement stairs.

**KITCHEN**

Riley pockets an APPLE and fills her water bottle.

MOTHER (O.S.)  
Max?

Riley freezes. She listens, her body tense.

MOTHER (O.S.)  
Zoe?

**UPSTAIRS HALLWAY**

The Mother steps out of her bedroom and goes to the doorway of the kid's room, peers in, sees them sleeping, frowns.

**KITCHEN - SAME TIME**

Riley tiptoes from the Kitchen toward the Basement.

**PRIMARY BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER**

The Mother shakes the Father's shoulder.

MOTHER

There's someone downstairs. I heard  
water running.

The Father, groggy, rubs his eyes.

FATHER

Kids?

MOTHER

They're sleeping.

FATHER

I don't hear anything.

MOTHER

It stopped.

FATHER

What do you want me to do?

MOTHER

Check it out!

Deep sigh. The Father gets out of bed, stumbles to the  
bedroom door and down the stairs.

**BASEMENT**

At the top of the basement stairs, Riley closes the door with  
a CLICK.

**LIVING ROOM**

The Father hears the CLICK.

FATHER

Who's there?

OFFSCREEN NOISE from the basement.

The Father grabs a poker from the fireplace and hurries to  
the basement door, throws it open.

FATHER  
Who's down there?

**BASEMENT**

The Father starts down the stairs.

Riley scrambles out a window, kicks over a box.

At the bottom of the stairs, the Father sees Riley disappear out the window.

FATHER  
Hey!

The Father runs to the window then back up the stairs.

The Mother stands on the stairs, phone in hand.

MOTHER  
Was there--?

The Father runs out the back door.

**EXT. BACKYARD - NIGHT**

Riley leaps over a fence and crouches under some bushes, breathing hard.

**EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - NIGHT**

The Father bursts into his backyard, runs to the fence, looks over. Runs to the other side of the yard, looks over the fence. Nothing.

**INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

The Father enters, winded, closes the front door.

At the door to the basement, the Mother motions him over.

MOTHER  
You gotta see this.

**INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT**

The Mother points to small space amongst the storage boxes where Riley had been hiding out.

A granola bar wrapper lies on a crumpled quilt.

MOTHER  
Whoever it was--was hiding right  
here. For god knows how long!

FATHER  
Jesus!

MOTHER  
I'm calling the police.

**INT. BASEMENT - LATER**

The Father points to Riley's hideout.

OFFICER PEREZ, 40s, Male, Latino, and OFFICER BURTON, 40s,  
White, look at what Riley left.

BURTON  
Looks like you've been a victim of  
phrogging.

FATHER  
What?

BURTON  
That's what they call it. People  
hopping from one house to another,  
hiding inside, coming out when the  
folks aren't home.

MOTHER  
Oh my god! That's, that's--

FATHER  
Creepy as fuck!

BURTON  
Did you get a look at the person?

FATHER  
He was wearing jeans and a dark  
hoodie.

Officer Perez takes notes.

BURTON  
Any other details?

FATHER  
No. Sorry.

PEREZ  
Anything of value missing?

MOTHER  
An apple, a banana... a granola bar.

FATHER  
We haven't done a thorough search.

Officers Perez and Burton share a look.

BURTON  
I think we have enough. If you  
notice anything of value missing,  
contact the station.

FATHER  
Will do.

MOTHER  
That's it?

FATHER  
Hon.

MOTHER  
This person lived in our house!  
What if they hurt Max or Zoe?

BURTON  
Were the children hurt?

FATHER  
I don't think so.

MOTHER  
We don't know!

BURTON  
I am very sorry, ma'am. We will  
file a report. And we will be on  
the lookout for someone matching  
the description you gave us.

The Officers turn to go.

MOTHER  
Well that's just--

FATHER  
Thank you, officers.

The Officers close the door behind them.



**INT. POLICE CRUISER - NIGHT**

Perez and Burton buckle in. Perez starts the engine.

PEREZ

You think someone could live in  
your house without you knowing?

BURTON

No way.

PEREZ

Why not?

Burton shrugs.

BURTON

I think I'd just sense someone in  
the house. You?

PEREZ

Maybe. All's I know is I haven't  
been in my attic in months, so...

Burton chuckles.

BURTON

You gonna check when you get home?

PEREZ

Just might.

**EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - NIGHT**

The Cruiser drives away, passes a house several doors down.

**EXT. BACKYARD - NIGHT**

From her hiding place in the bushes, Riley watches the Police  
Cruiser go by.

**EXT. PUBLIC PARK - NIGHT**

Riley jogs into a large Public Park. She finds a bench off  
the beaten path and sits.

She looks around, pulls her hoodie tight around her head, and  
curls up on the bench.

**BEGIN FLASHBACK**

**EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY**

Riley and MARISA, 15, Latina, lean against a brick wall behind the school. Marisa exhales a nicotine vape cloud.

RILEY  
I just want to be normal.

MARISA  
Like all the other idiots in this school? Normal's boring.

RILEY  
And safe.

MARISA  
Don't worry. I've got your back.

Riley smiles.

RILEY  
Who's got yours?

MARISA  
You, of course!

Riley scoffs.

RILEY  
Like I could protect you.

MARISA  
You don't think you're strong enough?

Riley points at her arms.

RILEY  
I can barely do a push-up.

MARISA  
It's not about that. It's about not being alone.

**END FLASHBACK**

**EXT. PUBLIC PARK - DAY**

Riley wakes abruptly, sits up on the bench.

In the pre-dawn light she sees an unhoused woman, VALERIE, 60s, sitting on the other end of the bench.

Riley looks around. The park is empty at this early hour.

VALERIE  
Looking for someone?

Riley shakes her head.

VALERIE  
Maybe someone looking for you.

Riley looks at Valerie with surprise.

VALERIE  
This my invisibility bench. Don't  
no one see me when I'm sitting  
here.

Riley smiles at her.

RILEY  
I see you.

VALERIE  
'cause you're on the bench with me!

She winks at Riley. Riley smiles.

She and Valerie sit in a LONG SILENCE.

VALERIE  
Robert Frost said, "Home is the  
place where, when you have to go  
there, they have to take you in."

Valerie scoffs.

VALERIE  
What a crock of shit.

Riley looks up.

VALERIE  
Shouldn't be no "have to's".

Valerie clears her throat loudly and spits.

VALERIE  
If you ask me, home is a place  
where you want to go... and they  
want to take you in.

Riley ponders this. Valerie rummages in her cart, pulls out  
two small packages of crackers, holds them out.

Riley eyes them, hesitates.

VALERIE  
Go on. I got more.

Riley takes the packages.

RILEY  
Thank you.

Riley unwraps a package. Valerie unwraps her own. They eat together in silence.

VALERIE  
If you want a real meal, there's a  
shelter on sixteenth.

Riley nods.

VALERIE  
Clean enough. If you can stand all  
the people.

Riley smiles. They munch on their crackers.

VALERIE  
Couple bike cops coming soon.

Alarmed, Riley stands abruptly, scans the park.

RILEY  
Thank you, ma'am.

She shoulders her backpack, starts away.

VALERIE  
You be careful, girl. They can see  
you, now you off the bench.

**EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - DAY**

As the day lightens, Riley puts her hood up.

She passes a house-under-construction. The house has a roof and sheathing, but no doors.

**EXT. HOUSE-UNDER-CONSTRUCTION - DAY**

Riley slips easily into an opening in the rear of the house.

**INT. HOUSE-UNDER-CONSTRUCTION - DAY**

The inside of the house has been framed and dry-walled.

Riley climbs bare stairs to a room facing the street. She sits, leans against the wall, backpack in her lap.

**BEGIN FLASHBACK DREAM****EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY**

Riley and Marisa lean up against the brick wall behind the school. Marisa shows Riley something on her phone.

RILEY

I could never look like that.

MARISA

That's 'cause you don't know how to do makeup. You gotta let me do your look.

RILEY

If my parents ever saw me looking like that, they'd send me to military school. Or worse.

MARISA

Worse?

RILEY

Conversion therapy.

MARISA

Dafuck?

RILEY

I saw the brochure.

MARISA

That is sooo messed up.

RILEY

The place looked nice. Like a park.

MARISA

You know what they do, right?

RILEY

Therapy, Bible study...

MARISA  
Abuse, torture...

**END FLASHBACK DREAM**

**INT. HOUSE-UNDER-CONSTRUCTION - DAY**

Riley jerks awake to the BUZZ of a TABLE SAW.

She peeks out the window, sees a couple of CONSTRUCTION WORKERS get out of their pickup.

She grabs her backpack, runs down the stairs, out the back.

**EXT. - RESIDENTIAL STREET - DAY**

Riley looks up and down the street, pulls her hoodie over her head and continues quickly down the street.

**EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - LATER**

Riley sees a Police Cruiser down the block and immediately takes cover between two houses.

As she nears the backyards, a DOG appears on the other side of a wooden fence. It GROWLS.

RILEY  
Shh! Good boy.

The DOG BARKS. Riley hurries away.

**EXT. SHELTER - NIGHT**

Riley stands under a street light and stares at an old, weathered one-story strip mall, faded and industrial-looking.

A SIGN reads: Community Care Connection.

A couple of UNHOUSED RESIDENTS linger with their carts.

Riley checks her surroundings, speed walks to the entrance.

**INT. SHELTER - NIGHT**

Fluorescent lights illuminate a cluttered reception desk where DORIS, 50s, Black, gray hair and glasses, sits.

Riley approaches the desk. Doris looks up.

DORIS  
Yes?

RILEY  
Is this--? Is there--?

DORIS  
Looking for a bed?

Riley nods.

DORIS  
Parents?

Riley shakes her head.

DORIS  
Mmm-hmm. Got any ID?

Riley shakes her head again.

DORIS  
Name?

RILEY  
Riley.

DORIS  
Address?

Riley doesn't respond. Doris looks up at her.

DORIS  
Where do you live, Honey?

RILEY  
I--I... nowhere.

DORIS  
Runaway?

Riley doesn't answer. Doris notices the bruise on her cheek.

DORIS  
Just had a bed open up.

#### **MOMENTS LATER**

Riley follows Doris down a long hallway that opens on a vast room with several rows of bunk beds.

BABY CRIES and the occasional CHILD'S YELL.

Doris strides down a row, speaking her spiel as she goes.

DORIS  
You are responsible for your own  
belongings. No booze, no drugs, no  
sex. No weapons. And absolutely no  
violence.

Next to one bunkbed, MOLLY, 18, F, bounces a fussy TODDLER on her hip. Doris stops there, points at the top bunk.

DORIS  
(to Molly)  
Molly, right?

MOLLY  
Yeah.

DORIS  
This is Riley.

She glances at Riley, a quick tight smile. Riley matches it.

DORIS  
Any questions?

Riley shakes her head. Doris nods and turns.

DORIS  
They're still serving chili in the  
dining area. Just down the hall.

RILEY  
Thank you.

#### **DINING AREA - MOMENTS LATER**

Riley sits with a few other WOMEN at a long cafeteria table.

They don't talk to each other. They all just eat with the focus and intensity of the hungry.

Then RACHEL, 18, F, plops down across from Riley.

RACHEL  
Hey.

RILEY  
Hey.

RACHEL  
How'd you get the...?

Rachel gestures to Riley's bruise. Riley doesn't answer.



RACHEL  
Sorry. Rude.

Rachel lifts up her cast-covered arm.

RACHEL  
Boyfriend.

Riley raises her eyebrows.

RACHEL  
We're not together anymore.

Silence for a while. Riley doesn't look up.

RILEY  
I was in a... camp.

RACHEL  
My cousin Eric got sent to one of  
those. Came back cured, they said.

Rachel stops, overcome with emotion. She gathers herself.

RACHEL  
News flash: he wasn't.

Riley is silent.

RACHEL  
He overdosed right before school  
started.

RILEY  
I'm sorry.

RACHEL  
How 'bout you? Cured?

Riley gives her a grim smile. Shakes her head.

RILEY  
I think it's terminal.

RACHEL  
Sorry to hear that.

RILEY  
Me, too.

**INT. SHELTER - NIGHT**

The room is dark now and quiet. Riley sits cross-legged on her bunk, rummages in her backpack, pulls out a zippered pencil case. Inside, an energy bar and cash.

On the bunk below, Molly sleeps. Her Toddler sits next to her, FUSSING. The Toddler pulls on Molly's clothes, CRIES.

Riley counts the money, small bills, zips the case back up, shoves it to the bottom of the backpack.

The Toddler's CRIES get louder. Molly remains asleep.

Riley peeks over the side of the bunk. The Toddler sees her, stops crying. Riley pulls back. The Toddler starts crying.

Riley pulls a package of crackers from her backpack, climbs down, offers a cracker to the Toddler.

The Toddler takes the cracker, munches it down, reaches toward Riley, makes fussing sounds. Riley gives her another.

**LATER**

The Toddler sleeps on Molly.

On the top bunk, Riley reaches under her collar and pulls out a St. Christopher's pendant, holds it as she bows her head.

RILEY  
(whispers)  
Please, God, bring me safety and  
acceptance.

Riley straps her backpack onto the frame of her bunkbed. She lies down, shoes on, and pulls the blanket over herself.

**BEGIN FLASHBACK**

CLOSE on the St. Christopher Medal in the palm of Riley's hand. She looks a question to Marisa.

MARISA  
It's a St. Christopher's Medal. To  
keep you safe. At the camp.

RILEY  
I thought you didn't believe in all  
that.

Marisa shrugs.

MARISA  
It can't hurt. It was my grandma's.

RILEY  
Thanks.

MARISA  
Did they say how long?

Riley shakes her head.

RILEY  
At least six weeks.

MARISA  
Just pretend you're cured. Maybe  
they'll let you out early.

RILEY  
I'm sure no one's ever tried that.

Marisa grabs the pendant out Riley's hand.

MARISA  
Turn around.

Marisa clasps the necklace behind Riley's head. Riley turns  
back, hugs Marisa.

MARISA  
Don't try to be a hero.

RILEY  
Don't worry.

**END FLASHBACK**

**INT. SHELTER - DAY**

The Shelter is waking up. BABIES CRY in the distance.

Riley opens her eyes, sits up. She reaches for her backpack.  
It's gone!

Riley throws her blanket off, leans over the side of the bed.  
There's no one on the bottom bunk. Empty.

RILEY  
Shit!

She scrambles down, races to the entrance and out the door.

**EXT. SHELTER - DAY**

She scans right and left in the dim morning light. Not a soul in sight. A car passes by. She turns and goes back inside.

**INT. SHELTER - DAY**

Riley knocks on the office door. After a moment, Doris opens it, her robe held tightly.

RILEY  
The girl with the kid. Molly. Where is she?

DORIS  
Hell if I know.

RILEY  
My backpack. It's gone. I think--

DORIS  
First rule. Take care of your belongings.

RILEY  
Do you know where she went?

DORIS  
Sorry, hon. Didn't see her leave.

Doris shuts the door.

RILEY  
Shit. Shit. Shit.

Riley tears at her hair, paces in distress, then rushes out.

**EXT. CITY STREET - DAY**

Semi-industrial part of town. A few boarded-up businesses.

Riley approaches a small encampment of tents near the interstate. She hears a WOMAN'S VOICE, a BABY CRY.

She veers toward the sound, peeks into a tent. A WOMAN, 20s, breastfeeds an infant.

RILEY  
Sorry.

At the next block, she slows, stops, checks her surroundings.

A black SUV drives slowly past. Riley glances at it. It comes to a stop. The window rolls down.

Startled, Riley jogs in the opposite direction.

At a safe distance, she glances back, sees someone leaning into the SUV window. She turns and hurries down the street.

**EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - DAY**

Head down, Riley shuffles down the sidewalk in a neighborhood of modest single family homes.

She stops to wait for a car backing out of a driveway. In the backseat, the face of a GIRL looks out at her.

As the car drives away, Riley looks at the house: a well-kept one-story ranch with a BLUE FRONT DOOR.

She waits until the car disappears around a corner, then slinks around the back.

**EXT. BLUE-DOOR HOUSE - DAY**

Riley tries the back door, finds it locked. She looks under a few potted plants. Nothing.

She checks the top of the door frame and finds a key. She opens the door and replaces the key before slipping inside.

**INT. BLUE-DOOR HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY**

The home is modest but clean and tidy. At the kitchen sink, Riley chugs a glass of water.

**LIVING ROOM**

Riley stands in front of a framed copy of *To Kill a Mockingbird* mounted behind glass.

**CHILD'S BEDROOM**

Riley sits on a twin bed covered in stuffed animals.

**PRIMARY BEDROOM**

Riley examines a framed photo on a dresser.

IMAGE: A smiling man and woman in hiking gear, a young girl on the man's shoulders.

### **BASEMENT STAIRS**

Riley flips a light switch, steps carefully down the stairs. About halfway, a STEP CREAKS. She pauses, then continues.

### **INT. BASEMENT - DAY**

A daylight basement with windows high along one wall.

Riley spies a door ajar at one end of the basement. She pushes open the door and peeks inside.

### **INT. UTILITY ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

The small room houses a water heater and furnace. Behind the furnace is a space wide enough to sit cross-legged.

Riley crawls behind the furnace, curls up on the linoleum, and closes her eyes.

### **BEGIN FLASHBACK DREAM**

### **INT. ROOM - NIGHT**

Riley sits in a hospital bed. She stares in terror at a TV screen at the foot of the bed. The screen is just static.

Wires trail from her head to a machine on a cart next to her.

An ATTENDANT, 30s, surgical mask, fiddles with the machine. A SECOND ATTENDANT, 20s, straps Riley's wrists to the bed railing.

RILEY  
What is this?

ATTENDANT  
Brain training.

The Second Attendant holds up a mouth guard.

SECOND ATTENDANT  
So you won't bite your tongue off.

He shoves the guard into Riley's mouth.

ATTENDANT  
Watch the screen.

**END FLASHBACK DREAM**

**INT. UTILITY ROOM - DAY**

Riley's eyes open. She's a moment remembering where she is.

INDISTINCT FEMALE VOICES upstairs.

Riley puts her ear to a heating vent and listens.

SHERYL (O.S.)  
He did? What did you say?

EMMA (O.S.)  
I said he was being a poopy head.

Riley smiles.

WOMAN (O.S.)  
Emma! That wasn't very nice.

EMMA (O.S.)  
But, Mom! He told me I couldn't  
play with them.

**INT. KITCHEN - DAY**

EMMA, 6, spirited and precocious in all the best ways, sits at the kitchen island. This is the girl Riley saw in the car.

SHERYL COLLINS, 30s, the kind of parent who volunteers at school functions, washes strawberries at the sink.

SHERYL  
And that wasn't very nice of him,  
but we don't call names.

EMMA  
I know.

SHERYL  
Can you think of a better way to  
handle the situation?

EMMA  
He's the one who needs to handle  
the situation better.

**INT. UTILITY ROOM - SAME TIME**

Riley, listening at the vent, stifles a laugh.

SHERYL (O.S.)

Yes, I agree. But we can't control  
other people, only ourselves.

Emma sighs like an exasperated teenager.

EMMA (O.S.)

I know, Mom!

**INT. KITCHEN - SAME TIME**

Sheryl hands Emma a plate of strawberries.

EMMA

Thanks!

SHERYL

Next time Bobby says the basketball  
court is only for boys, what could  
you do?

EMMA

Tell the teacher.

SHERYL

That's a good idea if you can't get  
Bobby to listen. What's something  
you could do before going to the  
teacher?

EMMA

I could tell him girls can do  
anything boys can do. Then show him  
my dribbling skills.

Sheryl laughs.

SHERYL

That's a great idea, honey. If that  
still doesn't work, then it's okay  
to tell Miss Charlotte.

EMMA

Okay!

**INT. UTILITY ROOM - SAME TIME**

Riley smiles. Something wistful in her eyes.



**BEGIN MEMORY FLASH****INT. DEPARTMENT STORE - DAY**

YOUNG RILEY, 5, holds a boxed Barbie doll, runs up to RILEY'S MOTHER, 30s, beaming.

RILEY  
This one!

Riley's Mother frowns, shakes her head.

RILEY'S MOTHER  
That's for girls. Put it back.

Head down, Riley returns the box to the shelf.

**END MEMORY FLASH****INT. UTILITY ROOM - DAY**

Riley's smile fades into sadness.

**SERIES OF SHOTS****KITCHEN - NIGHT**

Emma, Sheryl and KURT, 40s, White, charming, confident, sit at the kitchen table eating dinner.

Kurt and Sheryl look at Emma with affection as she talks and gesticulates with her fork.

**EMMA'S ROOM - NIGHT**

Sheryl and Kurt tuck Emma into bed. Kisses on her forehead.

**PRIMARY BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Kurt and Sheryl sit up in bed. Him on his phone, her with a book.

**KITCHEN - NIGHT**

Riley grabs a loaf of bread, takes a slice, reties bag.

**FOYER - DAY**

Kurt, Sheryl, and Emma put on coats. Kurt holds his arms out to receive Emma's hug.

**KITCHEN - DAY**

Riley drinks from the milk carton.

**LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Riley sits on the sofa, watches a News Channel intently.

**INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT**

Sheryl, Kurt and Emma eat at the kitchen table. Emma laughs.

**END OF SERIES OF SHOTS****INT. UTILITY ROOM - NIGHT**

Riley lies with her head near the heating vent.

She hears VOICES and puts her ear to the vent.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)  
Can't we back out?

SHERYL (O.S.)  
We RSVP'd. They're expecting us.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)  
I just don't understand why I have  
to be there.

**INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT**

Sheryl washes dishes at the sink. Kurt swigs a beer.

SHERYL  
They're your friends.

KURT  
Angela's not your friend?

SHERYL  
She's nice, but you know we don't  
have that much in common.

KURT  
I didn't realize I was forcing the  
friendship on you.

SHERYL  
That's not--

EMMA (O.S.)  
Mom! Dad! Stop fighting.

SHERYL  
(brightly)  
We're not fighting, honey!

Kurt huffs off to the bedroom. Sheryl exhales.

**INT. UTILITY ROOM - SAME TIME**

Riley, her head to the vent, also exhales.

**INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT**

The house is dark and SILENT. The door to the basement opens, and Riley tiptoes down the hallway and into the kitchen.

Her hand is on the fridge door when she hears a FLOOR CREAK. She creeps to the living room and crouches behind the sofa.

From her hiding spot, she sees Kurt slip into Emma's bedroom.

**INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

Riley frowns. She stands up and tiptoes down the hallway.

**INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS**

Emma's door is slightly ajar. Through the gap, Riley sees Kurt rubbing Emma's back. Then he reaches into his pants.

Riley puts her hand to her mouth and turns away.

**INT. UTILITY ROOM - MOMENTS LATER**

Riley hugs her knees and sobs.

**BEGIN MEMORY FLASH:**

**INT. CABIN - NIGHT**

Riley lies on her stomach on a bare mattress, same bruise on her cheek, her eyes squeezed shut.

A MAN GRUNTS offscreen. Riley cries out in pain.

MAN (O.S.)  
Shut up!

SECOND MAN (O.S.)  
This'll fix you, femboy.

**END MEMORY FLASH**

**INT. UTILITY ROOM - NIGHT**

Riley continues to sob.

**INT. PRIMARY BEDROOM - DAY**

Riley opens all the dresser drawers, searching for something. She looks under the bed. She looks in the closet. She frowns.

**INT. BASEMENT - DAY**

Riley searches desk drawers. She thumbs through a pile of papers, a box of files. Appears frustrated.

**INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT**

Riley tiptoes to Emma's room, sees her sleeping peacefully. She takes a step across the threshold. FLOOR CREAK.

**INT. EMMA'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

EMMA  
Daddy?

Riley freezes. Emma turns over, still groggy, sees Riley.

EMMA  
Who are you?

RILEY  
(whispers)  
A friend.

EMMA  
You're pretty.

RILEY  
(whispers)  
Thank you. So are you.

EMMA  
Are you an angel?

Riley scoffs.

RILEY  
(whispers)  
Me? No. I'm just a regular person  
like you.

EMMA  
Why are you here?

RILEY  
(whispers)  
I-I wanted to see if you were okay.  
Are you?... Okay?

FLOOR CREAK. Riley looks up in fear.

#### **HALLWAY**

Kurt walks slowly down the hallway toward Emma's room.

#### **EMMA'S ROOM**

Riley's eyes dart, looking for somewhere to hide.

EMMA  
(whispers)  
It's Daddy.

Kurt reaches the door to Emma's room.

Riley slides under the bed. Emma lies back, pulls covers up.

#### **HALLWAY**

Kurt turns the door handle, eases the door open.

SHERYL (O.S.)  
Kurt?

Kurt stops, looks back to his own room.

SHERYL (O.S.)  
Everything okay?

KURT  
Just getting a glass of water.

Kurt turns from Emma's room and walks into the kitchen.

#### **EMMA'S ROOM**

From under the bed, Riley watches the doorway.

#### **KITCHEN**

Kurt gets a glass of water then walks down the hallway.  
He slows at Emma's room, then continues to his own room.

#### **EMMA'S ROOM**

Under Emma's bed, Riley slowly exhales her held breath.  
She scooches out from under the bed, tiptoes to the door.

EMMA  
(whispers)  
Will you come back and play?

RILEY  
(whispers)  
I'll try.

Emma smiles and closes her eyes. Riley slips out.

#### **INT. KITCHEN - DAY**

Emma, Kurt, and Sheryl eat breakfast at the kitchen table.

#### **INT. UTILITY ROOM - DAY**

Riley sits with her ear against the air vent, nervous.

#### **KITCHEN**

Kurt and Sheryl check their phones while they're eating.

EMMA  
I made a new friend.

SHERYL  
That's nice, honey.

EMMA  
She comes to my room. At night.

**UTILITY ROOM**

Riley puts her hand to her mouth.

**KITCHEN**

Kurt watches Emma carefully.

SHERYL  
Like in a dream?

EMMA  
No, she's real.

Sheryl looks at Kurt. He shrugs, looks intently at Emma.

EMMA  
She's my guardian angel.

Kurt relaxes, smiles at Sheryl.

SHERYL  
That's nice honey. Finish your  
cereal. It's almost time to go.

**UTILITY ROOM**

Riley relaxes, exhales.

**INT. FOYER - LATER**

Kurt is at the front door, leaving for work.

SHERYL  
Where did you put the nanny cam?  
It's a new sitter tonight.

KURT  
What happened to Hannah?

SHERYL  
Not available.

KURT  
I think it's in the basement.

### **UTILITY ROOM**

Riley, her ear against the vent, glances at the Utility Room door. She hears the BASEMENT DOOR OPEN and SHUT.

A CREAK on the STAIRS. Riley crouches behind the furnace.

### **MOMENTS LATER**

Sheryl enters the Utility Room, rummages through a box.

Riley curls into a ball behind the furnace.

SHERYL (O.S.)  
There you are!

Sheryl pulls a TEDDY CAM out of the box and leaves the room.

Riley breathes a sigh of relief. She hears the CREAK on the stairs as Sheryl leaves the basement.

### **LIVING ROOM**

Sheryl turns the Teddy Cam upside down, flips a switch. A red light comes on.

She places the Teddy Cam on a bookshelf in the living room and angles the camera toward the sofa.

She opens an APP on her phone and checks the VIDEO FEED.

IMAGE: VIDEO of Sheryl in the living room on her phone.

Satisfied, Sheryl closes the app and heads out the door.

### **INT. BASEMENT - DAY**

Riley wakes abruptly. She rubs her temples. She leaves the Utility Room, climbs the basement stairs.

### **INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS**

Riley cracks the door, peeks out, sees a bowl of fruit on the kitchen counter.

She spies the Teddy Cam in the living room and shrinks back.



She looks from the bowl of fruit to the Teddy Cam. Can she risk it? She sighs, retreats, closing the door behind her.

**INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

Sheryl and Kurt, dressed for a night out, stand by the front door next to the sitter, NAOMI, 17, mixed-race, nonchalant.

SHERYL

(to Naomi)

Emma's already eaten, but there's a pizza in the freezer if you get hungry.

NAOMI

Thank you, Miss.

SHERYL

Call me Sheryl. We should be home around eleven.

KURT

I hope before that!

Sheryl ignores Kurt and holds out her arms for Emma. Emma runs over and gives her a hug.

SHERYL

Mind your manners and do what Naomi says, okay?

Emma gives Naomi a sideways glance.

EMMA

Okay, Mom.

Kurt picks Emma up in a bear hug.

KURT

Who's my good girl?

EMMA

Me!

He sets her down and she runs off.

**INT. BASEMENT STAIRS - NIGHT**

Sitting at the top of the stairs, Riley cracks the door open and peeks toward the living room.

**LIVING ROOM**

Naomi slouches on the sofa, immersed in her phone. Emma sits nearby, brushes the hair of a Barbie doll.

EMMA

Are you an only child, too?

NAOMI

I have a brother.

EMMA

Lucky... I almost had a brother.

Naomi looks at Emma, confused.

EMMA

He died before he got born.

**BASEMENT STAIRS**

Riley takes this in.

**LIVING ROOM**

NAOMI

Oh, that's awful. I'm so sorry.

EMMA

Yeah. Mom was sad for a long time.  
Dad, too.

**BASEMENT STAIRS**

Riley tears up.

**INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER**

Emma and Naomi sit on the sofa in front of the TV. Emma watches *Brave*, and Naomi scrolls on her phone.

EMMA

(to Naomi)

Do you want to play Barbies?

NAOMI

You don't like the movie?

EMMA

You're not watching.

Naomi looks up from her phone.

NAOMI  
I've seen this one already.

EMMA  
He's watching you.

Emma points at the Teddy Cam.

NAOMI  
Oh! A nanny cam. Haha, it's cute.

EMMA  
It doesn't bother you?

NAOMI  
Lots of parents have them.

Emma waves at the Teddy Cam, sticks out her tongue at it.

#### **INT. UTILITY ROOM - NIGHT**

Riley sits listening at the vent to VOICES ABOVE.

SHERYL (O.S.)  
Goodnight!

A DOOR CLOSES. Silence. Kurt mumbles something.

SHERYL (O.S.)  
You're still angry about that?

KURT (O.S.)  
You embarrassed me!

SHERYL (O.S.)  
All I said was--

KURT (O.S.)  
I heard what you said. The whole  
fucking room heard you.

SHERYL (O.S.)  
Shhh! You'll wake Emma. It was a  
joke. Nobody thought I was being  
serious.

KURT (O.S.)  
Oh, you're a psychic now?

SHERYL (O.S.)  
Kurt.

A DOOR SLAMS. Riley pushes away from the vent.

**INT. KITCHEN - DAY**

Emma eats cereal at the kitchen table. Kurt's on his phone.

Sheryl places a coffee in front of Kurt, sits next to Emma, and sips her own coffee.

SHERYL

Did you have a nice time with Naomi last night?

EMMA

I guess.

SHERYL

What's the matter?

EMMA

She was boring.

SHERYL

Boring?

EMMA

She was on her phone. A lot. She really, really loves TikTok.

SHERYL

(to Kurt)

I checked the nanny cam. She barely moved off the couch all night.

Kurt scoffs.

EMMA

I like Angel better.

SHERYL

Your imagi-- your nighttime friend?

EMMA

Yeah. She seems nicer.

Kurt looks up from his phone, makes eye contact with Sheryl.

Sheryl shrugs.

**INT. HALLWAY - LATER**

Riley crouches in the basement doorway. With an eye on the Teddy Cam, she crawls into the kitchen.

She keeps an eye on the Teddy Cam on the bookshelf as she sidles along the wall, out of camera range.

At the bookshelf, she grabs the Teddy Cam, turns it upside down, switches it off.

She's about to put it back on the shelf when an idea forms.

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

Riley carries the Teddy Cam into Emma's room.

She looks around for a place to put it. She sees a collection of stuffed animals in one corner, goes to it.

She turns on the Teddy Cam and hides it amongst the other stuffies, making sure to point it toward the bed.

She eases out of the room, careful to avoid the camera.

**INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT**

Riley sits at the top of the basement stairs, ear cocked.

**HALLWAY**

Kurt creeps down the hallway. The FLOOR CREAKS.

**BASEMENT**

At the sound of the CREAK, Riley tenses.

**HALLWAY**

Kurt arrives at Emma's bedroom door.

**BASEMENT**

Riley listens at the top of the stairs.

**EMMA'S ROOM**

Kurt crosses to Emma's bed and sits. Emma stirs.

EMMA  
Angel?

KURT  
It's Daddy.

EMMA  
Where's Angel?

KURT  
Shh. Go back to sleep.

**HALLWAY**

Riley tiptoes to Emma's doorway where she sees Kurt's got one hand in his pants. The other caresses Emma over the covers.

EMMA  
(sleepy)  
I'm tryna sleep.

KURT  
That's a good girl.

Fury burns in Riley's eyes. She glances at the Teddy Cam hidden amongst the stuffed animals then back to Kurt.

She swallows the bile in her throat, tears forming, then backs away silently.

Standing outside Emma's room, Riley seems uncertain. Then determination forms in her eyes.

She tiptoes into the kitchen, grabs a lemon from the fruit bowl, slips back to the basement door, chucks the lemon into the living room.

It lands with a THUD.

**EMMA'S ROOM**

Kurt looks up sharply at the THUD.

**HALLWAY**

Riley slips into the basement, closes the door behind her.

**EMMA'S ROOM**

Kurt stands, zips his pants, moves to the door. He peers out.

**BASEMENT STAIRS**

Riley crouches on the top step on the other side of the basement door.

**HALLWAY**

Kurt hurries past the basement door down the hallway and into the living room.

**LIVING ROOM**

Kurt looks around, doesn't see anything amiss.

**BASEMENT STAIRS**

Riley sits frozen in fear, her hand on the doorknob.

**HALLWAY**

Kurt hurries past the basement door again, on the way to his own bedroom.

**PRIMARY BEDROOM**

Kurt goes to Sheryl's side of the bed and leans down, listening to her breathing. She's fast asleep. He frowns.

**INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Everyone gathers by the front door, putting on shoes and coats. Emma spots the lemon on the floor by the TV.

EMMA

Why is there a lemon on the floor?

Emma points. Sheryl and Kurt look.

SHERYL

What the--?

EMMA

Mommy! You almost said a bad word!

Sheryl picks up the lemon, looks at Kurt. Kurt shakes his head, confused.

**INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT**

Riley sneaks up the stairs, stops at the door and listens. Silence. She eases the door open and slips into the hallway.

**HALLWAY**

Riley goes to Emma's door, reaches in, sets the door handle to lock, closes the door with a quiet CLICK and slips back to the basement.

**INT. PRIMARY BEDROOM - LATER**

From the doorway, Kurt watches Sheryl sleeping. He steps carefully into the hallway.

**BASEMENT STAIRS**

Crouching at the top of the stairs, Riley keeps her hand on the door handle.

**HALLWAY**

At Emma's door, Kurt finds the handle locked. He wiggles the handle, then KNOCKS gently. No response.

He KNOCKS again.

**EMMA'S ROOM**

EMMA  
(sleepy)  
Angel?

LOUDER KNOCK.

**HALLWAY**

KURT  
Emma?

Kurt KNOCKS LOUDER.



KURT  
Emma!

EMMA (O.S.)  
Daddy?

KURT  
(through the door)  
Why is the door locked?

SHERYL (O.S.)  
Kurt?

KURT  
(under his breath)  
Fuck sake!  
(to Sheryl)  
It's nothing, hon!  
(through the door)  
Emma, unlock the door.

The door opens. Emma stands there, half-awake.

KURT  
Why did you lock the door?

EMMA  
I didn't.

SHERYL (O.S.)  
What's wrong?

KURT  
(to Sheryl)  
Go back to bed!

KURT  
(to Emma)  
You, too. Back to bed.

Emma pads back to her bed.

Kurt closes Emma's door and heads to his room.

### **BASEMENT STAIRS**

Riley starts down the stairs when a STEP CREAKS.

### **HALLWAY**

At the threshold of his bedroom, Kurt hears Riley's CREAK.

He looks down the hall, strides quickly to the basement door.  
He yanks open the door, flips on the light.

#### **BASEMENT**

Riley dashes to the window, pushes out the screen, and climbs out just as Kurt reaches the bottom of the stairs.

He sees her feet disappear.

KURT

Hey!

Kurt turns and runs back up the basement stairs.

#### **EXT. BACKYARD - SAME TIME**

Riley scrambles over the backyard fence, falls with a CRASH into the yard next door.

#### **INT. LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME**

Kurt runs to the front door.

SHERYL (O.S.)

What's going on?

KURT

Intruder.

Sheryl's jaw drops as Kurt hurls himself out the door.

Emma emerges from her room, rubbing her eyes.

EMMA

I heard noises.

Sheryl rushes to Emma, turns her around.

SHERYL

It's nothing honey. Let's get you  
back to bed.

#### **EXT. BACKYARD - NIGHT**

Riley races across the neighbor's lawn. A DOG BARKS.

**EXT. BLUE DOOR HOUSE - NIGHT**

Kurt bursts out of his front door and runs into his backyard.  
A DOG BARKS nearby.

Kurt turns toward the sound, rushes to his fence, looks over.

In time to see Riley climbing over the neighbor's fence, a  
dog chomping at her heels.

He turns and sprints along the fence line toward the front of  
the house.

**BACKYARD**

Riley drops into another yard and darts across.

**SIDEWALK**

Kurt rushes to the front of the house.

**BACKYARD**

Riley gallops through another yard.

**FRONT YARD**

Kurt sprints across the front lawns of the same houses, then  
turns between them, KNOCKING OVER a FLOWER POT.

**BACKYARD**

Riley hears the FLOWER POT CRASH and veers sharply away from  
the sound.

**BACKYARD**

Kurt bursts into the backyard Riley just left, runs to the  
back fence, climbs it, looks both ways. Nothing.

**INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

Sheryl opens the door. Kurt, sweaty and breathing hard, steps  
into the house.

SHERYL  
(low voice)  
What in god's name is going on?

KURT  
There was an intruder in the  
basement.

SHERYL  
What?

**INT. UTILITY ROOM - NIGHT**

Sheryl and Kurt stare at a throw pillow and crumpled blanket  
behind the furnace.

KURT  
Holy shit!

SHERYL  
This is... someone was down here.

KURT  
Yep.

SHERYL  
Someone was sleeping down here!

KURT  
I'm calling the cops.

SHERYL  
I think I'm gonna be sick.

**INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT**

Sheryl stands at the threshold of the Utility Room.

Officers Perez and Burton step into the small room. Perez  
shines his flashlight on the towel and pillow.

BURTON  
(to Perez)  
Same guy?

PEREZ  
(to Burton)  
Maybe.  
(to Sheryl)  
Any idea how long this person may  
have been down here?

SHERYL  
I-I have no idea.

She looks at Kurt.

KURT  
Not more than a few days. I think.

SHERYL  
Oh my god!

KURT AND BURTON  
What?

SHERYL  
(to Kurt)  
Emma's imaginary friend!

KURT  
Oh my god!

PEREZ  
What is it?

KURT  
This, this... person! Has been in  
my six-year-old daughter's bedroom!

Sheryl tries to stop herself from crying.

BURTON  
Your daughter interacted with this  
individual?

KURT  
We thought it was just kids'  
imagination.

BURTON  
Did she describe the intruder?

SHERYL  
She said she was nice.

A sob hitches in her throat.

BURTON  
Female?

Sheryl nods.

PEREZ  
Has anything gone missing?

BURTON  
Anything of value, that is.

KURT  
I don't know.  
(to Sheryl)  
Jewelry? Laptops?

SHERYL  
Lemme check.

Sheryl hurries up the basement stairs.

KURT  
You said this phrogger's been in  
other homes?

PEREZ  
We've had a few other complaints.

Offscreen, SHERYL CRIES OUT. Kurt scrambles up the stairs,  
the cops trailing behind him.

**INT. LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER**

The three Men rush into the living room to find Sheryl  
staring at the wall.

Kurt follows her gaze. He gasps as he sees: an EMPTY glass  
picture frame.

BURTON  
What was in it?

SHERYL  
A signed copy of *To Kill a  
Mockingbird*. A gift from my dad.

PEREZ  
Approximate value?

Sheryl shrugs.

KURT  
A few thousand, I think.

BURTON  
Do you have a surveillance system?

KURT  
No.

SHERYL  
The Nanny Cam!  
(to the Cops)  
We had it set up in the living  
room. For the sitter.

PEREZ  
Maybe it picked up the intruder.

SHERYL  
I can access the feed from the app.

She grabs her phone and opens the app.

Kurt and the Officers gather behind her.

Sheryl pulls up the feed.

VIDEO: FAST MOTION of NAOMI and EMMA on the living room sofa.

SERIES OF VIDEO IMAGES:

- Emma waves at the camera, sticks out her tongue.
- Naomi and Emma move out of frame.
- Just Naomi on the sofa on her phone.
- Kurt and Sheryl arrive home. Naomi leaves.

KURT  
That was two days ago.

SHERYL  
Here's yesterday.

VIDEO: The FAST FORWARDED IMAGES show the LIVING ROOM.

Then a BREAK IN THE VIDEO, and we are looking at EMMA'S BED.

Sheryl PAUSES the video for a moment.

SHERYL  
Huh. It got moved.

KURT  
To Emma's room? Why?

SHERYL  
I don't know.

KURT  
You didn't move it?

SHERYL  
Emma must have.

Kurt's face goes white as Sheryl continues fast-forwarding.

KURT  
Hold on. Let me just--!

Kurt reaches out to grab Sheryl's phone. Too late.

VIDEO IMAGE: Kurt comes into Emma's room and sits on her bed.

KURT  
I was just--

Sheryl PAUSES. And there it is.

IMAGE: Kurt looks toward the door, erection in his hand.

Sheryl's mouth falls open in shock.

No one says anything for a moment.

Sheryl turns toward Kurt.

SHERYL  
What. The. Fuck. Is THIS?!

KURT  
Sheryl, I--

SHERYL  
(dripping venom)  
Out.

KURT  
Honey, just let--

SHERYL  
Get out of this house!

KURT  
Let me explain!

SHERYL  
(to the Cops)  
Can you make him leave?

Perez looks at Burton.

BURTON  
(to Kurt)  
Sir--



KURT  
I'm leaving, I'm leaving.

BURTON  
You're actually under arrest.

Burton grabs ahold of Kurt's arm.

KURT  
What do you mean? You don't have a warrant.

PEREZ  
Probable cause. Don't need a warrant.

KURT  
But I'm the victim! We've been robbed!

BURTON  
You have the right to remain silent--

KURT  
I haven't hurt anyone! I never laid a hand on--

EMMA (O.S.)  
Mom?

Sheryl rushes down the hall toward Emma's room.

**INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS**

She reaches Emma at her doorway, turns her around, and leads her back into her room.

**INT. EMMA'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

EMMA  
What's happening?

SHERYL  
It's just... some friends of your dad's.

Sheryl closes Emma's door, leads Emma to her bed.

**INT. LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER**

Burton puts handcuffs on Kurt, leads him to the front door.

BURTON

As I was saying, you have the right  
to remain silent. Anything you  
say..

Burton and Perez lead Kurt out the front door.

**EXT. HOUSE ACROSS THE STREET - NIGHT**

From behind the house across the street, Riley watches as  
Officer Burton leads Kurt, cuffed, out the front door.

She draws in a sharp breath, watches the Officers place Kurt  
into the Police Cruiser.

**INT. POLICE STATION - DAY**

Under fluorescent lights, several messy workstations are  
manned by a mix of uniformed and plainclothes OFFICERS.

At one workstation, Officer Burton reviews the Nanny Cam  
footage on his laptop. Officer Perez comes up behind him.

PEREZ

Get it logged in the file?

Burton holds up a flashdrive that he inserts into his laptop.

BURTON

Gotta isolate the clip.

PEREZ

Fucking disgusting.

BURTON

Did you see that pervert's face  
when she paused the video?

Perez scoffs.

PEREZ

The wife's coming in tomorrow to  
give a statement.

Burton nods. Perez moves on.

Burton goes back to cropping nanny cam footage on his laptop.  
He moves an editing slider, one frame at a time.

He sees something, rewinds, moves frame by frame until the BREAK in the feed between the Living Room and Emma's Room.

He pauses just before the break.

IMAGE: EXTREME CLOSE UP of Riley's partial hand and wrist showing her thin, pale, self-harm scars.

**EXT. RESIDENTIAL HOME - DAY**

CLOSE ON Riley's wrist where those same self-harm scars are clearly visible as she tries a locked back door.

She searches for a key, finds none, slinks away.

**INT. POLICE STATION - DAY**

Burton's still on his laptop. On his screen are several different CCTV video feeds. Perez comes up behind him.

PEREZ  
What's with the CCTV?

BURTON  
Trying to spot our phrogger.

PEREZ  
Think it's the same person?

BURTON  
Gotta be.

Perez returns to his desk. Burton goes back to his screen.

**EXT. MODERN HOUSE - DAY**

Riley hops a fence and tries to open windows. She finds them all locked.

**INT. POLICE STATION - DAY**

Burton searches CCTV feeds on his laptop. He pauses on

IMAGE: Intersection Cam showing Hooded Figure in lower right.

He ZOOMS IN on the face of the Hooded Figure.

IMAGE: RILEY'S FACE, only half-covered by her hoodie.

BURTON  
There you are.

**EXT. MODERN HOUSE - DAY**

Riley tries the back door.

A DOG appears at the window, BARKING. Riley retreats.

**EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - DAY**

A Police Cruiser drives slowly down the street.

**EXT. BACKYARD - DAY**

Riley tries another back door, but finds it locked. She searches for a key, finds none.

At the far end of the yard, Riley spies a wooden shed.

She tries the shed door. It opens. She peers in at a collection of yard tools, a lawn mower.

**EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - DAY**

A Police Cruiser drives slowly down the street.

**INT. SHED - DAY**

Riley enters and sits down on an overturned bucket. She leans back into the corner.

**BEGIN FLASHBACK**

**INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT**

Young Riley, 8, silently cracks open a door, peeks in.

RILEY'S FATHER, the back of his head in silhouette, stares at two men having sex on his computer screen.

RILEY'S MOTHER (O.S.)  
(sharp whisper)  
Riley!

Riley turns to see the angry face of her mother as she silently closes the door.

YOUNG RILEY  
(whispers)  
What's Daddy doing?

Riley's Mother marches Riley down the hall.

RILEY'S MOTHER  
(whisper)  
What did Daddy tell you about his  
office?

YOUNG RILEY  
Never go in.

RILEY'S MOTHER  
That's right. You're lucky it's me  
who found you. Now back to bed.  
That's a good boy.

**END FLASHBACK**

**INT. SHED - DAY**

Riley opens her eyes. She hears a CAR DOOR SHUT.

Riley moves to the door, peeks out, sees an OLD MAN, White, 70s, and a large DOG get out of a pickup in the driveway.

**EXT. OLD MAN'S HOUSE - DAY**

The Old Man walks to the side gate and lets the dog into the backyard.

OLD MAN  
There you go, Bucky.

Bucky gallops into the backyard as the Old Man closes the gate and goes to the front door.

**INT. SHED - DAY**

Through the crack in the door, Riley watches Bucky sniff the grass, lift his leg.

**BACKYARD**

Bucky continues his perusal of the backyard, finds a scent and makes a beeline to the shed.

**SHED**

Riley backs into the corner of the shed as Bucky gets closer. His nose pushes against the crack in the door.

He GROWLS.

RILEY  
Shhh! Nice doggie.

BUCKY BARKS.

**OLD MAN'S HOUSE - DAY**

The Old Man hears BUCKY BARKING. He frowns, looks out the window and sees Bucky barking at the shed.

**SHED - DAY**

Riley holds her hand for Bucky to smell through the slats.

RILEY  
It's okay. Good boy. Nice doggie.

Bucky continues BARKING.

**EXT. BACKYARD - DAY**

The Old Man walks across the yard towards the shed.

OLD MAN  
What is it, boy? Another racoon?

The Old Man strides to the shed and yanks open the door, revealing Riley cowering in the corner.

OLD MAN  
What the--?

**INT. OLD MAN'S HOUSE - DAY**

Riley slumps on a sofa across from the Old Man, and Bucky, happily panting, sits beside him.

The Old Man glances out the window.

OLD MAN  
About time.

Riley looks up, sees the police cruiser, and bolts toward the backdoor. The Old Man steps in her way and grabs her arm.

OLD MAN  
No you don't.

**INT. OLD MAN'S HOUSE - DAY**

He pulls her to the front door and opens it to reveal OFFICER WILLIAMS, 30s, Black, female and OFFICER BLAKE, White male, 30s, goatee.

A look of relief briefly passes over Riley's face.

OLD MAN  
Here she is. Found her in my shed  
in the back.

OFFICER WILLIAMS  
What were you doing in the shed?

RILEY  
I was cold.

OFFICER WILLIAMS  
Where do you live?

Riley doesn't answer.

OFFICER BLAKE  
(to the Old Man)  
Any damage to property? Anything  
missing?

OLD MAN  
Doesn't look like it.

Officer Blake nods.

OFFICER BLAKE  
You can press charges, or we can--

OLD MAN  
Someone's got to stand up to these  
people.

OFFICER WILLIAMS  
You'll need to come down to the  
station.

OLD MAN  
Can I bring my dog?

OFFICER WILLIAMS

Uh... sure.

**INT. POLICE STATION - DAY**

Sheryl stands at the reception desk. The DESK SERGEANT, 40s, overweight, glasses, looks up.

SHERYL

I'm here to see Officer Perez.

Perez hears his name and looks up.

PEREZ

Mrs. Collins?

Perez meets her at the front desk.

PEREZ

We appreciate you coming in.

Officer Perez leads Sheryl to his desk where she takes a seat across from him.

PEREZ

This won't take long. Wait here for a moment while I grab what we need.

Perez disappears down a hallway.

At the reception desk, Officers Blake and Williams arrive with Riley, the Old Man, and Bucky.

DESK SERGEANT

You can't--

OFFICER WILLIAMS

It's a service dog. He'll be gone in a a minute.

The Desk Sergeant narrows his eyes at Williams, but returns his attention to the computer screen in front of him.

Williams sits Riley down at her work station, just a few feet away from Sheryl. Riley slumps in the chair.

OFFICER WILLIAMS

Hood off.

Riley pushes her hood back, takes a scared look around.

At another desk, Officer Blake motions for the Old Man to sit.



He does, and Bucky sits at his feet. Officer Blake hands a clipboard to the Old Man.

OFFICER BLAKE  
Fill out the top part here and the  
section on the back.

The Old Man nods, begins filling out the form.

OFFICER WILLIAMS  
(to Riley)  
Okay. Name?

RILEY  
Riley.

OFFICER WILLIAMS  
Last name?

Riley hesitates.

RILEY  
Uh, Leeds.

OFFICER WILLIAMS  
Two E's?

RILEY  
Uh, yeah.

OFFICER WILLIAMS  
Date of birth.

RILEY  
November twenty-second, twenty-ten.

OFFICER WILLIAMS  
Place of residence.

RILEY  
I--I don't--

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)  
Williams!

Williams looks in the direction of the voice. A FEMALE OFFICER, 30s, Latina, motions to her.

FEMALE OFFICER  
We need you down in line-up.

OFFICER WILLIAMS  
I'm busy.

She gestures toward Riley and the Old Man. The Female Officer glances at them.

FEMALE OFFICER  
It'll only take a minute.

Williams sighs, gets up.

OFFICER WILLIAMS  
(to Riley)  
This will only take a sec.  
(to Officer Blake)  
Keep an eye, eh?

Officer Blake nods. Williams disappears down a hallway.

Perez returns, sits down across from Sheryl. He sees the Old Man, Dog, and Riley, and looks to Officer Blake.

PEREZ  
Where's Williams?

OFFICER BLAKE  
Line up.

Perez nods, turns to Sheryl, hands her a clipboard.

PEREZ  
Fill out this first sheet. Then  
initial the next two pages.

Sheryl takes the clipboard, begins writing.

Officer Williams returns and sits at her work station.

OFFICER WILLIAMS  
(to Perez)  
Hey, I think I got your phrogger.

Perez looks at Williams, then at Riley. So does Sheryl.

PEREZ  
That so?

OFFICER WILLIAMS  
Trespass. On Walker. Isn't that  
near where you caught the pedo?

Perez gives Williams a severe look, motions with his eyes. Williams looks at Sheryl.

OFFICER WILLIAMS  
Oh, shit. Sorry.

Sheryl waves away her concern, stares at Riley.

**INT. POLICE STATION - LATER**

**SERGEANT'S DESK**

Officer Williams shakes hands with the Old Man at the Sergeant's desk.

OFFICER WILLIAMS  
You should receive a follow-up  
email within a a day or two.

The Old Man grunts, leads Bucky to the exit.

**OFFICER WILLIAMS' DESK**

Sheryl leans toward Riley.

SHERYL  
(whispers)  
It was you, wasn't it?

Riley meets Sheryl's eyes, holds for a long moment.

SHERYL  
(whispers)  
How did you know?

Officer Williams sits, blocking Sheryl's access to Riley.

OFFICER WILLIAMS  
Where were we?

She consults her computer.

OFFICER WILLIAMS  
Ah, okay. I'm gonna need your  
parents' names.

BURTON (O.S.)  
Riley?

Officer Burton approaches Officer Williams' desk.

BURTON  
(to Officer Williams)  
I got this one.

Burton grabs Riley's arm, tries to pull her out of her chair.  
She grips the armrests, resisting.

OFFICER WILLIAMS  
Hey! I'm not done booking her!

BURTON  
Him!

Perez and Sheryl both watch this standoff in shock.

Burton glares at Williams.

BURTON  
(low and dangerous)  
Release him to me.

OFFICER WILLIAMS  
Sure. After I'm done booking...  
him.

Burton looks like he wants to punch Williams in the face.

He releases Riley's arm and disappears down the hallway.

**INT. POLICE STATION - MOMENTS LATER**

Perez ushers Sheryl toward the exit.

PEREZ  
Thanks for coming in.

Sheryl nods, still unsettled. She motions to Riley, still at Williams' desk.

SHERYL  
(whispers)  
Is that the... person who was in my  
house?

Perez looks at Riley.

PEREZ  
Still investigating, ma'am. We'll  
let you know of any developments...  
regarding the book.

Dissatisfied, Sheryl nods.

SHERYL  
Thank you.

Sheryl exits, and Perez hurries down a hallway.

**EXT. POLICE STATION - MOMENTS LATER**

Burton paces in the parking lot behind the station. Perez exits the station, goes to Burton.

PEREZ  
What the fuck?

BURTON  
That's my son in there.

PEREZ  
Why didn't you say anything?

BURTON  
I wasn't sure before.

PEREZ  
I wish I could say we could keep him out of the system.

BURTON  
I just want my son back. His mom has been worried sick.

PEREZ  
How long has he been missing?

BURTON  
He left bootcamp over a week ago.

PEREZ  
Bootcamp?

BURTON  
Not that kind. He's fifteen.

PEREZ  
Your private life is none of my business.

Perez turns to go.

PEREZ  
Just watch it or you'll have the captain on your ass. Williams is just doing her job.

Burton nods, head down.

**INT. POLICE STATION - LATER**

Burton grips Riley's arm, escorts her to the station exit.

Riley turns and looks back, eyes filled with dread.

Officers Williams and Perez watch, both troubled.

**INT. POLICE CRUISER - NIGHT**

Riley stares down at her lap in the passenger seat of Burton's police cruiser.

BURTON  
Where's the book?

RILEY  
Book?

BURTON  
The book. The Collins book. In the  
frame. The house with the blue  
door.

RILEY  
I don't know about a book.

BURTON  
You didn't take it?

RILEY  
No.

BURTON  
Swear before God?

Riley nods.

RILEY  
I swear.

Burton scoffs, looks at Riley for a long moment, then grunts.

BURTON  
Your mother's been worried sick.

Riley doesn't respond.

BURTON  
She's been praying every night  
since you... escaped. We both have.

Riley stares at her lap.

RILEY  
(barely audible)  
They were electrocuting me.

BURTON  
That's--that's just science. A  
brain thing. Gotta rewire it is  
all.

Tears fall silently from Riley's eyes.

Burton sees the tears, and anger rises in his eyes.

BURTON  
Jesus Christ! This is what I'm  
talking about. Stop that shit.

Riley wipes the tears away.

RILEY  
Sorry.

BURTON  
Gotta toughen up, boy.

**INT. BURTON HOUSE - NIGHT**

Burton hauls Riley through the front door.

Riley's Mother, Mrs. Burton, clasps her hands together.

MRS. BURTON  
Praise the lord!

She embraces Riley, whose arms remain at her side.

MRS. BURTON  
Thank God you're okay. Are you  
hurt? Have you been eating?

Riley doesn't respond.

BURTON  
He's fine.  
(to Riley)  
Come on.

Burton pulls Riley down the hallway. Riley stumbles.

They reach a reinforced door in the hallway. Mrs. Burton  
follows. Riley stops at the threshold.

BURTON  
Go on.

**INT. BURTON BASEMENT STAIRS - CONTINUOUS**

Riley descends the stairs. Her parents follow.

**INT. BURTON BASEMENT - NIGHT**

A long, dark room with cinderblock walls and cement floor. A tidy row of shelved boxes at one end next to a small fridge.

At the other end, a mattress on a metal frame, the bed covered with an NFL blanket.

Technically a daylight basement, the two windows are covered with plywood. Burton gestures toward the windows.

BURTON

I made some minor changes. For safety.

Riley stares at the floor. Mrs. Burton takes her hand.

MRS. BURTON

Pray with me.

She leads Riley toward the bed, kneels, pulling Riley down with her. Burton watches.

Mrs. Burton puts her elbows on the bed, presses her palms together. She looks at Riley.

After a brief hesitation and a fearful glance at Burton, Riley does the same.

Mrs. Burton raises her eyes to the ceiling.

MRS. BURTON

Dear Lord, thank you for bringing my baby boy back to me.

She sniffs, wipes her nose.

MRS. BURTON

Please help him to see the error of his ways and guide him on the path to righteousness.

She pauses here.

MRS. BURTON

Help him to accept God's will to embrace his manhood and fulfill his ultimate goal of fatherhood. In the name of Jesus, Amen.



She stands, leaving Riley frozen in place, on her knees, palms together, head down.

Mrs. Burton starts up the stairs.

BURTON  
Don't get any ideas. There's no way  
out of here except through this  
door.

He points up the stairs.

BURTON  
And it's going to be deadbolted.

Burton follows his wife up the stairs. At the top of the stairs, he turns.

BURTON  
Don't worry. You won't have to stay  
down here long... Just until you're  
fixed.

The door closes behind. LATCH LOCKS.

Riley's shoulders shake as she sobs silently.

### **BEGIN FLASHBACK**

#### **INT. RILEY'S CLOSET - NIGHT**

Riley, bloody nose, tears streaking eyeliner, crouches in the corner of a closet, her face illuminated by a thin shaft of light coming from a crack in the door.

ANGRY VOICES can be heard OFFSCREEN.

MRS. BURTON (O.S.)  
Roger, stop!

BURTON (O.S.)  
Did you see him?

Riley glimpses her parents through the closet door.

MRS. BURTON  
God has placed--

BURTON  
God has forsaken us! Did you see  
his face?

The door to the closet opens. Burton towers over Riley.

**END FLASHBACK**

**INT. POLICE STATION - DAY**

Sheryl stands at the Sergeant's Desk. The Sergeant looks up.

DESK SERGEANT

Perez! Visitor.

Perez motions Sheryl over. She comes in, sits.

PEREZ

How can I help you, Mrs. Collins?

SHERYL

I was wondering if you had any more information on the... phrogger you brought in yesterday.

PEREZ

Would you like to press charges?  
For *To Kill a Mockingbird*?

SHERYL

Did you find it?

PEREZ

No.

SHERYL

No. No charges. Just wondering what's going to happen to...?

PEREZ

The minor suspect was booked and released to his parent's care. I'm not really at liberty to share any other information.

SHERYL

Of course. It's just that--

PEREZ

Sorry I can't tell you more.

SHERYL

I understand.

Sheryl stands to leave.

**INT. BURTON BASEMENT - NIGHT**

Riley lies on her back on the bed, eyes closed.

MRS. BURTON (O.S.)  
Will it hurt him?

REVEREND POLK (O.S.)  
Depends on how deeply the demonic  
spirit is attached.

Water droplets hit Riley's face. She blinks, opens her eyes.

They widen in fear as she sees past her mother to the stern, wrinkled visage of REVEREND POLK, 70s, pasty white skin, gray hair, black eyes.

He dips his fingers into a bowl of "holy water," flicks the water over Riley. Riley blinks again.

Riley tries to lift her hands, finds them bound to the bed. She looks around, sees Burton lurking in the shadows.

Reverend Polk CLAPS THREE TIMES, startling everyone.

REVEREND POLK  
Hear me, Riley Burton! You have  
been possessed by the devil! He is  
the one perverting your thoughts.  
He is the one torturing your mind.

Riley closes her eyes tightly.

REVEREND POLK  
But fear not. I am here to save  
you. To cast out the devil of  
perversion.

BURTON AND MRS. BURTON  
Praise the Lord!

Reverend Polk holds a CROSS over Riley with his left hand presses his right palm against Riley's forehead.

REVEREND POLK  
Demon be gone!

Reverend Polk pushes into Riley's forehead.

REVEREND POLK  
Return to hell where you belong and  
free this poor soul!

Reverend Polk mumbles prayers under his breath.

Mr. and Mrs. Burton stand nearby, heads bowed.

Reverend Polk stops his prayers, looks up at the Burtons.

REVEREND POLK  
Come. Link hands. Together, we will  
vanquish this demon.

The three of them join hands, close their eyes. Riley watches them in fear.

REVEREND POLK  
O, Lord, take away from this child  
his iniquities, we entreat Thee.  
That with pure mind he may worthily  
enter into the Holy of Holies.  
Through Christ our Lord.

ALL THREE  
Amen.

Reverend Polk continues to recite prayers in a low voice as all three adults bow their heads. His voice rises to a shout.

REVEREND POLK  
Lord, hear us! Drive out this  
insidious demon. This enemy of the  
light. Return him to hell where he  
belongs! Oh, Devil, in the name of  
Christ, begone!

Reverend Polk releases the hands of Mr. and Mrs. Burton and stares wide-eyed at a space behind them.

REVEREND POLK  
Behold! The apparition!

Rev. Polk points. Mr. and Mrs. Burton turn to look.

REVEREND POLK  
Do you see it?

Riley cranes to look. There is no apparition.

MRS. BURTON  
I see it!

REVEREND POLK  
Begone, demon!

He dips his hands into the "holy water" and throws it in the direction of the "spirit."

REVEREND POLK  
Never again will you pervert this  
innocent soul!

The Reverend mutters indistinct prayers as he holds the cross aloft. After a moment, he stops, drops to his knees.

Mrs. Burton goes to him.

MRS. BURTON  
Reverend?

REVEREND POLK  
It is done. The demon has been  
vanquished.

MR. AND MRS. BURTON  
Praise the Lord!

Riley squeezes her eyes shut.

#### **BEGIN FLASHBACK DREAM**

#### **INT. CLOSET - NIGHT**

Crouched in her closet, her face illuminated by the light of her phone, Riley wipes tears away.

RILEY  
Can I hide out at your place?

MARISA (V.O.)  
You know my parents. They would  
never let me have a boy over. Or a  
girl. They're worried I might be  
gay.

Riley laughs through tears.

RILEY  
Just maybe.

MARISA (V.O.)  
When are they...?

Riley shrugs.

RILEY  
This week. Next week. I don't know.

MARISA (V.O.)  
Fuck!

RILEY  
What am I gonna do?

MARISA (V.O.)  
Don't do anything stupid.

RILEY  
I'm not gonna off myself, if that's  
what you're worried about.

MARISA (V.O.)  
Promise?

**END FLASHBACK DREAM**

**INT. GARAGE - DAY**

At a workbench in the back of the garage, Burton fastens a CAR BATTERY to a small wooden platform.

Burton wraps long, thin copper wires around one end of a METAL ROD.

He wraps duct tape around the handle then attaches the long copper wires to the car battery.

He touches the rod to the metal work table, and it sparks.

**INT. BURTON BASEMENT - NIGHT**

Riley lies on her back in bed, staring at the ceiling.

The DOOR OPENS at the top of the stairs, and Riley sits up.

**INT. BURTON BASEMENT - NIGHT**

Burton arrives at the bottom of the stairs holding a tray with battery, rod, and wires.

Riley sees the tray, eyes widening in fear.

**BEGIN QUICK FLASHBACK**

**INT. EXAM ROOM - DAY**

An ATTENDANT hovers over Riley, attaching electrodes to her temples.

**END QUICK FLASHBACK**

**INT. BURTON BASEMENT - NIGHT**

Burton sets the Electrocution Tray in the middle of floor.

BURTON  
You left boot camp before your re-  
training was complete.

RILEY  
No.

BURTON  
Nothing against the Reverend. I'm a  
God-fearing man, but I'm also a man  
of science.

RILEY  
Please!

BURTON  
(calls up the stairs)  
Bring a chair!

RILEY  
Dad, no.

MRS. BURTON (O.S.)  
Coming!

BURTON  
It's called "aversion therapy."  
Scientifically proven.

RILEY  
You don't have to do this. I can be  
good.

Mrs. Burton carries a chair down the stairs, sets it next to  
the Electrocution Tray.

BURTON  
It's not that easy, son. You've got  
a sickness in your brain. It's not  
just going to go away on its own.

Burton grasps Riley's hand, pulls her roughly to the chair  
and straps her wrists and ankles to it.

Riley looks at Mrs. Burton.

RILEY  
Mom?

Burton places a laptop on a small table in front of Riley.

MRS. BURTON

It's for your own good. It'll help  
you be your old self again. Back in  
God's good graces.

RILEY

I can be my old self. Please!

BURTON

Don't worry. I did my research. I  
know what I'm doing.

He hands a MOUTH GUARD to Mrs. Burton, who tries to put it in  
Riley's mouth. Riley resists.

MRS. BURTON

Come on, honey. This is for your  
safety.

Riley accepts the Mouth Guard, tears falling.

BURTON

(to Mrs. Burton)

It's all ready. Just click to  
advance the pictures.

Mrs. Burton nods her head, serious.

Burton arranges the battery apparatus behind Riley and grasps  
the metal rod with a gloved hand.

BURTON

(to Riley)

Look at each image. If you turn  
your head or close your eyes,  
you'll get the shock.

Mr. Burton nods at Mrs. Burton. She leans forward, presses a  
button on the computer.

IMAGE: A Family Photo from when Riley was young.

Riley's eyes fill with dreadful anticipation.

IMAGES continue flashing on the screen. Each image lingers  
for a few seconds before another image comes up.

IMAGE: a dog mid-run

IMAGE: a landscape sunset

IMAGE: a smiling family of four

IMAGE: a man wearing eye shadow



A SIZZLING SOUND as Burton presses the end of the metal rod against Riley's back.

Riley convulses, back arching, and she lets out a SCREAM.

Mrs. Burton covers her ears.

**EXT. BURTON HOUSE - SAME TIME**

In the middle the street in front of Riley's house the FAINT OFFSCREEN SOUND OF RILEY'S SCREAM.

**TIME CUT TO:**

**INT. BURTON BASEMENT - BATHROOM - NIGHT**

Riley turns her back to the mirror and lifts up the back of her shirt to reveal several angry red, circular welts.

**INT. BURTON BASEMENT - NIGHT**

Riley curls up in a fetal position on the bed.

**INT. BLUE DOOR HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Sheryl and Emma sit facing each other on the living room sofa. Sheryl holds Emma's hands in hers.

EMMA

It's my fault.

SHERYL

No, honey. Not even a little bit.  
Your dad, he has an illness. He can  
get better, but it will take time.  
Maybe a lot of time.

EMMA

How long?

SHERYL

I-I'm not sure. A long time.

EMMA

Can I see him?

SHERYL

Um. Not right away. Maybe after  
things settle down a little.

Emma nods, face serious.

**INT. BURTON BASEMENT - NIGHT**

Riley crouches underneath the stairs, body tense. She hears FOOTSTEPS, glances up. They FADE. She breathes.

She squeezes the St. Christopher Medal.

**BEGIN FLASHBACK**

**EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY**

Riley and Marisa lean up against the brick wall behind the school. Marisa offers a vape to Riley. She declines.

RILEY  
What if... what if it works?

MARISA  
What? The conversion?

RILEY  
What if I can't take it? What if  
they break me?

MARISA  
They won't. They can hurt you, but  
they can't change who you are. Even  
broken, you're still you.

RILEY  
I'm scared.

Marisa hugs Riley.

MARISA  
You just gotta survive it. Remember  
who you are. Remember you are  
loved.

**END FLASHBACK**

**INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT**

Under the stairs, Riley hears FOOTSTEPS and stands up.

She kisses the St. Christopher medal, an angry, defiant look in her eyes.

The basement DOOR UNLATCHES.

Light from above partially illuminates Riley's face.

Riley watches Burton's BOOTS CLOMP on the stairs.

**INT. BASEMENT STAIRS - NIGHT**

Holding the Electrocution Tray, Burton takes slow steps.

**INT. BASEMENT - SAME TIME**

Riley waits until she sees Burton's foot on a step within her reach then grasps his ankle with both hands and pulls.

BURTON

Hey!

Burton falls forward. The Electrocution Tray and Burton hit the stairs and slide to the cement floor with a CRASH.

Before Burton can get to his feet, Riley leaps onto the stairs, runs up and out of the basement.

BURTON

Agnes! Stop him!

**INT. LIVING ROOM - SECONDS LATER**

Mrs. Burton runs to block the front door.

MRS. BURTON

God is watching, Riley.

She raises her cross pendant as if to prevent her passage.

Riley barrels forward and pushes her mother so hard she falls against a table, causing a VASE to fall and SHATTER.

Riley darts out the front door.

Burton clambers up the stairs.

BURTON (O.S.)

Riley!

**EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - NIGHT**

Riley races down the street, turns at a stop sign.

**EXT. BURTON HOUSE - NIGHT**

Burton limps out his front door, looks both ways.

After a moment, he hobbles off in the correct direction.

**STREET**

Riley sprints down the sidewalk, slides under a parked car.

Burton turns the corner just as Riley hides herself.

He jogs, limping, in the direction of Riley's hiding place.

**UNDER CAR**

From under the car, Riley watches Burton limp past.

**STREET**

Burton reaches the end of the block, looks both ways. Nada.

BURTON  
God Dammit!

**UNDER CAR**

Riley watches Burton's feet as he passes her hiding place.

Riley puts her hand over her mouth to silence her breathing.

**TIME CUT TO:**

**EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - NIGHT**

Riley crawls out from under the parked car.

**EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - LATER**

Riley jogs down the street, sees the Blue Door of the Collins house. She runs to it and knocks on the door.

**INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

Sheryl and Emma sit on the sofa, watching TV.

LOUD KNOCKING. Concerned, Sheryl goes to the door, sees Riley, opens it.

Riley stumbles inside, falls to her knees.

Sheryl looks toward the street, sees nothing and closes the door quickly.

EMMA

Angel!

SHERYL

I think her name is Riley.

(to Riley)

Is that right?

Riley nods.

SHERYL

Are you okay, hon?

EMMA

What happened to you?

Riley looks at Emma, tries to collect her thoughts.

SHERYL

(to Riley)

Come sit down.

Sheryl helps Riley to the sofa. Emma sits next to her while Sheryl retrieves a glass of water from the kitchen.

As Sheryl places the water on the coffee table, Riley leans close and whispers in her ear.

RILEY

(barely audible whisper)

They electrocuted me.

Sheryl pulls back like she's been slapped. Her eyes fill with sympathy. She sits and hugs Riley.

SHERYL

(whispers)

Your parents?

Riley nods. A sob escapes her.

SHERYL

I'm so so sorry.

**INT. KITCHEN - LATER**

Sheryl and Riley sit at the kitchen table.

Nearby, Emma watches a TV show and sneaks glances their way.

Sheryl reaches for Riley's hand.

SHERYL

(whispers)

I want to thank you for what you  
did. For Emma.

Riley looks down.

SHERYL

(whispers)

You saw something. Something I  
missed. And I'll never--

Tears fall from Sheryl's eyes.

SHERYL

(whispers)

If you hadn't moved that teddy  
cam...

Sheryl wipes her eyes, gathers herself.

SHERYL

(whispers)

Emma was right about you being her  
guardian angel.

**INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Emma and Riley sit cross-legged facing each other on the  
living room floor.

EMMA

What happened?

She points at Riley's face.

RILEY

Someone... hit me.

EMMA

Why?

RILEY

I...I think because... their heart is  
full of fear. And hate.

EMMA  
I don't like those people.

RILEY  
Me neither.

EMMA  
If I was there, I would kick them.  
Hard!

Riley smiles.

RILEY  
You'd be my protector?

Emma leaps up, takes an action stance.

EMMA  
I would karate chop them!

She karate chops the air.

RILEY  
Where'd you learn that?

#### **KITCHEN**

At the sink, Sheryl watches Emma and Riley, phone to her ear.

SHERYL  
Is fostering even an option? No... I  
don't know... okay.

She listens, nods.

SHERYL  
I'll call you when I know more.

#### **INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER**

Emma watches TV. Riley sits across from Sheryl.

SHERYL  
I spoke to a lawyer friend. She  
said the first thing we need to do  
is call the police.

RILEY  
But-

The SOUND OF A CAR PULLING UP OUTSIDE.

Sheryl looks up in fear.

Riley rushes to the window, sees Burton getting out of his Police Cruiser.

RILEY  
It's my dad!

SHERYL  
Do you have a phone?

Riley shakes her head.

SHERYL  
Here's mine.

She presses her phone into Riley's hand.

SHERYL  
Take Emma to her room, lock the door behind you, and call 911.

Riley nods, fear in her eyes. She takes Emma's hand and hurries down the hall.

**INT. FOYER - SECONDS LATER**

LOUD KNOCKS ON THE DOOR.

Sheryl goes to the front door, but doesn't open it.

SHERYL  
What can I do for you, Officer?

**EXT. FRONT PORCH - SAME TIME**

Burton peeks in the window.

BURTON  
I'm looking for my son.

**INTERCUT SHERYL/BURTON**

SHERYL  
Your son's not here.

BURTON  
You're lying. Open the door.

SHERYL  
Look, it's not my business, but--



BURTON  
You're right. It's not your  
business.

SHERYL  
I can't in good conscience let you  
take Riley. She's scared to death.

Burton tries opening several windows.

BURTON  
This is a family matter, best  
handled within the family.

SHERYL  
I just think--

BURTON  
If you insist on holding Riley  
here, I'll have no choice but to  
arrest you.

SHERYL  
Arrest me? For what?

BURTON  
Kidnapping. Obstruction. Resisting  
arrest.

SHERYL  
I didn't kidnap anyone!

BURTON  
Why don't you open the door before  
I break it down?

**INT. FOYER - SAME TIME**

Sheryl steps back from the door.

SHERYL  
You can't enter my residence  
without a search warrant!

BURTON  
I can if I'm in pursuit of a  
suspect who's committed a felony.

SHERYL  
What felony?

**EXT. FRONT PORCH - SAME TIME**

Burton unholsters his HANDGUN.

BURTON  
Riley assaulted me and my wife. I  
pursued him here, and I'm coming in  
whether you like it or not!

SHERYL  
I've called 911!

BURTON  
I want my son!

Burton kicks the front door hard. It CRACKS and SPLINTERS.

**INT. EMMA'S ROOM**

Under the bed, Emma whimpers. Riley puts her arms around her.

RILEY  
(whisper)  
It's okay.

**INT. FOYER - SAME TIME**

Burton kicks the door again. It swings open. Sheryl runs toward Emma's room. Burton bursts through, gun raised.

BURTON  
Hold it!

Sheryl freezes, hands raised.

BURTON  
Turn around.

Sheryl turns slowly.

SHERYL  
I-I haven't done anything.

Burton moves toward Sheryl, gun on her.

BURTON  
This is a safety issue now. We  
don't want either of the children  
to come to harm. Right?

SHERYL  
N-no.

He looks past Sheryl at the door to Emma's room. Sheryl turns.

BURTON  
Your daughter's room?

OFFSCREEN SIREN. Burton turns his head toward the sound.

BURTON  
Fuck.

He grabs Sheryl. She screams.

**INT. EMMA'S ROOM - SAME TIME**

Sheryl's scream is loud and clear. Riley hugs Emma tighter.

**EXT. FRONT PORCH - MOMENTS LATER**

Officers Blake and Williams, guns up, peek through the splintered front door.

Through the door, Williams sees Burton gripping Sheryl's arm with one hand, his HANDGUN with the other.

Sheryl strains to get away.

OFFICER WILLIAMS  
What the fuck is going on?

BURTON  
Walk away.

OFFICER WILLIAMS  
We got a call. 911 dispatch.

SHERYL  
That was me! I called!

BURTON  
I got this!

SHERYL  
This officer is threatening me and my daughter!

Williams and Blake step further into the room.

OFFICER WILLIAMS  
How about we all put our guns away?

Williams and Blake lower their guns. Burton grips his handgun more tightly.

BURTON  
This is private matter. She has my son.

OFFICER WILLIAMS  
It's not private anymore.

SHERYL  
He broke my door!

Burton shrugs.

BURTON  
She refused to open it. She's holding my son against his will.

RILEY (O.S.)  
No she's not!

Everyone turns to see Riley standing outside Emma's room, door closed. She points at Burton.

RILEY  
He electrocuted me.

Williams looks at Burton. Burton raises his gun.

BURTON  
He's lying.

Williams and Blake raise their guns.

RILEY  
Look in our basement.

OFFICER WILLIAMS  
(to Burton)  
Be smart.

Burton doesn't take his eyes off Williams.

BURTON  
Riley, get your ass over here.

Riley doesn't move. Fear and determination in her eyes.

OFFICER WILLIAMS  
(to Burton)  
Don't be stupid.

BURTON  
Riley!

RILEY  
No!

Riley's eyes flash defiance. Burton's jaw flexes, his mind working. He pushes Sheryl onto the floor.

BURTON  
Get the fuck out of my way.

Burton storms past Williams and Blake, jumps into his Police Cruiser, and roars away.

OFFICER BLAKE  
What the fuck was that?

OFFICER WILLIAMS  
Career suicide. That's what that was.

Riley slumps to the floor. Sheryl goes to her, kneels.

#### **EXT. BURTON HOUSE - DAY**

In the driveway, Mrs. Burton pushes a suitcase into the trunk of an SUV. Burton ties a cargo bag to the roof rack.

They both climb into the SUV as SIRENS ERUPT.

As Burton starts the engine, two Police Cars come to a SCREECHING HALT at the end of the driveway.

Officers Williams and Blake leap out, weapons drawn.

OFFICER WILLIAMS  
Hands on the dash, both of you!

Mrs. Burton puts her hands on the dashboard.

Another Police Car pulls up, lights flashing.

Seething, Burton puts his hands on the dashboard.

The Officers move in.

#### **INT. BURTON BASEMENT - LATER**

Blake and Williams stare down at the Electrocution Tray.

OFFICER BLAKE  
Holy shit.

OFFICER WILLIAMS  
That poor kid.

**INT. DEPT. OF CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES - DAY**

Riley sits across from a SOCIAL WORKER, 40s, Latina, kind.

SOCIAL WORKER  
What about your grandparents? Your  
mom's mother?

RILEY  
She died when I was young.

SOCIAL WORKER  
Father's folks?

RILEY  
I think my grandma's in a home  
somewhere... we never visited.

SOCIAL WORKER  
Dad's father?

Riley shrugs. The Social Worker nods, types something, looks  
back at Riley.

SOCIAL WORKER  
With no family members to care for  
you, the only option, for now, is a  
group home.

Riley nods, grim-faced.

SOCIAL WORKER  
It's still possible for you to be  
placed with a foster family... It's  
just...

RILEY  
I know.

The Social Worker smiles sympathetically.

**TIME CUT TO:**

**INT. COURTROOM - DAY**

Burton and Mrs. Burton stand at the one table with their  
LAWYER, 50s, White male, slimy looking.

At the other table, Riley, hair longer, no bruises, sits next  
to an ADVOCATE, 40s, female, pantsuit.

A JUDGE, 60s, somber, refers to a sheaf of papers.

JUDGE

For criminal mistreatment of a  
child, the court sentences Agnes  
Burton to four years.

Mrs. Burton puts her hand to her mouth.

JUDGE

For aggravated criminal  
mistreatment of a child, Roger  
Burton is sentenced to thirteen  
years.

Mrs. Burton gasps. Burton stares straight ahead.

The Advocate speaks in Riley's ear. She nods.

Sheryl, near the back of the courtroom, slips out.

**TIME CUT TO:**

**INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Emma and Sheryl sit on the living room sofa. Sheryl holds  
Emma's hands in hers.

SHERYL

Are you sure?

Emma nods.

EMMA

Uh-huh.

SHERYL

It's a big step.

EMMA

I know.

SHERYL

And it might not be for that long.

EMMA

Why not?

SHERYL

Well, it'll be up to Riley.

**EXT. SCHOOL - DAY**

Marisa leans up against the brick wall behind the school. She exhales a vape cloud.

RILEY (O.S.)

Thought I'd find you here.

Marisa sees Riley and rushes to her. They embrace.

MARISA

Oh my god! I saw the news. Your parents! I've been calling and texting you.

RILEY

They took my phone.

Marisa steps back, examines Riley.

MARISA

I figured. Are you okay? Are you converted?

Riley laughs.

RILEY

Not quite.

MARISA

I went by your house. Where are you staying?

RILEY

Group home.

MARISA

Is it awful?

Riley shrugs.

RILEY

It's alright.

MARISA

I missed you.



RILEY

You did?

MARISA

Of course! This school is full of  
idiots.

Riley smiles.

RILEY

I missed you, too.

**INT. GROUP HOME - COMMON AREA - DAY**

At a desk in the common area, Riley reads a textbook.

SHERYL (O.S.)

Riley?

Riley turns, sees Sheryl standing next to the group home  
MANAGER, 50s, female. They are both smiling.

**MOMENTS LATER**

Sheryl and Riley sit across from one another.

SHERYL

Many, many years. You'll never have  
to see him. I promise.

Riley nods.

RILEY

Okay.

Sheryl brightens.

SHERYL

Really?

RILEY

Yeah.

Riley gives a slight smile. Sheryl's eyes light up.

**TIME CUT TO:**

**EXT. EMMA'S HOUSE - DAY**

Riley gets out of the Social Worker's car.

Sheryl and Emma stand on the front porch, beaming at Riley.

Emma runs to Riley, takes her by the hand.

EMMA  
You came back!

RILEY  
Is it okay if I stay with you for a while?

EMMA  
It's what I wanted!

**INT. EMMA'S ROOM - LATER**

Riley walks to a bookshelf in Emma's room and gingerly removes *To Kill a Mockingbird* from behind picture books.

She hands it to Sheryl. Sheryl looks at it, then at Riley.

RILEY  
I wanted to make sure you called the police.

Sheryl nods in understanding.

SHERYL  
Clever girl.

Riley smiles.

Emma grabs two Barbie dolls. She holds one out for Riley.

EMMA  
Do you like Barbies?

Riley smiles, takes the offered doll.

RILEY  
Who doesn't?

Riley and Emma sit down to play amongst a slew of dolls.

Sheryl smiles from the doorway, eyes glistening.

**FADE OUT.**