



BLOOD DRIVE

by Phoenix Black

E: phoenixblackthewriter@gmail.com
Cell: +61 410 746 033

TOTAL CONTROL

A song by The Motels

Looking counter clockwise
Knowing what could happen
Any moment maybe you, maybe even you

Steadfast collapse
Always certain any moment
Maybe you maybe you, Maybe even you

Recline complete, dream too sweet
I can't do it, not with you
Not even with you, Maybe never with you

And I'd sell my soul for total control
Yeah, I'd sell my soul for total control

Street wet tonight,
Lovers touch, it's pure delight
Always certain any moment, Maybe even you

Stay in bed, stained sheets
My head hurts, I repeat
Maybe you, maybe you, maybe even you

And I'd sell my soul for total control
Yeah, I'd sell my soul for total control

Ooh I'd sell my soul for Total Control

Over you.

EXT. RURAL USA - STILLWATER HIGH - BLOOD DRIVE VAN - DAY

CHEERLEADERS and JOCKS flirt by a sun-bathed blood drive van. A sign by the steps: STILLWATER HIGH BLOOD DRIVE. The school buzzes as school cliques mill past.

YOUNG WOMAN (V.O.)
What would it take for you to believe
the unbelievable?

PUM-PUM-PUM. A Jock hammers a basketball like a racing pulse.

INT. BLOOD DRIVE VAN - DAY

Sorority queen CHASTITY (16, white) reclines in an arm chair. Her blue eyes blink rapidly like morse code for HELP. Sweat coats her lip. Her lace bra peeks through her shirt.

The basketball PUM-PUM-PUM replaces her heartbeat. Chastity pumps a ball in a manicured hand.

Raven-haired nurse EVE (appears 40, white), with a body to die for, bends close over Chastity.

EVE
Stay. Completely. Still.

A thick needle SLOW, SLOW, SLOWLY pierces Chastity's vein, blue in her alabaster skin. Chastity cries out.

Eve's deep blue eyes fix on the blood snaking down a tube. Eve notes Chastity's purity ring. Chastity notices.

CHASTITY
I'm head of the chastity club.

EVE
You've really never had sex?

CHASTITY
I'm not going to hell.

A bell RINGS. The school chatter outside fades.

Blood DRIPS fast, echoing into a bulging blood bag.

Chastity eyes the bag, the door. Tries but can't speak.

A basketball BANGS the window. Chastity startles. Eve closes the blinds. She meets Chastity's fear with a sly smirk.

EVE
Relax. It's almost over.

Eve jerks the needle out. Chastity whimpers, weak.

Eve zones in on a fat blood drop at Chastity's elbow.

Her tongue FLICKS the blood drop into her mouth!

Life in Chastity's face ebbs but the fear remains.
The basketball PUM-Pum-pum slows, slows -- Stops.

Eve labels a blood bag 'VIRGIN 16 AB-'.

EXT. BLOOD DRIVE VAN - DAY

Eve's eyes skim the empty yard. She plucks the sign inside.
Door MEWLS shut. VAN LOGO: UNITED WELLNESS set in a galaxy.

CUT TO BLACK

INT. STILLWATER - ARI'S HOUSE - DAY

ARI'S BEDROOM

Moving boxes cram a tiny room. Through them voyeuristically,
the bare back of a woman conditioned to be small.

Bitten nails zip the back of a white nurse's uniform, hiding
cigarette burns. A MEDICAL BRACELET clasps a delicate wrist.
A necklace is fastened, pulling forward an AMETHYST CROSS.

Frazzled single mom **ARI** (46, Korean American) fingers her
cross. She's a flower struggling through a crack in a road.
A testament to survival on the verge of being crushed.

Ari faces the ghost of herself in the mirror. Sighs.
She pats makeup on bags under her eyes.
Arranges her fringe to cover a SCAR. It's her nervous tic.

Ari feels under her mattress. Retrieves a GUN. Checks the
safety. Puts it her handbag. She pulls a 'GO' bag from under
the bed. Rummages through until she finds her US passport.

A CAT jumps on the bed. Ari startles.

ARI
Jonesie! You scared me!
(calls out)
Ben! Merry! Get a move on!

Ari nuzzles JONESIE. He PURRS. She cradles him to the door.
Trips over a box. A box cutter BOUNCE BOUNCES and nicks her.

Ari drops Jonesie who MEOWS in protest. She tamps the cut.

ARI (cont'd)

Frack!

On her nightstand are pill bottles labeled ASPIRIN and LAMICTAL ANTI-CONVULSANT and two forgotten tablets.

HALLWAY

Ari dodges Jonesie, ALWAYS UNDERFOOT, and a dozen neatly folded empty boxes, on her way to...

KIDS' BEDROOM

Twin beds, haphazardly made, in a small, empty room. Half the room is themed with vampire posters and figurines.

ARI (cont'd)

(distressed)

Ben? Merry?

BEN (O.S.)

Boo!

Ari wheels around. Her kids are geared up with backpacks.

The kids often lead by nature or necessity. Ari is the heart of the family, but they're the head and the fidgety hands.

Ari's cheeky, independent daughter **MERRY** (12, Eurasian), has HEMOPHILIA, leans on her WALKER. Merry raises an eyebrow.

MERRY

We're ready. Are you?

Ari's withdrawn son **BEN** (Eurasian, 8), with THICK GLASSES and Complex Trauma* films her.

**Complex Trauma, caused by childhood trauma, can present as a mix of autism and ADD, difficulty with reading cues and boundaries.*

Ari seizes Ben's camera. He hisses, baring plastic fangs.

ARI

Ben baby, no vampire stuff today.

Ben spits his fangs into Ari's palm. A familiar routine. Ben scoops Jonesie up and kisses him. Jonesie is nonplussed.

MERRY

Have you made lunch?

ARI

Argh!

Merry collects three packed lunches from the hall table.

MERRY
Another day in chaos.

ARI
I'm trying, Merry.

Merry is contrite. She spots the bleeding cut on Ari's shin.

MERRY
What happened? Did you "trip" again?
It lands like a slap. Ari recovers. She cups Merry's face.

ARI
This is a new start. We're safe here.
It's clear that neither of them quite believes it.
Ari assesses Ben as he cinches his lips with his fingers.

ARI (cont'd)
Remember. Your last name is Lee. And
we keep our secrets, like about Dad.
Ben grabs his stomach. Ari crouches and caresses his face.

ARI (cont'd)
Won't it be fun to make new friends?

MERRY
No more home schooling. Yay!

ARI
For you and me both baby. For you and
me both. Look, we're right on time!

MERRY
You don't get points for that, Mom.
Ari pokes out her tongue playfully. Merry responds in kind.
Ben's long blink. Ari's reassuring face.
Ben spews a demonic fountain of vomit.
Ari gawps at her spew-soaked uniform.

SERIES OF SHOTS

-- Ari dwells on Ben and Merry moping into school, holding hands. Ben twists back to Ari, anxious. Ari fakes a smile.

-- Ari cruises through a **PRESERVED SMALL TOWN**. A BACKPACKER enters a diner. Sign: *STILLWATER'S BEST JUICY LUCY!*

RADIO NEWS READER (V.O.)
Crusaders junior basketball team
remains missing after their bus...

Ari passes a billboard: *'United Wellness. Healthcare you can trust.'* A HANDSOME DOCTOR reinforces the message.

-- Clouds brood over a town of nearly twenty thousand souls, hemmed in by sunset-hued forest and endless APPLE ORCHARDS. Ari's car on a serpentine road is swallowed by the forest.

INT./EXT. CAR (FOREST) - DAY

Ari smiles up at the autumn leaves. She passes a sign.

STILLWATER
Est 1884
America's Apple Capital
Population 19, 994

A REDHEADED MAN in overalls paints the '4'.

He twists on her approach. His gaze pins her.

THWUMP! A flash of black fur BOUNCES off the window.

Ari swerves. SCREECHES to a stop. She pants, wet with sweat.

IN THE REAR VIEW MIRROR: A bear CUB lumped on the road.

EXT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Ari exits the car --

-- The man and cub are GONE. Nothing but silence.

Ari turns back to the car -- the CUB SCREAMS. She freezes.

Ari thaws, wavers toward the scream at the forest edge.

She peers into the bushes but doesn't leave the road.
The CUB SCREAMS. Ari squeezes her eyes shut until SILENCE.

INT./EXT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Ari collapses into the car and SLAMS the door. Takes a beat.
She peers at the bonnet. No damage. Exhales.

THRUMP! A giant mama bear LUNGES at the window.

Ari drops the key. The bear MOANS loudly and retreats.

Ari feels for the key under her seat. Got it!

THRUMP! The bear's PAWS and SLATHERING MAW fill the window.

Ari fumbles the key in. Engine GRATES, STUTTERS then starts.

Ari SCREECHES off. The bear MOANS in grief behind her.

LATER

Ari drives, shaken. The red tree canopy casts an eerie glow. The forest opens onto...

EXT. HOSPITAL - CONTINUOUS

A sprawling brick building with turrets from the 1890s.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - DAY

Ari jogs down the old corridor of the heritage building. Signs: PEDIATRICS, RESEARCH. Ari heaves back the door to...

INT. PEDIATRIC UNIT - CONTINUOUS

A STATE OF THE ART pediatric unit. Ari, harried, inaudibly explains her lateness to a nurse.

The nurse is Eve! Eve leers over thick-rimmed glasses, hair pulled into a severe bun. She looks dour. NAME TAG says Eve.

ROOM 6

Ari wipes drool from the mouth of **JAX** (11, male, Black), a paralyzed stroke patient. His eyes are knowing and bright. He speaks, words lost in a blur. Ari strains to understand. He grunts in frustration.

SHWP! Curtains around the bed draw back -- It's Eve.

Ari spins, knocking the patient chart off the bed.

EVE

Pick that up.

Pediatrician **ADAM** (looks 50, white), devilishly attractive, sails through the curtains. He picks up the patient chart.

Adam is a man that stops conversations and starts whispers, with magnetic gray eyes you trust and a velvet voice you sink into. He has a widow's peak and no boundaries.

ADAM
Are you making our new nurse welcome?

EVE
(purses lips)
Doctor Well, head of pediatrics.

ARI
You're on the billboard.

ADAM
And regretting it daily. I'm Adam.

Adam extends a hand and a disarming grin. Ari hesitates but takes his hand. Adam holds it then shakes firmly. He clocks her medical bracelet. Ari withdraws her hand quickly.

ADAM (cont'd)
I'll take over from here, Eve.

Eve bristles. She RIPS the curtains closed behind her.

ADAM (cont'd)
Eve's the first person I met when I arrived. She runs this place. It's Ari right? You're in the Mackenzie house. That was a smuggler's den, you know, like a lot of these old houses.

ARI
How did you --

ADAM
Best thing about a small town is you know everyone. Worst thing about a small town is everyone knows you.

Ari smiles tightly. Adam fills any void with chatter.

ADAM (cont'd)
I was with Doctors Without Borders. This is the longest I've stayed anywhere. I can introduce you to some other single moms if you like.

Ari's brow furrows. Adam struggles to read her.

ADAM (cont'd)
I'm a doctor and a single dad. Five minutes after I got here, every single mom's kid got sick.
(off her look)
No, I'm not some player. I just feel like prey sometimes.

Jax garbles urgently. Ari squeezes his hand.

ADAM (cont'd)
Moving isn't easy but kids adapt.
My son Seph is fifteen, at Stillwater
High. What about your kids?

ARI
Ah, Ben is eight and Merry is twelve
going on twenty.

Adam chuckles.

ADAM
And their dad?

ARI
He's... not on the scene.

ADAM
Dead or deadbeat? Sorry. Not my
business. I can't control my mouth.

Adam takes Jax's other hand. Jax shakes his head vigorously.

ADAM (cont'd)
It's okay, Jax. This will be easy.

Jax gets lost in Adam's gray eyes. Adam exhales. Jax exhales
and calms. And so does Ari. Adam traces Jax's veins.

ARI
Do you want a butterfly needle?

Adam registers Ari's hand tremor.

ADAM
I'll get it. You take a break.

ARI
But I just got here.

ADAM
It's our secret. Us single parents
have to have each other's backs.

Ari draws the curtain behind her. A quiet smile.
She peeps between the curtains at Adam's strong back.

He glances back. She ricochets forward. *Sprung*. He chuckles.

OWEN SMYTH (8, Black), bald with leukemia, in the opposite
bed, notes the exchange. Ari catches his infectious smile.

NURSE'S STATION (LOOKS INTO ROOM 6)

Ari writes in Owen's chart. Shares another smile with Owen.

ON THE CHART: OWEN SMYTH. Hemophiliac. Foster care.

Ari busies about. Eve and TWO NURSES track her like hunters. Ari looks up. They hunch over their work like vultures.

Ari's FACE SLACKENS. Her EYES ROLL BACK.

She wilts to the vinyl floor. CONVULSES. She wets herself.

Adam bends over Ari. Eve's there in a flash.
In Ari's daze, Adam and the ceiling lights become...

ADAM (cont'd)
(distorted)
I'll take care of her.

EXT. DREAM SEQUENCE - DAY

Light dapples through apple trees.
Adam, naked, kisses Ari's neck. Ari looks past Adam.

Eve is swathed in a writhing snake and nothing else.
The snake STRIKES at Ari. Her SCREAM becomes...

INT. SCHOOL - FOYER - DAY

RIIING of the school bell. Adam breezes into the foyer.
TWEENS mill past at the end of the school day.

Merry reads her teen romance novel. Ben wages a figurine battle. His vampire hunter stakes a vampire.

BEN
Die! Fwoosh! We got him Merry!

A YOUNG SECRETARY leers at Adam. Chews her pen.

School Principal CHANNING (looks 50, female, white) enters.
She's athletic, dressed in Armani.

ADAM
I'm here for Merry Lee. I called.

The Secretary points toward Merry who observes them.

ADAM (cont'd)
Hi Merry, I'm Doctor Well. Your mom's
caught up at the hospital. She asked
me to pick you up.

Merry considers Adam's doctor's bag, a poster of the school
board featuring Adam, and Channing simpering at him.

CHANNING (TO ADAM)
Will I see you at drinks?

Adam signs Merry and Ben out and smiles warmly at them.

ADAM
Depends on my patients.

CHANNING (TO MERRY)
Well, don't keep the doctor waiting.

Merry holds fast. Channing is steely. Merry weighs one
authority figure against the other, back and forth.

INT./EXT. CAR (SCHOOL CAR PARK)- DAY

Merry maneuvers in the tight gap between the car and wall.
Adam steadies her walker.

MERRY
I can do it!

Merry clambers into the passenger seat, bumping her knee.
Ben gets in behind her.

Adam turns the ignition. Cheesy music oozes out.

ADAM
I like your independence. Not many --

MERRY
Disabled kids?

ADAM
I was going to say, not many young
women are so assertive, mature.

MERRY
It's not a quality Mom appreciates...
This is nursing home music.

Adam chortles. Nods at the radio.

ADAM
You drive.

Merry flicks jarringly from channel to channel.

ADAM (cont'd)
Merry, I have to tell you, your mom,
she had an episode. But she's okay.

MERRY
She's in the psych ward?!

ADAM
What? No. She had a seizure.

Ben squeaks. Merry leans over the seat and holds his hand.

MERRY
It's okay, Ben. We're going there.

Adam notes Merry's tunic rise above her fast-bruising knee.

As they drive, Ben sights posters of MISSING CHASTITY and
MISSING CRUSADERS TEAM (8, mixed race) on a noticeboard.

INT. HOSPITAL - EMERGENCY ROOM - DAY

Ari sleeps in bed. Merry clutches her hand. Ben shakes Ari.

BEN
Mom? Mom! Mom Mom Mom Mom Mom.

MERRY
No one called Dad, did they?!

BEN
Then who's going to take care of us?

Ari's eyes flicker at Ben and Merry. His lip trembles. Her brow knits. Adam stands between them, calm and in command.

ADAM
Ari, you had a seizure. We're going
to observe you for a bit. My shift's
over. I can take the kids home.
(to kids)
You like pizza?

Adam drapes his arms around the kids. Merry shies away. Ari argues, incoherent. They blur as she blacks out.

ADAM (cont'd)
(as if underwater)
Your mom needs to sleep.

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - HOURS LATER

The muffled BEEPS and BUSTLE of the Emergency Room.
Ari's eyes flutter. In her dazed vision, Eve LOOMS over her.

Eve TAPS the purplish veins in Ari's elbow. A kidney dish,
with needle and blood bag are coiled and ready on the bed.

Eve fakes a smile. Checks over her shoulder. *No witnesses.*

SHWP! An OLDER DOCTOR parts the curtains.

Eve's nostrils flare. Ari's daze clears but Eve's gone.

ARI
What time is it?

INT. ARI'S HOUSE - NIGHT**KID'S BEDROOM**

Ari SLAMS open the bedroom door. Ben sleeps deeply.
A girl's SCREAM. Ari whips around.

LIVING ROOM

Ari bursts through the door.

Merry and Adam watch a horror movie, eating popcorn.
Merry has an icepack on her raised knee.

ARI
Merry!

Ari removes the icepack from Merry's knee. It's purple.

ARI (cont'd)
She has hemophilia.

ADAM
Merry told me. She's okay. Are you
okay? I could stay. I ordered pizza.

ARI
Oh. Ah...

MERRY
(eyeing Ari)
Yes, of course you'll stay.

RINGTONES of Godzilla theme song. Ari grimaces.
ON THE PHONE: Momzilla 6 missed calls.

ARI
My mom has a sixth sense.

INT./EXT. ARI'S HOUSE - NIGHT

THROUGH THE WINDOW: Ari and Merry are captivated by Adam gesticulating a joke then laugh at the punchline.

INT. ARI'S HOUSE - ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Adam lingers, fascinated by Ari. There's chemistry here.

ARI
Is something wrong?

ADAM
I can't read you. You're... different
to other women here.

ARI
Because I'm not swooning?

ADAM
Yes -- no. Okay, you got me.

Ari is flustered by her frankness but Adam is amused.

ADAM (cont'd)
These stairs can't be easy for you.

ARI
We're lucky to find anywhere. I had
to pay three months in advance.

ADAM
There's not a lot of turnover here.
(sees Merry spying)
You know, Merry really should have a
phone. In case of an emergency.

Ari's mommy senses tingle as Merry ducks out of view.

ARI
Go to bed.

Merry peeks out like a kid who's been told fifty times she can't have a cell phone. Adam winks. Merry grins.

INT. ARI'S BEDROOM - DAY

Ari moans and wakes from a steamy dream. Stretches in bed. CRERSH of the garbage truck. She shoots up.

EXT. ARI'S DRIVEWAY - DAY

Ari, in a robe, jostles a bulging bag to the trash.
The bag breaks. Rotting food falls on her legs.

MAGGOTS WRITHE over her feet. Ari's eyes reluctantly feast.
Jonesie EATS the maggots. *Ergh*.

INT. ARI'S HOUSE - DAY**BATHROOM**

Under the shower, Ari scrubs her legs harshly, like a punishment. Water beats her scarred back.

Behind the shower curtain, the SHADOW of a man.

Ari lifts her face to the full force of the water.

SHADOW presses against the curtain. Ari CRANKS the tap shut.

Ari gropes for a towel. Rubs her face, blindly stepping out.

The room is dense with steam.

Ari faces a steam-fogged mirror. Wipes it and -- Nothing.
Ari gives herself an imaginary facelift. Duck pouts.

She opens her makeup kit. In its mirror -- Nothing.

Ari looks up at the bathroom mirror. It's fogged again.

The SHADOW flashes! Ari spins toward the --

--MENACING FACE of ex-husband Doctor ZANE WHITE (45, white).

Zane clamps her neck -- she wheezes for air -- the vice tightens -- her eyes bulge.

ZANE

Shhhh.

He SMASH-SMASH-SMASHES her head in the mirror. It shatters.

Ari EYES silver shards on the tiles. Out of REACHING hands.

Blood pours from her future scar, origin of her seizures.

RAP-RAP-RAP on the front door brings her **BACK TO THE PRESENT**
Ari leans on the sink, panting, alone with her violent past.

ARI

You're safe you're safe you're safe.

ENTRANCE

Ben opens the door to Adam as Ari shouts out.

ARI (O.S.)
Don't open the door!

Ari pokes her head into the doorway, wearing a towel.
Merry ducks out behind Ari. Adam bears a foil-covered dish.

ADAM
Just checking on my patients.

ARI
Oh! We're fine, thanks.

MERRY
I can speak for myself.

Ari assesses Adam. He attempts to read her face but fails.

ADAM
I remember starting in a new town as
a single parent. If it wasn't for the
kindness of strangers...

Adam nods to a welcome basket on the step. Ari inspects it.
The CARD: 'NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH *Always looking out for you!*'

ADAM (cont'd)
It's a tight community.

He presents the dish like an offering. Merry tears the foil.

MERRY
Lasagne! My favorite!

Ari bites at her lip. It's too much. Adam checks his watch.
Ari realizes the time. *Shit!*

ADAM
I'm on the way to the school clinic.
I could take them, if you like. You
shouldn't be driving so soon.

Ben scoots past Ari and down the stairs, camera in hand.

ARI
Ben! Don't run off!

MERRY
Mom, what's your problem?

Ari moves to object as Merry barges past and levers the rail to descend. Adam hoists her walker. Pushes his hair back.

ADAM

Do you have anything on this weekend?
I can introduce you to some families.

Ari catches Ben filming Adam's cartoon socks snagged in his pants leg. Jonesie circles Adam. Ari's apprehension eases.

ARI

That would be great.

INT. UNITED WELLNESS COMMUNITY CENTER - DAY

Adam leads Ari, dressed to be invisible, through the center. Merry follows. Ben twitches from sight to sight. IMMIGRANTS consult with VOLUNTEERS at tables. KIDS cluster around an animated teen storyteller.

ARI (TO BEN)

Don't. Wander. Off.

ADAM

Undocumented immigrants who come for fruit picking have no one looking out for them. We link them with services, even pay them for blood donations.

ARI

They're paid to donate blood?

ADAM

It's a symbiotic relationship. We need it for research, and give them free quality healthcare in return. That's what pays for a high-tech pediatric unit in a low-tech town.

MERRY

Yeah, Mom. It's fantastique, Adam. I'm learning French.

ARI

Since when?

They sidle up to the teen storyteller.

ADAM

This is my son, Seph.

SEPH (15, male, white) is the golden-boy captain of everything, reluctantly living out his father's dreams.

ADAM (cont'd)
He's sixteen in six months and counting down. Seph, this is Ari, Merry and Ben. Seph volunteers to tutor special kids if Ben needs help.

SEPH
Dad bought you lasagne, right?

ADAM
Brought.

Seph snorts. Adam gives him a playful sneer.

ADAM (cont'd)
Traitor! Ari, we're doing a blood drive at the moment. We're always looking for nurses.

Ben mouths "*blood drive*." Puts fangs in. Catches Seph's eye. Ben gestures *Shhh* to Seph. Seph winks. Ben sneaks away.

EXT. BLOOD DRIVE VAN - DAY

Ben wanders off to the van. He scopes out the surrounds.
Apple orchards for miles. Dense into darkness.
MOANING from the clinic van. Ben snaps to the source.
Ben snoops in the window...

EXT./INT. BLOOD DRIVE VAN - DAY

A nurse bends over a sun-worn FRUIT PICKER (50s, male).
A blood bag is filled to the top.

Fruit Picker's head flops toward Ben, as if dead.

Ben gulps -- The man's eyes DART OPEN.

FRUIT PICKER
Run.

The nurse whips toward Ben. It's Eve!

Blood DRIPS from Eve's mouth. Her eyes are PURPLE.

Ben is an owl-eyed statue.

Fruit Picker grabs Eve who whirls, breaking her hold on Ben.

FRUIT PICKER (cont'd)

RUN!

Ben scouts the options. *Too open.* Dives under the van.
Hears THUD, CLUNK above. Covers his ears. Door MEWLS open.
Eve's feet bound down the steps. Ben shrinks behind a wheel.

INT. COMMUNITY CENTER - SAME TIME

Merry reads TWILIGHT or similar vampire romance.

Adam and Ari chat whilst painting a mural with volunteers.

ADAM

I hope it's okay that I gave her that
book. All the kids are reading it.

ARI

No, it's very thoughtful.

Ari wipes hair out of her eyes, smearing herself with paint.
Adam reaches to wipe it. Ari backs away into the wet wall.

ADAM

I was trying to help.

Ari titters with embarrassment. Adam snickers until they
burst out laughing together. Adam targets Seph nearby.

ADAM (cont'd)

Hey Seph, go help Eve in the clinic.

Seph shakes his head vigorously.

ADAM (cont'd)

He's going to be a doctor but he's
afraid of blood.

(stares Seph down)

This isn't a negotiation.

SEPH

Bu-

Adam wins. Seph trudges off. Gives Adam a murderous glare.

ADAM

Kids will kill you, I tell you.

EXT. BLOOD DRIVE VAN - DAY

Ben hears the Community Center door SCREAM open.

Seph wallows toward the clinic van. Loiters at the steps --
-- Ben's hand claps onto Seph's foot. Seph yelps.
Seph peeps under the van.

BEN
Sh-sh-sh-she's a vampire. Th-the man.
The nurse killed him!

SEPH
A vampire, huh? In here?

Ben nods emphatically.

Seph treads up the steps.

Ben listens. Door MEWLS open... Seph SCREAMS. Ben freezes.

Seph's head ducks into view, under the van.

SEPH (cont'd)
Just jokes. There's no one here.

Ben tries but fails as usual to read Seph's face.
Seph grins. Ben takes the cue.

SEPH (cont'd)
Sorry, li'l dude. It's safe. Come on.

INT. COMMUNITY CENTER - DAY

Adam and Ari chat and paint a wall in synchrony.

ARI
Ben could do with some help,
tutoring. Speaking of Ben...
Where is he? He never listens.

Ari hastens to the door, bumping into **PARK** (Korean, 50s, male), kind-faced. They sidestep in the same direction. And again. They laugh awkwardly. Park chuckles.

PARK
You're the first Asian person I've
met here. I'm Park. You from Korea?

Ari brightens. They briefly chat in Korean unheard as...

INT. BLOOD DRIVE VAN - SAME TIME

Seph ambles in. Ben cranes his neck in. The van is EMPTY.

SEPH
See? No one here... Better not tell
anyone you saw a vampire, though.
They'll put you in the psych ward.

Ben remembers his mom in the psych ward. Nods. Seph slings
an arm around Ben as they leave, over a HATCH IN THE FLOOR.

SCANNING THROUGH THE FLOOR

Stuffed in the cavity under the floor is Fruit Picker, his
neck twisted, eyes open. DEAD.

INT. ADAM'S HOUSE - ADAM'S STUDY - DAY

Ben and Seph sit at an antique desk. Ben scratches his neck
compulsively. Seph heeds Ben's CAROTID PULSING.

SEPH
Relax. School isn't life or death.

BEN
You're good at everything.

SEPH
I don't have a choice... Okay, focus.

Ben's face contorts in concentration.
Seph leans close and turns a flashcard '2 x 5' over to '10'.

SEPH (cont'd)
Don't calculate. Remember it like a
picture. Like, think of a word.

BEN
Vampire.

SEPH
Not letting go of that, huh? Okay.
You don't calculate v-a-m-p vamp, add
i-r-e to make vampire. You see it.

BEN
Yes, I see vampires.

Ben hisses. Bares his imaginary fangs. Seph chuckles.

SEPH
Everyone wants to be a vampire.

BEN
Vampires suck.

Ben laughs at his own joke. Seph can't resist and joins in.

SEPH
Okay Dracula, let's get back to it.

The study decor is old money. A skeleton on a stand, heavy BOW AND ARROW mounted above the door with a *St John* crest.

Merry arrives in the doorway, framed by a wall of bookcases. She watches Ben and Seph. Puffs. Bored.

ON BOOKCASE:Books on hematology, genetics, monster legends.

INT. ARI'S HOUSE - SAME TIME

LIVING ROOM

Ari stands on top of a ladder leaning against a ceiling high bookcase. Sings 'Fight Song' by Rachel Platten or similar.

ARI (SINGS)
This is my fight song
Take back my life song!

Ari holds the drill, as if for the first time. *Deep breath*. She drills into a bracket. *Done!* Blows on the drill like a smoking gun. She's covered in sunshine yellow paint.

ENTRANCE

A POSTMAN sets a box by the yellow door. Sender: ZANE WHITE

Postman pervs at Ari through the window, poised to drill. Places his hand, with a GALAXY PATTERN RING, on the wall.

ARI (SINGS) (cont'd)
My power's turned on
Starting right now, I'll be strong!

LIVING ROOM

Ari lines up the drill, face determined.

IN THE WALLS

Electricity CRACKLES toward her.

LIVING ROOM

The drill pierces the wall. Ari's body JOLTS. She falls.

Her head SMASHES against the window. Crack!

Ari whimpers on the floor. BLOOD COURSES from her cut eye.

Ari levers onto her elbows.

Her knee buckles sideways at forty degrees grotesquely.

Ari picks up her flaccid broken leg, positions it straight.

Crooks her good ankle under her lifeless one.

HALLWAY

In a cold sweat, she drags herself back...

ARI'S BEDROOM

Ari collapses on the floor. Breathes hard.

Her hand feels for the phone on her nightstand.

INT. ADAM'S STUDY - SAME TIME

Merry studies an old-time photo of Adam, Seph and Eve. Moves to a portrait of BEJEWELLED debutante *Olivia St John* c1900.

Merry spots an ornate WOOD BOX on a high shelf. One hand on her walker, she reaches, reaches, stands on tiptoes, reach--

Adam startles her.

MERRY

I wasn't snooping.

ADAM

Sure you were. You're a curious cat. That's a medicine man's box. Powerful magic. It came with the house, like a lot of this cool stuff. It doesn't open though. Is your mom here?

MERRY

Probably forgot about us.

ADAM

I doubt that.

Merry shrugs. Adam calls Ari from his cell phone.

INTERCUT - ARI'S BEDROOM AND ADAM'S STUDY

-- Ari's phone RINGS in her hand. She's out cold.

Jonesie pads over to her. MEWS. Nudges her. No effect. MEWS.

-- Adam hangs up. Merry stares into the distance.

ADAM
She'll call us back.

MERRY
No. Something's wrong... Ben! Get
your stuff. We're going home!

INT. ARI'S HOUSE - DAY

ARI'S BEDROOM

Merry charges in with her walker, followed by Ben and Seph.

MERRY
Mom! Mom!

Adam kneels beside Ari.

Ari's eye OOZES blood. Seph is TRANSFIXED. Breathes hard.

FLASH: Ari's eyes EXPLODE with blood, splashing Seph's face.

ADAM (O.S.)
Seph, get the first aid kit.

Seph falters **BACK TO REALITY.**

ARI'S BATHROOM

Seph reaches into a cabinet for a first aid kit. Closes it.
In the cabinet mirror, he's free of blood.

SEPH (TO HIMSELF)
What the fuck was that?

ARI'S BEDROOM

Seph hands surgical strips to Adam.

ADAM
You do it.

Seph wordlessly appeals to Adam who is unmoved.

Seph's hands shake as he applies the strips.
Blood SEEPS through onto Seph's finger.

Seph is drawn like a magnet to the blood.
He TASTES it with the tip of his tongue and recoils.

Merry witnesses it. Ari groans, focusing Merry's attention.

EXT. ADAM'S HOUSE - DAY

BIRD SONG. Sunshine. Adam offers Ari his hand, creating frisson as he helps her out of his luxury car. Her leg and opposite arm are broken and in casts. She's a helpless mess.

Ari takes in the 1880s home, gilded with golden vines. Carved on the entrance arch is the *St John* sword crest.

Adam's hand reaches protectively across her back.

ADAM

Lean on me.

Ari flushes. She uses Adam as a crutch as she limps in.

Ari sees a ONE-LEGGED CROW nudge its dead, bloody mate, by a broken basement window. Ari's face reflects the pathos until

RUSTLE. Ari flicks back. Bushes beyond the iron gates shift.

GRRR as the imposing iron gates close them in. CLANG shut.

OUTSIDE GATES: An **UNKNOWN MAN** with purple NECK TATTOO lurks.

INT. ADAM'S HOUSE - DAY**HALLWAY**

Adam leads them into a sumptuous yet soulless heritage home.

ADAM

Bedrooms are to the right. Living, dining, kitchen are at the back. It's an old house so the electricity is tricky. But we do have a generator. The reception is patchy too. Sorry.

All the doors are open except one. It's solid metal.

Ben turns its handle. Adam clinches Ben's hand.

ADAM (cont'd)

That's the cellar. No kids allowed.

Ben's face lights up. *Challenge accepted*.

LIVING ROOM

Adam brings tea to Ari, marooned on a chaise.

ARI
I'm so sorry, and grateful. I promise
that as soon as I can manage stairs--

ADAM
Don't worry. It's good for Seph to
have kids around.

ARI
Nothing like an accident to make you
feel totally alone.

ADAM
You're not alone.

Ari marvels at a tiny box with gold Lego brick on the table.

ARI
Is that a--

ADAM
--fourteen karat gold brick from
Hohenwestedt factory. Check this out!

Adam recognizes a fellow AFOL(Adult Fan Of Lego). Flourishes
open a walk-in wardrobe of color and size sorted LEGO. *Could
this kindred closet nerd be the man of her LEGO dreams?*

Ben barrels in. Merry is close behind.

MERRY
Where's the pool?

BEN
Seph has a PlayStation!

ADAM
See? Everybody's happy.

BEN
You look like Frankenstein's monster!

ARI
Thanks baby... Oh, god. The cat!

ADAM
Don't worry. We'll get it.

Ari plays with her fringe.

LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Ari video calls her mom **BINSA** JANG (65, Korean), a WARRIOR.
Binsa, more at home on the battleground than the playground,

is not the mommy type. They speak Korean, SUBTITLED.
Ben and Seph play an online monster hunter game behind her.

ARI
Could Zane be in the US?

BINSA
Don't worry. We're on the hunt.

ARI
We?

BINSA
What? I have connections. You think
I'll let that monster go after you?
You really do attract them.

Ari winces at her mother's criticism dressed as support.

INT. BINSA'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

Binsa softens. Teases her.

BINSA
So you're shackled up with this man?

ARI
Just until I can manage on my own.

BINSA
Then you're never leaving. I don't
know how you came from my womb.

ARI
I should be a strong, independent
woman and put myself first right?
Wouldn't make me much of a mother
though, would it?

INTERCUT - ADAM'S LIVING ROOM AND BINSA'S OFFICE

They both got a jab in and take a moment to recoup.

BINSA
Where's his ex-wife?

ARI
Out of the picture. She went
underground after the divorce.

Adam enters with Jonesie in a cat carrier and suitcases. The
kids lug shopping bags. Seph swings Ben over his shoulder.

BINSA
 Ari, where's your necklace?!
 You must always wear it!

Adam sees Ari on the call. Listens to them speaking Korean.

ARI
 It's somewhere...

MERRY (O.S.)
 We're home!

BINSA
 Home? Ari, if it seems too good to be
 true... Connect with your instincts.

END SUBTITLES. Adam delivers flowers to Ari. Waves at Binsa.

ARI
 This is Adam. This is my mom, Binsa.

ADAM
 I see where Ari gets her beauty.

BINSA
 You a politician or a pediatrician?

ADAM
 (leans into phone)
 Pediatrician. I love kids. Your
 grandkids are great.

BINSA
 Yes, I'd kill for them.

ADAM
 (holds his hands up)
 I'm one of the good guys! I was in
 Korea, a lifetime ago. It's stunning.
 I wish I'd picked up the language.

Binsa scrutinizes Adam's handsome face in her laptop.

BINSA
 You must visit with my daughter.

Behind Adam, Ari gestures 'shut it', hand slicing her neck.

Merry interrupts. She has changed into new short shorts.

MERRY
 Halmeoni, look! Adam bought me new
 clothes! Let's do the fashion parade!

Adam trails after Merry. He waves Binsa goodbye.

ARI
Mom, I have to go. I love you.

INT. BINSAS OFFICE - SAME TIME

Beyond Binsas laptop, unseen by Ari, is a MURAL OF MONSTERS veined with vines of a FAMILY TREE.

On the desk is a sketch of a MONSTROUS RIDGED WHITE FACE.

Binsa dials her phone. She talks as she walks through to a

HIGH-TECH ARMORY

Crossbows, guns, tactical bodysuit, sword with purple hilt.

BINSAS (KOREAN, ON PHONE)
Have you found anything suspicious?

INT. ADAMS HOUSE - NIGHT

DINING/KITCHEN

On the wall is a CORREGGIO PAINTING 'Jupiter and Io'. Jupiter, hidden in a dark cloud, kisses naked Ios neck. Its both sensual and sinister. Its the backdrop for...

Seph and Ben set the table with NAMED MUGS.

Pulling back, Ari and Merry settle at the kitchen island. Adam, haloed by pots and pans on hooks, tosses food like a bartender to amuse Merry. Ari intently builds a LEGO castle.

ARI
I need a red two by two.

Adam finds the LEGO brick immediately and hands it to her.

Jonesie waits for food to fall. Adam throws him some meat.

ARI (cont'd)
Put 'Doctor Who Cooks' on a T-shirt
and you can have any woman you want.

ADAM
I don't want any woman. Just my
missing piece.

Adam clicks a piece of Lego into place. *Cheesy but cute.*

EXT. KOREAN MOUNTAIN - NIGHT

A mountain outside Seoul. A helicopter descends.

INT./EXT. HELICOPTER - NIGHT

The PILOT regards the mountain camouflage dissolve around her as she descends. She lands in front of a multi-level secret division of the Center for Disease Control (CDC).

INT. CDC HQ - NIGHT**BINSA'S OFFICE ARMORY**

Binsa zips up her high-tech tactical bodysuit. Glints at a high shelf. She PARKOURS up, grabs and slings her cross-bow across her back and touches down in one effortless movement. Binsa places an EYE on a SCANNER. An elevator GRINDS opens.

ELEVATOR: The elevator cage transverses floors. Down...

CARGO BAY: A CDC jet is loaded up. Down past the...

STRATEGY ROOM is abuzz. A map with circled towns. Down...

Elevator lands. Cage doors GRIND open onto a platform above

TRAINING ROOM Ninjas block-strike-pivot. Exact, relentless.

Binsa JUMPS off the ledge, lands primed in starter position.

PRELAP: Coach's WHISTLE.

INT. SCHOOL GYM - DAY

Ben's basketball game. An attempt to build social skills.

COURT: Ben is the only Asian on the CUBS team (all white, 8). He's weedy compared to the others and dwarfed by the hefty KNIGHTS players. Ben awkwardly dribbles the ball.

BLEACHERS: Ari watches...

SIDELINES: Coach Adam sidesteps the sidelines. His arms and thighs ripple in a polo shirt and shorts.

ADAM
You got this, Ben!

FROM THE GYM DOOR: Unknown Man (spying on Ari at Adam's house) monitors Ari and Merry. He turns. It's Park!

BLEACHERS: Roosting behind Ari are overdressed BITCHY MOM and PLASTIC MOM (40s). Ari's leg is still in a cast.

BITCHY MOM
Doctor, coach, on the school board.
There must be a flaw.

Ari smiles as she eavesdrops.

PLASTIC MOM
The flaw is he's taken. You know that
sad nurse with the disabled kid? He's
a sucker for wounded birds.

Ari wrinkles her nose. They watch Adam suck a drink bottle.

BITCHY MOM
Who cares? I'd let him suck me dry.

PLASTIC MOM
You're terrible.

Merry arrives with snacks. The Moms snicker. *Oops!*

COURT: Ben's fast but clumsy as he dribbles the ball.

SIDELINES: Seph, the Cubs' junior coach, claps.

SEPH
Go, bro! You got this!

COURT: Ben ducks away from hands reaching for the ball. Miraculously, the hoop's in reach. Ben hurtles forward.

BLEACHERS: Ari holds Merry's hand.

ARI
Please, please, please...

COURT: An OPPONENT at Ben's heels. Ben flounders, slack-jawed, then commits. *Holy hell! He might actually make it.*

Bitchy Mom's son DOM, a Cubs player, steals the ball off Ben as he shoves him into Opponent. Dom shoots and scores what would be the winning basket except - WHISTLE blows - *Foul!*

BLEACHERS: Bitchy Mom claps. Merry scowls.

MERRY
Asshole!

SIDELINES: Adam calls time out.

BLEACHERS: Ari watches heartsick.

SIDELINES: Ben slumps. Adam berates Dom. Grips his arm. Adam rests a hand on Ben's neck. Small thumbs up to Ari.

Adam pats DAVID, team star, ON THE BUTT to send him in.

BLEACHERS: Ari's brow furrows. She checks Bitchy and Plastic Mom's reactions. They're unfussed. They lean forward as the game restarts for the final seconds.

PLASTIC MOM
You're AAARY right, Adam's friend?
That's my David who just went in.
Adam really took him under his wing.

BITCHY MOM
I heard you two are living together.

COURT: KLAXON SOUNDS. A crushing defeat. The Cubs glower at Ben as they trudge off. Seph hooks an arm around Ben.

GYM DOOR: Park withdraws as Seph and Ben drift out to...

INT. LOCKER ROOM - DAY

The room erupts with raucous boy energy. Boys jettison uniforms into a laundry basket. Showers hammer shoulders.

Ben is shrouded in his towel, self-conscious. Seph leans in.

SEPH
Bro, don't be weird.

David, unusually muscular, whips OTHER PLAYERS with a towel. Adam squeezes David's shoulder.

ADAM
Bulking up there, David.

DAVID
It's that high protein diet.

Ben twitches between: SLO-MO Boys CACKLE -- Boys SHOVE each other hard -- Boys study Ben and WHISPER. THE ROOM SHUDDERS.

Dom, Bitchy Mom's son, rips Ben's towel away. Ben SCREAMS like a banshee. Leaps SLO-MO at Dom who is agog.

PRELAP: BIRDSONG accompanies the THUMPING of a basketball.

EXT. ADAM'S HOUSE - DAY

Vines over the house are bright blood red.

YARD

POV BASKETBALL HOOP: Ben's upturned face frowns.

SEPH

Like we practiced. You can do it.

Seph and Adam nod at Ben. He does a layup, shoots, misses.

BEN

This is a stupid game!

Seph picks up the ball. Ben stomps and crosses his arms.

Adam glances up at the window, where Ari and Merry overlook the game. He puts his hand affectionately on Ben's neck.

INT. ADAM'S HOUSE - DAY**LIVING ROOM**

Ari's eyes mist. Merry's puppy-dog eyes betray a CONFUSED CRUSH tangled up with her craving for a father figure.

ARI

I think they've practiced every day.

MERRY

He's pretty great, isn't he?

Ari pulls Merry in close. Merry wears a bikini top and towel wrapped around her waist, revealing her CROOKED SPINE.

INTERCUT - YARD AND LIVING ROOM

-- Adam dribbles like a pro, sizing up Seph.

ADAM

Suck it up princess.

Seph blasts him with a teen glare, charges, grabs the ball. Adam shoulders Seph HARD, steals the ball, shoots. It's in!

Seph's pissed. Adam, always first, gloats.

ADAM (cont'd)

It's hot as hell out here.

Adam casts off his shirt. Ben follows suit. Adam tips a bottle of water over his head. Shakes his hair.

Adam waves up at Ari and Merry. Seph rolls his eyes.

Ben dribbles again. Locks eyes with Adam who nods.
Ben shoots. SWISH. Nothing but net. Ben double blinks.

-- Ari and Merry fling open the window. WHOOP.

-- Adam and Seph high-five Ben. Adam heads inside.

ADAM (TO SEPH)
He's all yours.

-- Ari wrings her fringe. *He's a good guy - right?*

INT. ADAM'S HOUSE - NIGHT

LIVING ROOM

Ari sips wine by the fire, watching the family tableau.
Her arm and leg cast are off.

Seph roughhouses with Ben on the lounge, like a brother.
Adam dances with Merry, holding her feet off the ground.

Ari exhales fully for the first time in years.

MUSIC changes. 'Total Control' by The Motels or similar.
Sexy, intense. Adam winks and sets Merry down. She pouts.

Adam pours himself and Ari more wine. Breathes it deeply.
He watches Ari's face brighten as she recognizes the song.

MARTHA DAVIES, LEAD SINGER
(singing)
*Knowing what could happen
Any moment maybe you, Maybe even you.*

Adam pulls Ari up to dance, holding her waist.

ADAM
(singing)
*Steadfast collapse
Always certain any moment
Maybe you maybe you,
Maybe even you.*

ARI
I can't believe you know
this song. No one knows this
song. I love this song...

Adam offers Ari an invisible mic. She demurs but gives in.

ARI (cont'd)
(singing)
*I can't do it not with you
Not even with you.
Maybe never with you.*

Adam feigns a stake to the heart. Ari sobers up.

ARI (cont'd)
The cast is gone. We should go too.

MARTHA DAVIES, SINGER
(singing)
*Yeah I'd sell my soul for
Total control...*

ADAM
You're not going anywhere.

Adam draws Ari close. Her resistance melts with the lyrics.

ADAM'S BEDROOM

Adam kisses Ari's neck from behind. Her lips part.
She leans into him. He turns her toward him.

Eyes downcast, she slips off her dress revealing the scars.
Adam's shock gives way to tenderness as he traces her scars.
She stays his hand. He meets her eyes, steady, reassuring.

She straddles him on the bed. Kisses him, intense and
unguarded. His hand enfolds her throat. She hurtles back as
if thrown. She curls into a ball, guarding her head against
the expected blow.

He gapes. He kneels by her and covers her with a blanket.
Her face floods with shame. Her sobs come soft and low.

ADAM (cont'd)
If I meet him, I'll kill him.

He lies beside her. Stares into her. Their foreheads touch.

PRELAP: Dinner party chatter.

INT. ADAM'S HOUSE - ANOTHER NIGHT

BEN'S BEDROOM

In bed, Ben listens to chatter and stabs of laughter from...

DINING ROOM

A candlelit dinner party for eight. Guests in operatic haute
couture tell stories with their whole bodies.

Adam TINGS and raises a glass. He looks with love at Ari.

ADAM
To Ari, who brought new life to my
dead heart.

EVE
Always the drama!

Adam side-eyes Eve, smiling. An old, complex friendship.

HALLWAY

Ben patters toward the chatter. In passing the CELLAR DOOR, he tries the handle. LOCKED. He puffs. *Onward!*

INTERCUT - HALLWAY AND DINING ROOM

-- Ari, clearly nervous, CLINKS glasses with each guest. These are FATMAN (50s) the mayor, JAGGER (60s) a rock musician, ARCHIE the architect (Asian, 40s), earth goddess EARTHA (Black, 30s) and GRACE (50s) a social worker.

EVE
You have to lock eyes when you toast.

GRACE
It's a Stillwater tradition.

ADAM
Is it?

EVE
Wouldn't know what's under his feet.

Eve and Channing share the smile of an inside joke.

-- Ben goosenecks into the living room. His eyes bug. *Eve!*

-- Adam raises a forkful of meat to Ari. She laughs, tipsy.

ARI
I'm not a child. I can feed myself.

FATMAN
This one bites back!

Adam clenches. Eve chews blue steak. Blood stains her lip.

The lights fail. Candles spotlight Eve. She BLOWS them out.

JAGGER (O.S.)
Woooooo!

ADAM (O.S.)
The generator will kick in.

EVE (O.S.)
No one touch my food.

Ari turns on her phone torch -- There's NO ONE AT THE TABLE.
A SHADOWY FIGURE stands behind her.

Ari sweeps the light around the room to --
Adam and guests overshadow Ari, black on black. She shrieks.

Eve's HAND with long nails reaches out. Ari weaves under it.

Generator WHIRS the lights to life -
Everyone is at their seats! As if nothing happened.

-- Ben peeks at the guests. Jonesie darts out! To the table!

-- UNDER THE TABLE: Jonesie curves in and out of Eve's legs.

-- Adam holds an empty wine bottle. SCRAPES his chair back.

ADAM
I'll get us a fresh bottle.

-- Ben ducks. CREAK behind him. He scrambles after Jonesie.

-- UNDER THE TABLE: Eve kicks Jonesie away, into Ben's arms.
Jonesie MEOWS. Ben ensconces Jonesie. He listens to...

-- Fatman, slurring, gesticulates wildly.

FATMAN
It's a political cesspit.

JAGGER
Erg, let's change the tune.

-- Archie and Eartha rise to drunk dance, chairs toppling.

-- UNDER THE TABLE: Chairs SLAM. Sexy MUSIC surges. Archie
retrieves a chair, FACE INCHES FROM BEN -- Doesn't spot him.

Eve strokes Adam's thigh. Jonesie darts out!

Ben crawls between feet in pursuit. Channing's feet bar his
path. She crosses her legs. He crawls underneath them.

-- Ben's in the clear until -- He crashes into Seph's feet.

-- Ari is blind to Ben. The party turns feral. Laughter
distorts. Eve pushes Adam's hair back like a lover. Tequila
shots. Jagger lick-sip-sucks Channing. Ari's vision doubles.
She spills wine. Red BLOOMS OUT over the white tablecloth.

SEPH'S BEDROOM

On Seph's bed, Ben huddles into Seph. Laughter wafts in.

SEPH
Don't worry. You're safe with me.

Ben searches Seph's face. Seph scrunches his hair, smiles.

EXT. ADAM'S HOUSE - DAY

TIME-LAPSE: Vines turn from red to purple. Leaves fall.

INT. ADAM'S HOUSE - DAY

BEN'S BEDROOM

Ben films Merry and Seph, dressed as vampires as they swoop around the room. Jonesie dozes.

MERRY
That's take ten! We are done!

BEN
Seph can hypnotize people. Show her.

SEPH
Shh! That's our thing.

Seph squirms. In the face of Ben's excitement, he caves. Ben takes his place. Merry crosses her arms, one eyebrow raised.

SEPH (cont'd)
Look deep into my eyes.

MERRY
Seriously?

SEPH
Touch your nose.

Ben complies. Jonesie wakes, on alert, unnerving Merry.

SEPH (cont'd)
He can't move. Until I release him.

Jonesie HISSES. Merry's anxiety skyrockets. She shakes Ben.

MERRY
Ben? Ben? Let him go!

Ben shakes awake. Jonesie returns to his post, still wary.

BEN
Now do Merry!

MERRY

Yeah, try me.

Seph holds Merry's shoulders, staring into her.

MERRY (cont'd)

Nothing.

Seph's pupils dilate. Jonesie HISSES.

Seph's eyes flash purple for an instant. Merry SCREAMS.
Seph inhales sharply and lets go. He's stupefied.

KITCHEN

Merry rushes to Ari. Ari contemplates bloody steaks in the fridge for dinner. Phone is on speaker. Merry shakes Ari.

MERRY (cont'd)

(Korean, SUBTITLED)

Mom-Mom-Mom! Seph hypnotized Ben and
he couldn't move! And his eyes turned
purple! We have to get out of here!

INT. PEDIATRIC UNIT - SAME TIME

Adam overhears the commotion on his phone. *Not good.*

ARI (V.O.)

Adam, I'll call you back.

Adam, perturbed, watches a CLEANER mop up BLOOD DROPS.

INT. ADAM'S HOUSE - DAY

KITCHEN

Ari, hands on hips, scolds Merry. Speak Korean SUBTITLED.

MERRY

I'm not lying!

ARI

Merry, why are you trying to sabotage
this? Don't I deserve to be happy?

Ari considers this herself. Merry, unsure, watches Ari.

MERRY

Yes, Mom. You deserve to be happy.

Ari searches Merry's face. *What's going on with her?*

Merry deflates. *She'll never believe me.*

LATER

Ari cuts into bloody meat on a chopping board. Radio on.

RADIO NEWS READER (V.O.)
There is still no sign of the
Crusaders school bus or missing boys.

The meat BLEEDS over the board and POOLS on the bench.

Ari wipes the pool -- sees the reflection of a boy's face.

Ari jerks back. Blood spreads -- A SCREAMING BOY FLAILS OUT.
He grabs Ari's arms and grips tight, eyes locking her in.

Her daze breaks when Adam kisses her neck.

ARI
Jesus! Hi, hi... How was your day?

ADAM
It was murder. Something's causing
hallucinations. We had it last year
but it died out. How was your day?

ARI
Oh, ah, um, well, Merry's not happy
so that's fun for the whole family.

ADAM
I'll talk to her.

ARI
Seems like the more she talks to you,
the less she talks to me. Just let
her be. It's hormones.

Adam dumps mail and a package on the kitchen table.

ADAM
I picked up mail from your old place.
You need to change your address.

ARI
Oh, yes. I'll do it tomorrow. Thanks.

Ari, knife in hand, picks up the box. Sender: ZANE WHITE.
Ari is speechless. Adam takes the package and opens it.

Ari peers into the package, HEARTBEAT racing.
INSIDE THE PACKAGE: Ari's amethyst cross is in pieces.

Ari drops the knife. It SPEARS her foot deeply.

ADAM'S BEDROOM

Adam brings Ari wine and tea in bed. Her foot is bandaged.

ADAM
Wine or tea? I wasn't sure.

Ari takes the wine, her hand shaking. She skulls it.

ADAM (cont'd)
You're safe here, Ari. I'll keep you
all safe. Just tell me what you need.

Ari unwraps her dress slowly, deliberately, in control.

ADAM (cont'd)
Are you sure?

ARI
It's time.

Ari pulls him down. Kisses him deeply. Rolls on top of him.
She unzips his pants, straddles him, pulling him inside her.
It's rough, desperate. She slams against him until he cums.

INT. ADAM'S HOUSE - NIGHT

ADAM'S BEDROOM

Ari types on her laptop in bed.

ON HER LAPTOP: An email. *'Hi Mom, Things are getting serious with Adam. Could you ask your contact to do a check on him?'*

LIVING ROOM

Adam, ON HIS LAPTOP, reads Ari's email as she types.

INTERCUT - ADAM'S BEDROOM AND LIVING ROOM

-- Ari clicks SEND.

-- Adam clicks UNSEND on Ari's email. His jaw clenches.

-- Ari Googles 'Adam Well Doctors Without Borders.' Google results: Key speaker at National Hematology Convention, Head of Pediatric Genetics Research Unit, working in war zones.

ARI (TO HERSELF)
What is wrong with me?

Ari's gaze flies upward -- Adam TOWERS. EYES BORE INTO HER.
Adam gets on one knee.

INT. ADAM'S HOUSE - DAY

KITCHEN

Ari and Adam sit before the kids, hands entwined, showcasing a huge ANTIQUE engagement ring. Ari is ravishing, renewed.

The kids sag. Adam takes Merry's hand. Her eyes well.

ADAM
Now we'll always be together.

Merry squints at Ari and her thoughtless happiness.

ARI
I'll need a maid of honor.

Adam smiles to steady Merry. Ari hugs Merry who stiffens.

MERRY
I'll think about it.

EXT. LAKE - DAY

Ari stands on a bridge over a vast lake. She exhales years of fear. She cradles a gun in her hands. After a long beat, she lets it fall into the depths. Her fear falls with it.

INT. ADAM'S BEDROOM - DAY

Wedding Day. A HAIRDRESSER primps Ari and Merry's hair with floral wreathes. Ari calls Binsa. Speaks Korean, SUBTITLED.

ARI
Mom, I've left you twenty messages!

INT. AIRPLANE - SAME TIME

Binsa sits calm in first class. The plane pitches and yaws. A PASSENGER grips his seat. Thunder CRACKS.

PILOT (O.S.)
Can I have your attention? Due to
severe weather, the airport is now
(MORE)

PILOT (O.S.) (cont'd)
closed and we need to return to...

Binsa checks her sat phone. No signal. Her face clouds.

INT. ADAM'S HOUSE - SAME TIME

ADAM'S BEDROOM

Ari fumes as she clicks off the phone.

ARI
Halmeoni's done another disappearing
act. That is the last straw! And
where's Ben? Vanished again?!

Merry shrugs. Seph sticks his head in the door.

SEPH
Merry, can I talk to you?

Merry doesn't budge. Ari propels her with a sharp look.

HALLWAY

Merry, her jaw set, glares at Seph.

SEPH (cont'd)
Merry, I don't want things to be
weird between us, okay? Isn't it good
for Ben to have an extra person
looking out for him? You don't need
to be jealous. I'm like a spare tire.

Merry can't help but laugh.

MERRY
I'm not jealous. I thought...

Merry searches Seph's open, earnest face. *Am I jealous?*

SEPH
They've only known each other four
months. And now they're marrying two
weeks after Dad proposed? It's so
fast. It messes with my head too.

MERRY
(sheepish)
Maybe it is making me a bit crazy.

SEPH
Do I call you sister now?

Seph punches her playfully. Merry chuckles, bashful.

PRELAP: Classical wedding MUSIC.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Adam and Seph stand at the front of the aisle.
Behind them, Father JUDAS (60), conservative but affable.

Merry peeks in from the vestibule.

A United Nations of head-turners fill the rows. Eve's up front. She sneers like an ex-wife at her husband's wedding.

Seph tugs his collar, sweating. His eyes dart from the stained glass window to Jesus on a cross, hands BLEEDING.

ADAM
Here, have a swig.

Adam hands him a flask. Seph swigs it. Coughs hard. Calms.
Merry parades on her flower-bedecked walker. Onlookers coo.
Ben fiddles with his suit. Watches his steps.

BEN
Five elephant elephant. Six elephan--

Ben lifts his gaze. Strangers stare. He stops. Mouth twists.

BEN (cont'd)
What elephant was I on?

All eyes turn to Ari behind them. She glows in a high-necked gown. Musicians in the crowd rise to play a schmaltzy song.

Park (the spy from the basketball game) watches Seph LOCK IN ON BEN, Adam BEAM at Merry, Merry BEAM back. There is something off about their focus on each other, not Ari.

Churchgoers gasp. Rose petals fall on their upturned faces.

Only Merry sees Seph shake, fighting an internal force.

Purple veins THROB through Seph's skin. Pupils FLASH purple. Neck CRACKS. Lips TWITCH back, showing small white FANGS.

A TRUMPET FLARE drowns Merry's SCREAM. Seph grins. No fangs. Merry blinks hard. *Am I sick? What's happening to me?*

INT. WEDDING RECEPTION - NIGHT

Wedding dance. Adam and Ari waltz across the floor.

Merry hangs her head. Ari and Adam exchange a look.
Adam offers Merry his hand. Ari touches her heart.

A STATUESQUE WAITRESS with a tray of drinks. Ari reaches for red wine but champagne lands in her hand as the tray is whisked away. She sips, annoyed. Tipsy, Ari threads through the strange crowd, catching fragments of conversation.

Fatman and Jagger watch wraith-thin Asian COLLEGE STUDENT grind against a Black BASKETBALL PLAYER. Fatman leers.

FATMAN
Isn't she delicious?

JAGGER
Careful, you might break her.

FATMAN
You are what you eat.

Ari wrinkles her nose. *Gross.*

SNATCHES OF CHATTER
People have been seeing things... the
CDC... a genetic breakthrough... When
are they leaving? I'm starving!

Fatman nibbles College Student's neck. Jagger tut-tuts.

CAIN (70), a behemoth, bumps against Ari. His red-headed BODACIOUS WIFE (30) grabs his arm.

CAIN
Ah, the new wife.

Cain registers Eve staring at them. Ari follows his gaze.

CAIN (cont'd)
Must be uncomfortable having her
always under your feet. Well, only
sixty-nine days 'til the big day!

BODACIOUS WIFE
Sorry, he doesn't know when to stop.

Adam locates Ari and carves through the crowd toward her.

Ari's gaze returns to Eve... Eve embraces Seph. Foreheads touch. Eve cups his face, talks intensely. *Strange.*

CAIN
I'm a Principal on the Council.

ADAM
I'm stealing my bride away.

Bodacious Wife turns hard to Cain. Adam steers Ari away.
They join his MALE FRIENDS and YOUNG DATES and talk unheard.
Adam's hand reaches possessively across her back, palm flat.

Ari stops dead, like a deer sensing a predator.

A group FIX ON HER: Eve, Channing, Jagger, Grace, Archie,
Fatman, Eartha, Cain and Postman.

Ari flicks back. Like meerkats, the group snap away as one.
Ari scans for Ben as Merry approaches.

ARI
Where's your brother?

MERRY
I don't know. I've got my own life.

ARI
No, you don't. Go find him. Please.

Behind them, Ben POPS balloons on his way to the back door.

Seph stalks Ben with his eyes. Then with his feet.

Seph checks over his shoulder. Skulls the red dregs in a
wine glass. He chokes as he swallows. Continues outside...

EXT. WEDDING RECEPTION - NIGHT

Ben leans over a barrier. He peers down a cliff to the sea.
Ben watches a boat bob. Seph's face appears beside his.

SEPH
I, am, so, bored.

Seph perks up and turns to Ben.

Ben smiles innocently. His face SLACKENS. His eyes glaze.

Seph's pupils are black saucers, with purple rims.

Ben climbs over the barrier. Seph holds his jacket.
Ben's toes teeter on the edge. He cranes past them to see...

Far below, waves crash against the cliff.
Two men drag a DEAD FEMALE MODEL into a rocking boat.

As Ben cranes, his artery THROBS in his exposed neck.

Seph BARES FANGS.

Ben is a pulsing NETWORK OF BLOOD VESSELS.

Seph overshadows Ben, the moon behind him. His ear TWITCHES.

Light from the distant door silhouettes Merry.

MERRY

Ben! Seph! They're leaving!

Seph's fangs retract. Waking, he snatches Ben to his chest.

SEPH

What were you doing out there?!

Ben shakes off his daze.

INT./EXT. CAR (OUTSIDE WEDDING RECEPTION) - NIGHT

Ari, Adam, Ben, Merry and Seph step inside a black Porsche. Wedding guests throng around them.

Ari winds down the window to wave -- The guests are gone. The venue door SLAMS shut. CHEERING from inside.

INT. WEDDING RECEPTION - NIGHT

Sexy MUSIC sweats through the room. Bodies writhe.

Clothes are shed. Basketball Player is on her knees, her face in Jagger's groin as he sucks her wrist.

Fatman fucks College Student against a wall, fangs in neck.

Cain's mouth drips with blood as ASPIRING MODEL falls dead. Bodacious Wife drains ACTRESS and glares at Cain. He shrugs.

The floor is red with blood.

A SNAKE writhes over Eve, who sits naked on the stage like a queen. She strokes her breasts. Wears a GALAXY PATTERN RING.

A primal SCREAM of a girl. Eve strokes her lips.

EVE

Ah, the main course. Yummy.

INT. PEDIATRIC UNIT - DAY**NURSE'S STATION (LOOKS ONTO ROOM 6)**

Ari watches Merry at Jax's bedside. *Is that a crush?*

ROOM 6

Merry wears a Wonder Woman T-shirt. Jax sits in bed, a pile of Merry's books beside him. His recovery is unsettling. Jax waves Owen over but he shakes his head, too shy to join in.

JAX

How often do you volunteer?

MERRY

Adam says I should be more independent. I can come whenever. He even gave me my own phone.

JAX

Is your real dad Korean?

MERRY

My dad's a dick. No, he's American.

JAX

My dad's a dick too, but Mom's great.

MERRY

My mom's great too. But don't tell her I said that.

JAX

You should tell her. You never know what's gonna happen, right?

Merry drifts into memory. Absently rubs her knees.
PRELAP: RAP RAP RAP on a door.

INT. ADAM'S HOUSE - DAY**HALLWAY**

Ari RAPS on the BATHROOM DOOR as she passes, toting laundry.

ARI

Merry, get moving!

BATHROOM

Merry dries herself, seated before a mirror --
-- The door WEDGES OPEN.

VOYEUR'S POV (HALLWAY INTO BATHROOM)

Merry pushes her breasts together. Screws up her face.
She senses a presence. Swings around. Covers up.

HALLWAY

Adam bumps into Ari. Jerks back in surprise.

ADAM
I'll fix the lock on that door. She's
not a child any more.

ARI
Neither is Seph. You're so good.

Ari smooches him. He smacks her butt. She play yelps.

LIVING ROOM

Merry enters in shorts. She's on the verge of being prey.

Adam reads her vampire romance, lying on the chaise. The
other lounge is taken over by his bag, jacket and papers.

ADAM
I see naked people all day. Every
woman should be proud of their body.

Merry's chest caves as she wills the floor to swallow her.

ADAM (cont'd)
Come on, come with me.

ADAM'S BEDROOM

Merry sits before a full length mirror, Adam behind her.
Her long braids drape in front of her chest.

ADAM (cont'd)
I see a beautiful young woman.

MERRY
I'm ugly.

Adam moves her braids behind her. Slowly unbraids her hair.
He twists it in a knot at the crown of her head.

ADAM
You should show off your neck.

Adam holds up a heart locket and chain.

He clasps it at her nape. The locket sits between her breasts. Merry chews her lip, unsettled.

Ari enters. She traces Adam's hands on Merry's shoulders.

Adam discerns Ari's uncertain face in the mirror.

He claps Merry's shoulders twice. Merry swings around.

MERRY
Mom, look what Adam got me!

ADAM
To celebrate us becoming a family.

MERRY
Don't I look grown up?!

Ari regards Merry with concern. *She does look grown up.*

INT. BINSAS OFFICE - SAME TIME

Binsa presses her cell phone to her ear. Hears it RING.

INT. ADAMS BEDROOM - SAME TIME

Godzilla RINGTONE. Ari's jaw tightens. Adam rankles.

ADAM
She didn't even come to the wedding.
Don't let her judge and control you.
Don't let her ruin our happiness.

Ari meets Adam's unwavering look. Refuses the call.

INT. BINSAS OFFICE - SAME TIME

Binsa hangs up and humphs, disgruntled.

INT. ADAMS HOUSE - SEPH'S BEDROOM - DAY

In Seph's bedroom, Ari puts laundry in drawers.

Ben and Seph wrestle on the floor. Ben wears his cape. They roll. Seph pins him. Ari chuckles.

BEN
Whoooooa!

Merry pokes her head in. Her eyes narrow. Seph, eyes closed, sniffs Ben's neck deeply. He opens his eyes. Locks on Merry.

SEPH
You reek, Ben.

Seph fake-vomits. Ben cackles. Merry frowns.

ARI
Ben, put that vampire cape in the wash or I'll put it in the trash.

Ben and Seph mock Ari soundlessly.

Ari lifts Seph's pillow to put fresh pajamas underneath.

A BLOODY, HEADLESS WHITE MOUSE lies there. Ari shrieks.

SEPH
Has Jonesie left me another present?

Ari clutches her chest. Merry's eyes plead with Ari.

ARI
Merry, what's wrong?...

SEPH
Apart from the dead mouse?

In a moment between them, things could be, but aren't, said.

EXT. ADAM'S HOUSE - DAY

The house is trussed thickly in dark purple vines. Clouds cast shifting shadows. Vines batter Ben's bedroom window.

INT. ADAM'S HOUSE - SAME TIME

BEN'S BEDROOM

SCRITCH-THUD. Vines claw at the glass, choking out light.

Ben plays with figurines of a Vampire at a Boy's neck.

BEN
(imitates vampire)
You want to be fast, right? Slurp.
(imitates boy)
I'm so fast now. Zooooom.

Boy figurine runs. Vampire Hunter figure comes in to attack.

BEN
(imitates hunter)
I'm going to kill you!

Merry enters behind Ben.

MERRY
Whose side are you on?

BEN
The vamp side, of course.

Merry leafs through one of Ben's vampire books.

MERRY
How did they know who was a vampire?

BEN
Well, vamps are repelled by garlic,
crosses and holy water. They burn in
sunlight and sleep in coffins. Hmm,
that'd be hard on a quest. Anywhere
dark works, I guess.

A white MOUSE runs over the bed. Merry squeals.

BEN (cont'd)
That's Harry. He lives here.

Jonesie pounces. HARRY the mouse scampers away.

BEN (cont'd)
Jonesie stop!

Ben bolts up and gives chase. Merry follows Ben to...

LIVING ROOM

Merry watches Harry the mouse scamper into the fireplace,
followed by Jonesie. No sign of them.

Ben crawls into the fireplace and DISAPPEARS.

Merry rushes to the fireplace. She gets down on her knees.

There's a SECRET DOOR in the left wall of the fireplace.

She abandons her walker, crawls through a tight space to...

HIDDEN PASSAGEWAY

Ben's far ahead. He dashes down stairs to...

BASEMENT

Light from the basement window dances dust over a bookcase. Peaceful. Until Jonesie bounds up the bookcase after Harry.

Ben TSK-TSKS to Jonesie above him.

A RUSTY BOX is at Ben's eye level. He picks it up.

Jonesie herds Harry around a LARGE JAR of formaldehyde. The jar teeters, teeters, then FALLS.

Ben catches it with his free hand! *Phew!*

Ben's breath catches as he gawps at the jar.

IN JAR: A YOUNG WOMAN'S HEAD. She grins, green eyes open.

Ben SCREAMS.

The jar SHATTERS on the floor. The head stares at Ben.

Jonesie jumps on Ben. Ben screams again!

Jonesie bounds after Harry down another passageway, into...

A BASEMENT ROOM with a COFFIN.

HIDDEN PASSAGEWAY

Merry stands sans walker. Takes five steps. Trips, flailing.

She groans on her back then lifts her PHONE, casting light onto walls, painted with hunters through the ages in battle.

Merry crawls further. Raises her phone. It lights up --

A century-old fresco of a VAMPIRE above her.

A RAT SCAMPERS on the ceiling -- It DROPS on Merry's face.

Merry screams. She pushes it off her and crawls, as fast as she can manage, back the way she came.

LIVING ROOM

As Merry exits the fireplace, the secret door closes. *Damn!* She tries to slide it, knocks it. No joy. Ari is behind her.

ARI

What are you doing?! Where's Ben?

MERRY

He's in here!

ARI

Merry!

MERRY

Mom! I'm not making it up!

Ari and Merry have a silent stand-off.
Merry's face roils from rage to resolve.

SERIES OF SHOTS

-- Merry gathers mince garlic from the fridge whilst, in the dining room, Ari listens to Ben tell a story with zeal.

BEN

And in the basement guess what I found? A lady's decapitated head!

ARI

A decapitated head, huh? That's cool.

-- Merry puts a cross around Ben's neck.

-- Merry fills a bottle with holy water from the church. Father Judas has his back turned. He turns -- she's gone.

INT. ADAM'S HOUSE - DAY

DINING ROOM

The family dines. Merry observes Seph. Adam takes vitamins.

MERRY

Should we say grace?

ARI

What happened to "the bible is a book of myths and legends"?

Adam hands Seph a bottle identical to his -- GARLIC TABLETS.

ADAM

For your immunity. Take one a day.

Merry notices Seph wearing a chain. With a cross. *Humph.*

Merry, under the table, empties holy water into a glass. She places it on the table. She shifts. Reaches for the salt.

Merry accidentally-on-purpose knocks the glass of holy water into Seph's lap. He vaults up. Annoyed but unhurt.

SEPH
You did that on purpose!

ARI
Merry! Apologize!

Seph stomps off. Ari considers Merry. *What's going on?*

EXT ADAM'S HOUSE - DAY

Ari hauls a bag to the trash cans. A bear rifles through them. The bear looks at Ari. A long, still moment. It resumes feasting on decay. Something in Ari shifts.

INT. ADAM'S HOUSE - DAY

LIVING ROOM (LOOKS ONTO YARD)

Ari watches Seph and Ben play basketball outside.

Seph's hands position Ben's hips, standing close behind him. He lifts Ben as he takes the shot.

The One-Legged Crow TAPS on the window. Ari jumps.

ARI
Hello there. Are you okay?

Ari TAPS back. One-Leg cocks his head, wordlessly answering.

BEN'S BEDROOM

Seph massages Ben's shoulders on his bed.

Ari looks in. Ben groans. Ari bites her bottom lip.

SEPH
That feels good, right?

INT. ADAM'S HOUSE - NIGHT

BEN'S BEDROOM

Ben sleeps. Vines PUNCH the window. Ben bolts upright. Ben picks up his teddy. His feet hit the floor. Patters toward

ADAM'S BEDROOM

In bed, Adam reads about GENETICS. Ari reads a book on CHILD TRAUMA. Stack of books on her night stand. She turns a page.

ARI (V.O.)
Pedophiles use roughhousing and
massage to desensitize kids to touch-

Ari bites her nails. Adam clasps her hand.

ADAM
Don't bite your nails. What's wrong?

ARI
I'm going to sound like a prude...
It's just, well, I don't like Seph
massaging Ben. It gives me the icks.

ADAM
Is that a medical diagnosis Mrs Well?
Hang on a minute. This is your mother
trying to get between us, isn't it?

ARI
What? No. I haven't talked to her in
ages. -- You think I'm being silly.

ADAM
It's better than farting in each
other's faces. But that's just me.

HALLWAY OUTSIDE ADAM'S BEDROOM - SAME TIME

Ben peeks in. Considers whether he can jump in bed with Mom.

INTERCUT - ADAM'S BEDROOM AND HALLWAY

-- Adam takes Ari's hand. His voice is chiding, parental.

ADAM
You're just hyper-vigilant given your
ex, Ari. Not all men are monsters.
Wrestling, roughhousing, it's normal.
I massage the boys at basketball.
What's the issue?

ARI
I'm being ridiculous.

ADAM
Just overprotective. Look how much
better Ben is with men in his life?
He can't be a mama's boy forever.

ARI
You sure?

Adam takes her face in his hands. Holds her eyes with his.

ADAM
You have nothing to worry about.

-- Ben absorbs the lesson. *It's all normal.* He shuffles off.

-- Ari reads her book, tweaks her fringe.

ARI (V.O. READING PRELAP)
Pedophiles groom the community, then
the parents and then the child...

EXT. ADAM'S HOUSE - BACK YARD POOL - DAY

Ari swims. She surfaces to watch the family in the pool.

It's all glistening and slow-mo, so sweet it seems rotten.
Ben's on Seph's shoulders. Merry SWATS Adam as he lifts her
by the HIPS onto his shoulders. Ben and Merry try to PUSH
each other off. Behind, there's a WATERFALL into the pool.

Ari focuses on Seph's hands PRESSING on Ben's thighs,
Merry's THIGHS HUGGING Adam's neck. Ari chews her lip.

ARI (V.O. READING)
....They're the people you trust.

INT. ADAM'S HOUSE - NIGHT

BEN'S BEDROOM

Ari tucks Ben in and kisses him.

MERRY'S BEDROOM

Ari perches on Merry's bed and tucks her in.

ARI
You'd tell me if anyone ever made you
or Ben feel uncomfortable, right?

MERRY
Of course, Mom. I know all about
consent. I'm a modern woman.

ARI
Oh. Well, good. I love you, baby.

HALLWAY

Ari squints into SEPH'S DARK ROOM. Sees his outline in bed.

INT. PEDIATRIC UNIT - SAME TIME

Adam flirts with Eve and two NURSES at the nurse's station.

ADAM
Good night, my pretties.

INT. ADAM'S HOUSE - NIGHT**ADAM'S BEDROOM**

Ari drinks coffee. Reads. Her eyes droop.
CREAK of a floorboard. Ari blinks awake.

HALLWAY

ARI'S POV: Ari creeps to Merry's door. Merry sleeps soundly.
Ari creeps to Seph's door. BED EMPTY. Her heart POUNDS.
Ari rushes to Ben's door. Steps on Lego. Silently curses.

BEN'S ROOM

Ben, awake, lies with his head in Seph's lap.

MALE DEEP VOICE (O.S.)
Slowly, Sephtis. Let your gift flow.

Seph nods, as if drugged. Gazes into Ben.

SEPH
You are strong, fast. Unbeatable.

At the door, Ari watches in shock.

Seph BARES HIS TEETH. His FANGS DESCEND. Black VENOM DRIPS.

Ari lunges on Seph!

A GNARLED HAND pulls Ari off Seph.

Ari, wild-eyed, turns to Deep Voice. Screams WITHOUT SOUND.

The gnarled hand taps her forehead.

She falls like a plank, smashing her head.

The gnarled hand softly brushes Ari's fringe from her scar.

MALE DEEP VOICE (O.S.)
Silence. Sleep. Forget...

BLACKNESS for a beat.

Ari wakes whimpering. Her eyes focus and widen in terror.

The blood-wet face of **FIRST** (ancient) is white, ridged, monstrous with long hair. *Like the sketch on Binsa's wall.*

First buries his face in her bloody hair, sucking.

INT. ADAM'S HOUSE - DAY

ADAM'S BEDROOM

Adam kisses Ari's neck. She groans. Holds her aching head.

ADAM
You usually sleep like the dead but I
found you sleepwalking last night.

Ari looks around, disoriented. She bounds up and runs...

HALLWAY

Trips over Jonesie. Falls hard. *Get up!* Runs to...

BEN'S BEDROOM

Ari checks Ben's neck. He's asleep. *No bites.*

MERRY'S BEDROOM

Ari checks Merry's neck. *No bites.* Merry grumbles.

ADAM (O.S)
Are you okay?

Ari spins to Adam. His brow wrinkles.

ARI
I, I had a nightmare. It was so real.

INT. PEDIATRIC UNIT - ROOM 6 - DAY

Ari, distracted, checks Jax's vitals.
Jax's fingers blur over a computer game, phone on the bed.

Owen watches Jax from his bed and summons his courage.
He wheels his drip toward Jax who smiles his encouragement.

ARI
You make me believe the unbelievable.

JAX
Yeah, I'm kicking Merry's butt.

MERRY (V.O. ON PHONE)
Hey! And Mom, I'm not in homework club because Adam drove me home after school. And Ben's out with Seph.

Ari goes to object but stops. *It was just a nightmare.*
Owen and Jax implore her with their eyes. *Do something.*

ARI
Okay. See you at home.

EXT. ADAM'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Ari approaches the house. It looks malevolent not majestic.
Bare black vines strangle the house. They bleed red sap.

The gates GRRR closed. Ari twitches back but steels herself.

INT. ADAM'S HOUSE - NIGHT

LIVING ROOM

Ari enters in uniform. Ben, Seph, Merry and Adam play Twister and collapse in a laughing tangle. They turn to Ari.

BEN
Mom, come and play.

MERRY
Get in here.

ADAM
The bath's running. You relax. I've got these monsters under control.

The kids bash Adam with cushions. Ari studies Seph.

BATHROOM

Candles surround a bubble bath. A glass of wine is on the table. She sips it and locks the door. *Still broken!*

Ari sheds clothes. Lowers herself into the bath. Exhales.

She sinks under the bubbles, as her eyes close.
Peace at last. Air bubbles plop slowly to the surface. *Aaah.*

A DEAD BOY'S FACE brushes her cheek! Her eyes flash open!

Ari lurches up, pants with her whole body.

HANDS GRAB AT HER, DRAGGING HER DOWN through murky reeds...

Ari thrashes for the surface. She emerges in the...

BATHROOM

Ari CATAPULTS out of the bath. STAGGERS back to the wall.

She steadies herself. Treads gingerly on the wet floor.

Ari bends over the bath... wipes the bubbles aside...
It's just her face saying *I'm losing it*. She scolds herself.

FIRST LEAPS OUT OF THE WATER!

Her feet slip. She SMASHES her head against the towel rail.

Ari lies unconscious. Her eyes flash open. *Time for action.*

QUICK MONTAGE - ARI SPIES ON THE FAMILY - DAY

-- Ari buys spy cameras at an electronics store.

-- Hides a camera in a living room vent.

-- Hides a camera in a book in Merry's room.

-- Ari hides a camera in a vampire figure in Ben's room.

INT. ADAM'S HOUSE - NIGHT

BEN'S BEDROOM

Ben stares up as Seph nuzzles his neck, hand on Seph's head.
Seph rolls back, BLOODY MOUTH exposed. He draws Ben to his
shoulder, ruffles his hair. A ghoulissh tenderness.

BEN
Am I a vampire now?

SEPH
Maybe when you get older.

Ben turns toward the vampire figure with it's hidden camera.

POV ARI'S CAMERA: Ben is calm. He still wears the cross.

BEN
I want to be just like you.

MERRY'S BEDROOM

Adam enters. Merry looks up from a book, frowning.
She shows Adam the open book with the camera.

BEN'S ROOM

Adam rifles through Ben's books. Stares at the figurine.

LIVING ROOM

POV: The living room vent camera. Adam reaches into the vent. Behind him, the room has been tossed.

INT. ADAM'S HOUSE - DAY

LIVING ROOM: Ari has her hidden cameras by her laptop.
An SD card is plugged in.

ON THE SCREEN: She clicks open a file. Nothing but static.
Ari clicks the mouse frenetically, biting her lip.

EXT. STREET - DAY

In the street, A DOG WALKER stops to chat to a NEIGHBOR.
Kids play in a park. An ad for Middle America.

PHONE BOOTH: Park (spy at basketball game) is on the phone.

PHONE MESSAGE (V.O.)
You've reached Stillwater Police
Station. Please hold and...

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY**HALL**

Police pass Ari, seated in the hall. She clasps her handbag tightly. The blurred BUZZ of the police station is cut by

BEN
Mom, I'm hungry.

Ari gets muesli bars from her bag. Ben doesn't wear glasses.

ARI
Where are your glasses?

BEN
I can't see with them now. I want
something from the vending machine!

Merry notices Ari sag. Ari absently hands Ben some change.

Merry and Ben jostle each other down the hall to the

VENDING MACHINE

Merry and Ben consider their options.

OFFICER STURDY (50, male) grabs a soda from the machine.
OFFICER EARNEST (30, female) passes behind him.

OFFICER EARNEST
Heard you caught a filthy pedo
messing with kids at basketball.
Think this one will stick?

OFFICER STURDY
Doubt it. It's the usual pillar of
the community bullshit.

OFFICER EARNEST
Maybe it's that virus from last year,
that made people hallucinate? I heard
there's some new cases.

They detect Ben and Merry. Merry blinks rapidly.

BEN
Merry, what's a pedo?

INTERROGATION ROOM

Merry and Ben sit silent and defiant, opposite a
PSYCHOLOGIST (50s, female) and Officer Sturdy.

VIEWING ROOM

Ari and Earnest monitor the kids through a one-way mirror.

INTERCUT - INTERROGATION ROOM AND VIEWING ROOM

Merry and Ben whisper conspiratorially.

MERRY
Don't say anything about vampires.

BEN
Or they'll put me in the psych ward.

CHILD PSYCHOLOGIST
Ben, we heard Adam is in the locker
room with the boys. Is that right?

BEN
'Course. He's the coach.

CHILD PSYCHOLOGIST
He's a good coach, then?

Ben nods. Psychologist turns to Merry, who crosses her arms.
She refocuses on Ben.

PSYCHOLOGIST
Has your step father ever touched you
in a way that made you uncomfortable?

MERRY
Adam wouldn't hurt us! He loves us!
He's not like Dad.

BEN
I want Mom! Mom-Mom-Mom-Mom-Mom!

Ari, stricken with anguish, responds to Earnest's scrutiny.

ARI
What kind of mother would I be if I
let someone hurt my kids?
(convincing herself)
Adam's a good man... Better than I
deserve.

Merry and Ben exit the room, teary and sniffing.

HALL

Ari and Psychologist fix on Adam down the hall with Fatman.

PSYCHOLOGIST
Is that the Mayor?... Adam knows
everyone, doesn't he?

Adam turns to the kids, arms open. Ben gallops ahead.

BEN
Dad!

Merry runs behind Ben! Her walker appears purely decorative.

Adam folds Merry and Ben into his body. The perfect dad.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Ari's eyes beseech a marble Virgin Mary holding baby Jesus. Father Judas appears beside her.

ARI
Jesus! I thought I was alone.

JUDAS
Never. You're always under His gaze.
Do you need a priest or a friend?

ARI
Something's wrong... with me, Father.

Ari's head collapses in her hands.

ARI (cont'd)
You believe in monsters, Father?

JUDAS
Part of the job description.

ARI
I mean real monsters. This is
confidential, right?

JUDAS
Of course.

ARI
I dreamed, I saw... Seph biting Ben's
neck. Merry can miraculously walk.
And Adam loves Merry, maybe too much?

JUDAS
You know a virus is making people
hallucinate. The CDC might come.

ARI
I didn't know about the CDC.

JUDAS
Ari, we are all born sinners. Even
Merry. She's a ripening apple. Every
father notices his daughter maturing.
The only monster here is jealousy.

Ari seeks Mary's face, whose TEARS FALL onto Baby Jesus.

INT./EXT. CAR - DAY

OUTSIDE THE CHURCH, Judas leans in to talk to the driver.

JUDAS

Bible's the best cover story ever.
Fear wrapped in love. We should give
that writer a prize.

ADAM

Ari won't say anything?

JUDAS

Believe in demons and angels, you're
a Christian. Believe in vampires and
you're insane. She doesn't want to
believe... Seph is safe for now. We
have ten days to the ascension. Just
keep her busy.

Adam's mind ticks.

INT. ADAM'S HOUSE - DAY

BATHROOM

Adam opens the medicine cabinet.

Takes Ari's contraceptive pills.

Swaps them with a packet of placebos from his pocket.

KITCHEN

Ari makes nutritious school lunches. Radio is on.

RADIO (V.O.)

The father of Tim Smythe, driver of
the Crusaders bus, and Owen Smythe,
who went missing in foster care...

Ari recognizes Owen's name, except it was Smyth not Smythe,
wasn't it? *Probably nothing.* Distracted, she cuts her thumb.

RADIO (V.O.) (cont'd)

...arrested today, accused of killing
the officer investigating both cases.
The weapon was a wooden stake putting

Blood from Ari's thumb SPLOTS into the sink.

ADAM IS IN THE REFLECTION of a hanging pot.

Adam leans into Ari's neck -- and kisses it. She yelps.

RADIO (V.O.)
Stillwater on the map, with
a flood of horror tourists.

ARI
(overlapping)
Don't sneak up on me!

ADAM
I'm not sneaking. That's a sad case.

ARI
There's no justification for murder.

ADAM
You wouldn't kill to protect your son? That kid saw vampires. He should have been committed not investigated.

Ari stares into a pot of churning red sauce.

ADAM (cont'd)
Come, I'll take your mind off it.

Adam cups her breast. She clocks his hand. Beat. Fake-moans.

INT. PEDIATRIC UNIT - NIGHT

ROOM 6

A DRUG TROLLEY crosses the room.

Jax watches a MUSCULAR NURSE (25, male, white) hand pills to child PATIENTS who swallow them.

Muscular Nurse wheels the drug trolley toward Jax.

He places a pill on Jax's tongue then makes him sip water. Jax swallows. Lifts his tongue. Muscular Nurse smiles.

Jax watches him wheel the trolley out. Spits out the pill.

Dreamy Doctor JET (35, male, Asian), enters with a chart.

Jax tracks him with his eyes. Dr Jet bends over a GIRL (5).

The Girl locks eyes with Jax. SLURPING sounds.

Dr Jet glides to the foot of Owen's bed, opposite Jax.

He wipes his mouth, wet with blood. He picks up the chart.

ON THE CHART: Owen Smyth. HEMOPHILIAC. Foster care.

Dr Jet growls as Muscular enters. THROWS him across the room, eliminating competition. A COMMOTION of a crowd. Dr Jet twists toward the corridor. Flashes out and into--

CORRIDOR

First glides down the corridor, an inch of chilly air beneath his feet. Muscular Nurse and Dr Jet bow low.

A THRONG of people, dressed for cocktails, part like the Red Sea, as First approaches. Channing is among them.

FIRST
They're subdued, not sedated?

DR JET
(head bowed)
Yes, First.

CHANNING
I fell asleep at the wheel last time.

The Throng chortles. Dr Jet scowls.

DR JET
It was a tasting night. No one was
supposed to be drained.

Channing's lip curls.

Postman strokes the wall as he passes down the corridor. The lights flicker. His fingers CRACKLE, animating a painting.

The playful painting of children running COMES TO LIFE. The children turn, terrified, running from something unseen.

First's purple eyes sweep the Throng, who bow in turn.

First's lips retract.

His FANGS DESCEND -- long, large, white with a violet sheen.

His jaw unhinges like a snake. His fangs extrude.

The Throng cowers. On his signal --
The Throng blurs into the rooms of unconscious children.

First's flat nostrils flare. His ears twitch.

ROOM 6

Eve stands over Owen, asleep but smiling. Strokes his neck.

Eve salivates. Eyes flash purple.

Her fangs burst through her gums. Eve opens wide, slaverling like a wolf over prey.

Eve dives at Owen's throat. She loses herself in the feed.

Seen like a medical scan, BLACK VENOM flows through Eve's fangs into Owen, spreading tendrils into Owen's brain.

Owen wakes! He flails at Eve. She pulls back, mouth bloody.

He meets her purple eyes -- No trance.

His SCREAM curdles.

First glides across the floor. Owen is shackled by fear. The Throng rubbernecks to watch.

First kneels over Owen. He speaks as if giving Communion.

FIRST
Blood is the food of the Thirst.

THRONG (IN CHORUS)
Until Vampira returns.

Owen whimpers. First drives his FANGS into Owen.

Eve nods to the Throng. They SWARM in. Owen SCREAMS.

Channing SINKS into Owen's wrist. Dr Jet BITES his thigh. Owen's screams abruptly stop.

Jax's scream is a strangled squeak.

Channing SPINS HER HEAD 180 degrees. Stops. Channing slowly returns to Owen. Jax's eyes brim with tears.

MUSIC PRELAP: Total Control by The Motels or similar plays.

INT. ADAM'S HOUSE - DAY

BEN'S BEDROOM

The song drifts through the house as Ari picks up laundry.

Ari goggles. On Ben's pajama collar are two dark RED SPOTS. Ari lets go of the laundry basket. Clothes scatter.

Ari flounders for a sock under the desk. She spies the RUSTY BOX that Ben found in the basement.

Ari sits cross-legged under the desk. She opens the box.

INSIDE RUSTY BOX: An antique vampire-fighting kit and DIARY embossed with a sword.

Ari opens the cover: *Olivia St John*. Ari's EYES ROLL BACK.

VISION: EXT. FIELD - DAY

1820s: OLIVIA (21) in a man's hooded cape, sweeps a sword with purple hilt against five vampires. Beheads two at once!

Their bloody heads, fangs extended, roll across the ground.

Olivia pulls back her hood, huffing. She grins, triumphant. With her green eyes, she surveys the dead.

A sword SLICES Olivia's head off!

First lowers his sword, victorious. He watches her head roll across the grass. Ari gapes at it. It's the head in a jar!

INDISTINCT VOICES of Ari's family coming home wake her to...

BACK TO SCENE (BEN'S BEDROOM)

Ari fumbles everything back into the box. She peeks into the

HALLWAY

Ari sees Merry walk unaided. Adam's hand is low on her back.

MARTHA DAVIES, SINGER

(singing)

*Sell my soul for total contro-o-o-o-l
Over you.*

The song, their intimacy, shake Ari.
But a decade of abuse isn't easily overcome.

EXT. STILLWATER STREET - DAY

Ari paces, phone to her ear. Her eyes patrol the street.

ARI

I'm sorry, Mom. I should have called.
I thought, or Adam thought... God, I
don't know if I'm crazy or stupid or
both. But if Zane finds out I'm
seeing things, he'll get the kids.

INT. STRATEGIC PLANNING ROOM - NIGHT

Binsa watches an OFFICER pin STILLWATER on the map.

ON A SCREEN: Photos of OWEN SMYTH/E, his brother bus driver TIM, their FATHER and a news story about the missing bus.

BINSA (TALKING ON PHONE)
You're sane, Ari. Okay? We have two reports of hallucinations and someone is monitoring the area. You had... let's call it a vision. You haven't actually seen a vampire, have you?

INTERCUT - ARI AND BINSA

Ari laughs weakly as she tugs her forelock.

ARI
Then I really would be crazy.

BINSA
Ari, trust your instincts. Get out of there as soon as there's a window.

Ari stops walking, squeezes her eyes shut, her face pained.

ARI
How can I trust my instincts when I can't trust myself?

BINSA
I trust you, Ari. I love you. Trust in that.

Ari's shoulders shudder as she stifles her sobs.

INT. ADAM'S HOUSE - NIGHT

LIVING ROOM

Ari enters in her uniform. On the lounge, Merry, Ben and Seph pile on Adam like puppies, watching a vampire movie.

BEN
Turn on the lights!

MERRY
Where's the fun in that?

SEPH
They deserve to die.

ADAM
Darwin's law.

Subtle flashes on Ari's face: fear, love, doubt.
Adam extends a hand to Ari.

ADAM (cont'd)
Come here.

ARI
There's no room.

Adam stands, jettisoning the kids, who scream and laugh.

ADAM
There's no us without you.

Adam sweeps her up and flops back with her onto the chaise.
He hugs her to his chest. She hears Adam's LOUD HEARTBEAT.

ADAM (cont'd)
Baby, I know it's last minute but the
CDC's onto the hallucination cases.
We need to organize everything.
Sorry, I'll be away for five days.

MERRY (TO ARI, IN KOREAN)
Maybe grandma will come.

Ari shoots Merry a look that silences her.

ADAM
You'll have your hands full with this
lot. Will you be okay on your own?

MERRY
She's not on her own.

Ari relishes this moment of solidarity. Beams at Merry.

ARI
We'll be fine.
(lightly, practiced)
I'm going to look for a book club.
Try and meet some local moms.

ADAM
Let's look together when I'm back.

Ari appears to acquiesce.

LIVING ROOM (LATER)

Ari blows a kiss out the window as Adam's taxi drives off.
She watches the taxi recede into darkness.

HALL

Ari pads down the hall.

Leans into MERRY'S BEDROOM -- she's asleep. Continues...

Nudges BEN'S BEDROOM door open -- he's asleep. Continues...

Her feet tread over floorboards. CREAK. Stops dead still.
Ari is right in front of the CELLAR DOOR. Beat. Continues...

Ari approaches SEPH'S ROOM. Seph sleeps. Ari breathes again.

LIVING ROOM

Ari video calls Binsa. Whispers IN KOREAN.

ARI
Mom! Adam's away! We have our window.

Jonesie jumps on Ari! Ari yelps then titters.

ON THE PHONE, BINSAs POv: Seph walks up behind Ari.

BINSAs
He's behind you!

Ari drops the phone. FROM FALLEN PHONE: Ari walks Seph out.

ARI (IN ENGLISH)
You're sleepwalking. Back to bed.

INT. ADAM'S HOUSE - DAY**ADAM'S BEDROOM**

Ari steps into the bedroom. Stops. Listens. *She's alone.*
Opens Adam's nightstand. Rifles through it. Pilfers cash.

Ari's silver earring falls out. A soft PLINK. Ari feels her ear. The back of her earring rolls under the nightstand.

ARI
Shit!

Ari's head pokes under the nightstand. Her earring rests beside a hidden bottle of SLEEPING PILLS.

Ari opens it. The pills are POWDERED. The veil lifts.

ADAM (V.O.)
You usually sleep like the dead.

KITCHEN

Ari clumps two dozen silver earrings on the table.

Ari opens Seph's garlic capsules. Puts sleeping powder and back of an EARRING INSIDE GARLIC CAPSULE. Seals it. Crushes paracetamol to put into the empty bottle of sleeping powder.

From the open kitchen window, One-Legged Crow watches. One-Leg flies in and onto Ari's shoulder. Ari's on edge.

One-Leg caws. Except it's not a caw. It's a BOY'S SCREAM.

Ari stumbles back. One-Leg flies off. *Phew!*

Ari exhales, eyes closed. One-Leg SWOOPS HER FACE! SCREAMS!

INT. ADAM'S HOUSE - NIGHT**LIVING ROOM**

Merry and Ben curl up to Ari on the chaise lounge. They drink milk from mugs with their name on it.

Seph, on the couch, seems glued to the television. His eyes slide to Ben's neck. PULSE-PULSE-PULSE.

SEPH'S BEDROOM

Ari sits on Seph's bed. He swallows garlic tablets and milk.

SEPH

This is the first time Dad's away on Council business and I'm not stuck with a sitter, like I've got a real family, you know... A real mother.

Ari searches his innocent face. She takes Seph's mug.

SEPH (cont'd)

Ari... is it okay, if I call you Mom?

He's just a child. What am I doing? Ari kisses his forehead.

EXPLODING FROM HIS FACE, his network of veins reaches out like a webbed hand to grab Ari's face. The mug shatters.

SEPH (cont'd)

You okay? Should I call Dad?

ARI

No! No, I'm fine. Go to sleep.

MOMENTS LATER: Ari eases the door closed. Seph lies in bed.

GARAGE

Ari softly closes the trunk, hiking packs inside.

She texts BINSÄ: 'On schedule.'

Cl-UNK. A shovel falls. Ari's eyes pierce the shadows.

Harry the mouse runs over her feet. Ari shrieks. Recovers.

RIIING ruptures the silence. ON THE PHONE: It's Adam!

ADAM'S BEDROOM

Ari, phone to her ear, eases a drawer open.

Ben and Merry sleep in her bed. Merry winces. Rubs her knee.

ADAM (O.S.)

I miss you. How about some phone sex?

ARI

Ben and Merry are in bed with me.

ADAM (O.S.)

Have they been there all week?!

Ari puts stakes, holy water, crosses into a sports bag.

ARI

They're needy if you're not here. Is
your plane still getting in at nine?

(calms her breath)

It's just that I'll be at my book
club and the kids have sleepovers.

INT. UNITED WELLNESS LABORATORY - NIGHT

Adam's in a lab coat. Beyond him are cages of WHITE MICE.

LAB SCIENTISTS peer into microscopes or titrate blood.

ADAM

You have a book club? With who?

INTERCUT - LABORATORY AND ADAM'S BEDROOM

-- Adam leans against a glass-walled room in the lab.

-- Ari double checks her list of vampire weapons.

ARI
Jenny. I met her at the library.

ADAM
Really?... I don't like sharing you.

ARI
I plan to make it up to you.

-- Behind Adam, Chastity (Virgin AB-) BANGS ON THE GLASS WALL with both hands UNHEARD. She wears a patient gown.

ADAM
I have to go. I love you. Goodnight.

On Chastity's side of the glass, the BANGING reverberates.

CHASTITY
Help me! Let me out! Please!

Adam hangs up, uneasy. Turns to Chastity. Opens the door. Her eyes widen as she backs away. She SCREAMS.

INT. ADAM'S HOUSE - NIGHT

HALL

Ari carries Ben, asleep on her shoulder.
Peers into SEPH'S ROOM. Sees outline of his sleeping body.

GARAGE

Ari buckles Ben in his car seat.

A SKITTER. Ari's twists. Her eyes probe the dark. No one.

C/U: Harry, paws raised, watches. Nose twitches. Adorable.

HALL

Ari checks SEPH'S ROOM. He's still asleep.

She soft foots down the hall, EYES glued to his door.

ADAM'S BEDROOM

Ari rouses Merry. Her eyelids flutter awake.

Over Ari's shoulder, the hallway stretches behind her.
In soft focus, a SHADOW shifts in frame. Ari whips around.

Merry sees Ari's terrified face.

MEMORY HIT (MERRY'S) - ONE YEAR EARLIER - NIGHT

Ari carries Merry to the car. Binsa carries Ben.

Merry lifts her face to Ari's terrified, bandaged face.

Merry's leg is in a cast, a lasting casualty of Zane's violence. She wears pajamas with bears on them.

BACK TO SCENE (ADAM'S BEDROOM)

Merry's face is intense, more grown up than it should be.

MERRY
Did Dad find us?!

Merry stands then DROPS to the floor! She gapes at her legs.

MERRY (cont'd)
Mom! My legs! I can't--

Ari battles her inner panic.

ARI
Okay, it's okay. We'll go to the E.R.

INT. PEDIATRIC UNIT - NIGHT**ROOM 6**

Merry sleeps in a hospital gown.

Ari removes an icepack from Merry's tennis ball knee.

ARI
Please God, let her walk again...

Ben sleeps on a chair beside the bed.

Ari looks up -- Eve towers over her, eyes boring in. *Shit!*

EVE
Adam didn't mention she's a
hemophiliac... Has anything changed
in the last five days?

ARI
No, apart from sleeping in my bed...

A Godzilla RINGTONE.

ARI (cont'd)
I think we can manage Merry at home.

ADAM (O.S.)
Why didn't you call me?

Ari spins. Adam's face is full of fatherly concern.

EVE
Let's talk at the nurse's station.

Adam and Eve leave the room. Ari struggles to calm herself.
Ari kisses Merry's forehead. CLICKS off the light. DARKNESS.
Merry, Jax, and two PATIENTS sleep. Ben sleeps on a chair.

NURSE'S STATION

Ari, Adam and Eve talk unheard.

ROOM 6

Ben's head lolls in sleep. His neck is bare, vulnerable.
The black shadow of a SMALL MAN FLASHES across the room.
Ben's eyes flutter open. They slowly DRIFT to Merry.
Seph stands by Merry's side. He turns Merry's face away.
SINKS fangs into her neck.

NURSE'S STATION

Ari balks! Seph shuffles to the desk.

ARI
What the hell are you doing here?!

SEPH
Dad brought me.

ROOM 6

Ari races in, pulls back the sheets. Merry's legs are back to normal! But she's fast asleep.
Ari turns on Seph. He shrinks back.
Adam touches Ari on the shoulder. She jolts back.

ADAM
The CDC ordered us into lock down.
It's essential personnel only.

ARI
But I need to be with Merry.

ADAM

And leave Seph and Ben alone? You
take Ben. I'll bring Seph later. I
want to give him some tests first.

Ari bites her nails. Adam grabs her hand to stop her.

INT./EXT. CAR (HOSPITAL PARKING LOT) - NIGHT

Ari studies the hospital, mind whirling. Ben rides shotgun.

ARI

Stay here. I'm going to get Merry.

INT. PEDIATRIC UNIT - NIGHT

ROOM 6

Merry wrestles awake. Her eyes adjust to the dark.
A low SLURPING. Her eyes dart wide.
A man's shape bends over a girl in the opposite bed.

Merry, eyes fixed on them, slinks off her bed. She stares at
Jax. He's out. As she sneaks out Jax stirs and watches her.

CORRIDOR

Ari stands at the locked door of the pediatric unit. It has
a glass pane. Posters for teen vampire movies hang by the
door. She TAPS her access pass on the scanner. Doesn't work.

FOOTSTEPS behind her. Ari ducks out of view, brushing a
poster off the wall in the process.

Channing rounds the corner, seemingly alone, on her cell.

CHANNING

I expanded the boarding school
scholarship program and we captured
an interesting mix of kids.

Ari steps out of the shadow -- Eve appears behind Channing!
Ari ducks back out of sight.

Eve stops by the fallen poster with BLOBS OF BLU TACK on it.

EVE

The sexy vampire. Our greatest PR
campaign. The boarders have families?

CHANNING

Foster kids, addict's kids. We have five rare blood disorders, ten high talent and two hemophiliacs.

EVE

Girls?

CHANNING

You know how rare that is. It could be years until we find another Merry.

EVE

First thinks we could breed her. Imagine an endless source of hemo blood!

Ari's eyes bug. Eve TAPS her pass. They enter the ward.

Ari watches the doors close slowly. She's poised to duck in but Eve and Channing chat just inside the door.

EVE (cont'd)

Might be our last tasting for a while if the CDC come.

CHANNING

And we have the ascension ceremony tonight. You must be excited!

The door CLICKS shut. Channing and Eve's heels CLIP away.

REVERSE POV: Ari's eyes peek up through the glass pane.

Ari eases open the door. A glob of Blu Tack is on the lock.

Ari sneaks down the corridor. Curtains SCRAPE. Ari twists.

Eve and Channing stand at the bed of a YOUNG GIRL.

CHANNING (cont'd)

So, what's on the menu?

ROOM 6

Ari slinks in. The curtains are drawn around the four beds. Ari crouches, looking for feet. All clear.

Ari slips between the curtains around Merry's bed --

-- No Merry! Her heart POUNDS.

Through a gap in the curtains Ari sees Jax, asleep. Doctor Jet sits on his bed.

Jax's arm hangs off the bed. BITE MARKS!
 Blood drips to the floor. The punctures start to heal.

Ari hones in on Jet. He sucks blood from Jax's other wrist.

Jax's eyes flicker open.
 He points with his bloody hand, down the corridor.

JAX
 (mouths unheard)
 Merry.

Ari hesitates as Jet sucks Jax's wrist. *Nothing she can do.*

CORRIDOR

Ari peeks into room after room. Children sleep.

A SHADOW slithers behind Ari. She twitches back.
 Jet crosses the hall, blind to her. She pads to...

NURSE'S STATION

Muscular Nurse sits on the desk, back to Ari. Goth Nurse is
 bobs her head between his legs.

Ari hunches past as Muscular Nurse groans toward climax.

Muscular Nurse arches back hard, head snapping into her
 path. Ari holds her breath. His eyes are closed.

GOTH NURSE
 My turn.

Muscular Nurse straightens. Ari scrambles forward.

She tiptoes down the corridor, prying into each room.

HOSPITAL ROOM

Ari turns into the final room. It's empty.

She leans on a wall. She sobs softly, shoulders shuddering.
 PARTY CHATTER from the corridor. Ari folds behind a curtain.

The wall at the back of the room SHIMMERS. WAITERS in black
 tie swarm out, trays aloft, bearing white cloth napkins.

Ari peers into the HIDDEN SPACE behind them. It closes.

CORRIDOR

A Throng in cocktail dress sashay in. A string quartet
 swells to life. Waiters present trays of white napkins.

HOSPITAL ROOM

Ari squints, pats, taps, shoves the wall. It's solid.

A COUGH at Ari's ear. Ari PIVOTS to a WAITER (25, male) carrying a tray of blood-dotted white napkins.

He offers Ari his wrist. It has an ELECTRONIC BRACELET. His forearm is covered in double punctures.

WAITER
AB negative?

Ari shakes her head.

WALL SHIMMERS as the Waiter passes through, blood dripping.

Ari follows him. Her shoes STEP IN HIS BLOOD. Through to...

PASSAGEWAY

Ari follows down a dark passage. Waiter turns out of view.

Ari steadies her breath and follows him.

The passage splits into three. *Which way?*

Classical MUSIC beckons her down a passage. It opens into...

BAR

A coatroom of furs, capes and coats.

A shard of light shows Ari's bloody footprints. She sees it. *Shit!* Ari removes her shoes, hides them between the coats.

The bar is empty and strewn with remnants of a soiree. Ari follows MURMURS.

PASSAGEWAY

At the end of the passage, a heavy door. Ari creeps forward.

Checks left - empty passageway. Right - empty passageway.

The door is AJAR. Ari inches forward.

Her bare feet narrowly miss a BROKEN GLASS at the door.

Ari peeks in. Thick red drapes block her view. She nudges a drape back. Through the gap...

COUNCIL CHAMBER

First's broad back is imposing. He sits at a large table.
To his left is an empty chair.

To his right sits a RAVEN-HAIRED WOMAN. Her hair touches the floor. They wear bejeweled ceremonial purple capes.

INTERCUT - PASSAGEWAY AND COUNCIL CHAMBER

Ari glances back. *All clear.* She scrutinizes the room.

HUNCED FIGURES sit in shadow around the table.

From above, the table is large, round, gold. In the center is etched a GALAXY. Twelve grooves radiate from it to...

Hunched Figures pass around a candelabra with unlit candles.

FIRST

From Vampira came Adam and Eve.

The Hunched Figures respond in chorus, like a prayer.

HUNCED FIGURES

The Firsts.

FIRST

And the Firsts created the Thirst.

HUNCED FIGURES

And blood is the food of the Thirst.

FIRST

And the First created the Rings.

As each Hunched Figure speaks, they light a candle bringing them into focus. They are the PRINCIPALS of the Council.

POSTMAN

The Tenth -- Technology, planning.

ARCHIE

The Ninth -- Shelter.

JAGGER

The Eighth -- Arts.

EARTH GODDESS

The Seventh -- Food, Agriculture.

FATMAN

The Sixth -- Government, Justice, Defense.

JUDAS
The Fifth -- Religion.

GRACE
The Fourth -- Volunteers, vulnerable.

CAIN
The Third -- Sport.

CHANNING
The Second -- Education.

RAVEN-HAIRED WOMAN
The First -- Health and research.

HUNCHED FIGURES
And all are bound to The First.

FIRST
Until the great feeding.

ALL TOGETHER
Until Vampira returns.

Ari watches Raven-Haired Woman light the last candle.

FIRST
Today is the ascension --

RAVEN-HAIRED WOMAN
Of our son to the First Ring.

From a far door, six WAITERS carry in a six-foot covered gold dish and set it on the table.

The Principals clap and gush. Fatman licks his lips.

With pomp, Waiters remove the gold dish cover revealing

A GIRL IN A WHITE HOODED CEREMONIAL ROBE -- Possibly Merry!

Gold ropes cinch her robe and fix her hands to gold rings in the dish. She thrashes, cries muffled.

Ari's scream is silent, swallowed by fear.

Waiters retire in unison.

FATMAN
Oh goody!

Behind Ari, A HOODED FIGURE ADVANCES.

Ari is laser-focused on the bound young woman.

Hooded Figure closes in. Ari senses him too late.
 She switches back. She's face-to-face -- WITH SEPH!
 Seph, in a fugue state, sees but doesn't see Ari.
 LONG WHITE NAILS part the drapes from within.
 Ari is exposed as Seph skirts past her.
 White Nails, his head bowed, doesn't see her.
 TOOT-TO-TOOT! A trumpet sounds loudly just inside the door.
 The Principals rise, whipping toward the door and Ari.
 The drapes fall back into place, obscuring her just in time.

ALL TOGETHER
 Hail Sephtis, the Eternal Death.

Ari parts the curtains, half her face revealed.

ALL TOGETHER (cont'd)
 Hail Sephtis, the Eternal Death.

Seph unties the robe of the girl bound in the gold dish.
 Chanting continues. He peels back the hood -- It's CHASTITY.
 She fights her restraints. He strips away the blindfold.
 Chastity is wild-eyed. Seph locks in on his prey.
 He stalks around the table, until he's facing Ari.
 He removes Chastity's gag. She SCREAMS up at him.
 Seph's eyes flash purple. His voice deepens.

SEPH
 Silence. Still.

Chastity is silent, still.
 Ari, too, is transfixed by Seph.
 Seph's robe slips to the floor. His muscles bulge.
 Seph bares his FANGS. Mouth SLATHERS. His fangs EXTRUDE.
 Seph BITES into Chastity's groin. ARTERIAL BLOOD SPRAYS.
 Seph folds over her on the table. A wet, intimate silence.
 Chastity is doe-eyed. A final innocent plea. But she knows.

Seph's teeth RIP Chastity's neck. ARTERIAL SPRAY.

Blood gushes into table-grooves, trickles to the Principals.

The faces of the Principals twitch. Snarl. Teeth like stabbing knives.

Their TONGUES DRAG through the blood.

Chastity's head lolls toward Ari. Their eyes lock.

CHASTITY
(mouths, silently)
Help me.

Ari opens her mouth to scream. No sound. She can't move.

Seph's face is slick with blood. He drinks until Chastity's eyes glaze. Seph steps from the table, sated.

Standing in shadow, First and Raven-Haired Woman paint his arms and chest with blood. They place a crown on his head.

RAVEN-HAIRED WOMAN
I'm so proud of you, son.

FIRST
All hail Prince Sephtis, the Eternal
Death.

ALL TOGETHER
Hail Prince Sephtis, the Eternal
Death.

Raven-Haired Woman and First turn. Faces glow with pride.

THE RAVEN-HAIRED WOMAN IS EVE.

Seph unties Chastity. Focuses on her limp body.

SEPH
Move.

Chastity, weak, sits up. Scrambles back.

Ari breaks from her spell in the same moment.
She steps back -- onto glass. CRUNCH! Ari silently screams.

Seph nods to the Principals.

They surge as one. Biting. Tearing. Chewing flesh.

Ari is aghast.

Blood seeps from Ari's foot.

Seph sniffs. Whips to Ari, eyes glazed as if drugged.

Ari sparks to life.

PASSAGEWAY

Ari RUNS leaving bloody footprints.

ANOTHER WAITER rounds into the passageway behind her.

Ari CAREENS through the wall blindly into...

HOSPITAL ROOM

Ari PUMMELS into a WAITRESS (25). They startle. Gape at each other, uncertain.

Waitress blinks then offers Ari her punctured wrist.

WAITRESS

'A' negative?

Waitress notices Ari's bare feet. Ari thinks quickly.

ARI

Never dance on a table.

WAITRESS

You were at the ascension!

(she bows)

Please, take my shoes.

Ari shoves on the shoes. Hurries to the door. Peeks into...

CORRIDOR

The corridor is deserted.

Ari dashes down the corridor, head on a swivel.

Vampires suck necks of comatose kids, smoke, chat casually.

She runs, breath rasping.

Ari stops at Room 6. *Jax!* She peeks in.

Room 6 teems with vamps. *Impossible.* Tears stain her cheeks.

INT. ARI'S CAR (HOSPITAL PARKING LOT)- NIGHT

Ari folds over the steering wheel sobbing. Ben sleeps.

A shadow sits up in the back seat! Ari sees it too late!
Arms grab Ari's neck.

MERRY (O.S. KOREAN)

Mom!

Ari grabs Merry, kisses her all over her face.

ARI (KOREAN SUBTITLED)

How did you...

MERRY (KOREAN SUBTITLED)

I knew you'd come for me.

INT./EXT. CAR (APPLE ORCHARDS)- NIGHT

Ari speeds on an empty road. Apple orchards on both sides.

Ari checks the rear-view mirror. No one.

Ari smiles over her shoulder at Merry and Ben.

ARI

It's going to be okay.

The moon is bright. CRICKETS chirp. Ari sags with relief.

Ari approaches a SIGN: EVE'S APPLES, ORIGINAL AND THE BEST.

INT./EXT. MINIBUS - DAY (FLASHBACK)

The Crusaders school minibus approaches the same SIGN.

TIM (18, Black) drives, holds up his phone, searches for reception. MUSIC BLARES through his HEADPHONES.

TIM (TO HIMSELF)

Where am I?

Clouds overlook the bus, small in the endless orchard.

Trees sway in lines toward the bus as if closing on prey.

The eight-year-old Crusaders are absorbed in their devices.

OUT THE WINDOW: Human figures LEAP from tree to tree.

More than a dozen of them. From all sides. Closing fast.

The bus BUMPS over something. Tim SLAMS the brakes.

He leans over the steering wheel, wary. MUSIC drowns out--

Behind Tim, windows SHATTER. Boys SCREAM and KICK as they're WRENCHED out. Tim feels something wet his neck. Twists back.

TIM
No spitballs!

Blood sprays as kids fight. *Futile*. FANGS SINK into necks.

Eve, blood-drenched in the aisle, drops a limp boy.

Behind the bus, we see what Tim ran over -- a Crusader.
The SCREAMS continue into...

INT./EXT. CAR (APPLE ORCHARDS)- NIGHT (PRESENT)

THUNK! onto the roof. Merry and Ben look to the dent above their heads.

THE CAR IS PUSHED OFF THE ROAD BY AN UNSEEN FORCE.

Ari slams into reverse. BABUNK. They run over *what was that?*

Ari thrusts into drive. GRIYIY. They're stuck!

IN REAR-VIEW: A vamp lifts the back wheels off the ground.

ARI
Run!

EXT. ORCHARD - NIGHT

The family bolts from the car.

A RED TRUCK veers off the road and pursues them to the tree line. BEEPS. Stops short.

Ari shepherds the kids at full pace. Feet pelt over uneven ground. Branches scratch at her face. RUSTLE from all sides.

From above, vampires zone in from every direction!

POV VAMPIRE: The trio's heat signatures are red on black, disappearing and reappearing behind trees.

Ben stumbles and falls. Ari scoops him up, still running.

Ari slips and TUMBLES into a dam, taking the kids down with her.

Ari, then Ben and Merry HIT the water.

They SINK down, down.

Around the dam, vamps sniff, scout, and shinny up trees.

EXT. UNDERWATER - NIGHT

Ari, Ben and Merry sink into murk. Algae dances like dust in moonlight. Something brushes Ari's face. A DEAD BOY'S FACE!

A shaft of dirty light reveals the Crusaders bus in the mud.

DEAD BOYS FLOAT, half out of windows or trapped inside, eyes open in horror.

EXT. APPLE ORCHARD - NIGHT

The trio surfaces.

Eyes scope for vampires as the moon sheds her clouds.

They crawl out, wary.

Vampires lie dead, hearts staked or heads exploded.

A shadowed FIGURE DRAGS BODIES into the red truck.

Figure turns -- It's Park! He waves brightly.

Ari's face says *What the hell?!* She waves back weakly.

Park trots toward Ari, smiling and off guard.

A redhead vampire (female) lunges behind him.
She tears at his neck. Park YELLS as his jugular sprays.

Frack! Ari, Ben and Merry race to their car as the vampire consumes Park.

INT./EXT. CAR (APPLE ORCHARDS) - NIGHT

Ari speeds through the dark, checks the mirror, wipes tears.

Redhead vampire BLURS after the car.

Ari pulls ahead! Hones in on the road like a NASCAR driver.

WHOOOP-WHOOOP! A police car out of nowhere, chases her down.

Redhead closes in. Ari pumps the gas. SIREN WAILS.

Redhead peels away. Ari brakes. The car rocks to a stop.

INT. POLICE STATION - INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT

Earnest sits opposite Ari. Ari notices her cross. Silence.

ARI
Do you believe in the devil? Demons?
Jesus coming back from the dead?

Officer Earnest fingers her cross and looks uneasy.

OFFICER EARNEST
I'm a police officer and a minister's
daughter. Yes, I believe in evil.

ARI
What about demons with fangs?

Ben and Merry look to Officer Earnest expectantly.

ARI (cont'd)
You know Proverbs thirty fourteen?
'There is a generation whose fangs
are knives, barbarous inhuman
creatures, devouring the needy.'

Earnest leans in. Ari steadies herself.

ARI (cont'd)
In the pediatric unit tonight, I saw
it. Vampires preying on children.

Officer Earnest gawks. Ari's calm, seizing control.

ARI (cont'd)
And we found the school bus in a dam
in the orchard. Look at their necks.

Officer Earnest stiffens straight, eyes alert.

SERIES OF SHOTS

-- **PSYCH WARD:** Ari is in a hospital room. She tries the door. Locked. Peers through the glass pane in the door. Adam ambles down the corridor holding Merry's hand.

-- **BINSA'S CAR:** Binsa makes a call. **DASHBOARD:** Calling Park.

-- **ORCHARD:** Park's phone rings among the grass. His vampire killer loads his body into his truck with the dead vampires. She picks flesh out of her teeth. Drives off in his truck.

-- **DAM:** Police cover the dead bodies of boys from the dam.

-- **PSYCH WARD:** Ari sees Officer Earnest, face stern, address Adam. Ari reads her lips, smiles. *She found the bus!*

Merry arrives at Ari's room. Presses her hand to the pane. Ari raises hers to meet it.

Ari's gaze slips past Merry. Her eyes bug.
Officer Earnest TURNS HER WRIST UP to ADAM.

INT. PEDIATRIC UNIT - ROOM 6 - DAY

Merry sits on Jax's bed. Jax tenses as Adam enters.

ADAM
What are you guys up to?

MERRY
We're going to the cafe.

She holds her palm out. He chuckles and hands her money.

ADAM
Lucky I love you.

Jax assesses the teasing exchange. Adam strides out.

JAX
You really love him, don't you?

MERRY
He doesn't treat me like a kid.

Jax chews his knuckle. Takes a deep breath. Steels himself.

JAX
Does he..... does he bite you?

Merry frowns at her feet. Her face glows with shame.

MERRY
(whispers)
He says it's natural. And he only
does it for people who are special.

JAX
You are special.

MERRY
Am I?

JAX
'Course you are. And the venom makes
you better, right? It heals you?

MERRY

Yes. It's the power of love.

JAX

It's not real... It's not real love.
They mesmerize you, so it feels real.
They drink blood bags but it's better
fresh. But it's not real, Merry.

Merry strokes her legs. Healthy, perfect.

MERRY

I don't know how to break free...
If he stops I'll go back on a walker.

JAX

And you'll still be smart and funny
and kind and beautiful. Amazing.

Merry lowers her eyes, shy. Jax braces himself.

He lifts her chin. Gazes into her. Moves in for the kiss.
Their lips hover then connect gently.

Jax touches Merry's cheek. She returns the gesture.
They lean their foreheads together.

JAX (V.O. PRELAP)

Don't look in his eyes. He mesmerizes
you, tells you what you want to hear.

INT./EXT. CAR - DAY

Adam and Merry drive through streets lined with bare trees.
Adam searches for a radio station. Merry taps the radio off.

MERRY

I have a headache.

Merry closes her eyes. Concentrates on Adam's words.

ADAM

Did I tell you why the Mona Lisa
smiles?

MERRY (V.O)

At least three times.

MERRY

Let's just drive in silence.

Adam's ruffled. He registers her eyes closed.

ADAM
Your mom's not coming back for a long
time. I've got you all to myself.

A tear overflows down her cheek.

INT. CARGO PLANE (FLYING) - DAY

Binsa and FOUR SOLDIERS check equipment, weapons, maps, etc.
ON BINSa'S PHONE: She calls Ari.
Her eyes crinkle in worry at the muted unanswered RINGING.

INT. ADAM'S HOUSE - DAY

DINING ROOM

Merry and Ben pick at their breakfast.
Adam and Seph rise from the table.

ADAM
You sure you don't want to come to
the community center with us?

MERRY
No, we're going to the library.

SEPH (TO BEN)
I'll see you for dinner.

INT./EXT. ARI'S CAR (MOVING) - DAY (LATER)

Merry peers over the wheel. Ben rides shotgun, Jonesie in
his lap. He navigates through splayed fingers.

A POLICEMAN watches them pass. Drops his doughnut.

EXT. ADAM'S HOUSE - DAY

The house is still as a mausoleum.

PRELAP: RAP-RAP-RAP on the front door.

INT./EXT. ADAM'S HOUSE - DAY

ENTRANCE

Adam opens the front door, shirtless.

Bitchy Mom stands, cleavage out, holding a tray of food.

BITCHY MOM
I hear your wife's in the hospital.
I don't want you to starve.

She leers at Adam. He leers back. She struts in.

INT. PSYCHIATRIC WARD - DAY

ARI'S ROOM

Ari tries the door. Locked. Peers through glass.

A mammoth male ORDERLY manifests at the window.

CORRIDOR

Orderly steers Ari roughly down the corridor. Ari resists but he holds firm. Swipes a door open with an ACCESS PASS.

WHITE ROOM

Merry and Ben conspire at a table, back to the door. They pivot as Ari is pushed into the room.

ARI
Merry! Ben!

Ben shoots to Ari. Merry leans heavily on her walker.

Orderly sneers and turns to leaves.

BEN
Hey, asshole!

The Orderly spins back. Face tight, thin-lipped.

Ben takes karate stance. Gives Orderly the stink-eye.

Orderly's face FLASHES INTO A VAMPIRE.

Ben's fascinated not scared. Reaches up and DINGS a fang.

In the Orderly's moment of confusion, Merry charges him with her walker. He pushes her off. Ari catches Merry.

The door is open behind him. *This is their chance!*
But Ari pulls the children back to her protectively.

Orderly exits. Door clicks closed. Now they're all trapped!

Ari kisses Merry and Ben feverishly.

Merry holds up the access pass. Ari looks confused.

BEN (cont'd)
We're breaking you out!

INT./EXT. CAR - DAY (MOVING)

Ari pulls out from the curb as the SUN SETS.

ARI
How did you get the car here?

Ben and Merry make a silent pact to never tell.

MERRY
Our bags are in the trunk. We're not
going back to the house.

ARI
Without venom, you'll be in pain...
You'll never run again, Merry.

MERRY
It's okay, Mom.

ARI
No. It's not... If we capture Seph...

Ari calls Binsa. Speaks Korean, SUBTITLED.

ARI (cont'd)
Mom, where are you? I need your help.

INT./EXT. CAR - DAY (PARKED)

The car HUMS. It's around the corner from Adam's house.

Ari climbs out of the car. Leans in to Merry and Ben.

ARI
Stay in the car. I mean it.

Ben hugs Jonesie to his chest by an open window.

Ari grabs Ben's cape from his seat. Rubs it under her
armpits. Throws it to Merry who does the same.

ARI (cont'd)
Now it stinks like all of us.

EXT. ADAM'S HOUSE - DAY (SUNSET)

Ari hides her phone and Ben's cape outside the house.

At the front door, she removes her shoes. Slowly turns the lock. CLUNK! Ari winces.

INT. ADAM'S HOUSE - DAY (SUNSET)

DINING ROOM

Adam, from behind, eats at the dining table. Listens to dramatic, SINISTER MUSIC at high volume.

Adam cuts raw meat on a white plate. A bright red HEART.

ENTRANCE

Ari slinks in. The front door remains open behind her.

HALL

Ari edges forward. Peers into SEPH'S BEDROOM. Empty.

INT./EXT. CAR - SAME TIME

Merry keeps watch. Ben pats Jonesie. Jonesie is not amused.

JONESIE JUMPS OUT THE WINDOW.

Ben flings the door open, runs after him! *He never listens.*

EXT. ADAM'S HOUSE - DAY

Jonesie shimmies into the broken basement window.

INT. ADAM'S HOUSE - DAY (SUNSET)

SEPH'S BEDROOM

Looks empty. Ari jerks back the bed covers -- No one.

Ari moves lightly into the walk-in wardrobe.
Walls of clothes. A LONG COAT MEETS TALL RIDING BOOTS.

Continues to a curtain. WRENCHES it aside to see -- A WOMAN.
It's just herself in a mirror. *Get it together.*

FLOWING DOWN, we cross-section the house to the...

BASEMENT CORRIDOR

Jonesie chases Harry the mouse to...

BASEMENT ROOM

A COFFIN rests on a raised platform.

No, not just one coffin. THREE COFFINS.

A coffin SLIDES open. The CREAK of floorboards above.

On a shelf: A cage of white mice and a large specimen jar -- containing ZANE'S HEAD.

HALLWAY (OUTSIDE SEPH'S BEDROOM)

Ari edges into the hallway, unaware that behind her...

SEPH'S BEDROOM

Seph's bed floats up and hovers. TRAPDOOR OPENS under it.

BASEMENT

Seph's feet climb the basement stairs.

SEPH'S BEDROOM

Just as Ari closes the door behind her, Seph emerges. Yawns.

HALLWAY

Ari moves from Seph's bedroom toward the dining room.

BASEMENT

Seph's coffin is empty. The other two are closed.

Harry, evading Jonesie, climbs the side of a closed coffin.

His nose twitches. *Cute*. Harry nibbles a bloody HUMAN EAR.

A hand yanks Harry into the coffin! Harry SQUEALS. Silence.

ADAM'S STUDY

Ben delves behind the curtains, then under the desk.

BEN

Tss-tss-tss. Jonesie.

Merry is drawn to the portrait: Olivia St John holds an amethyst cross to a bleeding finger. Her RING is identical to Ari's engagement ring. The OPEN MEDICINE BOX glows.

Merry picks up the medicine box near the painting.

She fingers her amethyst cross, uneasy. The arms of her cross are sharp like a sword. *It's clear now.*

She pierces her finger. A blood drop FALLS onto the box. It slides open. Purple LIGHT EMANATES. Merry is spellbound.

Merry's finger heals itself.

She focuses on the cross bow over the door. PARKOURS up the bookcase. She grabs it! Leaps! Lands like a cat. Ben stares.

MERRY

Come on! Mom needs us!

DINING ROOM

Ari lingers on Adam's strong back.

Her shirt is wet with sweat. A stake is tucked in her belt. She peers beyond Adam. *Where is Seph?*

Adam chews a last bite. Wipes blood from his mouth. Sniffs.

ADAM

(in **KOREAN**, SUBTITLED)

Ari my love. What are you doing here?

Ari is framed by the huge Correggio Jupiter and Io painting.

The dark cloud in it swirls.

From the painting, a MUSCULAR ARM clamps her wrist.

Jupiter lifts his face from Io's neck. Io's head lolls. Blood runs down her throat.

Jupiter tilts Ari's head back, exposing her neck.

In her periphery, Jupiter opens his mouth revealing FANGS. A flick of his head, about to--

ADAM

Stop!

REVEAL: Adam twists, TRANSFORMING INTO FIRST. Fangs SLATHER. Jupiter releases Ari.

ARI

Who are you?

FIRST/ADAM

The bible says Adam was The First.
I'm Adam.

ARI

What are you? You're not a man.

FIRST/ADAM

Well spotted, darling.

First morphs back to Adam. Ari SLAPS him across the face.

ARI

I thought you loved me but you just used me, to get to my children.

ADAM

Everything I did, I did for love.
I had Zane killed to protect you.

ARI

Zane's dead?! But he... The box, the broken necklace...

ADAM

Oh, that was me... to expedite our love. Look, Merry's not in pain. Ben's a new kid. I made them better.

(edgy)

It was you that kept them with you when I went away, so Seph couldn't give them their venom. It's your fault that Merry can't walk.

ARI

Will they... will they become...

ADAM

Say it.

ARI

...Vampires!

Ari musters the bravest part of herself. Stares down Adam.

ARI (cont'd)

Just stay. Away. From my children.

HALLWAY

Merry and Ben tread slowly. Merry gestures *Shhh*.

They reach Seph's closed door. Merry listens. Thumbs up.

DINING ROOM

Adam continues with increasing intensity.

ADAM

Once we were worshiped. To sate a vampire's blood drive was an honor! Now we hide in plain sight. People refuse to see us.

ARI

Will they become vampires?!

LIVING ROOM

Merry and Ben press against the wall listening.

INTERCUT - DINING ROOM AND LIVING ROOM

Adam strokes Ari's neck. Her pulsing jugular.

ADAM

Some are born with an ancient vampire gene. Others are bitten. They might feel the blood drive but not act on it, like a vegetarian who could kill for a steak.

(laughs at his joke)

Some conditions grant total immunity.

ARI

Haemophilia...

ADAM

Female hemophiliacs, as adults, see us for what we are. They could become vampire hunters. Murderers! So they're hunted. Without my protection, Merry would be dead.

ARI

What about Ben?

Ben's about to speak. Merry covers his mouth.

ADAM

He'd probably feel the blood drive by now. Mostly it's adults that turn. Children heal almost immediately.

ARI

No bite marks...

ADAM

See Ari, there's an unknown line between tasting and turning. Our research will find where that is.

(MORE)

ADAM (cont'd)
We don't want vampire overpopulation
any more than you do. We want you to
thrive and live free of pollutants.
It's a symbiotic relationship.

ARI
And garlic, holy water, crosses,
silver, that's just in the movies?

Ben takes a balloon bomb from his jacket.

ADAM
There are as many differences in
vampires as there are in humans. Some
read minds or control the weather.
Some die in sunlight or weaken with
silver. But through our research, one
day we will become invincible.

ARI
What about a stake to the heart?

ADAM
Wouldn't even raise my cholesterol.

Ari has a light bulb moment.

ARI
There was no virus causing
hallucinations was there? You just
used it to discredit any witnesses...

ADAM
Ding ding ding. Unfortunately the CDC
thinks it's real, but there's no one
left for them to test.

Adam smirks. Ari ducks under Adam's arm.

From the painting, Jupiter's arm grabs Ari!

The dark cloud that forms Jupiter's body COILS AROUND HER.

SEPH'S BEDROOM

Seph hunches shirtless over his laptop, head phones on,
shooting vampire hunters. His stomach GRUMBLES. His lips
curl back. FANGS DESCEND. Muscles throb as he TRANSFORMS.

DINING ROOM

Jupiter's cloud-body squeezes Ari tight, TIGHTER.

ARI
Please, Adam. We won't tell.

ADAM
Who would believe you?

Ari gags for breath. She sees Ben and Merry peek out. *No!*

LIVING ROOM

Merry peeks around the corner to see...

DINING ROOM

Adam throws Ari against a huge antique wall MIRROR.
The mirror shatters into DAGGERS OF SILVER GLASS.

SEPH'S BEDROOM

Seph transforms into a young man. He TEXTS.

LIVING ROOM

Merry positions the bow. Poised to strike!
DING! Seph's text message on Ben's phone!

DINING ROOM

As Adam turns to Ben --

-- Ari STABS HER NECK with a shard of mirror.

Adam flashes into First! His wide eyes are purple.

First pulls Ari's hair back. He SINKS FANGS into her neck!

Ari locks eyes with Merry and Ben. Silently mouths 'Run!'

Ari looks at the shard in her hand, backed with SILVER.

Merry shoots the arrow! It hits First in the shoulder.

First shifts slowly. His eyes fix on Merry like prey.

MERRY
(distorted)
Adam, stop it! You're hurting her!
(clearly)
Dad!

First reverts to Adam. His face is soft, vulnerable.

MERRY (cont'd)
If you love us, let us go. Please.

Ari breaks free, shoves Adam hard.

He falls back, toward Merry. In one fluid movement --

Ari STABS Adam in the heart with the mirror shard!

Ari grabs his head. SMASHES it hard against the floor.
Adam lies bleeding, unconscious.

BEN
Dads really do suck.
(beat)
You have to cut off his head.

MERRY
We're not doing that.

Ari's rigid, staring down at Adam. Her hand is cut deeply.

Merry grabs Ari's hand. Ben looks toward the hallway. EMPTY.
Ari snaps into action. She leads Merry and Ben through to...

LIVING ROOM

Focus on FIREPLACE as they trail past through to...

HALL

They're almost at Seph's door when -- DING! A text.

ON BEN'S PHONE: Seph *'I'm home. Where are you?'*

Ben hands Ari the phone.

ON THE PHONE: ... (A message being typed).

Ari tows them back to...

LIVING ROOM

Ben crawls into the fireplace. Ari gapes as the secret door
in the fireplace opens. Ben waves Ari to follow.

BASEMENT

The second coffin rests in the gloom.

The coffin lid floats up. Long red nails emerge.

The occupant sits up -- EVE! Eve looks down to the floor.

Jonesie licks a pool of blood...

...next to a lingerie-clad woman, CHEST TORN OPEN. No heart!

...Her mouth in a forever silent scream. It's Bitchy Mom!

LIVING ROOM

As Ben crawls through the secret door...

Ari FLASHES BACK to the dead crow by the basement window.

Ari drags Ben back from the fireplace. They double back...

DINING ROOM

Adam still lies on the floor. The gash on Adam's head HEALS.

Ben leans over him. *Cool!* Merry yanks him away.

The painting of Jupiter and Io comes to life as Adam heals.

IO (GREEK SUBTITLED)

RUN!

Jupiter snatches at them. Io holds him back. They run to...

KITCHEN

Ben leads as the trio hurry through the kitchen.

Ari, hands unsteady, opens a box of silver cutlery. A wedding present. A CARD: Use in good health, Love Mom.

In a pan's reflection, ADAM STUMBLES TO HIS FEET.

Ari grabs the silver carving knife and fork.

Ben gasps at something behind Ari.

Adam is right behind Ari. His FANGS extrude.

Ben points, eyes bulging.

Adam closes SLO-MO on Ari's neck.

Ari's EYES FLICK to Adam's reflection in the pans.

Ari PLUNGES the carving knife into Adam's eye.

Adam YELLS in pain.

Ben throws his balloon bomb. It explodes in Adam's face.

Adam's face burns. But he's still not down!

Ari lobbs the LEGO castle that's on the island at Adam.

Adam steps on a LEGO piece, slips, legs kicking up. SMASH!

SEPH'S BEDROOM

The lights and computer fritz.

SEPH

Shit!

Seph takes his headphones off. Listens.
His neck muscles bulge as he morphs into a VAMPIRE.

HALL

The CELLAR DOOR. Ominous. It CREAKS open...
Looking down the dark stairs into blackness...

CELLAR

Dimly seen, the glass doors of a cool room.

DARK SPACE

C/U Ari envelops Merry and Ben. She cups her bleeding neck.

ADAM (O.S.)

Where the hell are they?

CELLAR

Glass cool-room doors. Bolted shut from the outside.

Beyond the glass, black outlines of wine racks.

The generator HUMS loudly to life.

The cellar lights up. One-Legged Crow flies in. Hops around.

Dom, Bitchy Mom's son, SLAMS both hands against the glass.

Trapped inside, Dom rattles the locked cool-room doors.

A FIGURE stands behind him. Dom doesn't see it.

He POUNDS the glass, crying now.

Dom startles at something beyond the door.

He SCREAMS. Backs away --

EVE RIPS OUT HIS JUGULAR from behind.

Blood sprays across the glass.

One-Legged Crow mimics the SCREAM.

WINE RACK: Bottles labeled with boys' names and blood types.

The wider room comes into view.

Six boys in Crusaders uniforms hooked to machines.

Faces vacant.

Blood snakes from needles in their elbows into machines, each with a tap feeding into a and wine bottle below it.

One-Legged Crow flies out of the room.

EXT. ADAM'S HOUSE - NIGHT

BACK YARD

One-Leg alights on the fence.

Seph and Adam reel into hiding spots to ambush -- nothing. A swaying bush. Nothing. Ghoulish stone gods. Nothing.

They stop at the waterfall into the pool.

UNDER THE TRANSLUCENT POOL COVER: Ari, Merry and Ben huddle. The pool cover sits a foot above the pool surface.

Adam walks to the pool edge, right above them. SNIFFS.

Ari signals. The trio's heads sink below the water. Ari cups her bleeding neck and hand. Blood is sucked into the drain.

Adam FLOATS above the pool.

From underwater, the trio watch Adam float above them.

They wade underwater and hide behind the waterfall.

Ari, hand above the water, clicks a buzzer. BRRRRRRRRR.

Seph and Adam's eyes flash purple.

SEPH

The gate!

FRONT YARD

Seph and Adam stand outside the gate.

SEPH (cont'd)

I smell them.

He turns to follow what he sees as a yellow trail of scent.

INT. ADAM'S CAR - NIGHT

Adam starts the car. He tracks Ari's phone on his screen.

EXT. ADAM'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Merry, Ari and Ben surface, gasping for air.

Ari speaks into Merry's waterproof phone. Korean, SUBTITLED.

ARI
Mom, they're coming. They'll follow
my phone. Merry's geotracking is off.

INT./EXT. VAN - NIGHT

Binsa is small behind the wheel.

IN THE PASSENGER SEAT: Ari's phone and Ben's stinky cape.

Binsa waves the vampire cape out the window and cackles.

The yellow fetid fumes of the cape waft behind her.

INT. ADAM'S CAR - NIGHT

Adam speaks into his phone. Seph rides shotgun.

ADAM
They're at the hospital. Find them.

INT./EXT. ADAM'S CAR - NIGHT

Adam pulls up to the hospital. From the car speaker --

DR JET (V.O.)
We can't find her.

ADAM
Useless!

SEPH
(sniffing)
They're definitely here.

A CDC van is parked at the hospital entrance.

ADAM
Great! Perfect!

EXT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Adam and Seph jog toward the entrance. The CDC van is open. FIVE CDC STAFF in space suits check equipment.

Seph stops next to the van. Sniffs long and hard.

SEPH
They're right here!

Seph and Adam are PUSHED INTO THE VAN.

INT./EXT. ARI'S CAR - NIGHT

Ari missiles through the dead town. A streetlight blinks.

Ben clutches Jonesie. Merry checks behind. An owl HOOTS.

Ari glances at the kids and smiles. *Home free.*

She turns forward --

FATHER JUDAS JUMPS IN FRONT OF THE CAR.

THUMP. The car hurdles over his body. Ari SLAMS the brakes.

But it's too late. In the rear-view mirror, his limp body.

ARI
Jesus!

As Ari opens the car door --

JUDAS IS AT HER OPEN WINDOW, his vampire fangs bared!

Ari screams. Ari grabs a stake from her kit.

She stabs his chest but it hits a rib. No effect.

Judas wrenches Ari half out the window. She swings at him.

-- The mama bear CHARGES into Judas. Jaws tear his neck.

Ari snaps into her seat. Hits the gas. They SCREECH off.

INT. CDC VAN - NIGHT

Seph and Adam are held down by four space-suited staff.

A tiny CDC person in a spacesuit SLAMS the door closed.

Seph and Adam start to MORPH into vampires.

FANGS. Arms thrash. Necks twist. Purple veins throb.

The tiny CDC person plunges an injection into Adam's neck.

Seph is unconscious. A syringe is pulled out of his neck.

One by one they pull back their head gear, revealing a TATTOO of a PURPLE SWORD on the back of their neck.

A circle of Korean faces look down on Adam -- CDC ONE, TWO, THREE, FOUR and Binsa.

Adam's open eyes are vacant. Binsa shuts them.

BINS
We can milk his venom for a century.

INT./EXT. BLOOD DRIVE VAN - NIGHT

The blood drive van stops next to the CDC van.

Eve flosses flesh from her teeth in the rear view mirror. The CDC van pulls out.

EXT. CDC CARGO PLANE - NIGHT

Insignia emblazons the plane: CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL.

INT./EXT. CDC CARGO PLANE - NIGHT

The plane RUMBLES. The CDC crew lean back on benches.

Seph and Adam are strapped down in the center. They stir.

Binsa pushes syringe into Seph who DISINTEGRATES INTO DUST!

The crew goggle. *What the --*

Adam flashes open his purple eyes. Transforms into First! First, in a rage, breaks his restraints.

Throws CDC ONE, TWO and BINS against the bulkhead. Stomps on CDC THREE'S head.

First RISES in the air. The cargo bay opens. First throws CDC ONE out the plane! He screams as he falls.

Binsa shoots her crossbow. First catches the arrow. Snarls.

First gazes at Seph's ashes. He FLIES out the open door into

BLACKNESS

SUPER: TEN YEARS LATER

PRELAP: SOUNDS of a party.

INT. AMERICAN CITY - BINSÄ'S HOUSE - GARAGE - NIGHT

Ben (now 18) opens the garage. Ben is muscular and assured. He wears a fang on a necklace.

In the garage is a blood drive van.

Ben saunters to a room at the back. KNOCKS on the door.

BEN

Merry, you're missing your own party!

BACK ROOM

Merry (now 21) stands in front of an open fridge.

MERRY

Be there in a minute, Ben!

IN FRIDGE: Vials of black vampire VENOM and BAGS OF BLOOD.

Merry loads a vial into a high-tech syringe.

MERRY (V.O.)

How do you believe that the person
you love is a monster?

Merry sweeps her long hair from her STRAIGHT SPINE.
In a floor-length mirror she beholds a confident, strong and
beautiful woman. She swabs her neck, angles her head.

Merry injects venom, next to her PURPLE SWORD NECK TATTOO.

Merry places her palm on a sensor next to a WALL MURAL.
The wall slides open. Merry walks through to...

ARMORY

Guns, tactical suits, purple sword, etc. Walks through to...

GLASS ROOM

Merry peers into a dim, well furnished room.
She opens a small window and slides a blood bag in.

It sits untouched. Black on gray, a figure flashes forward.

MERRY

It's B negative. Your favorite.

Close on a vampire's mouth, sucking the blood bag.

A venom vial is pushed through the window. Merry takes it.

MERRY (cont'd)
I'm sorry. There's too many people
here and after last time...

Merry presses her hand to the glass. The vampire raises hers to meet it. Lifts her chin in the dim light. It's Ari!

Ari and Merry look deeply at each other. A poignant moment.

ARI
Happy birthday, baby. I wish...

Ari hesitates, overcome, then flashes away.

BACK ROOM

Merry closes the armory, her palm on the sensor.

Merry fights back tears but loses the battle. She weeps.

She touches the mural of vampire slayers in battle. They're all women, including Olivia St John, Binsa Jang and Merry.

EXT. BINSAS HOUSE - BACK YARD - NIGHT

Merry calms herself as she enters her 21st party.
Ben and Jax (21) play DJ. Girls dance close to them.
Jax, now a hot nerd, waves Merry up to the spotlight where
Binsa skulls her whisky. She whistles LOUD. The MUSIC stops.

BEN
Let's give it up for my sister --

JAX
And my girlfriend, Merry!

Whoops from the crowd. Binsa is teary. Merry blinks tears.
The yard gate opens. A GIRL IN PINK MINI dress enters.

MERRY
Ben, Jax. Do you know that girl?

BEN
No.

JAX
Nope.

Pink Mini turns toward Merry -- She's a VAMPIRE.
Binsa winks at Merry, who pulls a dagger from her bra.

FADE OUT.