

HORROR STORIES

Episode 1
'Underground,' 'Feast' and 'The Trade'

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ONE - UNDERGROUND

FADE IN:

TITLES OVER BLACK -

Coughing. Choking. Waking.

The sound of movement on wood. Someone rousing and delicately banging their limbs in a cramped, confined space.

He can not be seen yet, but this is CRAIG (30s).

- TITLES END

Craig starts to panic. His movements become intense, dislodging dirt which falls onto his face. He spits out soil and muck as light spills onto him, illuminating his head and shoulders.

Confusion. Fear.

EXT. THE FIELD - DAY

An empty clearing surrounded by forest. Alone.

A small piece of plastic piping juts from the floor.

An air-hole made from a broken piece of guttering.

Craig's face can be seen through it as he comes to a terrible realisation.

He's been buried alive.

His screams echo through the lonely trees.

EXT. SOPHIE'S BACK YARD - DAY

A row of old jam jars in a cluttered, unkempt back yard. Each is filled with different creepy crawlies: spiders; snails; caterpillars; ladybirds. All captured and crammed into confined but lovingly decorated containers.

A pigeon sits on a garden fence. Across the way SOPHIE (9, an agile tomboy) stalks it cat-like. She holds a small bucket and creeps stealthily towards it.

As she pounces the bird flies away leaving Sophie, bucket in hand and bird-less.

She sighs. Bored.

SOPHIE
(Calling into the
house)
Mum, when can we get a dog?!

MUM (O.S.)
When the cat dies.

This is a conversation that has clearly been had before.
Sophie is exasperated.

INT. THE COFFIN - DAY

Craig has stopped screaming now, but he is still afraid. He searches the inches around his head with his eyes. Nothing of use. He tries to move his body but he is too constrained. He closes his eyes in fearful resignation.

ELSEWHERE IN THE FIELD

Sophie plays alone. Bored. She kicks a football at a tree, scaring the local wildlife which she tries, and fails, to catch. Angered, she kicks the ball as hard as she can into the field.

THE COFFIN

Craig hears. His eyes dart from side to side, scanning the sky.

CRAIG'S POV.

The ball flies high over him.

CRAIG
Heeeey!!!!!!!!!!!!

Sophie stops and looks around, nervous.

Her ball is far away and she is torn between fleeing the scene and retrieving it.

CRAIG (O.S.)
Please! I'm down here.

Sophie tries to find the source of the voice but can't. She walks slowly through the field, towards her ball.

CRAIG
Please!!!!

CRAIG'S POV

Sophie steps over the tube.

CRAIG (cont'd)
Hey! Hey! Down here!

Sophie looks at Craig. She is unnerved by him.

CRAIG (cont'd)
Please, please! Are you parents here?

Sophie takes in the field. Is she safe?

She shakes her head.

CRAIG (cont'd)
I need you to get them. I need you to tell them that I'm down here. Can you do that?

Sophie shrugs, unsure what to do.

SOPHIE
I need to get my ball.

CRAIG
What?!

She points, outside of Craig's line of vision.

SOPHIE
My ball.

CRAIG
Forget about the ball. Please. Just get someone.

Sophie considers for a moment. She looks at Craig, then at the ball.

And runs for the ball.

CRAIG (O.S.)
No, no! Wait. Please!

She runs across the field and picks up the ball. She looks back towards the air-hole.

SOPHIE

Whoa!

Impressed by her find, she makes her way tentatively back.

CRAIG (O.S)

Hey? Hey? Is that you? Please.
Please, I need your help.

She looks down into through the air-hole.

She can't quite believe her luck.

CRAIG (O.S.)

Please!!!!!!!!!!

EXT. THE FIELD - NIGHT

Rain hammers down. Visible through the air-hole, Craig does his best to catch as much rainwater in his mouth as he can.

EXT. SOPHIE'S BACK YARD - DAY

Sophie bounds out of the back door in school uniform, eager to get away.

MUM

Sophie! Wait!

Reluctantly, Sophie waits until her mum hands her a packed lunch. She then bounds out of the back gate.

Her mum eyes the dirty jam jars with resigned distaste.

EXT. THE FIELD - DAY

Sophie inches over the air-hole and looks down on Craig who sleeps, twitching.

Suddenly Craig jolts awake from a nightmare.

CRAIG

Get off me, get off me. Get the fuck
away from me! I never touched him!

Sophie staggers back petrified.

She doesn't know what to do as Craig's fevered rantings continue. Eventually they die down to become a low sob.

She edges over to the air-hole.

CRAIG (cont'd)
Please help me.

She doesn't know what to do.

SOPHIE
I've got to go to school.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

A frightened gerbil pokes his nose out of a little house.

TEACHER
He needs food. He needs to be kept warm and he's going to need lots of water and lots of attention.

A group of children gather round and watch the animal. Sophie is at the forefront. Her excitement feverish. She pushes forward.

TEACHER (cont'd)
Sophie, wait your turn!

A little boy is led by the teacher to take the animal out. Sophie watches with envious eyes. The teacher takes pity.

TEACHER (cont'd)
Go on then, give him a stroke.

Sophie darts forward. The teacher's eyes turn to horror.

TEACHER (cont'd)
Be careful, you'll hurt him!

INT. THE COFFIN - DAY

His face a muddied mosaic from the night's rain, Craig soundly sleeps as the morning sun burns down through the hole.

A chocolate bar falls through, hitting him on the forehead and startling him awake.

Sophie stares down the air-hole and waves.

Blinded by the light, Craig looks back at her. She holds a bottle of water over the hole offering him a drink.

Craig nods.

She pours the bottle from a standing position. Most of the water splashes into his eyes but he gets enough to satisfy his thirst for now.

CRAIG

Thank you.

Sophie just stares at him.

He notices the chocolate bar and tries to unwrap it with his teeth. He fails and looks at Sophie.

He tries again, famished.

SOPHIE

I'll get you everything you need.

Craig sighs, and sets about the difficult task of unwrapping the chocolate with his teeth.

EXT. THE FIELD - MONTAGE SEQUENCE

A) Sophie jumping back from the hole

B) Sophie dropping lots of different chocolate bars into the hole over several days - Snickers, Kitkat, Kinder Egg, Twix...

C) Time lapse. The field going from night to day to night to day.

D) Sophie stuffing fluffy hamster bedding through the hole.

E) Sophie pouring various different flavours of juice into the hole.

F) Craig pulling hamster bedding through the hole with his teeth. The coffin filling with dirty, damp fluff over a prolonged period.

EXT. SOPHIE'S BACK YARD - DAY

Sophie's Mum hangs washing out of the line. She looks over the jars and shakes her head in exasperation.

Then she notices something and goes to look.

EXT. THE FIELD - DAY

Sophie runs through the field, kicking her football with glee and carefree abandon.

Through the air-hole Craig lays in a pile of chocolate wrappers, brown smears around his mouth, hamster bedding up to his neck.

He looks paler, tired.

Sophie kicks the ball and runs to the air-hole. She gets down on her belly, more comfortable now.

SOPHIE

Boo!

Craig is becoming emaciated on a diet of chocolate. He can barely manage his words anymore.

CRAIG

Sophie.. I need to get out of here.

Sophie is becoming concerned.

SOPHIE

But I'm looking after you.

CRAIG

Sophie... Please....

Sophie gets to her feet. Hurt and offended.

CRAIG (cont'd)

You can't keep me here like this.

Sophie walks away, saddened.

INT. SOPHIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sophie busies herself stuffing hamster bedding into her rucksack. Her mum stands in the doorway and knocks.

INT. SOPHIE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The jam jars are all on the table. Each creepy crawly is dead from neglect.

Sophie sobs into her mum's arms.

MUM

If you want pets you have to look after them darling.

SOPHIE

But I did. I do look after them.

MUM

Maybe its time to think about how some animals just aren't meant to be kept in jars.

Sophie snuffles, and looks at her mum, heartbroken.

Her mum holds her tight, saddened.

EXT. THE FIELD - DAY

Sophie walks gloomily towards the air-hole. She stands over it and looks down.

SOPHIE

Hey.

Craig doesn't move.

SOPHIE (cont'd)

Hey.

Still no response.

She pours some of her water bottle on his face. He doesn't even flinch.

Shock.

A tear gathers on her eye as she starts to walk away.

Cough!

She runs back and looks down, hopeful.

Craig coughs and splutters. Eventually he smiles at her weakly.

CRAIG

Sophie, if I stay here like this, I'm going to die. Do you understand?

Sophie thinks it over.

CRAIG (cont'd)
It's so cold here.

And nods. She understands.

She takes her rucksack from her back.

SOPHIE
This will keep you warm until I come
back.

She starts to stuff the hamster bedding down the hole. Craig
choakes and complains but his protests are muffled by the
fluff.

EXT. SOPHIE'S BACK YARD - DAY

Sophie rummages through the garden shed. She emerges with a
small bucket and spade and goes to run to the back gate.

Her mum emerges from the doorway.

MUM
Sophie, come inside a minute.

SOPHIE
It's an emergency.

MUM
Come on darling. Come with me.

INT. SOPHIE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Sophie walks into the living room, hands over her eyes. Her
mum follows her.

MUM
And... open them!

Sophie opens her eyes to see a small Labrador puppy
adoringly looking up at her.

She beams with excitement, throws the bucket and spade to
the ground and runs to the dog.

MUM (cont'd)
I thought it was an emergency?

Sophie smothers the dog in affection, far too immersed to
worry about anything else.

EXT. THE FIELD - NIGHT

The air-hole pokes out of the ground. Alone.

There is no sound from Craig.

EXT. THE FIELD - DAY

Sophie, her mum and the dog run through the field. A happy family.

Sophie kicks her ball and the dog runs to fetch it.

Sophie's mum watches her and smiles as the dog returns.

MUM

What's that?

The dog hold the plastic piping in its mouth.

Sophie looks around the field, nervous.

MUM (cont'd)

Put that down it's dirty.

The three walk through the field and pass over the spot where Craig's grave lays.

When her mum isn't looking, Sophie discreetly covers the hole with dirt. All trace of Craig gone.

Sophie runs to the dog, smiles and laughter.

FADE TO BLACK:

The dog whimpers.

TWO - FEAST

INT. VERA'S KITCHEN - DAY

Sizzling juices dance out of a hot pan as the edges of a luscious portion of fatty meat begin to brown.

VERA (40s), a meticulously groomed example of middle class perfection adds a little seasoning in a spotless and well stocked kitchen.

She is becoming flustered, juggling several tasks at once as five separate pots steam on the stove.

A self help tape plays on the radio.

SELF HELP TAPE

The food must be impeccable. That goes without saying. But never forget that all eyes will really be on you. If you truly want to impress then remember, you must be the perfect host. Take a moment to tell yourself that.

Vera stops what she is doing. Closes her eyes and inhales.

VERA

I am the perfect host.

Confidence restoring.

But as she turns she knocks over her glass of wine all over the back of her leg.

SELF HELP TAPE

And remember, when you look your best, you are your best.

She sighs and turns off the tape. Becomes anxious again as she searches the kitchen sides

VERA

Where's the salt?

The lack of response agitates her.

VERA (cont'd)

They'll be here in a few...

As she turns and looks, she becomes concerned.

No one is there.

She turns off the stove.

INT. VERA'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

An immaculately clean and loving home. A place for everything and everything in it's place.

Vera cautiously enters, drying her hands on a dish cloth.

VERA

Kerry?

She hears the sound of glass smashing a few rooms away.

A look of concern.

INT. VERA'S HALLWAY - DAY

Vera carefully creeps down the hallway.

She scans the area, looking for protection.

Her eyes settle on an old umbrella.

She clutches it. An inadequate weapon.

She reaches a turn in the corridor.

Catches her breath for a moment.

Then rounds the corner.

Broken glass on the floor.

The front door blowing in the summer breeze.

She hears the sound of a van's door slamming shut.

EXT. VERA'S HOME - DAY

Vera darts out of the house brandishing her makeshift weapon.

A decrepit white van in the driveway of Vera's large estate.

The ignition starts.

VERA

Kerry!

The van backfires.

Utter panic and terror.

She dashes for the passenger door as she hears the engine struggling to come to life once more.

Backfires again.

VERA (cont'd)

Kerry!!!

The door is locked.

Inside she can see KERRY, 6, a terrified little girl.

Vera pathetically hits the van with the umbrella. It breaks in her hands as the van's engine roars to life.

Thick black smoke from the exhaust obscures Vera's view as she tries to get a look at the kidnapper.

She coughs and chokes as the van moves off, knocking her off her feet as it clips her while pulling away at an alarming speed.

As the dust settles Vera momentarily freezes.

Her worst nightmare.

Kerry has been taken.

VERA (cont'd)

No, no, no, no.

She struggles to her feet.

Winces with pain.

The fall has injured her ankle.

Half limping she makes her way to her car. Locked.

She holds back the tears. No time for them.

And hobbles to the house.

INT. VERA'S HALLWAY - DAY

Vera fumbles with keys in a cupboard.

Too many of them. Precious seconds ticking away.

Finally she finds the car key.

INT. VERA'S CAR - DAY

Tears stream down Vera's face as her eyes scan the horizon.

Just trees, and forest and empty space.

No sign of Kerry or the van.

She starts to hyperventilate.

VERA

No, no, no, no.

Slams on the breaks.

There is literally nothing she can do.

She looks for a clue. Anything.

She screams.

Utter desperation.

And then she sees it.

A pillar of smoke coming over the horizon.

A glimmer of hope.

INT. VERA'S CAR - DAY

Vera drives slowly and cautiously towards the smoke.

She reaches a turn in the road and there, in the distance

THE OLD WHITE VAN.

Vera stops the car.

Mortified.

No idea what to do.

The van is just sitting there.

Idle.

Vera watches for a moment.

Paralysed by fear.

She takes in her surroundings.

Dense trees and foliage.

Anyone could be out there.

Waiting for her.

She opens the glove box.

Just biscuits and hand wipes.

She searches the floor around her feet.

All the while keeping her eyes on the van and the dense trees around her.

She finds something.

The car's jack.

She clutches it tightly.

And very slowly moves the car forwards.

Towards the van.

Stillness.

Silence.

About 100ft away.

She slowly pulls over and stops the car.

Turns off the engine and climbs out.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

Vera slowly limps towards the van.

VERA

Kerry?

The silence is deafening.

She makes her way closer.

Nothing.

She reaches the van and sees what has happened.

The van has collided with an old stone wall on the road's bend. The front windscreen is completely smashed.

Panicked, Vera looks inside.

Kerry is still in there, unconscious.

She breathes a sigh of relief until she realises there is no sign of the driver.

She looks around her.

No one to be seen.

Clutches the jack tightly.

Eyes darting around the scene until she sees something.

A dirty trainer protruding from a bush.

No idea who is in there.

She glances back at the unconscious Kerry.

Then slowly moves onward. Towards the trainer.

Her breathing quickens. She is in no shape to defend herself.

She reaches the bush and parts it.

Lying there, unconscious or possibly dead, is THE MAN (30).

Blood covers his unshaven face from a significant head injury. He wears khaki combat gear. Hard to tell if the dirt and mud is a result of the accident or just his usual style.

She watches for a moment. Struggling to comprehend what she has just been through. Disgust at the man building within her.

Before making her way back to Kerry as fast as she can.

INT. THE OLD WHITE VAN - DAY

Kerry is unconscious but upright in her seat. Despite a few bruises her seat belt did it's job.

Vera's arm reaches past Kerry's face as she leans through the broken windshield to unlock the door. Her bare arm catches on the broken glass and starts to bleed as she finally, painfully unlocks the door.

She withdraws quickly and opens it.

VERA

Kerry!

Vera pats Kerry down. Checking for injuries.

She allows herself a moment to calm once satisfied she is unhurt. Sighs with relief. It's almost over.

BUT WITHIN THE BUSHES

The Man's foot begins to twitch.

Back at THE OLD VAN Vera struggles to unlock Kerry's seat belt. After fumbling it free the injured and exhausted woman pulls Kerry from the van and struggles to her feet.

She holds the unconscious infant close to her chest. The pair are cheek to cheek as Kerry's head sits on Vera's shoulder.

And as Vera begins her slow walk back to her car, in the distance, far behind her

THE MAN CLIMBS FROM THE BUSHES.

Vera has no idea.

She's open.

Vulnerable.

But he is injured too.

Even from this distance as he trips, falls and crawls, we can see he is in a worse shape than Vera.

But he has one advantage.

The element of surprise.

Slowly, silently, he crawls and walks his way towards them.

Vera reaches her car.

He's closer still. He picks up the discarded car jack.

The key is not in the pocket Vera checks.

She has to shift Kerry over to the other shoulder to get into the other pocket.

He's almost on top of them.

The movement disturbs Kerry.

She's coming around.

He's close now.

Kerry's eyes open.

The man sees her.

Kerry and the man lock eyes.

And just as Vera finally finds her keys.

KERRY

Daddy!

The man nearly brakes down.

THE MAN

I'm here sweetheart.

Startled, Vera turns to face him.

KERRY

Daddy help me.

THE MAN

I won't let her take you again Kerry.

He reaches out to her and Kerry reaches back.

THE MAN (cont'd)

Please, don't hurt her. Just leave us alone.

Vera moves away, afraid.

THE MAN (cont'd)
It's okay. It's okay. I won't hurt
you. Just give her to me. Please.

Vera starts to cry.

VERA
We're having a party.

THE MAN
Look, look.

He slowly, cautiously lowers the jack.

VERA
You're going to ruin it.

THE MAN
I just want my little girl back.

As calmly as he can, he moves towards her.

THE MAN (cont'd)
Please.

Vera is out of options.

Kerry is pushing and fighting to be let go.

Slowly, she releases Kerry, and with anguish, she watches as
the child runs and embraces her father.

The two weep in one another's arms.

Finally reunited.

And just as she is finally safe, just as Kerry gazes with
relief into her father's eyes.

THE MAN (cont'd)
You're safe now baby.

Kerry watches the car jack bury itself in her father's head
and he drops to the ground.

INT. VERA'S HALLWAY - DAY

Crying, Kerry walks into the hallways followed by Vera.

Vera looks at the damage to the door and steps over the
broken glass.

So much work to do.

INT. VERA'S KITCHEN - DAY

Kerry cries her heart out at the table.

KERRY
I want my daddy.

VERA
Shush.

The sobbing continues.

Vera walks to the stove and looks at the once sumptuous meat cooking in the pan.

Old, congealed fat.

VERA (cont'd)
Well this is ruined.

She is devastated but does her best to hold it in. She has a lot of work to do

VERA (cont'd)
Roll up your sleeve darling.

Kerry goes to back away.

VERA (cont'd)
Are we going to have to go back to this?

She motions towards a leather belt attached to the kitchen side.

Through terrified tears, Kerry shakes her head.

VERA (cont'd)
They'll be here soon!

Vera goes to her, and like any matriarch used to taking no nonsense from a child, takes her arm and rolls up the sleeve.

An old bandage.

Blood staining through.

She begins to unwrap the bandage.

VERA (cont'd)
I've got to start all over again now.

She takes a cheese grater from the kitchen side and holds Kerry's arm tightly.

FADE TO:

INT. VERA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Vera is sitting on the sofa staring dead ahead into space.

She has fixed her hair and make up and wears an elegant long sleeved dress that covers her injured arms.

She slowly breaths in....

....and out....

....and in.....

....and out....

The doorbell rings.

This is it.

With dignity and grace, she stands.

INT. VERA'S DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Vera puts the finishing touches to a silver service tray. From the other room, voices can be heard. Polite laughter.

INT. VERA'S DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Vera emerges with the tray of meticulously arranged food.

Several well to do types in their 40s and 50s sit around the dining table in animated conversation. As the conversation continues, we stay on Vera as she serves the food.

Beautiful steaming piles.

She pours wine and delicately re-positions cutlery.

TOM (O.S.)
 And I said her, all you really need
 is exceptional food, beautiful
 surroundings and a damn good host.
 Shame she only had two out of three.

More polite laughter.

Vera is oblivious to it all. She looks over the wonderful
 spread she has laid out for everyone. Proud.

TOM (O.S.) (cont'd)
 What do you say Vera?

She is a little caught off guard and unsure of the right
 response. She knows she is being tested.

They all look on, waiting for her response.

VERA
 I say lets enjoy ourselves.

TOM
 Well here, here to that.

Good natured agreement and laughter.

Tom holds his glass up to Vera in cheers before tasting his
 meal. He is genuinely shocked at how good it is.

TOM (cont'd)
 My God Vera, this is delicious.

Vera smiles at him. She's oh, so proud as her guests dig
 into the lovely meal.

INT. VERA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Montage sequence. The dinner party of Vera's dreams.

- A) Guests laughing at Vera's polite conversation
- B) Food being consumed. Lots of it.
- C) Ecstasy on the faces of those eating it
- D) Wine being poured
- E) More wine being opened
- F) Guests going back to the serving bowls for seconds

G) More wine

H) Plates scraped clean, desperate for more meaty goodness

I) Satisfied and happy faces.

J) Throughout, Vera's confidence growing.

INT. VERA'S DINNING ROOM - NIGHT

Vera stands by the table beaming with pride as her guests finish the meal. All of them look astounded by the quality. They've never eaten anything this good.

TOM

Wow.

He's momentarily lost for words.

TOM (cont'd)

You might even get the trophy this year.

Vera is assurance personified.

VERA

I'll go and prepare desert.

As she turns to walk back into the kitchen her guests see that the back of her dress has been tucked into the pants that she has forgotten to change.

The blood red wine stain.

Awkward glances. They can't believe what they are seeing.

Tom breaks the tension.

TOM

Maybe next year.

Her guests snigger behind her back.

EXT. VERA'S BACK GARDEN - NIGHT

Vera sneaks away from the party and walks along the garden path. She breathes in the night air. On top of the world.

In a beautiful well kept garden overflowing with greenery, she makes her way to a garden shed at the end of the path.

INT. VERA'S SHED - NIGHT

The door opens and Vera gazes inwards.

Very little can be seen inside here. It's dark. The only dirty place in Vera's entire estate.

VERA

I really think we're going to win
Kerry.

Silence.

VERA (cont'd)

Thank you darling.

A little tear of joy rolls down her cheek.

She closes the door.

FADE OUT

THREE - THE TRADE

INT. LARGE TOY SHOP - DAY

Row after row of glittering and inviting toys. Action figures, dolls, play sets, lego. This could be a scene from a lavish Christmas film.

But stood in the aisle is JESS, 20s, motionless and staring off into space. She wears loose fitting, comfortable beige clothes and looks very, very drained.

As if from a distance, the sound of children's laughter can be heard, along with a single repeated word.

'Mum'

'Mum'

'Mum'

Over and over again.

The voice gets louder.

AIMEE

Mum!

Jess snaps out of it, and frustrated, turns to look at AIMEE, a hyperactive eight year old. She holds a very expensive looking scalextric set, pleading.

Jess takes Aimee by the arm and marches out.

The other shoppers shake their heads as Aimee drops the box and begins to scream.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

RICK, 20s, working class and down to earth, briskly walks away from the busy site in high vis jacket, hard hat and work boots. He has a look of puzzlement on his face.

Aimee runs to him, arms outstretched.

AIMEE

Dad!

He warmly scoops up his daughter and looks to Jess who stands by her car smoking a cigarette. He clearly wasn't expecting her.

JESS
I need you to come home.

RICK
I'm at work.

JESS
Just for today.

Rick puts Aimee gently down.

RICK
Go and play for a minute.

She happily obliges.

JESS
She won't stop.

Rick tries to shush her calmly.

JESS (cont'd)
No, I need you to come home. I can't cope.

RICK
Jess, I can't just drop everything the minute there's a problem. We're not sixteen anymore.

Jess looks over to Aimee who is singing joyfully and running around a tree.

JESS
Oh God, I wish we were.

Rick takes Jess by the shoulders and looks into her eyes.

RICK
Hey, be careful what you wish for.

He kisses her on the forehead.

RICK (cont'd)
You're a good mum. You're gonna do just fine.

Reluctantly, Jess nods.

RICK (cont'd)
I've got to get back to work.

AIMEE (O.S.)
Mum! Mum!

Jess looks round to find Aimee happily playing in some mud.

INT. CHILDREN'S SOFT PLAY AREA - DAY

A frantic jungle gym full of energetic bouncing children. Aimee is among them, absolutely loving it.

In the corner, away from the action, Jess shares a coffee with IMOGEN and CONNOR (both 30s). They are both well dressed, well spoken and sickeningly good looking.

Next to them, their impossibly well behaved daughter ANNABELLE (8) listens quietly.

IMOGEN
All life's problems are in your head.
It's just a matter of perspective.

CONNOR
We learnt that in Tibet too didn't
we?

Imogen and Connor share a gag-inducing giggle.

Then Connor strokes his daughter's hair.

CONNOR (cont'd)
Such a beautiful country.

Annabelle quietly nods and agrees, warming Connor's heart.

As Jess weakly goes to protest, Aimee runs from the thrall of children in the ball pool.

AIMEE
Mum!

Before she can take a further step, Jess snaps.

JESS
Go and play!

Annabelle jumps. Imogen and Connor are uncomfortable. They do their best to hide it.

Jess is ashamed.

IMOGEN
 Maybe we can help.

Imogen reaches into her purse and pulls out a small mound of moss, about the size of a pill.

Jess rolls her eyes.

CONNOR
 It's all completely organic. Nothing to worry about.

Imogen speaks quietly, conspiratorially.

IMOGEN
 We met a shaman. In Tibet. This can make it all go away.

Jess doesn't have the energy to argue. Imogen holds out the moss.

IMOGEN (cont'd)
 Just swallow it, then make a wish.

Imogen awaits a stunned reaction from Jess. It doesn't come. She carries on regardless.

IMOGEN (cont'd)
 If the spirit deems it just, the universe aligns and the wish is granted.

Jess is utterly non-plussed.

CONNOR
 It really is something.

IMOGEN
 Just try it.

She forces the moss into Jess's hands.

JESS
 I don't--

IMOGEN
 -Ah, ah! Positive mental attitude.

Jess sighs and looks at the moss. Then she looks over to Aimee who is shouting over to her excitably.

AIMEE
 Mum, mum, look!

If only to take her mind off Aimee for a few precious moments, she throws the moss in her mouth and swallows.

JESS

Now what?

IMOGEN

Now you close your eyes.

Jess sighs and closes her eyes.

IMOGEN (cont'd)

And make a wish.

Imogen and Connor share an excited glance.

Jess ponders for a moment.

Finally gives in.

JESS

I wish that--

There is a clattering sound and a child's cry.

Aimee is at the bottom of a climbing frame holding her knee and wailing.

Jess gets to her feet.

JESS (cont'd)

Can you not give me five minutes?

Imogen and Connor exchange exasperated looks.

There's just no helping Jess sometimes.

INT. JESS'S HOUSE - DAY

The house is a mess. Days old pots piling up on the side, old clothing discarded on the sofa.

Aimee stomps into the room crying followed by an exhausted Jess.

AIMEE

It's not fair!

JESS

Life isn't fair Aimee. One day you'll learn that.

AIMEE
You're boring.

This really upsets her.

She closes her eyes

Struggles to hold in her rage.

JESS
You know Aimee sometimes I just
wish--

There is a FLASH, starting Jess.

She sees Aimee standing motionless in front of her.

FROZEN IN TIME.

A RED GLARE shines through the window.

Jess opens the curtains and looks to the sky.

A blinding red light as the stars above move and collide.

THE UNIVERSE ALIGNING.

Jess thinks for a moment and looks at Aimee.

She closes her eyes.

Embraces it.

JESS (cont'd)
I wish... that I could switch places
with my daughter.

Jess opens her eyes and for a moment nothing happens.

Crushing disappointment.

But then the light begins to change, the red fades and
becomes VIVID WHITE, almost blinding her.

Jess starts to laugh, feeling the power in the moment.

And as the light smashes off, back to normal daylight

JESS COLLAPSES.

Nervous, and back in normal time, Aimee watches her mother
lying prostrate on the floor.

AIMEE

Mum?

INT. AMBULANCE - DAY

A PARAMEDIC shines a torch into Jess's eye.

PARAMEDIC

Jess? Can you hear me?

Jess's eyes absently follow the light.

She is drooling.

Absent.

ANOTHER PARAMEDIC comforts Aimee.

COMFORTING PARAMEDIC

It's okay, we're going to make her
all better.

Aimee is petrified.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - DAY

Aimee is sitting on a hard plastic chair, sobbing and alone.

Rick anxiously jogs in, still in his work gear and covered
in soot. Aimee spots him.

AIMEE

Dad!

He moves swiftly to his daughter and hugs her close.

Aimee starts to cry even more.

He shushes her, soothes her. Then leans her back.

RICK

Where's yer mum?

Aimee points to the ward.

INT. HOSPITAL WARD - DAY

Rick and Aimee slowly walk in, both horrified at the sight
of Jess, seemingly paralysed on a gurney.

Her eyes watch them as they cross the room to her. She dribbles and lets out a small groan.

RICK
Jess, sweetheart. What's happened?

She lightly coughs and splutters.

Rick starts to well up.

An anxious NURSE enters the ward.

RICK (cont'd)
What the hell's wr--

NURSE
--The good news is that physically she's fine. She is responding well to stimuli and so far as we can tell she's unhurt.

Rick looks back at Jess in confusion and concern.

RICK
Will she be okay?

NURSE
We still don't know exactly what's happened.

Rick sighs. Something he really doesn't want answering.

RICK
What about the baby?

The nurse reacts. She didn't know. Rick becomes angry.

RICK (cont'd)
For Christ's sake she's pregnant.

The nurse urgently leaves the room, calling as she goes.

NURSE
Dr Lanstrom!

Rick sinks into despair and holds his daughter.

They both watch as Jess helplessly dribbles.

INT. ULTRA SCAN WARD - DAY

Rick is sitting with his daughter, head in his hands.

The nurse fiddles with the monitor.

Rick sees a look of concern growing in her eyes.

RICK
What is it?

Concern, turning to horror.

RICK (cont'd)
What's happened?

The nurse looks at Rick. She is utterly baffled.

And afraid.

Rick and Aimee get up and walk to her.

They both sense something dreadful coming.

They look at the monitor and their faces too turn to horror.

ON THE MONITOR - a small fetus claws desperately at the walls of the womb.

Panicking

Desperate.

Trapped.

Rick looks over to Jess in utter confusion and fear as she gurgles on the gurney.

We slowly track back and leave the family to their horror.

FADE OUT