

LANDLORD

Written by

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"The landlords are like the tapeworm in the belly of the nation, devouring the substance of the people!"

EXT. OAKCREEK VILLAGE - NIGHT

Midnight. Thanksgiving. A light wind pushes fall leaves around a picturesque, creekside Conejo Valley neighborhood. This is Oakcreek Village.

Oakcreek is surrounded by rolling hills and old-growth oak trees. The peaceful sounds of nature envelop the area: CRICKETS, FROGS, OWLS, distant COYOTES YIPPING.

EXT. THE BUNGALOW - NIGHT

At the end of a cul-de-sac sits a QUAINB BUNGALOW HOME. Still and eerie, illuminated by the bright full moon.

Moldy jack-o-lanterns from Halloween rot on the porch.

INT. THE BUNGALOW - NIGHT

Flickering light from a TV flashes underneath a bedroom door.

BEDROOM

An inebriated TIM EVANS (40's) is passed out on a bed without sheets. Empty beer cans and wine bottles litter the floor.

There's a Twilight Zone marathon on the TV that's been unwatched for hours.

On the bedside table, a framed photo of Tim with his WIFE and YOUNG KID in better times.

Tim's cellphone teeters on the edge of the bedside table. On the phone screen: 6 MISSED CALLS.

The phone buzzes as an UNKNOWN NUMBER calls again. The vibrations send the phone to the floor.

CRACK!

Tim bolts upright. Disoriented, he reaches for the shattered phone. He answers it, slurring his words.

TIM
Yeah? Hello?

On the phone, HEAVY BREATHING followed by deep, drawn-out SLURPING NOISES. Tim fumbles for the remote to mute the TV.

TIM (CONT'D)
Gina? Is that you? Babe?

A MALE VOICE is MUTTERING on the other end of the line.

MALE VOICE (V.O.)
Need to raise the rent.

TIM
Huh? I paid the rent.

MALE VOICE (V.O.)
Need...to raise...the rent.

TIM
You think you can intimidate me? I
know my rights.

MALE VOICE
I...need...

TIM
Listen. Fuck you, fuck your rent.
Consider this my 30-day notice.

Tim hangs up the phone, tosses it to the side.

Wide awake but a bit wobbly, Tim gets out of bed. His jeans are unzipped, his sweater wrinkled, his feet bare.

KITCHEN

Tim opens the mostly empty fridge, takes out a block of cheddar cheese. The fridge light reveals a gross, cluttered kitchen with toys strewn about.

As Tim searches for a clean plate, he knocks over a LEGO PIRATE SHIP. The pieces scatter everywhere.

TIM
Dammit.

Tim bends over to pick up the broken structure. He looks at it, sad for a moment, then puts it back on the counter.

A LEGO PIECE with a sharp edge remains on the floor.

A FEW MINUTES LATER

Tim VOMITS beer and cheddar into the sink.

He wipes his mouth and goes back to the fridge, unaware that his foot is dangerously close to that sharp lego.

In the darkness, he hears the front door *CREAK OPEN*.

Startled, he turns the light on and looks out the window. Nothing.

He steps back, his right foot landing directly on the lego.

TIM
(wails)
Aw, shit! Shit!

Furious, Tim sits down and pulls out the lego lodged into the bottom of his right foot. A few drops of blood trickle out.

The front door SLAMS SHUT. At this, Tim begins to panic. He pulls himself up, limps over to the

FRONT DOOR

Tim observes that the front door is locked. No sign of a disturbance.

EXT. THE BUNGALOW - NIGHT

On the front porch, Tim looks around. Nothing but darkness and the silhouette of trees.

INT. THE BUNGALOW - MOMENTS LATER

Tim returns inside, re-locks the door and turns out the lights.

As he limps back to the bedroom, a SLOW, HEAVY, WET SLIDING SOUND comes closer.

But before he can respond, something yanks him to the floor.

Tim looks down at his foot to see a naked, BLOATED MAN with his mouth latched to the bottom of his bleeding foot. The man's skin is slimy, unnaturally darkened and ridged. Tim freaks out.

TIM
Get off me! Get off!

Desperate, he tries to kick the bloated man off of him. But the man SUCKS and SLURPS and MOANS, consuming the foot whole.

Tim SCREAMS in the dark, hopeless.

EXT. PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY - DAY

A perfect day in Malibu. Sunny, 79 degrees, shimmering green-blue ocean waves. Songs are written about days like this.

A top of the line BMW--from a few years ago--drives down PCH.

INT. CAR (MOVING) - DAY

A woman with unruly curls sits in the passenger seat, her feet on the dashboard. MIKA DEACON (29). She's breezy and granola, like a girl from an early 90's music video.

Mika ignores the ocean views, scrolls her phone as her boyfriend, DAVID BREWER (35) drives. Everything about Malibu speaks to his soul right now.

DAVID

Mika, are you seeing this? These views are insane.

MIKA

According to Wikipedia, 65% of Oakcreek Village's population is over seventy-five years old.

DAVID

If this is December imagine what summer is like.

Mika stares at David, waits for a response.

DAVID (CONT'D)

What?

MIKA

You're moving us into a retirement community!

DAVID

First, we're just looking. Zero obligations. Second, older people means it's safe. A lot safer than San Francisco.

MIKA

What's the point in being safe if you're bored?

David looks at her feet on the dash.

DAVID
 Ever see what happens to a person's
 legs when airbags deploy in that
 position?

MIKA
 Why would the airbags deploy?

DAVID
 In a wreck.

MIKA
 We're not gonna wreck.

DAVID
 Shit happens.

MIKA
 Then maybe you should trade this
 thing in for a minivan.

DAVID
 Not gonna happen.

INT./EXT. CAR (MOVING) - OAKCREEK VILLAGE - DAY

David and Mika drive into the tree-lined community. The homes
 are small, cozy and folksy.

MIKA
 It's cute. I'll give it that.

MOMENTS LATER

They arrive at a cul-de-sac, where a charming bungalow home
 sits. The same bungalow where Tim was last seen. It's far
 less menacing in daylight.

From the porch: a large, sweaty man in a stretched-out polo
 and jorts waves. This is JOHANNES LATHEMALT (60's).

MIKA
 Is that the landlord?

DAVID
 Probably. Be nice.

Mika, recognizes his nervousness and takes his hand.

MIKA
 Credit scores aren't everything.
 Let's dazzle him with charm, yeah?

DAVID
Yeah. We've got this.

EXT. THE BUNGALOW - DAY

Johannes smiles grimly at the couple as they approach, revealing teeth that resemble candy corn.

JOHANNES
Welcome. I'm Johannes.

DAVID
David. This is Mika.

JOHANNES
A pleasure to meet you.

Johannes extends a hand out to David then Mika. SQUISH.

Mika looks at her hand - it's covered in a VISCOUS LAYER OF SWEAT. David subtly wipes his hand on his jeans.

DAVID
Lovely place you've got here.

JOHANNES
I know. How about we get out of this hot sun and head inside?

INT. THE BUNGALOW - DAY

The home is old-fashioned but inviting and bright. Large windows overlook the creek.

DAVID
Looks even better in person.

JOHANNES
The original structure was built in 1901. You see it retains a lot of those characteristics.

DAVID
Bet it's worth a fortune now, huh?

JOHANNES
Rent's \$5000. Cash or check only.

DAVID
Getting down to brass tacks.

JOHANNES
 You won't find a better deal in the
 area.

Mika is still repulsed by her soiled hand.

MIKA
 I'm gonna look at the kitchen.

JOHANNES
 You're in for a treat.

She nods politely, heads to the kitchen.

JOHANNES (CONT'D)
 (to David)
 I'll show you the master suite.

DAVID
 Oh, you mean "primary" suite.

Johannes stops dead in his tracks, smiles grotesquely.

DAVID (CONT'D)
 Master is a bit outdated.

JOHANNES
 Outdated? You mean masters no
 longer exist?

An awkward beat. Johannes serves another grotesque smile.

JOHANNES (CONT'D)
 Call it what you like. It remains
 the same. Come.

INT./EXT. KITCHEN - DAY

Mika washes her hands in the sink. She looks out the window
 where water flows down the tree-shrouded creek.

On the opposite side of the creek, TWO BOYS roughhouse
 playfully. The intensity increases. The bigger boy VIOLENTLY
 PUSHES the smaller one, takes out a KNIFE.

Disturbed, Mika BANGS on the window.

MIKA
 Hey! Stop it!

They don't notice her. The large boy JABS his playmate in the
 gut with the knife. A moment later, both kids are LAUGHING.
 It's a wooden toy knife.

Relieved but still shaking, Mika regains her composure.

MIKA (CONT'D)
(to self)
Get it together girl.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

David walks around the large bedroom. Johannes watches him carefully, unblinking.

JOHANNES
What do you do? For a living.

DAVID
I started out in tech. Now I mostly invest in startups, a little crypto on the side. Stocks.

JOHANNES
Ah, Silicon Valley guy. Big money.

DAVID
I sold an app last of year.

JOHANNES
For how much?

DAVID
Let's say seven figures.

JOHANNES
Yet you're looking to rent.

DAVID
We just sold our condo in the Bay Area. Don't wanna get tied down to another mortgage.

JOHANNES
So you like to buy things, sell things. But no steady income.

DAVID
I'll show bank statements if you want. Or my investment portfolio--

JOHANNES
No security in your line of work. Very unstable, unpredictable.

David hesitates, unsure how to respond to his bluntness.

MIKA (O.S.)
David is a creator.

Mika steps into the room.

MIKA (CONT'D)
An entrepreneur. It takes
imagination, passion, instinct to
do what he does. He's not a 9-to-5
worker bee. There's high risk and
high reward in what he does. All
investments are risky. As a
landlord, you're in the same boat.

JOHANNES
(to David, amused)
Your wife wears the pants well,
doesn't she?

MIKA
We're not married.

Johannes' eyebrows raise at this.

JOHANNES
Are you planning to work?

MIKA
I'm--I was--a teacher. But I'm
taking a break.

DAVID
We're starting a family soon.

JOHANNES
A baby?

MIKA
We'll see.

Johannes' eyes go wide. His wet lips quiver. He wobbles.

MIKA (CONT'D)
Are you alright?

JOHANNES
Diabetes. I get a little
lightheaded if I don't eat.

EXT. BUNGALOW FRONT PORCH - DAY

Johannes sweats even more profusely than before. Mika and David stand around, uncomfortable.

MIKA

Let's do this another day.

JOHANNES

You're a nice couple. Know what? I have the lease. You can sign today.

DAVID

Really?

MIKA

We need to think it over.

JOHANNES

There's many applicants. If you don't want it, I'll move on.

DAVID

Could you give us a moment?

JOHANNES

No.

Johannes looks at his wrist as if there's a watch on it.

JOHANNES (CONT'D)

I have another person coming by in a few minutes.

MIKA

We have other properties to look at too, Johannes.

JOHANNES

Fine. Three minutes.

He totters towards his truck parked across the house.

DAVID

We should go for it.

MIKA

Are you kidding? This guy is weird.

DAVID

Maybe. But it's kind of perfect. He didn't even ask for a credit check.

MIKA

You don't think that's sketchy?

DAVID

The house is cute as hell. You're outside LA. It's a safe area.

MIKA

Sure. But something is off--

DAVID

Mika, this could be our best chance at finding a place.

MIKA

We've barely looked!

DAVID

I can't take the humiliation of having to explain my situation over and over again.

Mika knows he's right but she's unhappy.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Please. It'll be just for a year until we get things back on track.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

David signs his name on the lease. He hands the pen to Mika, who hesitates a moment before doing the same.

Johannes takes the paper, folds it into his pocket.

JOHANNES

The contract itself is just a piece of paper. It's your word that matters. So many previous tenants have been disappointing. They made promises they didn't keep.

MIKA

You make renting seem so serious.

JOHANNES

It's how my family and I eat. There's nothing more serious.

DAVID

Absolutely. That makes sense.

JOHANNES

One more thing: do you have pets?

MIKA

Two cats. Is that a problem?

JOHANNES

The more the merrier.

EXT. THE BUNGALOW - DAY

Mika carries a crate with two brother cats, CARL and MAX.

SUPER: "DAY ONE"

David alternates between looking at his phone and directing the MOVERS as they unload boxes from a moving truck.

MIKA
Working hard or...

DAVID
...hardly working.

MIKA
I'm gonna bring Carl and Max
inside. Make sure the movers don't
open the office door.

DAVID
Yep, got it.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Mika releases the cats from the crate. They sniff around, wary. Max, skittish, runs back inside the crate.

Mika strokes his head. He responds with an ANGRY GRRRR...

MIKA
Aww, Max, you'll get used to it.

EXT. THE BUNGALOW - DAY

David sits on the front steps with his laptop. He puts a vape pen to his mouth. His phone BUZZES.

DAVID
Hello? Brandon, can you hear me?
(beat)
Hold on, I have no bars. I'll call
you back.

EXT. STREET - DAY

David walks away from the house, phone in the air.

A decrepit elderly woman, MRS. WHITE, pushes a friendly, wheelchair-bound DR. DANIELS (80's).

David gives them a tight, obligatory smile as he walks by.

DR. DANIELS
Hello there! You're the new
Oakcreek resident?

DAVID
David Brewer.

DR. DANIELS
I'm Dr. Daniels, president of the
Oakcreek HOA. And this is my
sister, Mrs. White.

MRS. WHITE
You're young. What do you do?

DAVID
Like for work?

MRS. WHITE
I'm not interested in your hobbies.
Yes, how do you make your living?

DAVID
Long story short, I work from home.

MRS. WHITE
And you can afford to live here?

Confused by the question, David considers how to respond.

DAVID
That's not something you need to
worry about.

DR. DANIELS
My sister doesn't mean to be rude.

DAVID
It's fine.

DR. DANIELS
Everyone calls your bungalow
"Hansel and Gretel." On account of
it being so darn cute.

MRS. WHITE
You can't afford it, can you?

DR. DANIELS
We should head back. It was a
pleasure to meet you, David.

He turns to his sister and waves his hands in the air.

DR. DANIELS (CONT'D)
Horse, make tracks!

Mrs. White spins his chair around, gives David a last glance.

EXT. THE BUNGALOW - DAY

Mika spots David up the road as he walks back, his phone still up in the air.

MIKA
There you are. Do you know where
the cat food is?

DAVID
I'll take a look.

MIKA
Okay, thanks.
(and then)
Who were those people?

DAVID
Weirdoes. They're in the HOA.

MIKA
I didn't know there was an HOA.

DAVID
That's right. We've got friends in
high places now.

David walks toward the house.

DAVID (CONT'D)
We need to get wifi ASAP.

INT. THE BUNGALOW - NIGHT

Half-eaten Chinese takeout and half-unpacked boxes everywhere. Mika tidies up.

David sits on the floor with his laptop, right next to a brand new modem and router. The face of his fast talking best friend fills the computer screen. BRANDON RAO (30's).

BRANDON
Duuude, BroCoin is blowing up!
We're up 20% in one week. One week!

DAVID
Dude, that's insane.

BRANDON
So what's it gonna take for you to
make the leap? Now's the time.

Mika shoots daggers in David's direction.

DAVID
My portfolio's so packed right now.

BRANDON
Don't lose your edge, man. Mika's
got you playing little house on the
prairie, living out some housefrau
fantasy.

At this, Mika storms over to the computer screen. She flips
Brandon off with both hands.

MIKA
Hi Brandon.

BRANDON
Mika. Classy as ever.

Brandon flips two birds back. Mika sticks her tongue out.

DAVID
Geez. I gotta go.

David slaps the laptop shut. Mika smiles, pleased.

DAVID (CONT'D)
That was very unnecessary.

He sets the computer aside, kisses her.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

In the dark, Mika and David are under the covers.

MIKA
You're not gonna let Brandon screw
you over again, right?

DAVID
Obviously not my plan.

MIKA
Good. This housefrau doesn't feel
like hiding your body in the creek.

DAVID
Housewife you are not.

MIKA
I like being a fur mama too much.

Mika looks at Carl and Max snuggled at the edge of the bed.

DAVID
Since we're on the topic of babies--

MIKA
Are we?

DAVID
We can't keep 'em frozen forever.

MIKA
David, we just moved. Let's get settled first.

DAVID
We've got our nest egg from the condo, promising investments...

MIKA
It's not money. Honestly.
(beat)
You really wanna raise a kid in a crazy world like this?

DAVID
What happened to you was horrible.
But we're not in SF any more.
You're safe here.

Mika smiles, appreciative but uncertain.

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

In bed, Mika stares at the ceiling, the symphony of nocturnal wildlife keeps her up. David snoozes next to her.

Her eyelids flutter as she finally drifts off...

LOW, VIBRATING THROBBING NOISES. RHYTHMIC PULSATING, SLOW. AS IF THE HOUSE IS BREATHING.

Max the cat looks up. He goes to the window sill and looks out into the darkness.

Outside the window, THE SHAPE OF A HUMAN FACE STARES BACK.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

The next morning. Mika unpacks dishes into the cabinets.

SUPER: "DAY TWO"

David walks in, disheveled.

DAVID
The movers here yet?

MIKA
Nope.

DAVID
You're up early.

MIKA
Slept like shit. Figured I might as well get up and be productive.

David approaches her, concern on his face.

DAVID
The nightmares...?

MIKA
Changing settings didn't magically make them go away. Go figure.

DAVID
They will.

Mika wants to object. Doesn't have the energy. David touches her arm reassuringly.

MIKA
Sure.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Dressed for jogging, Mika refills the cat food bowls. Carl happily gobbles the kibble.

Max cowers in the corner. Mika calls him with a TCH-TCH-TCH sound. He doesn't move.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Mika jogs up the road, takes in the scenery.

MRS. WHITE'S HOUSE

Mika runs past Mrs. White who tends to her garden.

MRS. WHITE
(calls out)
What're you running from?

MIKA
Excuse me?

MRS. WHITE
Last time I saw someone run that
fast, it was from a bear.

Mika doubles back, comes closer to Mrs. White's house.

MIKA
I like your garden.

Mrs. White can hardly suppress a pleased smile.

MRS. WHITE
It's the best in the neighborhood.

INT. MRS. WHITE'S SITTING ROOM - DAY

Mrs. White pours Mika a glass of ice water from a pitcher. A
LARGE FLY BUZZES around Mika. She shoos it.

MRS. WHITE
Oakcreek was built on Indian land.
It's why everything grows so nice.
If you knew how they got those poor
people off the land...not so nice.

MIKA
I can only imagine.

MRS. WHITE
Your bungalow was the very first
house built in Oakcreek.

MIKA
Wow, really?

MRS. WHITE
Surprised Johannes didn't tell you.
He's very proud of that fact.

MIKA
Do you know him well?

MRS. WHITE

Known him since I was a girl. He's older than me, believe it or not. Right around 115.

Mika nearly spits out her water.

MIKA

115...years old?

MRS. WHITE

God's honest truth.

(beat)

At the turn of the 20th century, our grandfathers were business partners who sought to purchase this land for cattle ranching. Of course, there was already a Chumash Indian village here but that was only a mild inconvenience to them.

The fly continues BUZZING in Mika's ear as she hangs on Mrs. White's words.

MRS. WHITE (CONT'D)

Anyway, first they had to acquire the land from the Reyes family. The Reyes' were one of the original families to receive land grants from the Spanish-Mexican government. In the end, a lot of blood was spilled on this soil.

Mrs. White is lost in thought. Mika grins, uncomfortable.

MIKA

Don't tell me it's cursed or something.

MRS. WHITE

I like to think it's blessed.

Mika goes to take another sip of her water. Before she can, Mrs. White reaches over, puts TWO FINGERS IN HER CUP.

MIKA

What are you doing?

Mrs. White opens her wet hand, a DEAD FLY in her palm. Mika recoils as Mrs. White's eyes grow wide and intense.

MRS. WHITE

There's trauma in your eyes. It's that husband of yours, isn't it?

MIKA
 He's not my husband.
 (and then)
 Thanks for the water. I should go.

MRS. WHITE
 He can't protect you. He can't
 afford the cost.

MIKA
 (stammers)
 I...have to unpack.

MRS. WHITE
 Hold on.

Mrs. White opens a drawer, hands Mika a tiny bag of seeds.

MRS. WHITE (CONT'D)
 To get your garden started. Best
 heirloom tomatoes you'll ever eat.

Mika hesitates before taking them.

MRS. WHITE (CONT'D)
 Don't worry. They're HOA-approved.

EXT. THE BUNGALOW - DAY

Mika returns home, still ruffled.

Outside, Johannes stands with David. Johannes wears the same clothes as when they met him. He looks plumper now and his shirt fits significantly tighter.

MIKA
 What's going on?

DAVID
 Apparently someone complained that
 we left furniture outside.

MIKA
 But we're literally moving in.

JOHANNES
 I know. People around here have
 time on their hands. Busy bodies.

MIKA
 Sorry you had to come all this way
 for something so silly.

JOHANNES

It's no problem. I'm just a few minutes away. Call me any time and I'll be here in a jiffy.

DAVID

Thanks, Johannes. Appreciate it.

Mika looks at David, observes his odd expression.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Mika looks through a box of clothes. Carl rubs against her leg, needy for attention. She looks around for Max.

MIKA

Max?

She makes the TCH-TCH-TCH sound. Nothing. Panic begins to settle in as she realizes he's not in the room.

EXT. THE BUNGALOW - DAY

Mika runs out to David who still chats with Johannes.

MIKA

Where's Max?

DAVID

What do you mean?

MIKA

He's gone! Did the moving guys go in the office?

DAVID

I don't know. I don't think so. You sure you looked in the house?

MIKA

Of course I did. Help me look outside!

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Mika and David frantically call for Max.

TCH-TCH-TCH!

They approach an ELDERLY NEIGHBOR who walks down the street.

MIKA

Excuse me, have you seen a black
cat around here?

ELDERLY NEIGHBOR

No, sorry.

Tears well in Mika's eyes as they keep walking.

EXT. TRAIL - DAY

Mika and David search along a wooded trail near the house.

DAVID

Max! Tch-tch-tch...

MIKA

You think maybe he went to the
creek?

EXT. CREEK - DAY

Mika and David walk along the creek, looking around.

TCH-TCH-TCH!

They head downstream. Behind their bungalow, Johannes stands
near the water.

JOHANNES

No luck with your kitty?

DAVID

He's a smart cat. He'll turn up.

Twenty feet away, Mika notices a BLACK MASS in the water. Is
it Max? She runs towards it. David, confused, follows.

Sure enough, it's Max. Mika pulls him up, soaking wet and
unconscious. Mika cradles him to her chest.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Oh my God. Is he breathing?

David leans in, puts his ear close to Max's face. Max's
breaths are short and small.

DAVID (CONT'D)

He's alive.

But Mika isn't concerned about his breath.

MIKA

David, look!

Max is covered in JUICY, SHINY, BLACK LEECHES. They're bulging, sucking on the small, bloody animal.

David puts his hand to his mouth as if he's going to be sick.

MIKA (CONT'D)

Do you have the car keys? We need a vet, right now!

Johannes remains in the same spot. Watches as the horrified couple run to their car. A bemused smile crosses his face.

INT. VET CLINIC - DAY

Mika and David sit, anxious. The VETERINARIAN approaches.

VETERINARIAN

Alright. They were definitely leeches. I've removed them all.

MIKA

Unbelievable. I've never even seen a leech in my entire life.

VETERINARIAN

Honestly, they're not common around here. Let alone in the creek.

DAVID

Poor little guy.

VETERINARIAN

Max lost a lot of blood, but he'll be okay. Make sure he stays inside. There's lots of predators out there that a house cat doesn't stand a chance against.

The vet walks back to the office.

MIKA

I don't get it. He's terrified of going outside.

DAVID

Cats hate change. He probably freaked with everything going on.

David squeezes her hand but Mika isn't at all reassured.

EXT. THE BUNGALOW - DAY

A bright, sunny day. Mika tends to her garden out front. She sprinkles diatomaceous earth on the ground.

SUPER: "DAY 60"

Mika picks up a large rock, moves it out of the way. Underneath, a DOZEN SQUIRMING SLUGS.

Disgusted, she pours diatomaceous earth directly on them. The white powder clumps and dries them out.

SQUISHY WET FOOTSTEPS from behind. Mika turns to see Johannes getting out his truck. He's more bloated and engorged than ever. His oily hair is plastered to his head.

MIKA

Johannes. Hi.

JOHANNES

I'm here to look at that drain David's been complaining about.

MIKA

Oh, from two weeks ago.

JOHANNES

It's not a perfect world, is it?

Johannes signals to the garden tools.

JOHANNES (CONT'D)

You're not fond of the landscaping. The HOA is particular about plants.

MIKA

I spoke with Dr. Daniels. We're in the clear.

JOHANNES

What a relief.

He steps closer to her.

JOHANNES (CONT'D)

I have a birthday next week. My family always does a big dinner. You and David must come.

MIKA

That's so nice of you. I'll check with David to make sure we're free.

Johannes stares at her. Unblinking. Unsmiling.

MIKA (CONT'D)
But...I'm sure we can go.

JOHANNES
That's great news.

MIKA
By the way, it's probably better if
you call ahead next time.

JOHANNES
I'm old enough to remember the days
people managed fine without phones.

MIKA
115, right?

He makes a confused face.

MIKA (CONT'D)
That's what Mrs. White said.

Johannes explodes in JOVIAL LAUGHTER.

JOHANNES
Mrs. White is nice, but the poor
old thing is senile. I'm 69. Not as
sensational as 115 but there it is.

He heads back to his parked truck, starts the engine.

MIKA
(calls out)
What about the drain?

But Johannes is already pulling away.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

David is hunched over at his desk in front of several
computer monitors. Mika stands at the doorway.

DAVID
Please don't tell me you said yes.

MIKA
You think I wanna go? But he really
insisted.

DAVID
Fine. Whatever.

He's on edge, anxious. Mika steps closer.

MIKA
Is everything alright?

DAVID
(terse)
I have a headache and I need to get
back to work.

David turns back to his computer screen. Mika picks up Carl.

MIKA
You don't have to be a dick.

She slams the door shut behind her.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Under the covers alone, Mika watches TV in the dark. Carl sleeps at the foot of the bed.

Mika turns to her side, closes her eyes.

BEGIN MIKA'S DREAM:

INT. NURSERY - DAY

Pretty, cheerful, colorful room. In the center, a cradle sways back and forth.

Mika, dressed in black, steps to the cradle. Inside, a blanket covers a baby. Mika pulls back the blanket to find an unmoving DEAD BABY completely covered in black LEECHES.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mika's eyes shoot open. She's in bed but can't move, can't talk. Her eyeballs dart around in their sockets.

On the side of her bed, the SILHOUETTE OF A MAN stands over her. He's large, scary, evil. Familiar.

The man PRODS Mika's lower abdomen with his fingers. He presses harder and harder until his fingers pierce her skin.

END MIKA'S DREAM

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mika's eyes jolt open. Again. She's covered in sweat. The TV is still on, the lights still off.

Max stands on her stomach, KNEADING her belly with his claws. His yellow eyes seem to glow in the dark.

MIKA

Get off!

She pushes him away. He HISSES at her.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

David and Mika pull into Johannes' driveway. David already seems fed up as he parks the car.

DAVID

Let's agree to leave by nine. Deal?

MIKA

It's eight now.

DAVID

An hour should be plenty of time.

MIKA

I'll let you make the excuse.

David holds up his phone.

DAVID

Setting an alarm right now.

EXT. JOHANNES' HOME - NIGHT

Mika knocks on the front door, David behind her.

SUPER: "DAY 65"

The door opens. GEORGIA LATHEMALT (40's), a big woman with a friendly smile beams at them.

GEORGIA

You must be the Brewers! I'm Georgia, Johannes' daughter.

MIKA

Actually, I'm Deacon. Mika Deacon. He's David Brewer.

GEORGIA

I'm sorry. I don't follow.

Georgia is truly confused. Mika opens her mouth to further clarify but thinks better of it.

MIKA

You know what, never mind. Brewer is fine.

A relieved smile returns to Georgia's face.

GEORGIA

Okay, good.

INT. JOHANNES' HOME - NIGHT

Georgia walks Mika and David through the house. It's straight out of a gothic nightmare. Dark, dingy, stale. Decades of dust permeate every inch. Old-timey portraits of long dead European ancestors hang, crooked.

David and Mika exchange looks. *Yikes.*

INT. JOHANNES HOME - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

At a long dinner table, SEVERAL DINNER GUESTS sit quietly. They're all as frail and decrepit as the house.

They stare blankly at the couple as they enter with Georgia.

GEORGIA

Everyone, meet the new tenants of the Oakcreek bungalow.

(to Mika and David)

I have seats for you both here.

Georgia directs them to two chairs.

DAVID

Could I use your bathroom?

GEORGIA

Certainly, it's just down the hall.

DAVID

I'll be right back.

David disappears as Mika, annoyed by his departure, takes her seat. She looks at the dry, motionless, old faces around her.

Georgia grips Mika's shoulder.

GEORGIA
Daddy will be here soon. He's just finishing some business nearby.

MIKA
He works pretty late?

GEORGIA
Landlording is a 24/7 job.

MIKA
I didn't realize he owned multiple properties.

GEORGIA
Oh, yes. Many.

Georgia smiles again, big and impenetrable.

GEORGIA (CONT'D)
I've got a few things to finish in the kitchen. Make yourself at home.

She scampers away, leaving Mika alone with strangers.

A BRITTLE MAN with tattoo sleeves gawks at her from across table. He wants to say something, struggles to speak.

BRITTLE MAN
Mmm-pffft-matty...

MIKA
Sorry?

The man holds out a balled fist towards Mika. He drops A LEGO PIECE into her open palm.

MIKA (CONT'D)
Uh...thank you. That's nice.

She tries to give the piece back but he looks away.

Mika pulls out her phone, texts David:

THX FOR DITCHING ME. HURRY BACK.

INT. JOHANNES' HOME - HALLWAY - NIGHT

David wanders down a long, narrow corridor with numerous doors. A dim light bulb FLICKERS.

DAVID
Where the hell am I?

Impatient, he tries opening one of the doors. It's locked. He tries another. Locked.

David continues down the hall. He chooses a random door, turns the knob. IT OPENS.

INT. JOHANNES' HOME - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

David walks into the dark room. He fumbles around for a light switch on a wall. Finds it, turns it on.

To his shock, a gigantic man stands at the toilet bowl, his pants down. FRED LATHEMALT (20's). He's not a nice guy.

Fred turns his head to look at David.

DAVID
Sorry dude...uh...I didn't...

Fred stands over the toilet, not moving. Still looking at David. His beady eyes on a head too small for his body.

David backs away to the exit. He catches a glimpse of what should be the guy's genitals. Instead, Fred holds a large DEFORMED LEECH WITH SHARP TEETH with both hands.

Too stunned to speak, David scrambles out. He falls on his rear. Fred zips up his pants, walks over to David.

FRED
Hey, man. It's all good. I'm Fred.

INT. JOHANNES HOME - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Mika is miserable. Finally, she stands up from the table.

MIKA
Pardon me.

Predictably, the decrepit dinner guests don't respond.

Mika's about to go down the hallway when she BUMPS into Fred. She's astonished by his excessive height.

FRED
Are you with the dorky guy?

MIKA
David?

FRED

He told me to tell you he's probably gonna be on the toilet for awhile. Some kinda stomach thing.

MIKA

(skeptical)

That's weird. He was fine when we got here. I texted him--

FRED

Good luck getting reception in this place.

Fred extends a sweaty hand. Mika takes it. SQUISH. Ugh.

FRED (CONT'D)

I'm Fred.

MIKA

Mika.

She looks back at the dinner table.

MIKA (CONT'D)

And who are they? They don't talk much.

FRED

Grandpa's friends.

MIKA

Johannes is your grandfather?

FRED

Uh huh. Yep.

Fred looks Mika up and down, inspecting her closely.

FRED (CONT'D)

Grandpa tells us you intend to have children soon.

(and then)

Pregnant women get so big, full.

His lips quiver, his chin trembles. As if salivating at the thought. Mika recoils.

MIKA

Comes with the territory. But we'll go through a surrogate. When the time is right.

FRED
Why?

MIKA
I'd rather not discuss it.

FRED
Why not?

MIKA
(snapping)
'Cause I was stabbed in the uterus.
Anything else I can share with you?

Fred's jaw goes slack.

FRED
So no babies?

JOHANNES (O.S.)
Frederick! Enough.

Johannes stomps into the room, glowers at Fred. Fred immediately falls back, petulant.

JOHANNES (CONT'D)
My nephew bothering you?

MIKA
You mean grandson.

JOHANNES
Sure.

Mika looks at her phone. It's 8:30 PM.

MIKA
It's late. I should check on David.

JOHANNES
You're leaving? I just got here.

MIKA
He has a lot of work to do.

She tries to go around Fred, but he stands in her way.

JOHANNES
What about my birthday?

MIKA
Happy Birthday. We need to go.

Johannes' face contorts through a range of emotions: disappointment, fury, finally landing on indignation.

JOHANNES

(intense)

My sister cooked. All day.

Just then, David stumbles into the room. Mika runs to him. He goes weak as she supports him on her shoulder.

MIKA

We need to get you home.

Johannes shoots a pointed look at Fred who looks away.

Georgia comes out of the kitchen with a gigantic pot of food. A goulash of some kind. She sets it on the table.

GEORGIA

Everybody ready to dig in?

MIKA

Thank you but David's not well. We appreciate your hospitality.

Georgia's face drops.

An OLD WOMAN at the table COUGHS UNCONTROLLABLY. Blood droplets splatter across the table and into the pot.

Mika winces, unable to hide her disgust.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

David and Mika sit at the kitchen table, laughing.

MIKA

He was like the Jolly Green Giant.

DAVID

The fuckin' Addams Family!

MIKA

I can laugh now but I was scared shitless.

DAVID

And that table of corpses. What was up with that?

MIKA

Who knows. I'm just glad you're okay now.

DAVID
The last thing I remember was
looking for the bathroom.

MIKA
Fred said you had stomach problems.

DAVID
I did?

David squints, tries to remember.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Don't recall.

MIKA
Wait, seriously?

DAVID
(shrugs)
I've gotta jump on a call with
Brandon. We're talking to more
investors. High rollers. Could be
lucrative, Mika. We're gonna make
everything back, and more.

David chugs his coffee and jumps up. Kisses Mika. She's pleasantly surprised by his good mood. He walks away, a light buoyancy in his stride.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

David, disheveled, unshaven, sits on the toilet staring at his phone. He reads an article with the headline:

"BroCoin in Jeopardy: Technical
Challenges Derail Crypto Startup."

DAVID
Shit.

SUPER: "DAY 180"

David flushes, stands up. His phone buzzes. It's Brandon.

BRANDON (V.O.)
Yo, you've gotta chill.

DAVID
The "chill" ship has sailed. This
is amateur hour stuff. We're gonna
spook the investors.

BRANDON (V.O.)
The blockchain tech ran into some
issues. Our guys tell me the
transaction times are back up.

DAVID
You're sure?

David wash his hands. The sink is STOPPED UP. He removes the
drain stopper.

BRANDON (V.O.)
That article is from a BS blog no
one cares about.

David reaches into the drain, pulls out a SOGGY CLUMP OF
HAIR. He makes a face.

BRANDON (V.O.)
Hello?

DAVID
Yeah, I'm here. The drain is
clogged. Again.
(beat)
I just need you to understand...I
put my entire savings into this.
Mika doesn't know. So this is it.
This has to work.

BRANDON (V.O.)
And it will. Trust me.

DAVID
Famous last words. I'll see you in
a couple hours.

David hangs up the phone and steps outside the bathroom.

DAVID (CONT'D)
(shouts)
Mika, do we have any more Drano?

MIKA (O.S.)
(shouting back)
We're out. Want me to get some?

DAVID
Nah, forget it. I'm gonna shower.

David turns on the shower faucet and begins undressing. He
steps into the shower.

He lathers up, washes his body and face. His eyes closed, he can't see:

A BLACK-RED GOOEY BLOB SLOWLY SQUEEZING THROUGH A SHOWERHEAD HOLE. IT LOOKS LIKE A BLOOD CLOT.

David remains oblivious. Washes his hair as the blob makes its way out with the water. PLOPS on to David's head. He rubs it as he shampoos, still not noticing.

The blob slides down David's back, buttocks and legs. It lands on the shower floor.

David's feet avoid the blob a couple of times. But then-- SQUISH! David slips, falls. The back of his head SLAMS on the tile wall.

Dazed, he touches the back of his head. Blood. The blood flows from him into the drain.

Finally, David notices the blob. It notices him, too.

DAVID (CONT'D)

What the--!

The blob soaks in David's blood. *Drinking*. David watches, horrified, his hand over his mouth. The blob has its fill, then slides down the drain with the water.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Agitated with a bandage around his head, David paces the kitchen. Johannes' voice on his cell's speakerphone.

JOHANNES (V.O.)

A leech? In the shower?

DAVID

Or something leech-like.

JOHANNES (V.O.)

I'll have my guy stop by tomorrow to take a look.

DAVID

Okay but we're having guests over tonight. It could be dangerous!

JOHANNES (V.O.)

(offended)

A party? My invitation must've gotten lost in the mail. Along with the rent.

DAVID

Let us pay online and you'd have your money right now.

JOHANNES (V.O.)

Always about you, and what's convenient for you.

DAVID

That's not fair.

JOHANNES (V.O.)

I don't give a damn about fair. Is it fair that you only call me when you need something? When you have complaints or want something fixed?

DAVID

You're the landlord. What else would we call about?

Johannes goes silent for a beat. DIAL TONE.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Asshole.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Post-dinner. David and Mika play a half-assed game of Monopoly with their guests Brandon and his on-again-off-again girlfriend AVA JOSHI (25). She's way too good for him.

AVA

That's the last time you get to be banker.

BRANDON

What do you mean?

AVA

I saw you swipe a fifty!

BRANDON

Don't be a narc. Cheating is the point.

Mika stands up with her empty wine glass.

MIKA

Anyone want more wine?

DAVID

Yes please!

BRANDON

If by wine you mean tequila, yes.

Mika rolls her eyes, heads to the kitchen.

AVA

This place is so cute. Cozy.

DAVID

Thanks, Ava. We really like it.

BRANDON

It's not as bad as I pictured. I'll say that.

AVA

20 minutes to the beach, 45 to LA?
I wanna move here.

BRANDON

And no crackheads or bums in sight.
You're living the dream.

Mika returns with a new bottle of red wine.

MIKA

Living the dream?

BRANDON

We were just saying how great
Oakcreek is.

Mika hesitates a beat too long. Brandon catches the look she shoots David.

BRANDON (CONT'D)

Hey, I saw that.

MIKA

What?

BRANDON

Something's amiss in paradise. What
is it?

DAVID

Nothing.

MIKA

Just our landlord.

AVA

What about your landlord?

DAVID

He's quirky.

MICAH

He's a psycho.

AVA
Which is it?

MIKA
He's a freak. Not in a "quirky"
way, either.

DAVID
The guy is a little intense.

MIKA
Don't downplay it. He watched us...

BRANDON
Watched you what?

MIKA
David didn't tell you?

INT. KITCHEN - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Mika and David make out in the kitchen. Passionate, heavy petting.

MIKA (V.O.)
It was last week. He showed up
unannounced, late afternoon.

Johannes stands outside, stares into the kitchen window with desirous, intense eyes.

Mika's lids flutter open, making eye contact with Johannes. Horror spreads across her face.

MIKA
Oh my God!

Mika scrambles to close her unbuttoned blouse. David turns around to see Johannes still standing outside. Grinning.

BACK TO PRESENT

Mika is disgusted as she recounts the story.

MIKA
Then he just got into his truck
like nothing happened.

AVA
So he's some kind of stalker.

BRANDON

Sounds like he enjoys a free show.

Ava elbows Brandon in the ribs.

MIKA

He just shows up whenever he wants but refuses to do any repairs. Like today, he straight up told us he wasn't gonna fix the drain.

DAVID

He's old-school.

MIKA

David, there's leeches in the drains. They drank your blood.

BRANDON

Ew. Glad we opted for the hotel.

AVA

Why are you still living here?

DAVID

Another six months on the lease.

AVA

Break it. It's not worth it.

MIKA

That's what I've been saying. Especially since the surrogate lives so far...

Mika looks to David. *Oops*. She just spilled the beans.

AVA

You guys are having a baby?

Mika nods. Joy spreads across Ava's face. She SQUEALS, jumps up and tackles Mika with a hug.

BRANDON

(in mock horror)

Out of wedlock! But what will the neighbors say?

MIKA

Johannes is certainly excited. Any time a baby is mentioned, he makes this little whimpering, moaning sound. As if...he's hungry.

For a moment, the room goes silent.

Then doorbell DING-DONGS. Jumpy, the group goes tense. They look at each other.

Another DING-DONG. Mika stands up.

MIKA (CONT'D)
Guys, it's a doorbell.

Mika goes to the front door.

FRONT DOOR

She looks into the peephole. Johannes' massive, unmistakable body stands on the porch.

He holds up a toolbox, smiles wide.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

The group sits, perturbed, as Johannes BANGS and CLANGS in the bathroom.

MIKA
He can't keep doing this shit.

DAVID
I'll talk to him tomorrow.

BRANDON
Why didn't you tell us Hagrid was your landlord?

He slaps his knee in amusement. Ava rolls her eyes.

Johannes enters the living room, toolbox in hand.

JOHANNES
All better.

MIKA
What about the bugs?

JOHANNES
Didn't see any.

DAVID
Thanks for coming by.

MIKA
At 10 PM.

JOHANNES

No problem. This generation. You
can't wipe your own asses.

Johannes smiles, orange-yellow teeth gleaming. He notices the
abandoned game of Monopoly on the coffee table.

JOHANNES (CONT'D)

Monopoly?

MIKA

Thanks again, I'll walk you out.

JOHANNES

I'd love to join.

BRANDON

Sorry, bro. We're not playing
anymore.

Johannes' smile drops. He stares at Brandon, intimidating.

JOHANNES

Scared an old man might beat you?

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

Johannes rolls the Monopoly dice. He's totally engrossed by
the game. The others sit around. They're bored and tired.

He moves his piece eight spaces, lands on BOARDWALK. He claps
like a thrilled, animated child.

JOHANNES

Boardwalk! And doubles. That means
I roll again.

Johannes shoves Monopoly money at Brandon.

BRANDON

Whopty.

MIKA

Johannes, we're super tired and our
friends need to be going.

She looks to the other three for support.

AVA

Yeah, it's about that time.

JOHANNES

No. We're just getting started.

DAVID

Can I grab you a water for road?

Johannes ignores them, counts his leftover money.

JOHANNES

I hope you're not still upset about the other day. It's nice to see a young couple in love. But I have to ask, what's the point?

DAVID

What do you mean?

JOHANNES

You can't have children. So what's the point of intercourse?

MIKA

That's none of your business.

JOHANNES

It's a simple question.

Mika stands up, enraged.

MIKA

Who do you think you are? There's more than one way to have kids.

JOHANNES

Bah. Technological freak show.

Johannes waves her away, rolls the dice again. He moves his piece to a property with a red hotel. Brandon smirks, smug.

BRANDON

That'll be \$340.

Johannes counts his money. His face falls. It's not enough.

BRANDON (CONT'D)

Looks like you're gonna need to mortgage property. Or you give me Boardwalk and we'll call it even.

JOHANNES

That's my property.

BRANDON

Not any more, dude.

Brandon takes the Boardwalk card. Johannes snatches it back.

JOHANNES
IT'S MY PROPERTY!

AVA
It's just a game.

JOHANNES
You simple little bitch. Your
existence is a game.

BRANDON
Hey, get out of her face!

Mika looks to David who stares blankly at the scene.

MIKA
Are you going to do something?

DAVID
Like what?

Frustrated, she steps in between Johannes and Brandon.

MIKA
Johannes, you need to leave. Now.
You're not welcome here.

JOHANNES
Not welcome, on my own property?

MIKA
We've got rights. And I say go.

Johannes looks around at the four pair of eyes staring at him. He heads to the front door, throws Brandon a dirty look.

INT. JOHANNES' TRUCK - NIGHT

Johannes sits in his truck, SEETHING. He glares at the bungalow, his eyes bulging from their sockets as his whole body trembles.

He's sweaty, too. Sweat pours down his face. His clothes soaking wet. He clinches his jaw and GRINDS his teeth, hard, in a circular motion. It sounds like sandpaper.

JOHANNES
(through teeth)
It's my property.

Finally, he starts the car and drives away.

INT. BUNGALOW - NIGHT

Brandon and Ava put on their coats and gather their things. David hovers, disappointed.

DAVID
I thought we were gonna talk
BroCoin?

BRANDON
Come by the hotel in the morning.

Brandon pats David's shoulder. He waves to Mika who stands at the end of the hall, arms crossed.

Ava gives Mika a big hug.

AVA
Malibu tomorrow, right?

Mika nods with a strained smile.

INT./EXT. CAR (MOVING) - KANAN DUME ROAD - NIGHT

Brandon drives on the windy, dark road. Ava seems distressed.

AVA
Can you believe David just sat
there? I feel so bad for Mika.

BRANDON
Yeah, well she's the reason they
moved in the first place.

AVA
Not like she asked to be attacked.

BRANDON
Just saying, he jumps through hoops
for that chick. He doesn't have the
alpha mentality.

AVA
Alpha? Seriously.

BRANDON
I love him but he's a simp.

AVA
And you talk like a 15 year old
playing Call of Duty. Hope you know
that's why I don't marry you.

They drive past JOHANNES' TRUCK, parked on the side of the road. It's empty.

BRANDON

You're hardwired to seek a provider. It's why you stick around, waiting to see what happens with BroCoin.

AVA

One more word and I'm jumping out.

BRANDON

Tuck and roll, baby.
(off her annoyance)
You know I'm just messing with you.

AVA

I wonder sometimes.

Ava looks at him, angry but not in the mood to be. Brandon leans over to try and kiss her but she pushes him away.

She looks back at the road and--

AVA (CONT'D)

Brandon, watch out!

Up ahead, a MASSIVE SHAPELESS FIGURE stands in the road. Brandon slams the breaks, comes to a SCREECHING HALT.

Bulky but remarkably spry and agile, the figure runs across the road and disappears into the bushes.

AVA (CONT'D)

What the hell was that?

BRANDON

Should I go look?

AVA

It's not like you hit him.

BRANDON

Yeah.

Brandon steps on the gas. The car doesn't move. A MOIST SLUSHING is heard under the spinning tires.

BRANDON (CONT'D)

It's not going.

AVA

See what it is.

BRANDON
Me? What happened to equality of
the sexes?

AVA
Fine. Jerk.

BRANDON
Wait, Ava--

It's too late. Ava's already outside the car.

EXT. KANAN DUME ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Ava crouches, takes a closer look at the tires. She turns on her phone's flashlight, illuminates the ground under the vehicle. A DARK, OILY, MUCOUS-LIKE FLUID.

AVA
There's some kind of liquid.

Brandon rolls down the window, sticks his head out.

BRANDON
What?

AVA
I think it's oil.

Brandon grows increasingly perturbed.

BRANDON
What does that even mean?

AVA
Get your lazy ass out and look.

BRANDON
I forgot my glasses. You know I'm
blind without them.

AVA
(irritated)
I'll take a picture.

Ava takes a flash photo, looks at the image. What she sees shocks her.

AVA (CONT'D)
We have to go. Now.

Ava looks up. Brandon is gone.

AVA (CONT'D)
 Brandon? Brandon!

Terrified, her eyes dart frantically in the dark. The light shakes in her hand as she holds it up.

She hears the sound of GREEDY SUCKING AND SLURPING nearby.

AVA (CONT'D)
 Brandon?

Ava opens the car door, slow. Inside: nothing, no one. The eating noises continue, louder.

It's coming from behind the car.

Ava follows the sound, unable to control her trembling hand.

As she approaches, the light REVEALS: A DARK, SLIMY BLOATED LEECH-LIKE CREATURE. Swollen, engorged and pulsating, it sits on top of Brandon's immobile body. Drinking him.

Rows of sharp, serrated teeth visible as it greedily consumes Brandon's blood. Brandon's eyes are rolled back in his head.

Ava is speechless. The creature doesn't seem to take notice of her as it undulates and writhes.

Ava backs away cautiously, scared to even breath. She waits until she's out of sight, then BOLTS down the dark road.

EXT. KANAN DUME ROAD - NIGHT

Ava runs in the dark, frantic and exhausted, not knowing where she's going. A CAR pulls up from behind her. Ava turns, waves wildly, face stained with tears.

AVA
 (yells)
 Help! Help!

The car stops. The driver rolls down the window. It's Mrs. White. Dr. Daniels sits in the passenger seat.

Mrs. White steps out of the car, concern on her face.

MRS. WHITE
 Goodness!

AVA
 (sobs)
 Please. I need your help.

Mrs. White turns to Dr. Daniels. He nods.

DR. DANIELS
Get in, dear.

Gently, Mrs. White takes Ava by the arm, guides her into the backseat. Slams the door shut.

INT. HOSPITAL LOBBY - DAY

Mika fidgets in her seat. She's a nervous wreck.

SUPER: "DAY 181"

A YOUNG MOTHER across from her nurses a NEWBORN BABY. It's a sweet, tender moment. Instinctively, Mika smiles.

FLASH TO:

The horrifying image of the leeches sucking from Max.

BACK TO SCENE

Mika averts her eyes, suddenly disgusted.

The lobby door opens as David enters from outside.

MIKA
What'd the cops say?

DAVID
They don't know what happened. No sign of Brandon. Just his car.

David sits next to her, visibly anxious and stressed.

DAVID (CONT'D)
This is so fucked!

MIKA
And we thought we were escaping.

DAVID
What does that mean?

MIKA
I'm saying messed up stuff happens no matter where you go.

DAVID
We don't know what happened.

MIKA

But it's clear something bad took place.

DAVID

And it's all my fault.

MIKA

I never said that.

DAVID

(sneering)

You didn't have to, Mika. I'm the one who screwed up, lost everything and moved us here, right?

Mika looks into David's bulging, bloodshot eyes. His chest heaves up and down. He's like a stranger.

DAVID (CONT'D)

My fault that you need a surrogate.

MIKA

I'm sorry about Brandon. I really am. But there's something else going on with you.

David's phone DINGS. He looks at the screen, dreading it. ON HIS PHONE: A stock update. BroCoin trends severely downward.

MIKA (CONT'D)

Can you stop with the phone for two seconds?

Irate, David stands up and kicks his chair across the room.

MIKA (CONT'D)

(shocked)

David!

Other HOSPITAL VISITORS, including the mother and newborn, quickly move away from the scene. SECURITY walks over.

DAVID

All my fault!

David storms out of the hospital before the security guards make him. Mika is left shaken.

The nursing mother approaches her.

YOUNG MOTHER

My ex was like that. It only gets worse.

MIKA

We're going through a lot. He's not normally like this.

YOUNG MOTHER

They've all got a monster side to them. And if you have kids, run.

The mom finds another seat elsewhere.

From behind, a FEMALE NURSE touches Mika's shoulder.

FEMALE NURSE

You can see her now.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Lying in a hospital bed, Ava stares at the ceiling. She's in shock. Mika stands by her side, touches her arm.

FEMALE NURSE

Her family has been informed.
Doctor says she's stable but we'll understand more once the shock wears off.

MIKA

She wasn't hurt?

FEMALE NURSE

Just severely dehydrated.

MIKA

She was fine last night.

FEMALE NURSE

You'd be surprised how the body responds to stress.

The nurse leaves the room as Mika looks into Ava's distant, blank brown eyes. Something is...off.

As she comes closer, Mika notices Ava's EYELASHES WRIGGLING, WRITHING like insect tentacles.

The hairs on both the bottom and top waterlines move toward each other in a mesmerizing formation.

Entranced, Mika holds her breath. She's unable to take her eyes off the grotesque scene. Ava blinks, her eyelids make a small SQUELCHING sound.

Mika looks again. Ava's eyes have returned to normal.

EXT. BUNGALOW - GARDEN - DAY

A sweltering fall day. Mika selects flowers from a blooming bush. She holds up the bouquet to admire.

SUPER: "DAY 325"

Mika picks up the water hose to spray the garden. Nothing comes out. It's broken. Annoyed, she tosses it to the side.

Mrs. White and Dr. Daniels go by on their daily walk.

MRS. WHITE

That green thumb of yours is giving me a run for my money.

Mika smiles gratefully.

MRS. WHITE (CONT'D)

You both still coming by tomorrow to help with the root cellar?

MIKA

We'll be there.

DR. DANIELS

I'm making my famous lemon bars. A fair bribe, I promise you.

Mrs. White spins Dr. Daniels around, heading home.

MRS. WHITE

(calls out)

And keep those marigolds moist!

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

A very pregnant DENISE (30's) wholesome and motherly, sips a diet soda. From the sofa, she's in a staring match with Max the cat whose eye TWITCHES. DROOL seeps from his open mouth. Uncomfortable, Denise looks away.

Mika enters from the kitchen with the bouquet in a vase.

MIKA

Sorry about him. He hasn't been the same since he fell into the creek.

She brings the flowers to Denise who takes them happily.

DENISE

Mika, these are beautiful!

MIKA

I thought you might like the smell of them. Maybe the babies will too.

DENISE

I'd love to see the nursery.

MIKA

David's working in there right now. Don't know what he'll do when the twins move in.

DENISE

Is he excited?

MIKA

Hard to tell. He hasn't been the same since Brandon disappeared. Sometimes he seems really excited and then...

DENISE

My husband was the same way with our first. But once that baby was here, it just clicked. I swear he turned into super dad overnight. He could hardly wait for the next one.

Denise touches her stomach.

DENISE (CONT'D)

They always kick when I'm here.

MIKA

You think they can sense...

DENISE

I do.
(and then)
Want to feel?

Mika considers for a moment.

MIKA

Not right now.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

David, sweaty and disheveled, hunches over at this desk. The blinds are closed. A half-built Ikea crib sits in the corner.

On his COMPUTER SCREEN several windows are open. Crypto prices and stock market charts. Half-written emails.

An article with Brandon's photo reads:

"Brocoin Flounders: All Hype
Without its Hypeman?"

David doesn't even look up as Mika walks in.

MIKA
Denise just left.

DAVID
Who?

MIKA
Denise. The surrogate.

DAVID
Oh, Denise.

MIKA
It's so stale in here.

She opens a window. David winces as sunlight pours in.

MIKA (CONT'D)
Did you make the surrogacy payment?

DAVID
What do you mean?

MIKA
The agency called. They said the
installment is late.

DAVID
I'll pay it tomorrow.

MIKA
It's 45 days late.

DAVID
I said I'll pay it.

Mika stares at him. He stares back, barely recognizable.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Anything else?

MIKA
The hose is broken. Again.

DAVID
What do you want me to do about it?

MIKA
Fix it. Or call Johannes.

DAVID
You've got his number.

The COMPUTER SCREEN catches Mika's eye as she notices the picture of Brandon. David quickly turns off the monitor.

DAVID (CONT'D)
I need to work, Mika. Nag me later.

Frustrated, Mika storms out.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

It's late. Mika gets out of bed as David sleeps.

INT. OFFICE - NIGHT

At David's COMPUTER, Mika looks through the various tech articles and news. Nothing she doesn't already know.

She's about to give up when an email pops up with the subject: URGENT!

INT. BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Mika storms in, TURNS ON THE LIGHT and YANKS the blanket off David. He's groggy and confused.

Mika holds a piece of paper in front of him.

DAVID
What's that?

MIKA
(reads)
"BroCoin's value has gone to shit.
Dogecoin isn't this worthless. Your
ineptitude, lies and recklessness--"

DAVID
Stop.

MIKA
(reads)
"--has put my investment at risk.
I'm not going to tolerate any more
of your bullshit. The time for
excuses is over."

David hops out of bed. Lunges at the printed email in Mika's hand. She dodges him, continues reading out loud.

MIKA (CONT'D)

(reads)

"Make this right or I swear to God,
I will tear your life apart."

DAVID

Enough!

David slumps onto the floor.

MIKA

Why is this guy saying this? What
did you do?

DAVID

It wasn't me, it was Brandon.

MIKA

You're gonna blame the guy who's
been missing for months?

DAVID

He made promises to investors that
he couldn't keep. I had no idea. It
was smoke and mirrors, all of it.

MIKA

So what does that mean?

DAVID

It means I'm broke.

MIKA

What about our savings?

David opens his bank app on his phone. Shows Mika the balance.

MIKA (CONT'D)

(shocked)

That's it?

DAVID

It's enough for two months, maybe.

The reality of the situation fully hits Mika.

MIKA

David, we're about to have two
kids. Babies. Relying on us.

DAVID
Why do you think I've been so
fucking stressed?

MIKA
You convinced me to do the
surrogacy! Then you gamble
everything and don't tell me?

DAVID
I was terrified.

MIKA
I told you not to trust him again.

DAVID
I know. I know.

MIKA
You're...

She stops herself before she can say anything she'll regret.

DAVID
(bitter)
Useless. Pathetic. I know.

MIKA
You're a coward.

INT. BART STATION - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Late night. Underground at the BART train station. It's
mostly empty.

SUPER: "TWO YEARS AGO"

Mika and David stumble down an escalator, tipsy and laughing.

They head to the ticket machine where David struggles to buy
passes. He presses all the wrong buttons.

DAVID
How do I...

MIKA
We're gonna miss the last train.

DAVID
I told you we should've taken Uber.

MIKA
Here, let me do it.

Mika playfully pushes him away and takes his credit card.

INT. BART TRAIN - NIGHT

The train doors are about to close. Mika and David push through just in time. There's no one else inside.

DAVID
Nice. An empty car.

MIKA
Thank God. I might have to puke.

They sit in a center row. David puts his arm around her, kisses her forehead.

The car door opens as a TEEN COUPLE enter from an adjoining car. The TEEN GIRL wears sunglasses as the TEEN BOY yanks her by the arm. The tension between them is palpable.

David doesn't pay them attention but Mika watches closely.

MIKA (CONT'D)
I think I know that kid.

DAVID
Really?

MIKA
He was one of my students a few years back. Got expelled.

DAVID
For what?

MIKA
He brought a gun to school.

DAVID
Damn. Crazy.

Without warning, the boy reaches a hand back and SLAPS his girlfriend. Her glasses FLY OFF her face and land on the aisle floor.

MIKA
Hey!

Mika immediately stands up. David pulls her back down.

MIKA (CONT'D)
We've gotta do something.

DAVID
Wait til the next stop.

MIKA
You're really gonna sit there and
watch this?

DAVID
There's nothing we can do.

MIKA
(disgusted)
Let go of me.

Mika walks up to the couple directly. The girl looks away.

MIKA (CONT'D)
Not sure if you remember me. I was
your teacher at Harding Elementary.

The teen looks her up and down with disdain.

TEEN BOY
I don't know you. Fuck off.

MIKA
(to the girl)
Are you okay?

The girl won't look at her.

MIKA (CONT'D)
I can help you.

The boy gets up. He's inches from Mika's face.

TEEN BOY
Bitch, did you hear me? I said go
sit the fuck down.

Mika turns to a bewildered David who's still seated.

TEEN BOY (CONT'D)
Your man isn't gonna do shit.
(to David)
Are you?

David looks like a deer in headlights. Can't even respond.

Mika heads to the intercom located at the end of the train
car. She pushes the button to speak to the train operator.

Before she can get through, her head is forcibly JERKED BACK as the teen yanks her ponytail, sending her backwards.

David stands up but remains at a distance.

DAVID

Mika!

Mika lunges at the intercom again. This time, the teen grabs her by the neck. Mika fights back, kicks him in the groin. He tackles her to the ground and they SCUFFLE.

TEEN GIRL

Stop it! Stop!

The boy takes out a switch blade. Mika doesn't even see it as he STABS her. She GASPS, looks down at the wound in her lower abdomen. She falls to her knees, shocked by the profuse BLEEDING. The teen STABS her again.

David runs over to her, finally. The train comes to a stop.

TEEN BOY

C'mon!

The teen grabs his girlfriend. As the train doors open, the couple run out of the train.

AUTOMATED ANNOUNCEMENT

*Three-car Fremont train now
boarding platform two.*

David cradles Mika as her vision goes black and the train fills with the SCREAMS of HORRIFIED RIDERS.

BACK TO PRESENT

Mika is exhausted from re-living the trauma.

MIKA

I knew what you were before we left
San Francisco.

(beat)

Having kids with you was a mistake.

David looks like he wants to cry. He meets the eyes of Max, who sits in a corner. Max breathes loudly, his mouth agape.

INT. CELLAR - SAME

Below the floorboards of the bungalow. In the darkness, we hear EXCITED, IRREGULAR BREATHING. Then it stops.

INT. BEDROOM - SAME

Mika looks down at David.

DAVID
So what now?

MIKA
We go to bed.

She takes a pillow off the bed, throws it to him.

INT. MRS. WHITE'S CELLAR - DAY

It's dark and dank. Old antiques and decaying furniture.

David, soiled with dust and sweat, picks up a box to bring up to the house. He TRIPS, sends the box flying.

SUPER: "DAY 326"

Dr. Daniels peeks in, shines a flashlight below.

DR. DANIELS
You need some help?

DAVID
I'm fine.

As he picks up the items from the fallen box, he notices a pair of raggedy, stained GUCCI SLIPPERS.

INT. MRS. WHITE'S SITTING ROOM - DAY

The Halloween spirit is alive and well in Mrs. White's house. Carved pumpkins, cobwebs, fake skeletons adorn the room.

Mika sorts through OLD PHOTOGRAPHS on the floor. Mrs. White carries in a tray of mulled wine and cups.

MRS. WHITE
David isn't very handy, is he?

MIKA
I told you.

Mrs. White pours Mika a cup of the warm wine.

MIKA (CONT'D)
I bet trick-or-treaters love your house.

MRS. WHITE

My dear, we haven't had a trick-or-treater since 1988.

Dr. Daniels wheels in, holds up the grimy slippers like a victory prize. David behind him.

DR. DANIELS

I used to wear these everyday.

MIKA

I'm sure you can get them cleaned.

DAVID

He can't. They're cursed.

DR. DANIELS

It's true. Last time I wore 'em, I murdered a man.

(points to stains)

That's his blood right there.

MRS. WHITE

It wasn't murder. He was an intruder. You did what had to be done. You're a hero, far as I'm concerned.

DAVID

Wait, you're serious?

DR. DANIELS

About ten years ago. I was making a casserole for the neighborhood potluck, like I always do. Had it cooking in a cast iron skillet. Tastes better that way. I go to take it out of the oven. Oh, it was perfection. That's when I saw a deranged young man climbing through the kitchen window. He meant to rob us, of course. These criminals think elderly folks are low-hanging fruit. That was his mistake. Before he could finish worming his way through, I took that hot skillet and brought it down on his head. Crushed it. Again and again, I don't know how many times. His teeth smashed all over the kitchen counter. They sounded like hard little candies, tap dancing. And by the end of it, I couldn't tell what was casserole and what was brain.

The room is painfully silent after this gruesome revelation.

DAVID

Wow. That is very, very horrible.

MRS. WHITE

I'll say it again, he did what had to be done. The police agreed.

DR. DANIELS

(staring at slippers)

But I could never bring myself to wear these again.

MIKA

Mrs. White is right. You protected your home and your family.

Mika shoots David a pointed look. Mrs. White catches this.

MRS. WHITE

Family is the most important thing. You two will understand that soon enough. You'll do anything to protect those precious babies.

Mika holds up an OLD PHOTO. It's an image of TWO VICTORIAN-ERA FAMILIES standing next to each other.

MIKA

Is this your family?

Mrs. White takes the sepia toned picture, nods.

MRS. WHITE

We don't like to think about those days, do we brother?

Dr. Daniels says nothing, still in reverie over his slippers. Mrs. White points to a wiry, SNEERING TEEN BOY.

MRS. WHITE (CONT'D)

Recognize this little pissant?

MIKA

Wow, it's Johannes.

David looks over at the photo.

DAVID

What was he like?

MRS. WHITE

Lazy, spoiled. Only sixteen and already corrupted by greed and malice. The typical Lathemalt family traits.

DR. DANIELS

He broke my legs for fun.

MIKA

But why?

MRS. WHITE

Dr. Daniels made friends with a little Chumash boy in the village. A nice boy. The Lathemalts didn't like that.

MIKA

Johannes, a bigot. Not surprised.

MRS. WHITE

One day, Johannes saw them playing together, pushed my baby brother into the creek. He's been in that chair ever since. Even worse, the Lathemalts blamed the whole thing on that Chumash boy.

DAVID

What year was this? Can't find anything online about his family.

David looks at his phone. Mrs. White rolls her eyes.

MRS. WHITE

Get off the phone and listen to what I tell you. Anyway, that lie gave the Lathemalts a perfect reason to run the Chumash off the land for good. Over 60 men were killed, including people in my family. But after it was all said and done, the Lathemalts were finally able to purchase the land.

Mika and David look at each other, overwhelmed. Mrs. White gets up from her seat.

MRS. WHITE (CONT'D)

Who wants more mulled wine?

EXT. MRS. WHITE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Mrs. White walks David and Mika walk out.

MRS. WHITE
Thank you again.

MIKA
It's the least we could. You're the
reason my garden is thriving.

DAVID
Can't say I'm eagerly awaiting the
next cellar adventure.

MRS. WHITE
You know, most of these old
bungalows were built with cellars.

MIKA
Not ours.

MRS. WHITE
Oh, I wouldn't be so sure.

Mrs. White smiles, closes the door.

DAVID
Yeah, they're nuts.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Mika stares down the hall, her eyes search for something. She
peeks in the hallway closet. It's just hanging coats.

SUPER: "DAY 352"

David, excited, runs out from the office.

MIKA
Do you hear that?

DAVID
Hear what?

MIKA
Never mind.

DAVID
Come here, I wanna show you
something.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

The two Ikea cribs are fully built, though wobbly. David looks to Mika for a reaction.

DAVID
What do you think?

She's not impressed.

DAVID (CONT'D)
I know there's a lot more we have to do but I figure it's a start.

MIKA
At least when the babies arrive to a shitty house with a freaky landlord and unemployed parents, they'll have somewhere to sleep.

Mika walks away before David can say anything.

DAVID
I'm trying, Mika!

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

A cloudy, rainy day. At the counter, Mika browses teaching jobs on her laptop.

SUPER: "DAY 356"

The doorbell RINGS. Mika looks out the window where a distraught woman with a CHILD stand at the door. This is GINA EVANS (30's) and MATTY EVANS (3). Gina pounds on the door.

David emerges.

DAVID
Who is that?

MIKA
I have no idea.

INT. FRONT DOOR - MOMENTS LATER

Mika stands behind David as he opens the door. Gina looks confused to see their faces.

GINA
Where the hell is my husband?

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Gina is on the sofa as little Matty chases the cats around. Mika sits nearby with David.

GINA

I've called, emailed, texted.
Nothing. Never said he moved, just
vanished. The police know nothing.

MIKA

Were you guys broken up?

GINA

It's complicated. Matty and I have
been with my mom in Vermont.

DAVID

Maybe he had a drug problem.

MIKA

David.

DAVID

It'd explain the erratic behavior.

Gina looks at her son, pained.

GINA

As soon as we moved in, the
drinking started. I didn't think
anything of it until he stopped
going to work. Turns out, he got
fired and never told me.

MIKA

Been there before.

GINA

Tim and I had our problems but we
both wanted to make it work.

(beat)

I moved out because of Johannes.

DAVID

(alarmed)

What do you mean?

GINA

Come on. You must've noticed the
guy is a freak.

DAVID

Well, yeah.

GINA

When Tim lost his job, that fucker wouldn't leave us alone. He started showing up unannounced, calling constantly. Always lurking. It was terrifying. Tim didn't want to say anything or cause problems.

Matty runs past his mom, pretending to be an airplane.

GINA (CONT'D)

The cellar was the last straw.
(off their look)
Wait. You haven't seen it?

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Gina opens the closet. She moves the hanging coats out of the way. There's a DOOR LATCH on the floor in the back.

Mika and David watch, shocked.

MIKA

This whole time...

DAVID

Narnia's real.

Gina pulls the creaky door open. She motions to the steps leading down into the dark CELLAR.

Matty watches, scared. He clings to Gina.

GINA

I'm not going back down there.

INT. CELLAR - MOMENTS LATER

Mika climbs down the rickety stairs, followed by David. They use flashlights to look around.

DAVID

It reeks.

On the cellar floor, a makeshift pallet of blankets. Someone has been sleeping here. Recently.

MIKA

David, look.

David walks over to the corner where Mika stands. She points to a pile of ANIMAL BONES. Some trash is littered in the corner as well: USED TISSUES, BAND-AIDS and--

DAVID
What's this?

He holds up a string attached to a wad of soiled cotton. Mika puts her hand to her mouth. He realizes it's a USED TAMPON.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Oh my God, no!

David throws it across the room, disgusted.

DAVID (CONT'D)
What the hell is going on?

EXT. BUNGALOW - NIGHT

Gina holds Matty by the hand as Mika walks them to their car. Gina takes out her cellphone.

GINA
Here's a picture of him. Will you let me know if you see anything?

Gina shows her a photo of Tim carrying baby Matty on his back. Tattoos cover his arms.

QUICK FLASHBACK

Johannes' party. A BRITTLE MAN gives Mika a lego piece. His haunted eyes plead with Mika. It's Tim.

BACK TO PRESENT

Mika is inwardly disturbed by her sudden realization.

MIKA
Of course.

GINA
Deep down, you know you should leave.

She lifts Matty into his carseat.

GINA (CONT'D)
Be glad you don't have kids. When I went down into that cellar, I found baby blankets and toys. God knows what Johannes wanted with them.

Again, Mika represses internal panic.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mika paces the room. David sits in a chair.

DAVID
How do you know it was him?

MIKA
I just do, David. He had the same
tattoos, same face. Everything.
Just 60 pounds lighter.

DAVID
Jesus...

MIKA
Mrs. White. She knew about the
cellar. She knows more.

DAVID
She's nice but she's a kook.

MIKA
So what should we do? Go to the
cops?

DAVID
We can't prove anything.

MIKA
Then we should leave, move out.

DAVID
What about the lease?

MIKA
It's almost up.

DAVID
We can't afford to move.

MIKA
So you don't want to ask Mrs.
White, you don't want to go to the
police and you don't want to leave.
What the hell should we do then?

DAVID
The first thing we should do is
confront Johannes, work it out
directly.

MIKA
That's your plan?

DAVID
 We can't be afraid of him.

MIKA
 You don't have to do that.

DAVID
 Do what?

MIKA
 There's confronting shit and then
 there's being dumb. And cornering
 that psycho is dumb.

David is offended. Mika doesn't care. She turns out the lights and gets in bed.

MIKA (CONT'D)
 I'm talking to Mrs. White tomorrow.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

David lies on the sofa, made up as a bed. He stares into the darkness, thoughts racing.

EXT. BUNGALOW - NIGHT

JOHANNES' TRUCK sits outside in dark. The engine idles.

EXT. MRS. WHITE'S GARDEN - DAY

A lovely, vibrant garden of flowers, herbs and vegetables. Mika and Mrs. White sit at a table under the patio awning.

SUPER: "DAY 357"

MRS. WHITE
 So you found the cellar.

MIKA
 We think Johannes has been sleeping
 down there.

Mrs. White sips her tea before answering.

MRS. WHITE
 'Course he has.

MIKA
 (shocked)
 What?

MRS. WHITE
 Pick up your jaw from the floor,
 dear.

MIKA
 I came here for answers. Please.

MRS. WHITE
 And I don't know if you're ready to
 hear them.

MIKA
 I can't bring children into that
 home if it's dangerous.

MRS. WHITE
 Too late. He won't let you go.

The blood drains from Mika's face.

MRS. WHITE (CONT'D)
 Where's David?

EXT. JOHANNES' HOME - SAME

David walks up to Johannes' front door. Nervous, he takes a deep breath. KNOCKS.

EXT. MRS. WHITE'S BACKYARD - SAME

Mika is confused by Mrs. White's question.

MIKA
 David's running errands. What'd you
 mean Johannes won't let us leave?

MRS. WHITE
 He's got to eat.

MIKA
 Enough with the allegories and the
 metaphors.

EXT. JOHANNES HOME - SAME

David peeks through the window. All the lights are off.

He goes back to the door and slowly reaches for the knob...

EXT. MRS. WHITE'S BACKYARD - SAME

Mika waits for Mrs. White to respond.

MRS. WHITE

Johannes was always a greedy son of a bitch. But after the Chumash were run off, he personified the very worst of his character. Wasn't long before we all realized he had become something...else.

MIKA

What, like a killer?

MRS. WHITE

A leech.

MIKA

This isn't the time for jokes.

MRS. WHITE

Do I look like I'm clowning around?

Mrs. White's face is hard and serious.

MRS. WHITE (CONT'D)

Johannes is a leech. A big, fat thirsty leech. And I'm not talking in metaphors here.

(and then)

Drink your tea.

INT. JOHANNES HOME - SAME

David is inside the house. It's empty, stale, quiet. This makes David even more nervous.

DAVID

(calls out)

Johannes? It's me David.

He walks slowly, surveys the house. It looks worse in day time. Dark, oily stains on the carpets.

A GROAN comes from a room upstairs. Startled, David takes out a small SWITCHBLADE from his pocket.

He clings to the knife as he makes his way up the stairs.

DAVID (CONT'D)
 Johannes, we need to talk.

TOP OF THE STAIRS

The GROANING returns, louder. David looks down the hall where he notices a DOOR at the end. He's drawn to it.

David's heart THUMPS in his chest and all the way to his ears as he gets closer to the door. He tries to calm his IRREGULAR BREATHING as he SWINGS THE DOOR OPEN.

David is shocked by what he sees. He lets out a WHIMPER.

IN THE CLOSET

A DOZEN EMACIATED CORPSES IN VARIOUS STAGES OF DECOMPOSITION lean against a wall, chained together. It's a horrific scene.

They're illuminated only by the natural light. Some of the "corpses" stir. THEY'RE ALIVE.

A MALE "CORPSE" extends a bony hand towards David.

MALE CORPSE
 David...it's me...

David is frozen in fear. The sound of his own name confuses him. He turns on his phone's light, puts it on the man. David immediately recognizes the man as:

DAVID
Brandon?

EXT. MRS. WHITE'S BACKYARD - SAME

Mika rubs her face, tries to digest Mrs. White's revelation.

MIKA
 Let's say, for the sake of argument, that Johannes is a human leech. Why is he sneaking around our house?

MRS. WHITE
 Johannes is tied to that creek behind the bungalow. The same way an umbilical cord connects a baby to its mother. That creek is his life source. Without it, he can't replenish, he can't reproduce.

MIKA

Reproduce?

MRS. WHITE

If you don't believe me, ask your friend.

MIKA

Who?

MRS. WHITE

The pretty girl we brought to the hospital.

This startles Mika.

MIKA

Ava? What does she have to do with this?

MRS. WHITE

Dr. Daniels and I are the ones who found her. You saw it in her eyes, didn't you?

MIKA

How do you know...

MRS. WHITE

Ask Ava what happened that night we picked her up on Kanan Dume, scared to death of him.

INT. JOHANNES' HOME - CLOSET - SAME

David frantically tries to loosen the ties on Brandon's hands and feet. He notices HUGE BITE MARKS on Brandon's neck, arms and thighs. The sight makes him more frantic.

DAVID

That sick monster.

BRANDON

(weak)

Hurry...

DAVID

I'm here, buddy. You'll be okay.

BRANDON

Bro...coin.

DAVID

Yeah, it's gone to shit. We'll talk about that later though.

Finally, the ties are loose enough to get Brandon's fragile limbs out.

From elsewhere, the PAINED GROANING SOUNDS return. It's joined by VOICES OF MEN arguing.

David looks towards the noise, conflicted. The groans grow louder as he makes a decision.

DAVID (CONT'D)

I'll be right back, okay?

BRANDON

Don't...don't...!

DAVID

You're getting out of here.

(to the others)

All of you.

The ones who are alive look to him, too weak to understand.

David follows the groans that have evolved into SCREAMS. Then the screams abruptly stop.

Sweat drips down David's face as he fumbles with his phone. He dials 911 but the call fails. No bars.

At the opposite end of the hall, a door opens. The voices are coming from there.

EXT. MRS. WHITE'S BACKYARD - SAME

Mrs. White refills Mika's cup with more tea.

MIKA

But what does he want from us? If he's really a leech that means he wants to drink--

MRS. WHITE

Your blood. But it's better for him if you're alive.

MIKA

What the hell does that mean?

MRS. WHITE

As his tenants, you're his debt slaves. He'll deplete you of your energy and resources until there's nothing left but your flesh. At that point, you're only good to eat. But don't worry, as long as you work and produce, you'll avoid the dinner plate.

Mika is speechless. Mrs. White blows on her hot tea.

MRS. WHITE (CONT'D)

Although, none of the previous tenants seemed to make the cut.

INT. JOHANNES' HOME - HALLWAY - SAME

David puts his ear to the door where he can hear the muffled voices of Johannes and Fred.

JOHANNES (O.S.)

He's not yours to take!

FRED (O.S.)

You can't hoard all the food to yourself.

JOHANNES (O.S.)

Watch yourself. I'm tired of your crap. You will respect me, boy.

The groans have stopped. But the sickening, monstrous sounds of FLESH TEARING AND RIPPING APART replace them.

EXT. MRS. WHITE'S BACKYARD - SAME

Mika stands to leave, zips up her coat.

MRS. WHITE

Where did you say your husband was?

MIKA

Why are you worried about him?

INT. JOHANNES' HOME - HALLWAY - SAME

Unable to help himself, David must look. He cracks open the door a little more to reveal just a sliver of the horror:

IN THE ROOM

Johannes and Fred--enlarged, engorged and bloody--fight over the REMNANTS OF A CARCASS like wild animals.

MRS. WHITE (V.O.)

David is already in his grips. He's got the same fuzzy, dazed stare they all get. Johannes will use him for a time. But when he's done, he'll toss David to the side like old chicken bones.

David watches in horror, too stunned to move or even breathe. He DROPS his phone.

Johannes and Fred immediately halt their gruesome meal, look to the cracked door. Johannes ROARS SAVAGELY as he throws the bloody HEAD OF THE CARCASS.

The head lands at David's feet. He looks down to see the eyes of TIM EVANS staring back at him. David SCREAMS.

INT. MRS. WHITE'S BACKYARD - DAY

In disbelief, Mika struggles to find words.

MIKA

This isn't why I came.

MRS. WHITE

You came here for answers and that's what you got.

MIKA

I don't believe you.

MRS. WHITE

Belief makes no difference.

Mrs. White shakes her head as Mika runs to the side gate.

EXT. MALIBU BEACH - DAY

A sunny, windy morning at the beach.

David is SPRAWLED OUT NAKED on the ocean shore, covered in sand. He slowly blinks his eyes open, sees nothing but the bright yellow sun beaming down on him.

From afar, BYSTANDERS CRY OUT.

SUPER: "DAY 358"

David looks over to his left. Beside him is BRANDON'S DRIED OUT CORPSE. A SEAGULL picks at his jerky-like flesh. David chokes for words that don't come.

EXT. POLICE INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

TWO WORLD-WEARY DETECTIVES sit across from David at a table. David wears an old, yellowed t-shirt with dancing raisins. His face and body drained, depleted.

DETECTIVE #1

Brandon Rao. Your friend and business partner. He'd been missing for months, right?

David nods his head.

DETECTIVE #2

And in all that time, you never heard from him?

DAVID

If I had, maybe our crypto wouldn't have tanked.

DETECTIVE #2

You were upset that he jilted you.

DAVID

He didn't "jilt" me. We weren't lovers.

The detectives look at each other, skeptical.

DETECTIVE #2

You were naked when we found you.

DAVID

I couldn't tell you why.

They don't believe a word he says.

DETECTIVE #1

Mr. Brewer, can you tell us more about the financial dealings between you and the deceased?

DAVID

This is the part where I ask for a lawyer, isn't it?

INT. CAR (MOVING) - DAY

Mika drives. David in the passenger seat. He's absolutely miserable. They're both silent.

MIKA

So. Did you do it?

DAVID

How can you even ask that?

MIKA

Your reputation sucks right now. I have to ask.

DAVID

Murder? Really, Mika?

Mika shrugs.

DAVID (CONT'D)

To be fair, it looks pretty damning. I wouldn't believe me.

MIKA

Poor Ava. She's going to be devastated.

DAVID

They say he starved to death but it looked as if his insides had been sucked dry with a straw. I've never seen anything like it.

David holds back tears as he's reminded of the horrific image of Brandon's body.

MIKA

You didn't go to Johannes' house, did you?

DAVID

I can't remember anything. I don't think I would. Why?

MIKA

Mrs. White told me something yesterday. But it's crazy.

DAVID

What?

MIKA

She said Johannes is...a leech.

DAVID

A leech?

MIKA

Like a giant leech that feeds off people. Some kind of curse from the Natives who had their land stolen, I guess.

This piques David's interest very much.

DAVID

What else did she say?

MIKA

He eats renters who don't do what he wants. It's stupid.
(off his look)
David, it's insane.

DAVID

After today, I think anything is possible.

Mika glances at him, concerned that he might be right.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

David makes his bed on the sofa. He gets under the covers, exhausted. Mika watches from the hallway.

DAVID

You mind turning that light off?

MIKA

I was here alone last night. I hated it.

DAVID

Yeah. The secret root cellar thing is a bit unsettling.

MIKA

Let's go.

She walks out of the room. David gets up and eagerly but gingerly follows.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

David is fast asleep in their bed. The lights are off but Mika sits up and holds her phone to her ear.

MIKA

Ava, I'm so sorry to have to tell you this but they found Brandon earlier today. He's dead.

Silence on the other end.

MIKA (CONT'D)

Ava?

AVA (V.O.)

What else?

Mika is taken aback by Ava's brevity and lack of emotion.

MIKA

They think David is involved. He's innocent, I promise.

AVA (V.O.)

I know that.

MIKA

You do?

AVA (V.O.)

I saw what killed him. David couldn't do what that thing did.

MIKA

What thing?

INT. AVA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Ava lies on the sofa, illuminated only by a muted TV. Dark circles under her eyes.

AVA

Everyone thought I was crazy. My family, doctors, police. They said I was having a mental breakdown. But I know what I saw!

Ava breaks down in UNCONTROLLABLE SOBS.

INTERCUT MIKA / AVA

MIKA

Ava, it's okay. You can tell me.

AVA

It was oozing with some kind of slime. Its teeth...I'll never forget the look on Brandon's face as it drained him. I see it even when I close my eyes. Oh God!

Mika gives Ava a moment to calm down.

MIKA

I don't know how to ask this but was it a leech that you saw?

AVA

I guess it could've been. It wasn't human, that's for sure.

(and then)

There's pictures. I took some right before Brandon...under the car. The wheels got stuck in it. My dad says it's just oil or mud. But it's not!

MIKA

Can you send me those pictures, Ava? Please?

AVA

Fine. It's your problem now.

Mika looks at her phone: CALL ENDED.

END INTERCUT

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mika receives several PHOTO MESSAGES from Ava. With slight hesitation, she opens images.

At first, she's not sure what she's looking at. In the pictures, the wheels of Brandon's car are covered in thick sludge. Mika zooms in for a better look.

DAVID

What's in the pictures?

His voice startles Mika.

MIKA

I thought you were sleeping.

DAVID

Don't think I'll ever sleep again.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

David and Mika study the pictures on Mika's phone.

DAVID

It's hard to make out. I'll adjust the settings.

MIKA

You should've heard Ava. She's like a different person. She didn't even ask how Brandon died.

DAVID

No one knows. The cops are just speculating.

MIKA

You really don't remember anything?

David shakes his head.

DAVID

Here, I got it. Look!

He shows Mika the edited photo. HUNDREDS OF BLOB-LIKE FORMS swim in the liquid. They resemble parasites underneath a microscope.

MIKA

What the hell is that?

DAVID

It looks exactly like the blob thing that was in the shower drain.

MIKA

Didn't you say that it--

DAVID

--drank my blood.

Unease settles over the both of them as they realize the implications.

MIKA

We're going to the police first thing. I don't know how but I know Johannes is involved in this.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Early morning. Mika puts her hair in a ponytail.

MIKA
 (calls out)
 David, you ready?

DAVID (O.S.)
 One sec!

Mika's phone RINGS. She answers.

MIKA
 Hello?

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

David puts on his socks. Mika walks in, her face expressing different emotions simultaneously: shock, joy, dread.

DAVID
 What is it?

MIKA
 They're here.

David immediately comprehends...

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Denise is IN LABOR, surrounded by a DOCTOR and NURSES. She SCREAMS in utter agony. Mika squeezes her hand.

DOCTOR
 Big push now! Come on.

SUPER: "DAY 359"

The heart monitor beeps rhythmically in the background.

DENISE
 (through clinched teeth)
 There's something wrong...this
 feels different.

MIKA
 We can do the epidural.

DENISE
 It's not that--

Out of nowhere, the monitors' alarms BLARE.

MIKA
What's happening?

DOCTOR
Hold on.

The doctor applies an ultrasound wand to Denise's abdomen. As he looks at the screen his expression grows serious.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
(to nurse)
There's a rupture in the uterine wall.

MIKA
What does that mean?

DOCTOR
We have to get her ready for a cesarean, immediately.

DENISE
No, this doesn't make sense.

As she says this, a SHOCKINGLY GIANT WAVE OF BLOOD GUSHES from between her legs, splattering the room and nurses.

DENISE (CONT'D)
Oh my God!

INT. NEONATAL INTENSIVE CARE UNIT - NIGHT

Mika and David gaze at their NEWBORN TWINS inside incubators.

MIKA
Is it bad I completely forgot we had kids on the way? We're going to be shit parents.

DAVID
Too late. They're stuck with us.

MIKA
We don't even have their names.

DAVID
We have a crib.

Mika laughs, genuinely. David is glad to see her smile.

The doctor approaches them.

DOCTOR

Denise is going to be fine. She's resting now.

MIKA

There was so much blood...

DOCTOR

We stitched her up and we're monitoring her vitals closely. I don't want you to worry.

MIKA

What about the babies?

DOCTOR

The healthiest premature babies I've ever seen. I want to keep them here for a few days, just to be sure. Okay?

DAVID

Got it.

MIKA

Can we say goodnight to Denise? We'll be really quiet.

The doctor smiles, nods.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Mika and David walk out of Denise's room.

MIKA

How about Clementine?

DAVID

Like the fruit?

MIKA

It's a good name.

DAVID

If you get Clementine, I get Terrence.

MIKA

We're not naming our kid Terrence.

The moment is cut short as a MASSIVE SHADOW casts over them.

They look up to see Johannes, grinning from ear to ear with a teddy bear and ballon bouquet in hand. David and Mika freeze.

JOHANNES

Uncle Johannes has arrived!

DAVID

What the hell are you doing?

JOHANNES

Offering my congratulations. It's nice to have new members of the family. Just in time for the holidays, no?

MIKA

Are you out of your mind? Get out!

JOHANNES

The hospital is not your property.

DAVID

We know you've been sleeping in the cellar. If you come near my family again, you'll regret it.

Johannes' jovial smile turns sour.

JOHANNES

I can see that I'm going to be mistreated. After all I've done for you, I'm dismissed like trash.

He takes out a folded piece of paper from his pocket and gives it to David.

DAVID

What is this?

JOHANNES

Your lease is expires in five days. You'll need to sign a new one. But you should know that I need to raise the rent. Double.

MIKA

You're delusional. We're moving out.

JOHANNES

No. I don't think you will.

Sniffing the air, Johannes takes a big whiff and motions to Denise's room.

JOHANNES (CONT'D)
Mmm. It smells good in there.

He giggles, evil. Hungry. Mika and David exchange worried looks as he walks away.

INT. CAR (MOVING) - NIGHT

David drives, fast. Mika bites her lip, stressed.

MIKA
Funny. For a brief moment today, I forgot about our fucked up reality.

DAVID
We're going home, grabbing our things and staying at hotel until the babies are ready to leave.

MIKA
And then what?

DAVID
We'll figure it out from there. But we'll be okay. I promise.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mika and David furiously stuff duffle bags with clothes. Carl and Max stare, bewildered by the bustle.

MIKA
I'm gonna look for the crate.

DAVID
Okay.

INT. OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Mika grabs the cat's crate from the top shelf of the closet. She suddenly CRIES OUT in pain. She looks down at her ankle. It's slashed, bloody. Max stands there, hair raised.

MIKA
What is wrong with you? Bad cat!

She grabs the cat by its scruff, puts it in the crate. Max SPITS and HISSES at her so she can't close the door.

A sudden doorbell DING-DONG startles Mika.

INT. FRONT DOOR - MOMENTS LATER

Nervous, David clinches a baseball bat in his hands, stands behind the front door as Mika opens it.

It's Mrs. White with a bottle of champagne. Mika sighs in relief.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

David, Mika and Mrs. White convene at the dinner table.

DAVID

(to Mrs. White)

How did you know about the babies?
We didn't tell anyone about them.

MRS. WHITE

I'm sensitive to these things.
Always have been.

DAVID

Psychics, leeches. Don't tell me
the old couple next door are
vampires.

MRS. WHITE

Are you mocking me?

MIKA

Mrs. White, we're on edge right
now. The birth, Johannes, money...

DAVID

Murder charges.

MRS. WHITE

I read about your friend. They
think you did it? Absurd.

DAVID

You think I'm innocent?

MRS. WHITE

I didn't say anything about
innocent. But a murderer? No. We
both know who did it, don't we?

Mrs. White looks deep into David's eyes.

MIKA

You were right about Ava. She sent
us photos.

Mika shows Mrs. White the edited picture on her phone. Mrs. White isn't fazed.

MRS. WHITE

His babies. Hungry little bastards, too. Excuse my language. Most of them die before they reach adulthood. He usually eats them.

(to David)

The one in your head, though, is positively blossoming.

DAVID

In my head. Right.

Mrs. White reaches over and grabs David's wrist, tight.

MRS. WHITE

Let me show you.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Mrs. White mixes herbs from Mika's garden in a mug of warm water. David lies on the floor. Mika is close beside him. He can't hide how nervous he is.

DAVID

That's not like Ayahuasca or shrooms, right?

MRS. WHITE

Certainly not. No hallucinations. Only the truth.

She hands David the cup. He looks to Mika who nods.

DAVID

Cheers.

David takes a swig. His eyebrows raise. *Not bad.* Takes another swig.

MRS. WHITE

Lie back down.

Once he's on his back, Mrs. White takes a half lemon and hovers it over his face.

DAVID

Wait, what's that for?

She SQUEEZES the lemon juice into David's eyes. He SCREAMS.

MIKA
What the hell are you doing?

MRS. WHITE
Making him see again.

David continues SCREAMING until he suddenly goes rigid.

QUICK MEMORY FLASHES - DAVID'S POV

--The night of Johannes' birthday. David in the bathroom.

--Fred stands at the toilet, he reveals SHARP BLACK TEETH.

--David laid out on the bathroom floor as Fred shoves his leech-like tongue down his throat. SLURPS.

--Johannes' house. David finds Brandon in the closet.

--David watches Johannes and Fred as they tear Tim apart.

--Fred and Johannes rip David's clothes, laughing as they BITE him.

--Johannes - deformed, twisted into a large wet creature - stands over David.

--Johannes and Fred appear to argue. Johannes shoves Fred.

--In the back of a van, David is dazed, stupefied. Across from him, a dead Brandon.

--On the beach, David looks up at the nighttime sky as his eyes roll back into his head.

BACK TO SCENE

David BOLTS UP, taking in a large GULP OF AIR. Mika and Mrs. White are still at his side.

DAVID
(stammers)
What--was that a dream?

MIKA
What did you see?

DAVID
I--I--remember everything.
Everything! She's right. Johannes
and his nephew...they're leeches.

MIKA

Fred?

MRS. WHITE

His protege. The next in line to
the throne.

DAVID

They drank from me! Put his tongue
in my...

David puts his hand to his mouth in horror as he recalls.

DAVID (CONT'D)

And they killed Brandon, set me up
for it.

MRS. WHITE

It's what he does. He's going to
enslave your whole family.

DAVID

By ruining my life?

MRS. WHITE

Money, your life force, your flesh.
It's all the same to him.
(and then)
Lie back down.

MIKA

What, why?

MRS. WHITE

You've seen what he's done. Now you
need to see what he'll do.
(to David)
Lie down. Close your eyes.

David complies. Inside his eyelids, everything is white.

QUICK FLASHES - DAVID'S VISIONS

--In Denise's room, TWO NURSES transfer her PLACENTA into a
biohazard bag.

--A NURSE puts the placenta into a refrigerated storage unit.

--Johannes creeps in, opens the refrigeration unit.

--Johannes holds Denise's placenta bag to his face, inhaling.

--A SECURITY GUARD grabs Johannes by the arm. Johannes knocks him down, runs.

--In his truck, Johannes chews on Denise's bloody bedsheets.

--Johannes rips open the bag of placenta, shovels it into his mouth. Feasting. Moaning.

BACK TO SCENE

David wakes, SCREAMING this time.

MRS. WHITE
What did you see?

DAVID
That sick fuck ate her placenta!
(to Mika)
He wants the babies.

Just then, two dark and BLOODY BLOBS slither down David's nostrils.

MIKA
David!

Mrs. White YANKS them out of his nose and throws them to the ground. Her small foot STOMPS on them until they're spread out on the ground like strawberry jelly.

MRS. WHITE
He knows you know.

DAVID
It doesn't matter. We're leaving.

MRS. WHITE
You think that'll stop him? You fool. He'll get you, wherever you are. And those babies. You saw it.

MIKA
What about Gina? She left with her kid and they're fine.

MRS. WHITE
Lucky for her, Johannes already had a new lease with new tenants.

MIKA
But he said our lease is expiring.

MRS. WHITE

You sign a new one, or you die.

DAVID

We're supposed to live here 'til we can't pay, then let him eat us?

MRS. WHITE

Or you can put an end to this forever.

DAVID

Hold on, why is this on us? Why don't you stop him? You seem to know everything.

MRS. WHITE

I'm not the fool who moved his family into the lion's den. I said from day one you didn't have what it takes to live here.

David straightens his back, summoning resolve.

DAVID

Tell me how to get rid of him.

Mrs. White looks at the BABY BAG packed with the other luggage on the floor.

MRS. WHITE

Same way you catch a mouse.

EXT. BUNGALOW - DAY

It's a bright, fresh day. Mika and David unload the NEWBORN TWINS from the car.

SUPER: "DAY 365"

Mika closes the car door, looks at the house. She holds one of the babies close to her face.

MIKA

Welcome home.

INT. NURSERY - DAY

What was once David's office is now a functional nursery.

Mika and David each bottle feed a baby. David sniffs the bottom of the baby in his arms.

DAVID

Think this one needs a change.

Mika wrinkles her nose.

MIKA

I think you're right.

David places his baby in the crib. He wraps the diaper and tosses it into a garbage bag that's already half full of dirty diapers.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Mika and David laugh on the sofa as the babies sleep in their arms. It's a picture perfect image of a family.

Mika looks down at her baby girl.

MIKA

Who are you? Charlotte? Celeste?

DAVID

How about my mom's name?

MIKA

"Loretta." Doesn't really suit her.

DAVID

Well Tobias and I think it does.

MIKA

Tobias? I like it.

David smiles, thrilled to get a green light from Mika.

DAVID

Mika, I just wanna say I hated lying about BroCoin. I convinced myself I was protecting you. But it was my own ego I was protecting. The thought of disappointing you again made me feel like shit about myself. I'm going to make it right.

Mika sees that he's sincere, let's her guard down. A little.

MIKA

I need a partner, not a martyr.

A beat.

MIKA (CONT'D)
You're going to be a good dad.

DAVID
Thanks.

They exchange a meaningful look. David kisses the soft head of his son, TOBIAS.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

2 AM. All lights are out. David and Mika are asleep. The babies are bundled in a bedside bassinet.

EXT. BUNGALOW - NIGHT

Quiet except for the usual crickets, owls. Bright full moon.

EXT. CREEK - NIGHT

In the darkness, Johannes wades into the water. He reaches his hands under its surface, searches for something.

After a moment he pulls out a LARGE, GELATINOUS CAPSULE--it's a COCOON. Holds it up to the moonlight, revealing it's velvety yet slimy texture.

Johannes cradles it lovingly in his arms. He whispers tender, sweet nothings to it:

JOHANNES
Ready for your first meal, my love?
Yes, you are. It's time to collect
the rent, dearest.

Johannes takes the cocoon, opens his mouth and SWALLOWS IT.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mika and David are still asleep. Their bedroom door CREAKS open as Johannes's massive figure creeps in.

We only see his silhouette as he glides across the room. He's making a clear beeline for the bassinet.

Mika's eyes are wide open. She's been awake the entire time. She struggles to control her breath as Johannes gets closer.

Johannes stands over the bassinet. He lets out a deep, simultaneous GROAN and SIGH from the back of his throat. A bloated hand reaches into the crib and then

Mika, fully dressed, jumps out of bed and aims a SPRAY BOTTLE at Johannes.

MIKA

Don't touch my kids.

Before he can respond, she SQUEEZES the bottle trigger. Johannes SCREAMS IN AGONY, blinded.

Mika continuously squeezes the bottle several more times, straight into Johannes's eyes.

MIKA (CONT'D)

David, let's go!

David hops out of the bed armed with his a bottle of his own.

They're ready for him.

While Johannes cries in agony, Mika and David grab the bundled babies and run out of the room.

HALLWAY

Mika and David split up. He heads to the cellar and she goes to the kitchen.

Johannes's loud cries suddenly stop.

KITCHEN

In the kitchen, Mika opens a drawer and takes out a knife.

Johannes stomps into the kitchen. He's gone a sickening shade of dark green. The skin around his eyes drips off his face.

Mika is scared shitless but stiffens herself.

JOHANNES

Lemon juice? You've been listening to that stupid old bitch.

Johannes' eyes settle on the baby Mika has in her arms.

JOHANNES (CONT'D)

I'm hungry. Got anything good to eat?

Max the cat approaches Johannes, rubs against his bloated, discolored ankles. Johannes picks Max up, grazing his cheek along the cats face.

JOHANNES (CONT'D)
My friend.

MIKA
Leave him alone.

JOHANNES
(to Max)
You've been a good kitty cat,
haven't you? My eyes and ears. I
thank you.

Johannes opens his mouth wide and CHOMPS DOWN on the cat, taking a large bite out his head.

He tosses the cat's carcass to the side as Mika stares in shocked, silent horror.

But now Johannes' body begins to MORPH. His head grows round and wide, the hair disappears from his scalp.

He becomes taller, too. He stands at least seven feet tall, towering over Mika as he comes closer.

JOHANNES (CONT'D)
I'm not a monster. I'll let you
choose which baby to give me. You
can keep the other. Fair?

Mika hugs the baby even tighter.

JOHANNES (CONT'D)
If you don't choose, I'll choose
for you.
(beat)
Fine. I'll have that baby.

Johannes wrangles the baby from her arms. Immediately, he BITES DOWN ON THE BUNDLED INFANT.

But something isn't right. Johannes frowns, GAGS. His mouth is full of brown--

JOHANNES (CONT'D)
Shit!

He looks at the bundle. It's not a baby, it's a bundle of DIRTY DIAPERS.

MIKA

David, now!

Johannes turns around to see David with a bag of salt. Before he can react, David launches half the bag on to him.

Johannes ROARS. Weakened, he falls to his knees and then the floor.

MIKA (CONT'D)

Everything ready?

DAVID

Exactly the way Mrs. White said.

INT. CELLAR - NIGHT

The cellar is dimly lit by battery-powered lanterns.

Johannes is sprawled out on the old mattress, his arms and legs tied in four different directions.

A funnel has been stuffed into his mouth with a rope wrapped around his head to secure it. His eyes flutter open to see Mika standing over him.

MIKA

Hope you're still hungry.

David walks over with TWO GALLONS OF BLOOD in his hands. He smirks as Johannes's eyes widen.

DAVID

You know how many halal and kosher delis I had to hit up to get this much animal blood?

He points to a dark corner of the room where at least ten more gallons of blood sit.

DAVID (CONT'D)

We're gonna be here awhile.

David unscrews the lid off one of the containers. Pours blood into the funnel, slow and then faster. Johannes CHOKES as blood SPURTS everywhere.

DAVID (CONT'D)

You killed my friend. You killed my cat. You wanted to eat my kids. I think I threw out my back getting you down here. You earned every drop of this.

David doesn't stop. He finishes dumping the first gallon and grabs another. And another. And another. And another...

LATER

Before long, Johannes has swelled twice his size. His clothes are in tatters. Blood is splattered everywhere.

Mika checks the ropes which have tightened on Johannes's wrists and ankles.

MIKA

We have to make sure these don't break.

DAVID

There's just a couple gallons left. Are we sure this is enough?

MIKA

He should be close to bursting.

She pushes on Johannes' distended gut. His belly is firm, like a basketball.

MIKA (CONT'D)

Let's keep going.

David grabs another gallon, pours. But after a moment Johannes's whole body starts SHAKING.

DAVID

What's happening?

Blood GUSHES OUT from between Johannes's legs as he emits a GUTTURAL CRY. The swelling in his belly begins to move downward...

DAVID (CONT'D)

Is this it? Is he about to pop?

MIKA

There's something...in there.

Mika observes the changes in Johannes belly, puts a hand on his slimy, cold, wet flesh. A realization washes over her as the muscles in his stomach move.

MIKA (CONT'D)

David...I think he's having contractions.

DAVID

What!

MIKA

He's basically a leech, right?
Leeches are hermaphrodites. They
can self-fertilize.

David is still lost.

MIKA (CONT'D)

Johannes is pregnant! We've been
feeding his baby.

Before David can respond, the unmistakable sound of a BABY
CRYING rings out. Mika looks between Johannes's legs where a
bulbous, black mass protrudes from a translucent cocoon.

Unsure of what to do next, Mika and David look at each other.

DAVID

I think we should kill it.

MIKA

We can't.

DAVID

It's not a--

MIKA

It is a baby.

DAVID

But it's not human! I can't believe
we're even discussing this--

Mika and David continue arguing as the NEWBORN LEECH wriggles
out of his cocoon. Its body is like a long and slimy ribbon--
the size of a full grown German Shepherd. It stretches and
contracts its body, inching forward like a worm.

Johannes beams at his offspring, proud.

MIKA

David--!

The baby leech attaches itself to David's leg, sucking and
guzzling. David looks down, horrified.

DAVID

Oh my God! Get off!

He tries to kick it off, but it's no use. The massive baby is
thick and heavy with blood. David falls. He's fading, fast.

MIKA

Where's the lemon juice?

Mika looks around for the bottle, anything to stop the baby leech. She picks up an old brick, bashes the leech with it. It doesn't even flinch.

DAVID

The salt...

Mika searches for the salt in the dark room. Johannes GROWLS.

MIKA

I can't find it!

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Desperate, Mika runs back upstairs to find something, anything that will work. She spots a BOTTLE OF BLEACH.

INT. CELLAR - NIGHT

David struggles to stay conscious. Mika returns, dumps bleach onto the baby leech and stands back as it SCREAMS. Its flesh SIZZLES and FIZZES.

A moment later, it detaches from David as it violently shakes and quivers until it finally goes still. Dead.

Mika rushes over to David. The leech bite is swollen, purple.

DAVID

I'm fine.

MIKA

You definitely don't look fine.

She looks around. The mattress is empty.

MIKA (CONT'D)

Where's Johannes?

David's eyes look beyond her. Mika slowly turns to see:

Johannes completely transformed into an ten-foot MEGA LEECH. No longer leech-human hybrid but a full-on, blood-sucking monster with a dozen rows of serrated teeth. He looks PISSED.

MIKA (CONT'D)

I'm sorry Johannes, you made me do that. I didn't want to.

He SNARLS as she backs away slowly.

MIKA (CONT'D)
You wanted to feed your baby with
my baby. I didn't have a choice.

JOHANNES
(deep, booming voice)
YES YOU DID!

Johannes advances quickly on Mika.

JOHANNES (CONT'D)
YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT IT MEANS TO
GROW A LIFE INSIDE YOU!
(and then)
I'M GONNA EAT EVERY BONE, ORGAN AND
DROP OF BLOOD IN YOUR BARREN BODY!

David struggles to his feet and steps in front of Mika.

DAVID
Go. Run. You have to.

MIKA
No.

He brings her in close. Whispers:

DAVID
Let me be the martyr, just this
once. Burn this shit hole down.

With his teeth, Johannes YANKS David off his feet. He tosses
him him in the air like a popcorn kernel. SWALLOWS HIM WHOLE.

Mika flees the cellar, slams the door closed.

CLOSET

She sits on the door taking a moment to let out a brief SOB.

But Johannes is making his way up the steps -- BANGS against
the cellar door. BANG! BANG! He hits it again and again.

Mika is no longer afraid but determined survive.

INT. CELLAR - MOMENTS LATER

Mika returns from the kitchen with LIGHTER FLUID and a CANDLE
LIGHTER. She swings the cellar door open, expecting Johannes.

He's not there. A viscous substance DROPS ON HER HEAD. Mika looks up--

Johannes has scaled the wall and clings to the ceiling, his drool pools on the floor.

He DROPS to the ground. Mika dives out of the way, narrowly avoids being crushed. She goes back up the cellar steps.

Johannes follows her her, tries to squeeze through the doorway. He makes it half way out before he can't go any further. HE'S STUCK. Mika laughs, infuriating him.

Mika pours the lighter fluid on the ground but stops when she sees that Johannes is transforming again. This time, he's returned to his normal size. Completely nude.

CLOSET

Johannes smiles wickedly as he now passes the doorway easily. Mika tries desperately to ignite the lighter. CLICK CLICK. It's empty. *Of course.*

But something isn't right with Johannes either. He pauses, holds his stomach. A GURGLING sound rumbles inside him.

His face and body begin swelling as he turns purple. He's EXPANDING like a balloon on a helium tank.

JOHANNES

Fuck.

KABOOM!

Johannes's guts and blood explode everywhere! The entire closet and cellar is covered in an impossible amount of bodily fluids.

The remainder of Johannes's body begins to melt and sizzle. His head ROLLS off his neck and tumbles down the steps, landing on the cellar ground the a SQUISHY THUD.

David is in the fetal position, drenched in Johannes goo.

MIKA

David!

CELLAR

Mika runs to David, wipes away some of the goo. Weak, David lifts up an empty bag of salt.

DAVID
Found the salt.

Despite the gore and sludge, Mika embraces and kisses him.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

David rests in a chair. Mika brings him a glass of water and towel. He slowly stands.

MIKA
Are you ready?

DAVID
I'm gonna clean up first.

MIKA
Forget it, let's go.

DAVID
Someone's gonna come looking for
that bastard eventually. We can't
leave it like this.

He tries to ease her concern with a weak smile.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Go on, I'll meet you at Mrs.
White's house after I'm done.

MIKA
Are you sure?

DAVID
Celeste and Tobias need their mom
right now.
(and then)
From now on, we're gonna be a
family. A real family. I mean it.

Mika trusts him for the first time in a long while.

MIKA
By the way, it's Charlotte.

EXT. MRS. WHITE'S HOUSE - DAY

Mika knocks on Mrs. White's door. As she waits, she looks at the rising sun. Optimism and relief washes over her.

The door opens. It's Dr. Daniels, wearing a Santa hat.

INT. MRS. WHITE'S HOUSE - DAY

Mika sits on the sofa. Dr. Daniels stares at her soiled clothes and dirty face.

DR. DANIELS
Excuse me for saying this, but you
look a real mess.

MIKA
Up all night undoing curses and
whatnot.

Dr. Daniels gives her quizzical look.

MIKA (CONT'D)
Sorry, I assumed you knew about
Johannes and the Chumash curse--

MRS. WHITE (O.S.)
Who said it was a Chumash curse?

Mrs. White enters with the twins. Brings them over to Mika.

MIKA
Then how did he become a leech?

MRS. WHITE
A little old-world magic. Of the
Anglo-Saxon variety.
(off Mika)
Don't look so shocked. I couldn't
let him get away with hurting my
baby brother. I didn't do much.
Just enslaved him to his nature.

DR. DANIELS
Thank you, sissy.

MIKA
But you didn't tell us.

MRS. WHITE
What difference does it make? The
fact that you're sitting here tells
me you successfully destroyed him.

But Mika grows alarmed the longer she thinks on it. Mrs. White brings over a pot of tea, pours her a cup.

MIKA
I don't want any fucking tea.

Mika shoves the cup out of her face.

MIKA (CONT'D)

If it was your curse, why did you need us to break it?

MRS. WHITE

Honey, you didn't break the curse. You just killed Johannes.

MIKA

He was gonna eat--

MRS. WHITE

Absolutely. He was going to eat you and your children. Now he's not.

Mrs. White touches Mika's face. Mika recoils.

MIKA

We're leaving. All of us. Now.

She stands to leave but inwardly, Mika panics. She senses they're not getting out that easy.

MRS. WHITE

I don't think Fred will like that.

MIKA

What's Fred got to do with it?

MRS. WHITE

He inherits everything, including the bungalow. And its tenants.

Angry, Mika grabs Mrs. White by her scrawny shoulders.

MIKA

Why are you doing this?

With one TERRIFYING LOOK from Mrs. White, Mika releases her grip. Steps back.

MRS. WHITE

Johannes, was a flawed but necessary evil. He provided balance in Oakcreek. Without sacrifice, we can't keep the peace. The riff-raff would take over. You know firsthand the type I'm talking about.

MIKA

No, I don't!

MRS. WHITE

You belong here. With like-minded people who believe in protecting what's important. Family.

MIKA

This is a bubble, it isn't reality.

MRS. WHITE

You think the world out there is reality? It's a disease. A plague that we're immune to.

MIKA

Killing innocent people and babies? You're worse!

MRS. WHITE

The HOA agrees, Johannes needed to be stopped. His greed got out of hand. I think you'll find Fred a reasonable alternative.

Mika fights back tears. The nightmare is far from over. She looks to Dr. Daniels, who appears as inoffensive as ever.

MIKA

Dr. Daniels, please?

DR. DANIELS

Fred's a good boy. Might even be HOA president one day.

He smiles a toothless, empty smile.

MRS. WHITE

Go home. Rest up. With that useless man of yours out of the picture, you'll need to get to work. And when those babes are old enough, you'll teach them too.

MIKA

What do you mean *out of the picture*?

From outside, the sound of SIRENS.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Mika runs holding both babies in carriers. Several POLICE, AMBULANCE and FIRE TRUCK vehicles are outside the bungalow.

EXT. BUNGALOW - DAY

Police escort David out of the house in handcuffs. David looks sad, helpless as his eyes meet Mika's.

Mika frantically approaches a DOPEY OFFICER.

MIKA

Stop this! He's innocent.

DOPEY OFFICER

Ma'am, please step out of the way.

MIKA

Why are you arresting him?

The cop looks around, making sure his buddies can't hear.

DOPEY OFFICER

He's being arrested for the murders of Brandon Rao and Johannes Lathemalt.

MIKA

You've got it all wrong. Johannes was trying to kill us--

DOPEY OFFICER

Looks like he had 'em locked in your cellar. You didn't notice? Blood everywhere, never seen anything like it. From the looks of it, we might be looking at more than two victims. Caught him trying to burn the place down.

Mika's face falls as she looks down at her children.

DOPEY OFFICER (CONT'D)

Don't worry, you're not implicated. He admitted to everything. Plus, the Lathemalt family swears to your innocence.

He points to Fred and Georgia talking to officers. Fred smiles and waves.

EXT. BUNGALOW - FRONT PORCH - DAY

The police wrap up. Mika stares ahead, shell-shocked, as the babies sleep in their carriers. Fred approaches.

FRED
Cute babies.

Mika cringes. She stares at Fred, hatred all over her face.

FRED (CONT'D)
You don't have to worry. I'm not my
uncle. Grandpa. Whatever.

MIKA
I don't care.

Fred stands uncomfortably close.

FRED
I need you to know, things are
gonna be different. Better.

Mika turns her face away, hot tears returning.

FRED (CONT'D)
So you can stay, but I'll have to
raise the rent.

THE END