

FADE IN:

on an old alarm clock, TICKING, the bells gone, the little hand missing, the big hand indicating twenty-after-something. It is bound with black electrical tape, time-bomb fashion, to a plastic water-filled spray bottle.

The alarm RINGS; the bell hammer tugging the piece of kite string tied to the trigger of the bottle; water is misted onto the face of--

BRIAN STEVENSON, a dark-haired twelve-year-old with eyes that don't miss much. Awake now, he shuts off the alarm and snaps on the Tensor lamp next to his bed. We are

INT. STEVENSON HOME - ATTIC ROOM - NIGHT

A huge poster shows the history of train engines. A stairway is cut into the floor. No curtains on the window. A just-past-half moon shines in the night sky.

Brian pulls on a pair of thick wool socks. He skates past a cluttered worktable, across the hardwood floor to the stairs.

INT. HALLWAY

Brian moves quietly past a closed door; on it, a plaque reads 'Eric's Room' above a picture of an antique car.

Farther down is another closed door. Brian pauses, listening to the sounds of Mom and Dad arguing; no words can be made out, only the tones, the rise, fall, sharpness of voices.

Brian looks away from the door. Prepares for his assault on the stairs. He reaches his foot down--and the step CREAKS loudly. Brian freezes. He moves his foot to the left, puts his weight on it. Silence. He goes right for two more, skips the next stair altogether, making his way to the bottom of the minefield of possible creaks and groans.

INT. KITCHEN

Brian whips up a balogna-mustard-onion sandwich. He glances at the clock--12:27--working under a deadline.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Brian--silently--pushes an armchair up to the television. He turns the volume knob down, holds the remote control an inch from the set, thumbs it. Brian adjusts the volume so it's barely audible-- just in time for the opening of 'Late Night

With David Letterman.'

2.

He sits back. Unseen by Brian a quick, subtle movement-- just a shadow, really--heads for the stairs.

Brian takes a bite of the sandwich--

--and then there is a SCREAM that could wake the dead.

Brian shoves the chair back, remotes the set off on the run, tosses the control on the couch, and races for the stairs.

EXT. STEVENSON HOME - NIGHT

A rambling, two-story midwestern house with screened-in front porch stands dark on a large wooded lot. The SCREAMING continues, going hoarse. A second-story bedroom light comes on.

INT. STEVENSON HOME - STAIRWELL

Brian is only halfway up the stairs when his escape route is cut off: light from his parents' room spills into the hall. Brian melts back into the shadows. HOLLY and GLEN STEVENSON hurry to the already open door of Eric's room.

INT. ERIC'S BEDROOM

No curtains in here, either. ERIC STEVENSON, nine years old with light brown hair and fine features, sits huddled in bed, breathing hard, blinking in the sudden glare of the overhead light.

ERIC
Mom! There was a monster!

Holly relaxes, smiles. She is a dark-eyed woman on the other side of thirty, pretty giving way to elegant. She gestures to Eric.

HOLLY
Skootch over.

Holly sits down on the bed beside Eric. She hugs him.

HOLLY
It was just a bad dream.

ERIC
But I wasn't sleeping!

HOLLY
Sometimes you dream you're awake,
but you're not.

Glen, slightly older than Holly, bearded, stands slumped against the door frame. He is a polished man but worn, the veteran of too many such late night disturbances.

3.

GLEN
It was probably just the house
settling. You're not used to it,
yet.

ERIC
It wasn't the house--there was a
monster! It zoomed in from the
hall and went under my bed!

Holly and Glen exchange a look.

GLEN
Eric...when you dream, it's just
your brain's way of sorting out
things you learned during the day.
So if you found out something--

ERIC
I found out there's a monster
under my bed! It ran in from the
hall--it grabbed my ankle!

HOLLY
There's no monster under your bed.
Here.

She gets down on one knee and--

ERIC
No, Mom! Don't!

--sticks her arm into the under-the-bed. She sweeps it back and forth, pulls it out. It is rather dusty.

HOLLY
See? No monsters.
(notices the dust,
brushes it off)

All the dust bunnies scare 'em
away.

ERIC
(a new threat)
...bunnies?

INT. HALLWAY

Brian rolls his eyes. He sneaks toward the attic stairs.

INT. ERIC'S BEDROOM

GLEN
There are no bunnies and no
monsters. There's nothing under
your bed.

4.

HOLLY
Maybe we should get the
flashlight.

Eric crosses his arms and gives Glen a grave nod.

GLEN
Holly, if we humor him--
(off her look)
All right.

INT. HALLWAY

Brian commando-rolls into the bathroom, disappearing just before
Glen steps into the hall.

INT. ERIC'S BEDROOM

Holly pulls the covers up to Eric's chin, tucking him in.

HOLLY
You want to know a secret? The
monsters are more afraid of you
than you are of them.

Eric looks very doubtful. He inches the covers down to free his
arms.

HOLLY

Once you realize they don't exist,
they're gone. That's a lot of
power. I wish I could do that to
the heating bill.

She pulls the covers back up to Eric's chin. Glen returns,
presents the flashlight to Eric.

GLEN

Easy on the batteries, kid.

Eric takes the flashlight, grips it tightly.

HOLLY

We'll leave the hall light on and
the door open.

HOLLY/GLEN

'night, Eric.

ERIC

G'night...

Glen turns off the room light.

5.

INT. HALLWAY

The pair move toward their bedroom door, speaking softly:

GLEN

Do you think he heard us?

HOLLY

Of course he heard. What do you
think scared him? He was--

The clicking shut of the bedroom door cuts her off.

INT. ERIC'S BEDROOM

Eric lies on his side, back to the door, eyes wide. He hears
something. He can't look. Then he jumps, arms flailing, a
scream on its way--cut off by a hand clamping over his mouth.
He trains the flashlight on his ankle--

--a hand is wrapped around it; the beam runs past the wrist, up
the arm, to Brian's face, grinning out of the darkness. His
attitude is that of a friendly co-conspirator, a helpful ally in

the kids vs. parents cold war.

BRIAN
They were lying.

Eric stares at him, his mouth still covered.

BRIAN
There is a monster.

Eric shakes his head 'no' emphatically.

BRIAN
It went for your ankle, right? It
got mine. Where do you think I
got this?

Brian takes his hands away. Sticks out one leg, pulls up his pajamas cuff, revealing the old, ugly scar on his ankle. Eric stares at it, a little panicked.

ERIC
You got that when your foot got
caught in the spokes. When you
were little!

Brian looks at him and smiles pityingly.

BRIAN
That's what
(jerks his head towards
their parents' room)
they want you to think.

6.

Eric, eyes widening, turns to look in the direction Brian jerked his head. Brian's smile gets bigger as he backs toward the door.

BRIAN
They're supposed to be comforting--
they're parents. I'm your
brother.
(reaches for the knob)
Here--I'll close this...you really
ought to keep the lights down.

ERIC
(a whisper)
Why?

BRIAN
(matter-of-fact)
Because monsters are just like
moths...they're attracted to
light.

Brian smiles helpfully, and pulls the door shut.

The flashlight beam cuts across the dark room. Eric turns it up to look into it, his worried face now lit from below. He glances quickly around the room. All is silent. Screwing up his courage, he snaps off the light, and the room goes BLACK.

Eric's soft, worried back-of-the-throat whimper floats out of the darkness.

INT. ATTIC ROOM - MORNING - CLOSE ON

a gold pocketwatch. The face is unique: a disc with a wedge cut out is set into a numbered ring. The wedge turns, revealing an old-fashioned drawing of a benign sun for daylight hours, a malevolent man-in-the-moon in a starry sky for the nighttime.

Brian sits at a worktable covered with disassembled mechanical items. He pores over the dismantled watch, cleaning the pieces with Dust-off.

HOLLY (O.S.)
Brian! Breakfast.
(Brian doesn't respond)
Brian!

Brian reluctantly sets the watch onto its stand.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Holly fits one last dish into the dishwasher; Glen finishes his coffee and grapefruit.

7.

Eric, head down, intently eats his cereal. Brian breezes into the room--then slows, sensing tension. Brian eases down next to Eric.

GLEN
I hope whatever you watched last
night was worth your allowance.

BRIAN

...huh?

Holly turns on the dishwasher.

HOLLY
We found the sandwich.

BRIAN
(beat)
What sandwich?

Eric winces--he knows the shit has just hit the fan.

HOLLY
Brian, you are the only person in
this house who eats bologna and
onions. Every time you get
caught, you think you can lie your
way out of it.

GLEN
You want to end up a politician?

BRIAN
...no.

Water pipes, visible through a hole above the sink, start to knock. Holly, expecting this, turns on and off the hot water. The knocking subsides.

ERIC
Gotta catch the bus.

HOLLY
This conversation is not over.

ERIC
It's not fair you get mad at me
every time you get mad at Brian.

The pipes start knocking again. Holly takes a deep breath, gestures that Eric can go. He grabs his lunch bag and leaves.

Holly repeats the hot water ploy; it doesn't work. She tries it once more; again, nothing. She shuts down the dishwasher; the knocking stops for good.

HOLLY
Damn! Damn, damn.

Glen goes to her. Brian is torn between escape--and his lunch. He edges toward it. Glen puts an arm around Holly's shoulder, tries to cheer her.

GLEN

The plumber'll be out next week.

HOLLY

Great. Can I leave him the dishes?

GLEN

Just keep saying to yourself:
'It's our dream house.'

HOLLY

I never dreamed of seventeen
hundred dollars in plumbing
problems.

Glen leans against the cupboard; a strange look crosses his face. He turns: melted strawberry ice cream stains his shirt, and drips out of the cupboard. He pulls open the door--a soupy half gallon of Carnation sits on a stack of dishes.

Brian looks incredulously at the gooey mess, snags his lunch, and beelines for the door--

GLEN

You're a deadman.

BRIAN

I didn't do it!

HOLLY

Just like the sandwich.

Glen, disgusted, plucks the carton out of the cupboard.

BRIAN

...okay, it was my sandwich-- but
I didn't have any ice cream! You
always blame me for everything--

HOLLY

Somebody puts scuff marks on the
doors kicking them open. And
somebody sticks gum under the
table--

BRIAN

Not me.

Glen throws an ice cream-bloated sponge into the sink.

GLEN

We'll let this go as an accident.
But I'm laying down the law. No
more intentionally disobeying the
rules. You know the difference
between right and wrong. Start
acting like it.

BRIAN

(downcast)
...yes, sir.

INT. STAIRWELL

Brian sits on the stairs, backpack between his knees. Glen, tie
over his shoulder, buttoning a fresh shirt, hurries past. He
kisses Holly goodbye and goes out the front door.

Holly turns, regards her glum son. Sits down beside him.

HOLLY

Brian, your Dad and I are worried.
You and Eric have been at the new
school the same amount of time.
Eric's already made some friends--

BRIAN

Grandpa was my friend.

HOLLY

Yes, I know. I know you miss
Grandpa. We all do.

(beat)

But you should get out more. Find
somebody to play with.

(remembering)

The lawyer who handled the estate--
Mr. Coleman? He had a son about
your age.

BRIAN

(stating a fact)
Ronnie Coleman is a toad.

HOLLY

He seemed like a nice kid.

BRIAN

We can have him over for milk and
dead flies.

Holly reacts with a small smile despite herself--then they hear a LONG, SCRAPING, CRUMPLING METAL SOUND from outside.

10.

EXT. STEVENSON HOME - DRIVEWAY

Brian's Beachcruiser lays twisted in back of the idling Honda. Glen sternly guides Brian out through the garage. Holly follows as far as the garage door.

GLEN

Right there. What do you see?

Brian spots the bike, breaks away from Glen. He stares down at the ruined bike.

BRIAN

You ran it over.

GLEN

Guess why?

Brian looks at him; a light dawns.

BRIAN

Oh no--no way.

(pointing to the side of
the garage)

It was there! I parked it right
there!

GLEN

It was behind the car. I didn't
see it this time because it was
lying flat.

BRIAN

My bike...all those stupid seeds
I had to sell.

GLEN

You're lucky--the car wasn't
damaged. As it stands you are
grounded for a month, no TV for a
month, and you can consider
yourself at poverty level until
the next century.

HOLLY

Isn't that a little rough?

GLEN

Don't make me the villain here,
Holly.

BRIAN

Wait...I'm out my bike. Your
car's fine. You ran over my bike
and I get punished.

GLEN

Don't get smart.

11.

Glen gets in the car as Brian drags the bike out of the way.

BRIAN

(muttering)

If you don't want me to get smart,
stop wasting your money on public
education.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - MORNING

Eric and his friend TODD walk toward the bus stop, notebooks and
lunchbags in hand. Todd's parents force him to wear dress
shoes; he compensates by scuffing them at every opportunity.

TODD

So you didn't really see
anything... All you felt was,
like, an eerie presence?

ERIC

Yeah. Eerie.

TODD

It didn't like, go in the closet,
or near it, or even look at it for
a second or anything?

ERIC

Nope.

TODD

--so this is an exclusively under-
the-bed phenomenon we're dealing
with here.

ERIC

Yeah. Under my bed.

They join other kids at the bus stop. Todd snaps his fingers.

TODD
Trolls! Trolls live under
bridges. This lives under a bed.
It could be some sort of...sub-
species, mutant troll.
(he punches his fist
into his palm)
That's it.

The bus pulls up; its doors hiss open.

ERIC
I just want to get rid of it.

12.

TODD
Maybe if you pound a stake through
its heart..?
(pause)
Nah...that only works on vampires.

They solemnly ponder this subject.

ERIC
I think that'd work on anything.

INT. BUS - DAY

half-filled with kids. Todd and Eric find seats as the bus
begins to move--but then it slows to a stop for a late-arrival:
Brian. He swings into his seat as the bus lurches forward.

ERIC
Why aren't you riding your bike?

BRIAN
Let's talk about that. You've got
two choices: you can lie, and die
slow and painful. Tell the truth,
and I'll be merciful.
(he smiles)
You'll die quick.

ERIC
What happened?

BRIAN

Dad ran over my bike because you
put it in the driveway.

ERIC
No way. Your bike?

The bus slows for its next stop.

BRIAN
Looks like it's gonna be slow and
painful. We'll start with
starvation and work our way up.

In an unstoppably quick motion, Brian grabs Eric's lunch and
tosses it out the window.

ERIC
My lunch! You stupid! I didn't
do anything...
(he sees Brian is
serious)
Your bike's really thrashed?

13.

BRIAN
I put it away. Mom and Dad sure
didn't move it. That leaves
(he points at Eric)
you. I'm tired of you getting me
in trouble.

ERIC
I don't touch your bike.
(Brian grabs Eric by the
shirt)
If I did, you'd beat me up!

Brian pulls back a little; Eric is sincere. Kids file on the
bus.

BRIAN
What about the ice cream? You
snuck some ice cream last night.

ERIC
(definite)
No.

Brian and Eric regard each other, both frowning, puzzled.

TODD

(confident)
The monster.

Brian and Eric look at Todd, who nods his head, all-knowing.

ERIC
That's it! That's what it was
doing!

Brian sighs, rubs his eyes in a long-suffering gesture.

BRIAN
He told you about the killer
attack bunnies under his bed?

ERIC
It was a monster.

BRIAN
There are no monsters.

RONNIE (O.S.)
(yelling)
Who's 'Eric?'

RONNIE COLEMAN, a sixth grade version of Pete Rose comes up the aisle, carrying Eric's battered lunch Bag. Ronnie wears a football jersey with COLEMAN on the back. A batting glove hangs out of the back pocket of his jeans.

14.

RONNIE
Who's the 'Eric' that threw his
lunch at me?

Todd's horror-stricken look throws a spotlight on Eric. Ronnie, grape juice staining his jersey, zeros in on him.

ERIC
It's my lunch, but I didn't throw
it.

RONNIE
Who did?

Eric points at Brian's back.

ERIC
My brother.

RONNIE

Stevenson? He's your brother?
(Eric nods)
Man, I was going to make you eat
this in one bite, but...

Ronnie proffers the bag to Eric.

RONNIE
(pointedly)
You got enough problems.

A few laughs at this; Eric throws in an 'oooooh, burned.' Eric cautiously takes the lunch.. Ronnie grins victoriously at Brian, who fumes. Ronnie raises an eyebrow, daring Brian to make something of it.

Brian holds his temper, slumps down into his seat. Ronnie shakes his head in disgust, swaggers down the aisle.

A KID grins at Brian from the seat in front of him.

BRIAN
What are you lookin' at?

The grin is wiped from the kid's face; he turns forward. Brian stares out the window.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. LAFAYETTE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - ESTABLISHING

The lunch bell RINGS; kids swarm out.

15.

INT. SCHOOL - SCIENCE CLASSROOM

Alone in the room, KIERSTEN DEVERAUX, a crush-inducing twelve year old, raises a Polaroid camera to take a picture of a just-beginning-to-bloom cereus. It is inside a homemade plywood box; the hinged side stands open. A blackout curtain, lifted, lines the box; a lamp is attached to the roof.

The Polaroid WHIRS, but doesn't spit out a photo.

Kiersten frowns, goes to a closed door marked TEACHERS ONLY. She takes a key out of her pocket, unlocks the door.

INT. BOOK/SUPPLY ROOM

Kiersten takes a pack of film from a metal cabinet. She shuts it, turns--

--Brian leans in the door frame, lunch bag in one hand, eating a sandwich. Kiersten is startled. Brian grins.

BRIAN
How ya doin'--
(significantly)
--partner.

KIERSTEN
What?

BRIAN
I'm your new partner. From now on, we're both going to get straight 'A's.

Kiersten frowns at him, puzzled.

BRIAN
Don't worry, I won't tell anyone you were stealing answers.

KIERSTEN
(pulling the door shut)
Did they forget to give you your medication this morning, Brian?

INT. SCIENCE CLASSROOM

Brian doesn't hear the insult, intent on firming up this new partnership. As she reloads the camera:

BRIAN
Oh, come on, Kiersten. I saw you. You were scamming the teacher's edition.

Kiersten doesn't give him a lot of attention.

16.

KIERSTEN
I was not. I'm allowed in there-- Mr. Finn gave me a key.

BRIAN
A key? You have a key?
(she nods)

And you weren't looking at the teachers' edition?

KIERSTEN
(explaining flatly)
I'm working on my science project
See? It's blooming.

BRIAN
What a breakthrough.

Kiersten finishes reloading the camera, and takes a picture of the cactus. On the counter are a dozen or so snapshots of the cactus. Despite himself, Brian is interested. He glances at the photos.

KIERSTEN
It's a cereus. They only bloom at night.

BRIAN
Yeah? This one's broken.

KIERSTEN
That's the poINT. I'm training it to bloom in the daytime.

BRIAN
Hey, y'know what...

He gathers up the photos into a stack, sorting them into proper order as he does so.

BRIAN
If you mounted the camera in one place...upside down--

Brian reverses the stack, holds them by the wide border.

BRIAN
You could take a bunch of pictures and make it like a movie.

CLOSE ON: the flip-book of photos. Brian riffles through it. The plant blooms.

KIERSTEN
(impressed)
Like time-lapse photography...

BRIAN

Yeah.

(beat)

So, you'll get me the answers,
right?

Kiersten scowls, exasperated. Brian puts up his hands.

BRIAN

You can get back to me on that.

He is gone. Kiersten shakes her head, then picks up the photos,
flips through them. She looks up, in the direction Brian left.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Brian shambles along, alone. Todd and Eric, having lain in
wait, suddenly appear, bursting with some new scheme.

ERIC

If you say there's no monster,
then switch rooms with me.

BRIAN

What?

ERIC

Switch rooms with me.

TODD

Yeah--you sleep in Eric's room and
he sleeps in your room.

BRIAN

You just want my room.

Eric and Todd pause--then Eric jumps back in step with Brian.

ERIC

Nuh-uh...I want you to prove me
wrong. I dare you to switch
rooms.

TODD

(advising Eric)
Double dare him.

ERIC

(certain that this is
the clincher)
I doubledare you to switch rooms.

BRIAN

Not interested.

Eric and Todd stop walking, falling behind as they exchange a disappointed look. Eric has an inspiration. He hurries back up to Brian; Todd does, too.

ERIC
I'll pay you.

Brian cocks an eyebrow.

INT. ERIC'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The door, propelled by a kick, slams open. The kick leaves a large scuff mark. Brian plods in, sets down a large wicker laundry basket. Eric holds his own covers in his arms.

ERIC
You have to stay the whole night.
And you gotta sleep with your leg
sticking out of the covers. And
with the door closed.

BRIAN
(deadpan)
Oh, stop. You're frightening me.

On top of the bedding in the basket is a shoe-box lid which contains Brian's pocketwatch and paraphernalia. He lifts it out and sets in on Eric's small desk, sits down--

Pebbles click-clatter off the window. Eric goes over and raises the sash.

EXT. STEVENSON HOUSE - NIGHT

Todd, holding a sleeping bag, stands in a spill of moonlight.

TODD
Hey Eric!

ERIC
Hey Todd! Good thing you made it--
(louder, for Brian's
benefit)
I think he's gonna bail!

TODD
Yeah, we'll make sure he won't!

ERIC

So get up here! Use the trellis.

Todd regards the trellis. Ivy snaking in and out of it, the trellis climbs the wall, stretching up past Eric's window, far up the side of the house.

19.

TODD

...naw...it looks kinda high up.
I'll meetcha at the door.

He's gone, off around the house.

INT. ERIC'S BEDROOM

Eric turns from the window, dashes out, almost colliding with Glen in the hallway.

ERIC

Gonna let Todd in.

GLEN

Hold on.
(addressing them both)
Do either of you have the good
scissors? They're missing again.

Eric's eyes widen. He looks at the bed, then back at Brian significantly. Brian grimaces, shakes his head.

BRIAN

No.

GLEN

Well, if you run across them, put
them back where they belong.

Eric nods and takes off. Brian turns back to the watch. Glen steps forward, watches over Brian's shoulder.

CLOSE ON THE WATCH as Brian, using a jeweler's screwdriver, tightens a mechanism. He releases a tiny lever. Minute gears spin; ticking can be heard, distinct from the soft whirring.

GLEN

You got it running!

Brian grins as Glen picks up the watch, examines it.

GLEN

Grandpa'd be happy. You have his
mechanical touch. It must skip a
generation.

Brian's smile turns a little sad. Glen hands the watch back.
Brian places it on the table, in the watch stand.

GLEN
I wanted to tell you, Brian...what
you're doing here is nice--
(more)

20.

GLEN (Cont'd)
switching rooms with your brother,
so he won't be scared.
(beat)
I'm counting on you to see this
through. No night frights. Okay?

Brian nods.

INT. ATTIC ROOM - NIGHT

Eric and Todd climb the stairs into Brian's room, intimidated
but pleased. Todd's shoes thunder on the stairs.

Eric surveys the disassembled stuff on Brian's worktable. He
reaches for an electric train--

BRIAN (O.S.)
Don't touch that!

Brian steps forward, takes the train, sets it back down.

BRIAN
You can use the bed, and you can
walk from the bed to the door and
back, and that's it.

Brian grabs the pillow off his stripped bed, turns to leave. He
stops at the stairs.

BRIAN
You can touch my light--but only
to turn it off.
(beat)
And no fart contests.

INT. ERIC'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Brian stops in the doorway, stares at the bed. In a decisive move he turns out the light, forces himself to walk calmly to the bed and sit on the edge. He jerks his legs up, lies down.

Brian looks at it, then pulls it in a bit. He lies back, closes his eyes.

BRIAN
(as derisively as he can
manage)
...monsters.

Slowly, smoothly, as if with a mind of its own, the foot slips back into the safety of the covers.

21.

INT. ERIC'S BEDROOM - LATER

The waxing moon shines brightly. Brian comes awake with a start. He tilts his head, listening--muffled, indistinct sounds of laughter can be heard, fading quickly to silence.

Puzzled, frowning, Brian starts to swing a leg out of bed. He stops--thinks--then pushes the covers away from him until they touch the floor, covering the space beneath the bed.

A long step, and Brian is safely in the middle of the room. He goes to the door, keeping an eye on the bed, unable to see beneath it--the covers block his view.

INT. HALLWAY

Brian sidles out of the door, listens--he hears a muffled voice, and moves silently toward it, to the vent in the wall by the attic stairs. The voice becomes clearer as he nears:

TODD (O.S.)
(low and scary-like)
So she goes out, and five minutes
go by, then ten...
(Brian reaches the vent)
So the girl's waiting for her
roommate to get back, and she's
getting real scared...

INT. ATTIC ROOM

The vent is flush to the floor. Todd is in his mummy bag, only his face visible, sitting across from Eric. The Tensor lamp is the campfire between the two, the gooseneck bent down so that the lip of the shade nearly touches the floor.

TODD

(low and scary-like)

--oh, yeah, the room's on the second floor--so she's waiting, and suddenly, from outside, she hears 'thump-THUMP...thump-THUMP.' So she gets real brave and she sneaks over to the door and she hears it again: 'thump-THUMP...thump-THUMP!'

INT. HALLWAY

Brian raises one eyebrow, listening.

22.

INT. ATTIC ROOM

TODD

And so she opens the door and she screams 'cause she sees her roommate coming up the stairs--only the ax-man cut off all her arms and legs and she's draggin' herself up by her chin 'thump-THUMP...thump-THUMP!'

Todd, in his mummy bag, writhes on the floor, impressively depicting the predicament of the limbless roommate.

ERIC

...WOW...

INT. HALLWAY

Brian shakes his head, disbelieving.

TODD (O.S.)

It happened to a girl a friend of my cousin knew.

Brian thinks. He hits the riser in front of him with the palm of his hand: 'thump-THUMP...thump- THUMP.' All sound from upstairs ceases. Brian grins darkly.

INT. ERIC'S BEDROOM

Brian comes through the door--and stops dead in his tracks.

The bedcovers have been thrown all the way back, away from the floor, onto the mattress--they lie in a long pile against the wall. Brian stares.

The black inkiness of the under-the-bed gapes at him.

Brian lowers himself into a half-stoop, half-crouch, peering into the darkness. Is there something there?

Brian throws a look at the desk--the stand is empty; his pocketwatch is gone. Brian's eyes go wide. He looks-- and sees it under the bed, just on the edge of the shadow.

Brian reaches his hand up along the door frame to the light switch. He flips the switch--

and A MONSTROUS, HORRIFIC, CHILLING HOWL comes from right behind him. Brian spins in the still-dark room. A blue glow flickers behind the door.

23.

INT. ATTIC ROOM

Todd jumps back from the stairs, bumping into Eric.

ERIC
(stepping back)
(panicked; a hiss)
What was that?

TODD
(another step back)
I dunno.
(futilely optimistic
that Eric will do it)
Go find out.

Eric considers this.

ERIC
No.

INT. ERIC'S BEDROOM

Brian forces himself toward the blue glow and noise. He reaches for the knob, yanks the door back, stares into--

--the family's 25" diagonal television set, sitting on its side, plugged into the switched socket, tuned to an SCTV rerun featuring Count Floyd.

Brian snaps off the light switch (shutting off the set) and whirls, ducking to look under-the-bed.

The watch chain becomes taut--the watch is pulled smoothly out of view, into the deep shadows under the bed.

CLOSE ON Brian, a cold sweat on his forehead, all doubt drained from his face: Eric was right.

INT. HALLWAY

Brian darts his head out; a light shines from beneath his parents' door. Brian's eyes go wide with anticipatory dread--and then the light goes out. Brian slumps, relieved, then snaps a look back over his shoulder into the room--

INT. ERIC'S BEDROOM

Brian tilts the TV set down onto the throw rug.

INT. HALLWAY

The television set slides heavily down the hall atop the throw rug pulled by Brian.

24.

INT. STAIRWELL

Brian grapples with the set, controlling its roll one step at a time, top-to-side-to-bottom-to-side, down the stairs.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Brian pushes the set into place. He adjusts it slightly. His gaze-- almost against his will--is drawn back up to the ceiling, in the direction of Eric's room.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING

CLOSE on Brian, asleep but not comfortably so. A hand reaches, grabs Brian's shoulder, shakes him.

ERIC (O.S.)
Hey, Brian! You okay?

Brian starts awake--for a moment really scared. Then he places himself. He has spent the night on the couch, using a dropcloth as a blanket; also in the room are paint cans, rollers, and a ladder.

Eric and Todd stand over Brian, gloating.

TODD
I guess this means we get our
money back.

ERIC
What happened? Did the monster
come?

Brian ignores the question--he examines the T.V.

TODD
Maybe it cut out his tongue.

ERIC
That's cats.

TODD
No, they just get it. Monsters
cut 'em out and wear 'em on a
necklace.

Brian remote controls the T.V.: the opening theme of the Bugs Bunny/Roadrunner show plays ('No more rehearsing or cursing our parts/We know every part by heart').

25.

TODD
Looks like you got two weird
things in your house, Eric. A
monster...and a giant chicken.

Brian stares at the screen. Wile. E. Coyote, supergenius, at a drafting table, T-square flying, creates a blueprint for Bugs Bunny's destruction: a Rube Goldbergian trap.

ERIC

It's a wash. He's not talking.

On screen, Wile E. feverishly builds that trap. Brian's mouth curls into a smile. Without looking away, to Eric:

BRIAN
I'm sleeping in your room again
tonight.

Eric and Todd look at each other wide-eyed.

BRIAN BUILDS HIS TRAP - SERIES OF SHOTS

A. Brian measures the clearance under Eric's bed, jots it down.

B. At the side of the house, Brian braces his mangled bike between his knees, straining to remove the sprocket-- it gives, and Brian clunks himself in the forehead. He rubs the bump, then starts on the handbrake.

C. A sign on a chain draped across a dirt-packed access road reads 'MUNICIPAL DUMP - CLOSED.' Beyond it, Brian hikes toward the dump, backpack over his shoulder.

D. Heaps of refuse blot out the horizon. Brian spots something, wrestles it out: the aluminum support frame of an old rocking horse. He tests the tension of one of the four large springs hanging from the uprights. They will do.

E. Holly, Glen, and Eric divide their attention between their partially-emptied plates and Brian, who is wolfing down the remainder of his dinner. Brian finishes his milk, and without setting his glass down--

BRIAN
May I please be excused.

Before the response, he is gathering up his dishes.

F. Eric's bed is supported by a stacks of books. Brian loosens a leg bolt with a crescent wrench.

G. By the last light of the day, Brian secures the pedal and gear to the front of the bed. He cranks the pedal around (not unlike starting a Model-T) pulling the legs out, expanding the springs until the castors are against the ground.

26.

BRIAN
(singing softly)
'Roadrunner...the coyote's after

you...'

H. Brian's hand squeezes the brake handle. He snaps a rubber band around it, and doubles it. The handle stays squeezed. Brian pulls out the books. The bed stays up.

BRIAN
(spoken)
'Roadrunner...if he catches you--
you're through.'

INT. ERIC'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Brian lies in bed in the dark room, awake, waiting. The door opens. It is Holly. Her work shirt is speckled with paint--so is her hair and her hands.

HOLLY
Brian? Are you awake?

BRIAN
Yeah.

HOLLY
Eric asked me to give this to you.

She holds out the flashlight. Brian takes it from her.

HOLLY
(slightly questioning)
He said that tonight, he wanted
you to have it.

Brian lets this go by. Holly smiles, goes to the door.

BRIAN
Mom?

She turns.

BRIAN
(like he's saying
goodbye)
I love you.

HOLLY
(puzzled, but pleased)
I love you, too.

She pulls the door shut. Her footfalls recede; the hall light goes out. There is the sound of a door closing.

PREPARING THE BEDROOM - SERIES OF SHOTS

A. The bedcovers are thrown back in a dramatic swoop by Brian. Revealed beneath is his Monster-Hunting Gear: a pocketknife, the alarm clock, a spool of 150 lb test fishing line, a hockey stick and a big bag of Doritos (Nacho Cheese).

B. Brian strains to be quiet as he slides the dresser across the floor, in front of the walk-in-closet door.

C. Brian crisscrosses the fishing line around the room. He ties one end to the hammer-guard of the alarm clock.

D. At the door, he disassembles and removes the inside knob, leaving the hall-facing knob and bolt in place.

E. He wedges a two-by-four against a piece of plywood that covers the heating vent.

F. Brian lays down, the hockey stick, knife, and flashlight beside him, on the wall side. He adjusts their positions. He makes a few practice grabs, quick. He is ready.

INT. THE BEDROOM - LATER

Moonlight filters through the window. Brian waits, munching Doritos as quietly as possible. He has an inspiration. He scatters Doritos around the perimeter of the bed.

Experimentally, he leans down and makes a 'little man' with his hand and walks it toward the chips. His finger steps on a chip, results in a crunching sound. Brian smiles.

INT. THE BEDROOM - MUCH LATER

Brian isn't going to make it. The alarm clock ticks away, hypnotically. Brian is right on the edge of sleep.

Crunch. Brian pulls the blankets tighter. CRUNCH Crunch. Brian's eyes open, but he does not move.

More crunches. Brian turns his head s-l-o-w-l-y, looking as far out of the corners of his eyes as possible. The crunching pauses, then turns into the unmistakable sound of chomping. Whatever is out there, it sure likes Doritos (Nacho Cheese).

Brian stealthily reaches one hand down to his knife. He positions the handbrake, waiting. He doesn't breath.

The alarm clock is triggered; it RINGS. Brian cuts the rubber band. The brake pads open. The rope releases. Sprockets spin. Springs snap. The trap works; the bed collapses, slamming to

the floor; Brian spins, the flashlight in his hand and on--

28.

The beam catches something rushing straight towards Brian, straight for the under-the-bed; a brief impression of yellow eyes--then it is gone, back into the dark.

Brian snaps the light across the room, almost catching something in the peripheral of the beam.

The alarm, ringing shrilly throughout, begins to whir down. Brian makes long sweeping arcs with the flashlight, systematically covering the room. Nothing.

The alarm is spent. Silence.

Brian peers into the dark. A shape rises up behind him. Brian becomes aware of it just as an arm slaps across his chest-- Brian shouts, and an instinctive jerk becomes a passable judo throw, propelling the shape over his shoulder to the floor.

Snapping the flashlight around in a two-handed pistol-grip, Brian pins the shape in the beam--

And the room light goes on. Brian looks over; Glen is standing in the doorway.

BRIAN

Dad! The monst--

The word stops as Brian looks back at what is in his beam: an innocuous pile of clothes: T-shirts, jeans, and sweaters, all slightly yellowish in tint--and one ratty red bathrobe...and a Washington Senators baseball cap.

Brian's eyes go wide.

BRIAN

--er...

CLOSE ON Glen as his eyes track from one corner of the room to another, his expression going from tired annoyance to shock to disbelief to wide-awake anger. He focuses on

Brian, on the collapsed bed, flashlight out in front of him, one foot on the floor. Brian shifts his weight slightly; a chip crunches.

GLEN

Christ, Brian--I was counting on you...

(beat)
I give up.

Brian, intimidated by Glen's forcefulness, starts to feel bad, but then remembers:

BRIAN
Wait a minute! I...there is--

29.

GLEN
A monster? It's a pile of
clothes, for Chrissakes.

He kicks the clothes. Unseen by Glen, two folds in the clothes open like eyelids and stare up hatefully. Brian's eyes widen.

GLEN
The next time you leave your room
will be the first time you vote.

Brian is speechless. He rubs his eyes, looks at the clothes. They look normal.

BRIAN
But--

Glen snaps off the light and reaches for the door knob; it comes off in his hand. He gives Brian one more glare, then pulls the door shut.

Brian swallows, keeps the light unsteadily on the clothes. He stretches for the hockey stick. Cautiously, he jabs the stick into the clothes, barely. Nothing happens.

He gives the clothes a good poke. That does it. The sleeve snaps the hockey stick out of his hands, across the room.

Brian half-leaps, half-sprawls back; he loses the flashlight.

The clothes gather in on themselves, start to change--

Brian slams the laundry basket over the clothes pile, throws his body on top of it. The basket forces itself up off the floor. Brian is pitched hard, heels-over-head, to the ground.

The basket continues to rise. Brian gapes as the thing becomes visible: long, flat feet with extraordinarily long toes. A yellowish hand curls out from under the lip of the basket and throws it off.

The Monster From Under the Bed glowers at Brian, eyes aglow with malevolent intelligence. The ratty old red bathrobe still exists; the monster wears it with a certain panache. He grins, face splitting in half, revealing jagged rows of teeth. His name is MAURICE.

MAURICE

Boo.

Brian stifles a scream. He grabs the rug and pulls hard. The monster's feet go out from under him; he lands on his back.

Brian scrambles away, onto the bed, pulls in his ankles as a claw-like hand slashes down, making four ragged tears in the mattress. Brian leaps over the monster, runs for the door.

30.

The knob has been removed; the door won't open. Brian looks despairingly at his own handiwork, lunges for the window.

Halfway across the room, fishing line wraps around Brian's ankle, the still-attached alarm clock acting as weight for the makeshift bolo. The monster, grinning, reels Brian in.

Brian reaches, desperately trying to extricate his leg. Working frantically, inches out of reach, Brian gets loose from the line. He rolls away, grabbing up the hockey stick.

The monster looks down at the clock dangling at the end of the line. The minute hand is nearly straight up. Brian sees the monster throw a look at the window. Dawn washes the sky.

The monster drops the clock and rushes for the bed. Brian, thinking fast, leaps between the monster and the bed, brandishing the stick. The monster pulls up short. The two gauge each other. For all its ugliness, the monster is not much taller than Brian. It raises its claws.

BRIAN

I'll scream.

MAURICE

That's good--let's both scream.
Let's get your dad back in here.

The monster takes a deep breath--then lets it out in a gasp as Brian slugs him in the stomach.

BRIAN

(a hiss)
Shaddup.

The monster raises a hand, takes some time to recover.

MAURICE
(gasping)
Whoa, time out...

Brian pauses...then sees that the monster is furtively edging toward the bed. Brian glances out the window. He sees the lighting sky, smiles. He steps in front of the bed.

BRIAN
Yeah. Why don't we just wait?

The monster recovers amazingly fast, growls and feints, ramming Brian out of the way with a shoulder. He makes it to the bed--just as the sun edges over the horizon.

The monster slips his fingers in under the bed frame and pulls up. His fingers pass through the box-spring and mattress--his hands have become two-dimensional, intangible.

31.

Brian jumps onto the mattress. The monster panics. Brian levers the stick between the bed and the monster, pries him away. The monster tries to move, but his now-intangible feet have no purchase. He falls, hands inches from the bed.

A gradient effect, beginning at the monster's fingertips, turns him from yellow to gray to black, transforming him into his own shadow. Brian stares as the arms and legs flatten.

BRIAN
What's happening?

MAURICE
What d'you think?

BRIAN
You're dying. The sunlight--
you're a vampire!

MAURICE
(gasping)
Puh-leez. No such thing...as
vampires...Gotta get back under
the bed...

BRIAN
No way. You wrecked my bike. You
stole my watch. You been pulling

stuff, trying to get me in trouble.

MAURICE
(hurt; defensive)
That's my job.

Brian sucks on his lower lip, thinking. He looks toward the window. The sun has almost cleared the horizon.

MAURICE
What, you never did anything just for a laugh?

Maurice's eyes, wide and pleading, lock with Brian's. The two gaze at each other, until finally the monster's eyelids drop closed.

BRIAN
Damn.

Brian sighs at his victory turned hollow. With both hands, he raises a corner of the bed, watching the monster, not at all sure if it will do any good.

Maurice's eyes open slightly. His gaze flickers to the bed; he tries to move but can't. Straining to hold the bed up, Brian puts his arm around Maurice's still-solid torso and pushes him into the shadow.

32.

Brian lets the bed drop. He collapses to the floor.

Suddenly, the bed lifts, raising away from the floor like a trapdoor. Brian jumps back. The monster, fully recovered and quite pleased, holds the bed easily above his head with one arm. He looks like he is standing waist deep in an inky pool.

His gaze flickers to the window--just as the sun clears the horizon, he grins a yellow grin at Brian.

MAURICE
(confidentially)
Brian--
(beat)
'Catch ya later.

He disappears, the bed dropping to the floor.

INT. STEVENSON HOME - HALLWAY - DAY

In the master bedroom, Glen sits at a desk covered with bills, a printing calculator and the check book. Holly holds an invoice. The tone of the argument is not harsh-- just hard.

GLEN

It's certainly the liberal solution to a problem. Throw money at it.

HOLLY

Well, since I seem to be responsible for getting this place fixed up--

GLEN

When we made the decision to live here, we knew it meant a lot of work.

HOLLY

For both of us.

GLEN

I'm commuting four hours a day. Do you think I enjoy that?

HOLLY

You don't seem to enjoy much of anything nowadays.

GLEN

(moving to shut the door)

Maybe there's not that much to enjoy.

33.

Down the hall, Brian steps out of Eric's room with the laundry basket. Glen spots him.

GLEN

Where do you think you're going?

BRIAN

I finished cleaning. I was going back up to my room.

GLEN

Well, get there and stay there.

Glen shuts the door. A beat; Brian turns to the stairs.

INT. ATTIC ROOM - NIGHT

Brian lies on his back, wide awake, staring up into the darkness. Suddenly, another one of Eric's screams pierces the silence. Brian starts, then frowns, a little scared. A pause.

MAURICE (O.S.)
(from under the bed)
Brian...hey, Brian.

Brian's eyes go a little wider. He doesn't move.

MAURICE (O.S.)
Yo! Brian! I'm back! Why'd you
switch rooms again with that
whiffleball? You know he sucks
his thumb?
(beat)
C'mon, I know you're up there. I
can hear you holding your breath.

Brian begins breathing again.

MAURICE (O.S.)
Okay, fine. Here--I brought you
something.

A thing lands on Brian's chest. He squirms out from under it.

MAURICE (O.S.)
Catch ya' later!

A clatter from below, and then silence. Brian gingerly picks up Maurice's gift, holds it up into a spill of moonlight: his grandfather's pocketwatch. Surprised, he looks down over the side of the bed. Nothing.

EXT. SCHOOL - PLAYGROUND - KICKBALL DIAMOND - DAY

A kickball game in progress. Ronnie is on second base; Brian is the catcher.

34.

A lanky red-headed girl kicks a grounder. Ronnie rounds third and heads for home. Brian, in the baseline, waits for the throw. Ronnie accelerates, lowers his shoulder and slams into Brian, sending him sprawling in the dirt.

Ronnie stands up, grins at Brian, turns toward his dugout.

The throw from first rolls in. Brian picks it up. With deadly aim, he hurls the ball as hard as he can, nailing Ronnie in the back of the head. Ronnie stumbles, recovers, spins.

BRIAN
You didn't hit the plate. You're
outta--

Ronnie has already launched himself at Brian, and the two go down into the dust amid shouts of 'Fight! Fight!'

EXT. STEVENSON HOME - DRIVEWAY - DAY

Brian gets out of the car, walks toward the house, the condemned man escorted to the chair--by Glen and Holly.

GLEN
I want to know why you threw the
ball at him in the first place.

BRIAN
To get him out.

HOLLY
No mouth, Brian. The principal
said the game was over, and then
you threw it.

GLEN
Christ. A new school, and more
fighting. Do you have any idea
how disappointed we are in you?
(he opens the front
door)
You're never going to get out of
your room.

A look of pure anger crosses Brian's face as he goes inside.

INT. ATTIC ROOM - DAY

Brian trudges up the stairs, to his desk. He digs into his pocket, pulls out the pocketwatch, flips it open--

--pieces of shattered crystal rain down. Brian is shocked: the crystal is gone, the casing dented...the hands still. The benign Sun is frozen, peeking out of the wedge.

Brian grips the watch, fists going white-knuckled--he spins to throw it against the wall, stops. A deep breath. He sits down, starts to take the watch apart, blinking back tears.

INT. ATTIC ROOM - LATER

Brian is asleep, his head on the desk. Just the desk lamp is on. Suddenly the bulb SHATTERS, throwing the room into darkness, snapping Brian awake. He whirls--

Maurice stands silhouetted in moonlight, twirling a slingshot by the elastic. He hitches his Senators cap back on his head.

MAURICE

The name's Maurice, but back home
they call me 'Dead-eye.'

Brian scrabbles for the light switch he has rigged to a bunch of extension cords--he flips it--

LIGHT FLOODS THE ROOM: two shadeless floor lamps, super-8 movie lamp, mechanic's light, the overhead light; extension cords criss-cross the floor; a string of miniature Christmas lights circle the room, blinking, casting colored shadows.

Maurice disappears. The slingshot clatters onto the floor beside the same pile of clothes from before.

BRIAN

It's like when your eyeballs get
bigger when it gets darker. If
the lights go on, you turn into
clothes. Right?

MAURICE

(like his mouth is
filled with cotton)
Oh, c'mon--we did the man-versus-
monster thing to death all ready.

BRIAN

Go away. Don't bother me anymore,
or Eric. I got enough problems
without you sneaking around.

(beat; it registers)

Maurice?

MAURICE

That's my name, don't wear it out.
C'mon, Brian. I gave back the
watch.

Brian considers. He flips the switch; the lights go off.

Maurice re-forms into his bipedal self. He pockets his slingshot, spies the watch.

36.

MAURICE

Hey--I did not return it in that condition. What happened?

BRIAN

Ronnie Coleman broke it.

MAURICE

Tsk. What kind of person has no respect for other people's property?

BRIAN

You stole it!

MAURICE

So call your lawyer. How'd it happen?

BRIAN

What's it to you? Ronnie smashed it, and then I got in trouble.

(beat)

I always get in trouble, and I don't do anything!

MAURICE

(amazed)

You get in trouble, and you don't do anything?

BRIAN

No.

MAURICE

You let them get away with it?

BRIAN

Huh?

Maurice pulls a pack of Lucky Strikes out of his pocket, shakes one out, lights it one-handed from a matchbook.

MAURICE

Brian, you've come to the right place. I can help you. I can get you what you want.

He blows smoke across the match, extinguishing it.

BRIAN
(a little greedy)
What? You mean--like wishes?

MAURICE
Wishes are strictly bush-league
leprechaun, pal. I'm a monster.
Monsters don't do wishes.

37.

BRIAN
What do...monsters do?

MAURICE
(imparting a great
secret)
Revenge.

He waits, smiling smugly. Brian is less than enthused.

MAURICE
Oh, come on--Revenge! You know,
get back, even-up, tit-for-tat,
retribution in the best Old
Testament sense! Vengeance.
(beat)
Revenge!

Brian raises an eyebrow, one corner of his mouth twitching into
a grin. Maurice seizes on this.

MAURICE
Okay. This Ronnie guy. Big kid,
slack jaw, hair like a whisk
broom?

BRIAN
(sullen agreement)
Serious chromosome damage.

MAURICE
Right! I know him! He's in my
district. I can get him for you.

Brian is starting to get into this.

BRIAN
Yeah? How?

Maurice holds up one finger ('allow me to demonstrate'), and slides beneath the bed with a flourish.

BRIAN
Ronnie Coleman's under my bed?

MAURICE
No...but under your bed is the way
to under Ronnie Coleman's bed.

BRIAN
Aah--you won't do it.

MAURICE
Brian--you gotta learn to trust
people. Besides, it's not like
you could come with me...

38.

Brian's eyes light up. He looks toward the bed. The forbidden beckons.

MAURICE
...nooooo, oh, no. Forget it.
Wrong. Totally unprecedented.

Brian is grinning, now.

MAURICE
I was joking. It was a joke.
You're not allowed down there.
You could get hurt.
(beat; sinister)
I could strand you.

Brian frowns, then leans toward Maurice.

BRIAN
You won't do that, 'cause I'm
taking this.

He brandishes the flashlight.

MAURICE
Whoa, there, Thunder--no lights.
Definitely not allowed.

Brian flicks on the light, angles it toward him menacingly.

MAURICE

Hey. Bring that along, why
dontcha?

BRIAN
Let's go.

MAURICE
You're sure now...

Brian hesitates, then grins tightly, every late-night Charles
Bronson film of the last five years replaying in his mind.

BRIAN
Let's nail that toad to the wall.

MAURICE
Y'know...you're my kinda guy.

Maurice lifts the bed.

MAURICE
After you.

Brian kneels. Looks at Maurice, dubious. He extends his hand
into the darkness. It does not go through the solid floor.

39.

MAURICE
Oh, yeah, that's right. We gotta
go together. Dull people can't do
it.

Using one hand to support the bed, Maurice grabs Brian's arm,
helps him in. Brian, tentative, expecting to contact floor, is
startled to find none. He loses his balance, plunges straight
through the shadow; from below comes a THUD.

MAURICE
(calling to Brian)
Good.
(a sinister smile)
Real good.

He disappears into the shadow. The bed THWOMPS to the floor.

INT. UNDER-THE-BED - ATTIC STAIRS

Brian picks himself up off the ground. He is next to a closed
door, at the bottom of a narrow, steep staircase that leads up
to the rectangle shadow of the bed. Maurice skitters down the

staircase to him.

Brian panics, searches the floor beside him.

MAURICE

Lose something?

Maurice dangles the flashlight from one finger. Brian grabs it. Maurice pulls open the door, steps out into

INT. UNDER-THE-BED - HALLWAY

Brian peers down the hall--the ends, if any, are lost in the distance. Doors are scattered along the walls; some reach high with low-set knobs; others are short; there are Dutch doors and French doors and doors that hang crooked, but still shut tight.

The walls loom, seemingly on the verge of collapsing in on themselves. The dark mahogany wainscoting and dark red wallpaper swallow the light from the tiny flickering gas lamps near the ceiling.

Brian steps into this. His jaw is slack. A frayed red runner cuts a swath down the polished black floor.

Maurice is already moving down the stairway. He realizes Brian isn't with him, stops.

MAURICE

Yo! Brian! Let's move 'em out!
We're burning nightlight, pard!

Brian starts slowly, then hurries to catch up to Maurice.

40.

INT. UNDER-THE-BED - STAIRWELL

Brian gasps. The hallway has ended; they are at the bottom of a huge well. Archways lead to other hallways; above, there are tiers of landings running around the circumference, and more hallways. Further up, the landings droop and twist, whole sections torn away, until there is just black.

In the center of the well is a massive staircase, spiralling up, offshoots connecting the landings. It continues far up, finally standing alone, dilapidated, too impossibly high to support its own weight--but it does. And there, at a dizzying height, it ends at a small landing, at a pair of tall doors, seemingly suspended in the darkness.

Brian grabs Maurice's robe.

BRIAN
(a croak)
Where are we?

MAURICE
Hm? Oh...we go one flight up, and
it's the third door on the left.

He heads up the stairs. Brian hangs onto the robe, eyes wide,
letting Maurice lead him on.

INT. STAIRWELL - RONNIE'S STAIRS

A wrought-iron circular stairway disappears into the bed-shaped
black area.

MAURICE
Here we are.

BRIAN
But--but Ronnie lives clear over
by Lake Skopski. How..?

MAURICE
(a little smug)
Magic.

Maurice climbs the stairs into the shadow, disappearing from the
shoulders up; Brian follows, bumps his head, unable to go
through. Maurice reaches down and pulls him up by the collar.

INT. RONNIE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Maurice and Brian look for all the world like two decapitated
heads sitting on the floor under a bed. They whisper:

BRIAN
This is somebody else's house!

41.

MAURICE
No duh--where'd ya park the squad
car, Dick Tracy? It's Ronnie
Coleman's bedroom.

BRIAN
...bitchin'...

Movement from above startles Brian; an ankle flops down, hangs in front of his face. A beat, and he reaches for it--but Maurice grabs his wrist.

MAURICE

Wait--too primitive. Good instinct, though. Hmm, now...what deviltry to perpetrate tonight? A banshee wail, perhaps?
(he runs a scale,
coughs)

...mm, maybe not...lessee...We gotta watch our step here. Every night like clockwork this dingus gets up to go to the bathroom. I almost got caught once planting cigarettes in his bookbag.

BRIAN

(thoughtful)

What time does he usually get up?

Maurice shoves his cap back, cocks an eyebrow...then grins.

INT. RONNIE'S ROOM - LATER

Ronnie snurfls awake. Groggily, he stretches and sits up--

--and the sheet yanks tight, slamming Ronnie back onto the mattress, pinning his arms. He struggles mightily, trying to get up--the sheet snaps taut and he is pinned again.

Maurice and Brian grin like madmen at each other across the bedshadow as they strain to keep Ronnie pinned.

RONNIE

Mom! Dad! Help!

Brian almost lets go of his side--but Maurice puts a hand out in a 'not yet' gesture.

MAURICE

(his most horrible
voice)

Screaming will only make it worse...

Ronnie squirms half-heartedly. The fear is numbing.

RONNIE

I gotta get up...

Maurice nudges Brian, indicating it's his turn. Brian shakes his head 'no'; Maurice eggs him on.

BRIAN

(screechy old-type
voice)

If he gets up, I get his toes.
You can eat the rest.

Maurice looks at Brian: 'That's disgusting.' Brian shrugs; it was just a first attempt.

Above, Ronnie gives up the struggle; he grimaces in humiliation. A tear squeezes out of one eye, rolls down his cheek--

--the door opens; the light goes on. Ronnie's dad, a solid man with an iron-grey brush cut, steps into the empty room.

MR. COLEMAN

I gotta be to work early, this
better be good--

Mr. Coleman sees the wet stain on the bed sheet.

MR. COLEMAN

(quiet)

Dammit. Dammit, Ron, I thought
you'd whipped this bedwetting
thing. You're almost a man, and--

RONNIE

I couldn't move, Dad...I couldn't
move my arms, I couldn't get up...

INT. UNDER-THE-BED - RONNIE'S STAIRS

Where Brian and Maurice crouch. Brian's eyes are bright as he listens: so this is power. Maurice watches Brian listening.

MR. COLEMAN (O.S.)

(sounding more defeated
than Ronnie)

Get up and change your sheets.
Clean yourself up. We'll talk
about this later.

RONNIE (O.S.)

...yes, sir...

INT. UNDER-THE-BED - HALLWAY

The hall stretches long and deep. Far off, Brian and Maurice cavort away. They high-five, laugh, and continue on.

43.

INT. ATTIC ROOM - NEAR DAWN

With Maurice's help, Brian pulls himself out from under the bed. He looks back in at Maurice, exhilarated.

BRIAN
Man, that was great!

MAURICE
Yeah--you're a natural, kid.

BRIAN
Thanks--

MAURICE
So whaddaya say, Bri? Tomorrow
night. Same bed-time? Same bed-
channel?

Brian's immediate impulse is to say 'yes,' but he stifles himself to give it some thought.

MAURICE
You. Me. Moonlight. Magic.
C'mon, Brian--take a walk on the
wild side.

That's it. Brian grins--and Maurice grabs his hand, shakes it jive-style: normal, thumb clasp, wrist clasp, slap five, fist-tap, thumb clasp variation leading to ascending birdies.

MAURICE
'Catch ya later.

And he is gone.

EXT. SCHOOL - PLAYGROUND - DRINKING FOUNTAINS - DAY

Ronnie, sweating and dusty, bends to take a drink.

BRIAN
Careful there, Ronnie. You
wouldn't want to splash any.
People might think you had
an...accident.

Ronnie straightens, murder in his eyes. Brian leans against the wall. Other kids, including CRAIG, wait in line.

RONNIE
If I wanted any of your lip,
Stevenson, I'd take it off my
zipper.

44.

BRIAN
(aside, to Craig)
It's in his permanent record. I
saw it. Blew me away.
Imagine...Ronnie Coleman--a
bedwetter. Whoa, reality check.

RONNIE
Shut up, Stevenson. That's a lie.

More kids gather like sharks smelling blood.

CRAIG
He wets the bed?

BRIAN
(nodding)
His dad's very upset about it.

RONNIE
SHUT UP!

Too late; in the eyes of his peers, Ronnie is already guilty. Brian pushes away from the wall and strolls out through the crowd, saying to Craig as he goes by:

BRIAN
Ask him about the rubber sheets.

The kids sense the kill. Faces beam with grim pleasure, crowding in, obscuring Brian as he saunters off.

CRAIG
Rubber sheets!

Brian smiles and does not look back.

INT. STEVENSON HOME - ATTIC ROOM - NIGHT

Brian waits, impatient. He jiggles his foot out over the edge of the bed, bait for Maurice. Finally, Maurice appears.

BRIAN

Maurice! It was great! He was
dying out there!

MAURICE

Cool your jets, okay? Let's go.

INT. UNDER-THE-BED - MAIN CHAMBER

Brian rushes out ahead of Maurice--

--and collides with BILLY, a monster wearing crossed toy
gunbelts. Billy drops a box, and dozens of doll heads, arms and
legs--Barbies, G.I.Joes, Baby Tears--spill out.

45.

A Barbie-head comes to rest near Maurice's foot. He picks it
up.

BILLY

Hey! You stupid..! That's mine!

Billy grabs the head from Maurice, and scurries around the hall,
picking up the parts. Maurice ushers Brian away.

MAURICE

Doll dismemberment is so small
time. No finesse, y'know?

BRIAN

(agog)

There's more than one of you?

MAURICE

Sure--hey, I'm good, but get real.
We divvy things up by school
districts. Lucky you--you were in
mine.

They pass a monster, MARY JANE; Brian swivels his head, staring
at her: she wears a flannel nightgown, Mary Janes, and is
cutting up a very elegant evening gown. She drops the scissors
and holds up a string of very elegant paper dolls.

INT. UNDER-THE-BED - STOREROOM

High wooden shelves line narrow aisles. There is one whole
shelf of stuffed animals lying on their backs wearing toe-tags,

a purloined plush-toy morgue.

Maurice moves along expertly, putting things into a canvas bag: a roller skate, a stale taco guacamole to a paper plate, a Tupperware container of mud.

Brian steps into the room tentatively, intrigued by the contents of the various bins. He peers into one, blinks. He reaches in, pulls out a dead goldfish, holds it gingerly between his fingers. He looks to Maurice for an explanation.

MAURICE

Dead goldfish. Take the live ones out of the tank, float these suckers in belly-up, and there's one kid who feels really bad and gets a lecture on pet responsibility to boot. Nice little double-whammy item.

Brian tosses the fish back into the bin. A large chest is on the floor. He opens it. It is filled with ballpoint pens, keys, sunglasses, claim stubs, earrings (singles), lighters.

46.

Brian paws through it, puzzled--then the light dawns, and he laughs. Maurice grins, picks out a pair of dark glasses.

MAURICE

(giving Brian the glasses)

Here. At least pretend you're cool.

Brian puts them on. He peers around the room.

BRIAN

It's kind of dark...

He takes a few steps--and bumps into the wall. He takes the glasses off sheepishly, stows them in his shirt pocket, and something else catches his eye: a stack of dirty magazines. Brian takes the top one off the stack, pages through it.

BRIAN

Wow...you get to look at all these?

MAURICE

Yeah. No big deal.

BRIAN

I found a copy of Playboy when I was trash-digging once--it was great. Boy, my mom--

An idea hits him. He closes the magazine, rolls it up and sticks it in his back pocket.

BRIAN

There's a stop I wanna make.

INT. TODD'S ROOM - NIGHT

Maurice watches from under the bed as Brian slides the magazine into the top dresser drawer, shuts it. On the way into the shadow, he grins down at Todd's sleeping form.

BRIAN

Explain that to your mom.

INT. HOUSE #1 - SERVICE PORCH - NIGHT

Brian pays close attention as Maurice, using a sneaker on his hand, tracks mud across the floor, dipping into the Tupperware container, examining his handiwork like an artist.

47.

INT. HOUSE #2 - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Methodically, Brian switches records into the wrong sleeves-- then returns them to the rack, out of order. Maurice appears in the doorway to the kitchen, and he holds up:

MAURICE

Ta-da! The good scissors! First we make 'em dull...

(cuts at a table leg)

Then, we hide the evidence.

(hides them under a couch cushion)

Not bad, huh? Perfected this little technique myself.

He turns to head out, but remembers something.

MAURICE

Oh, yeah--you'd better check your couch when you get home.

INT. DONLEAVY TWIN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Maurice scrambles out from under an infant bed; Brian comes out from an identical one across the room. One headboard reads KYLE, the other NATHAN. Maurice hurries to his work.

MAURICE

Here. Hold this.

He puts Kyle into Brian's arms, lifts Nathan out and puts him over in Kyle's bed. Brian looks worriedly down at Kyle. Maurice takes Kyle and sets him into Nathan's bed.

Maurice looks from one bed to the other. He wrings his hands and laughs a fiendish mad-scientist 'Mu-u-uwahhahah' laugh.

INT. HOUSE #3 - TOP OF STAIRS - NIGHT

Maurice carefully positions the roller skate on a step, angling it just so, sighting along it.

POV - MAURICE, along the skate, through the toe strap. It centers on a barrel cactus in a tub...then moves across to a china cabinet. It wavers back toward the cactus--then decisively fixes on the china cabinet. Target sighted.

Maurice smiles. Brian comes out of the bathroom.

BRIAN

(sinisterly pleased)

I didn't flush it--and left the seat up.

48.

MAURICE

(claps him on the back)

I like it.

Brian grins at the praise.

EXT. SCHOOL - PLAYGROUND - DAY

Hectic recess activity: running, shouting, ball-dodging. Brian sits in the shade of the building, away from it all. He pulls out the sunglasses from Maurice, puts them on.

INT. ALAINE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Maurice and Brian pig out. Brian eats the middle of the Oreo cookie and dumps the chocolate cookie outside back into the jar. Maurice chows down chocolate cake.

BRIAN
(through cookie)
...want some milk?

--and he opens the refrigerator door. Light spills out and Maurice drops out of frame with a 'FWUMP.' Brian looks over at where Maurice last stood--then looks down.

On the floor is the pile of clothes, a cake slice on top.

BRIAN
...sorry.

Brian reaches in and unscrews the fridge light bulb. Maurice is once again standing there, wiping cake off himself.

MAURICE
(a bit miffed)
Next time wait for me to unplug
it.

He grabs the jug of milk and takes a swig, then passes it to Brian, who does the same. Maurice upturns the cookie jar, shakes crumbs onto a paper towel. Brian takes another swig, emptying the milk jug. He starts throw it away--but Maurice takes it, recaps it...and puts it back into the refrigerator.

MAURICE
Always, always put the empties
back.

Maurice folds the crumb towel into a little knapsack, leaves. Brian follows, losing an Oreo from his handful, not noticing.

49.

INT. ALAINE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Brian slips back under the bed. Maurice follows, snapping the paper towel, raining cookie crumbs onto the girl's sheets.

INT. STEVENSON HOME - KITCHEN - MORNING

Brian, dark rings under his eyes, not real alert, holding his backpack, stands just inside the swinging-shut kitchen door.

BRIAN
I missed the bus.

HOLLY
Because you overslept again. I'll
get my car keys.

Brian leans against the doorframe, covers a yawn.

KIDS ON TRIAL - SERIES OF SHOTS

The parents' lines run together like a single lecture, anger
building.

A. An OVAL-FACED KID, seven, an expression of total innocence.

MOM #1 (O.S.)
--And if you thought more about
the consequences before you did
things--

B. A LANKY FIFTH GRADER glowers out from under long greasy
hair.

MOM #2 (O.S.)
--things like this wouldn't
happen. But no--I have a kid
who's an idiot--

C. A RED-HAIRED GIRL, eight, absolutely expressionless, save
for her quick bird-like blinks, regular as a metronome.

DAD #1 (O.S.)
--If I've told you once, I told
you a thousand times: don't leave
your toys where people can break
their necks on 'em--stop that
BLINKING!

D. A DEFENSIVE NINE-YEAR-OLD BOY.

DAD #2 (O.S.)
Now just sit there, shut up and
listen. Are you trying to
disappoint us?

The boy starts to answer 'no,' but thinks better of it.

50.

MOM #3 (O.S.)
You don't want people to like you,

do you?

It's a loaded question; the boy starts to say 'yes,' stops; he frowns, concentrates, trying to dope out the right answer.

DAD #2 (O.S.)

Answer your mother!

E. A GUILTY GIRL, six, sinks down in a straight-back chair.

MOM #4 (O.S.)

Fine. Be that way. But I'm the parent and you're the kid and you're going to sit here until you've decided you're ready to come out and join the rest of us and be a decent human being.

Off screen, a door slams with a BANG!

INT. UNDER-THE-BED - HALLWAY - NEAR THE ATTIC STAIRS

A door swings all the way open, flat against the wall. Maurice comes through, holding a TV remote-control. The door swings back-- revealing an entry way that wasn't there previously. Brian comes through with an arm load of socks.

Maurice tosses the remote-control onto a heaping pile of remote-controls. He pulls another from a pocket, tosses it, pulls another, tosses, etc., about a dozen in all. Over this:

MAURICE

Did you get 'em?

BRIAN

Yeah.

MAURICE

They don't match?

BRIAN

Of course not.

(rubs the mismatched
socks on his cheek)

Still dryer-soft, too.

To one side is a pulley-system clothesline with socks hanging from it. Brian pins a sock, pulls the line, pins another; the sock line goes off into infinity...and comes back from same.

Two monsters pass by, each lugging one end of a grandfather clock. Maurice grabs Brian by the shirt and hauls him away, scattering the arm load of socks.

MAURICE
A ballgame! C'mon!

INT. UNDER-THE-BED - MAIN CHAMBER

As Maurice hauls Brian past the clock-carrying monsters (who wrestle it up upright). There is the unmistakable CRACK of a bat; Brian dives away from Maurice--

--as a baseball smashes into the grandfather clock, starts it BONGING.

MAURICE
Yo, Brian! Little help!

Brian stares at the ball in front of his face. He picks up the ball, rises, and sees:

ANOTHER ANGLE - MAIN STAIRWELL

currently in-use as the playing field for a game of indoor Monster Baseball. There are monster 'fielders': Mary Jane crouches on an endtable, punches her glove, chatters ('C'mon batter c'mon batter SWING!'); a fat one is in right, PORSCHE sunglasses on, a boom-box blaring rave-up rock'n'roll.

All over the playing field are various breakable objects-- lamps, vases, aquariums, television sets, Baccarat crystal, objects d'art, etc. Home plate is a china serving dish.

Maurice swings two bats--smashing a lamp behind him in the process. He tosses one bat away--another crash off screen.

Striding toward Brian is SPIKE, a stocky monster in a black chest protector and protective mask. He flips the mask up.

SPIKE
Give me that, and git. No spectators on the field.

Spike jerks his thumb toward the stairs, where a raucous group of fans throw beer cans and popcorn boxes at him.

SPIKE
All right. Imaginary runners on second and third. Still two out, no score, top of the third.

Brian watches the game as he wanders around past the fans.

Spike passes the mound, tosses the ball to the pitcher, a

monster wearing OVERALLS, who winds up. Spike, still on his way to the plate, drops to the ground--the ball whizzes past where his head was. Maurice line-drives it into a stack stereo system, toppling it. From his prone position:

52.

SPIKE
That's a triple. Two runs score.

The BLEACHER BUMS think its a homer, and let him know. Maurice taps his bat lightly on home plate, shattering it. Spike steps up, brushes the fragments away with a whisk broom, puts down another plate.

Out on the field, two groundskeeper monsters hurriedly drag away the stereo, replacing it with a place glass window.

Brian smiles, but shakes his head, not that interested. He looks up the stairs, up to the door far above. He puts a hand on the bannister.

INT. UNDER-THE-BED - MAIN STAIRWAY

High above the baseball game. Brian looks down, then up at the door, keeps climbing.

INT. UNDER-THE-BED - MAIN STAIRWELL

A line drive rips toward Maurice. He raises a sterling silver tray into its path. The ball PWHANGS into the tray, denting it; the ball drops; Maurice catches it with his cap.

MAURICE
Sen-say-tion-al play! Oh, my!

He bows with a flourish. Turns proudly toward the stands, searches, but can't find Brian.

SPIKE (O.S.)
Okay, batter up! C'mon, we gotta
get this stuff upside in an hour!

Maurice finally spots Brian's figure, climbing up near the ruined section of landings.

MAURICE
Oh, shit!

He dashes for the stairs, ignoring the protests behind him.

INT. UNDER-THE-BED - MAIN STAIRCASE - LANDING

Brian picks his way up the ruined steps. The shadows here are deeper, more enveloping. He pulls the flashlight out of his back pocket, turns it on. He puts a foot on the next step--

A huge yellowish arm, muscles bunching on top of muscles, snaps down over his shoulder, tears the flashlight out of Brian's hand. The light clicks off.

>From the shadows comes a voice like razor-sharp icicles.

53.

VOICE

Bye-bye, Sunshine.

A shape looms; a huge hand grabs Brian by the head, and lifts him out over the banister, the endless drop below him.

Brian grabs the thick wrist with both hands. His feet scramble for purchase but find none.

MAURICE (O.S.)

He's with me, Snik!

And Maurice is there, defiant and wary. SNIK, one menacing yellow eye much larger than the other, light glinting crazily off them both, glares down at the smaller monster.

Snik holds Brian without strain--or a whole lot of concern for Brian's life. He has the teeth of a shark; he is hunched over from the weight of his muscled back and shoulders.

MAURICE

He's the new guy.

Snik looks at Brian. His brow furrows. He looks at Maurice.

SNIK

(indicates the stairs)

Rules broken.

(indicates Brian)

Neck broken.

Maurice hops onto the banister, keeps his voice low so Brian (trying to swing a leg over Snik's arm) won't hear.

MAURICE

Headless people have limited

potential, Snik. He's with me.
(Snik no comprende)
The boss okayed it. Remember?
Bri-an Ste-ven-son?

Snik's eyes widen a little; his gaze flickers towards the upper doors. Understanding floods his face.

 SNIK
Ah...this is the one?

Maurice gives Snik a dirty look, snaps a finger to his lips. Snik lifts Brian back over the banister--but doesn't set him down. Snik's thumb and forefinger cover Brian's ears.

 SNIK
Too much for you, Maurice? Need
some help, I think.

 MAURICE
No, Snik. I'll take care of him.

54.

 SNIK
You'd better.

Snik drops Brian to the floor. Maurice helps him to his feet, then practically pushes him down the stairs. Snik clears his throat for attention. Maurice and Brian give it to him.

Snik holds up the flashlight. He unscrews the end, drops the batteries into his hand. He grins, not straining as he crushes the batteries, the acid dripping down his arm. He throws the flashlight and endcap at Brian, who picks them up.

 SNIK
Don't bring it again. Brian.
 (displays the batteries)
Or head be next--Brian.

Maurice shoves Brian around, downstairs, watching Snik. Snik is pleased with himself.

ANGLE - UPPERMOST DOORS,

high above this tableau. The doors are split; a dark shape, backlit by flickering light, hunches within, watching.

INT. UNDER-THE-BED - MAIN STAIRCASE

Maurice trundles Brian back toward the archway. Brian jerks out of his grasp. He is a little angry, mostly terrified.

BRIAN

Who was that guy? He was going to kill me!

MAURICE

(shaking out a
cigarette, finding
matches)

Who? Snik? Naaww! He's all talk--
and big hands. He's just grumpy--
and dopey... and Sneezy, too, when
the pollen count is high.
Actually...he just got up on the
wrong side of the bed.

(lights cigarette,
looking toward the bed-
shadows)

'Course, down here, we all do.

Brian gives a small, pained smile. Maurice seizes on this: With a hearty laugh, he claps Brian on the back-- throws a quick, worried/relieved and unseen-by-Brian look back up the stairs-- and guides Brian away.

ANGLE - UPPERMOST DOORS

The shape draws back into the shadows. The doors BOOM shut--

55.

INT. THE BEDROOM - NIGHT

--and as the BOOM trails away, Eric's eyes open. He looks to his window: the wind has picked up--thunder BOOMS again. Tree branches rattle against the pane.

Eric's eyes take in the room warily.

INT. ATTIC ROOM - NIGHT

Eric slowly emerges from the stairwell, pauses at the top.

ERIC

...Brian..?

No answer. He takes a few tentative steps into the room.

ERIC

...Brian? Can I have the
flashlight?

He moves to the bed, reaches a hand toward the lump under the covers. He jabs the covers. He shakes the covers. He pulls them, revealing Brian's pillows, shaped into a sleeping form.

Eric looks very worried.

EXT. SCHOOL - LUNCH TABLES - DAY

Kiersten is eating lunch with ALAINE, a dark-haired girl with big eyes. Brian, pale and worried, wearing sunglasses, steps forward from out of the shadows.

BRIAN
Kiersten! I gotta have the
answers to the homework.

KIERSTEN
No way, Jose.

She gives the sunglasses a perplexed, unimpressed look. Brian pulls them off. He squints at the sunlight.

BRIAN
Mr. Finn said if I get another
'F,' he's going to call my folks.
C'mon-- just let me borrow the
key.

Kiersten shakes her head.

BRIAN
Mr. Finn'll never find out you
were stealing answers.

56.

KIERSTEN
I wasn't stealing answers.

BRIAN
I'll tell Mr. Finn I saw you
stealing answers.

ALAINE
(sarcastic)
Oh, like Mr. Finn'll believe you
over Kiersten.

Brian looks at the two of them. He puts on the shades.

BRIAN
Forget it.

He walks back into the shadows. Kiersten catches up to him.

KIERSTEN
Brian--are you feeling okay? You
look like you need some sleep.

BRIAN
Don't need sleep. I need answers.

KIERSTEN
Listen, Brian--I'm not going to
cheat for you...but if you want
to, I'll help you study.

Brian turns away.

BRIAN
I don't need anyone's help.

INT. STEVENSON HOME - ATTIC ROOM - DAY

The window. Eric's face appears in it; he scans the room.
Brian lays on the bed, asleep. Eric's eyes widen.

EXT. STEVENSON HOME - DAY

Eric drops the last few feet from the tree beside the house.
Todd kicks the tree trunk with his shoes, alternating feet.

TODD
What's he doing?

ERIC
Sleeping.

TODD
Oh. Boring.

57.

ERIC
It was your idea to run a
surveillance.

TODD

How else do we find out what he's up to?

ERIC
Well, we could ask him.

TODD
(not hearing him)
Maybe he's sleeping off a bad bottle of rotgut.
(nodding)
Drunks do that.

Eric starts around the house to the back door. Todd follows.

ERIC
He's not a drunk. He's been at school all day. When would he drink?

TODD
Haven't you seen the commercials? Where the kid pours the stuff into a thermos?

ERIC
Brian doesn't have a thermos.

Eric heads inside. Todd gets an idea.

TODD
Eric!
(Eric stops at the door)
I know what it is!

ERIC
What?

TODD
(he checks for listeners)
Drugs.

ERIC
(beat)
Get real.

He turns, lets the door swing shut behind him. Todd comes out of his musing in time to catch it and follow Eric inside.

TODD
Facts, Eric--look at the facts...

INT. STEVENSON HOME - ATTIC ROOM - NIGHT

Brian works alone at his desk. He twists on the gold back of his pocketwatch, turns the watch over. The crystal is gone, and the sweep second hand is bent, but the watch runs. The glaring Man-in-the-Moon face fills the wedge.

Brian makes an 'Oh, yeah!' gesture, hops up, grinning.

INT. HALLWAY

Brian heads for his parents room, puts his hand on the knob-- halts in his tracks.

GLEN (O.S.)

--so we should have just sold the house. Is that it? Use the money to buy something half the size in a worse area.

HOLLY (O.S.)

At least it would have been our house! But you wanted to live in your boyhood home--

GLEN (O.S.)

We decided to move here-- you were pretty thrilled when dad died and left us the house--

Brian spins away from the door.

INT. ATTIC ROOM - NIGHT

Brian shuts off the overhead light. He shuts off the light on the night table. A match scratches to life. Brian lights a candle. He sits on the bed in the soft glow, turning the watch over and over in his hands, waiting for Maurice.

INT. KIERSTEN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Kiersten looks angelic as she sleeps. Brian and Maurice slip out from under the bed like mechanics on crawlers.

BRIAN

Hey! That's Kiersten--

From outside comes the sudden sound of a small dog YAPPING. The two jump. They relax when nothing else happens.

MAURICE

I don't think everyone heard--why
don't you just call 911?

Brian ignores him; he cannot take his eyes off Kiersten.

59.

MAURICE

So what's this Kiersten chick
like?

(Brian doesn't answer)

Hey!

(Brian tears his eyes
away)

So what's she like?

BRIAN

(offhandedly)

She's a girl. She's real smart.
She always knows the answer,
always raises her hand--

MAURICE

--always has her homework done?

BRIAN

Yeah...always. Thinks she's so
much smarter than everybody else.

Maurice grins, rummages through the desk top. He finds a
peechee, finished homework inside.

MAURICE

Check out this action.

Maurice pulls at his jaws with both hands, hard, straining-- and
his face elongates. Brian stares, shocked. Gradually,
painfully, he molds the lower half of his face into the muzzle
of a dog.

Growling and yapping, Maurice chews up the homework. He finds
Kiersten's Polaroid flip-book, flips through it, dunks it into
a fish tank on her bookshelf. Maurice grins, then notices the
plywood box in one corner.

MAURICE

What the hell is that?

BRIAN

Her science project.

MAURICE

Yeah?

Maurice swings open the door, draws back the curtain-- light pours out--he leaps away with a shriek, dropping the curtain.

Maurice looks down at his hand. It is shadow-like, slowly reverting to normal. Brian has seen all of this.

BRIAN

Are you okay?

Maurice, royally pissed off, strides to the box, fumbles around behind it, yanks out the plug. He leans into the box.

60.

Brian looks away from him, back at Kiersten. A beat, and an off-screen maleficent chuckle from Maurice, and then Maurice is back at Brian's side. He grabs his arm.

MAURICE

C'mon, c'mon, let's go, we've all seen a girl before. Let's move it.

BRIAN

What'd you do?

MAURICE

You'll find out, you'll love it, c'mon, let's go.

He hustles Brian under the bed. Maurice pauses to look at Kiersten himself. He makes a 'not bad' expression, then goes.

INT. SCIENCE CLASSROOM - DAY

Brian breezes through the door...then slows. At one of the lab tables are MR. FINN, Kiersten, several other students.

Brian looks closer. On the table is Kiersten's plant-box and the night-blooming cereus--now planted upside down, the roots sticking out. Kiersten holds the flip-book.

KIERSTEN

But I have this--you can see how it used to look--

She tries to riffle it, but it is now a solid brick. It flips out of her hand. Kids giggle.

MR. FINN
Do you at least have your report?

KIERSTEN
(very sad)
...no.
(beat)
I did it, but my dog chewed it up.

Mr. Finn frowns at her.

RONNIE
Oh, right!

Some of the students laugh.

MR. FINN
Kiersten, you know no report means
a zero.

Brian hangs his head, turns away slowly; there is no joy in his
expression at all.

61.

RONNIE (O.S.)
Ooooooh...busted!

INT. STEVENSON HOUSE - ATTIC ROOM - DAY

Todd is under the worktable. Eric crouches, trying to see.

ERIC
What is it? What're you doing?

Todd backs out from under the worktable holding a dinosaur book
and a calculator.

TODD
The monster from under the bed!
It's dragging Brian away at night.
Look.

Eric inspects Todd's discovery. It is a fourteen inch-long dust-
ball smear that could be anything from a fish to--

TODD
It's a footprint. It stepped in
all that dust under there and left
a track.
(beat)

I'm figuring out how big it is.
By measuring the length of the
footprint and the impression
depth, then using the...
(checks book)
...'cube square' law--

ERIC
How big is it?

TODD
(calculating the final
number)
It's a seven-foot-eight, three
hundred-and-seventeen pound Troll.

Eric stares at him.

ERIC
...and it fits under the bed?

Todd looks at the display. New calculations may be in order.

INT. STEVENSON HOME - DINING ROOM - EVENING

Brian is the last to the table, and late--the others have
started to dig in. As he sits, Holly gets a good look at him.

62.

HOLLY,
Honey, you look...
(the word escapes her)
Are you okay?

She reaches over, feels his forehead. Brian shies away, starts
to pile food onto his plate.

BRIAN
I'm fine.

HOLLY
(she examines him
critically)
You're thin as a rail. You need
to eat more.

Eric frowns at Brian's overflowing plate.

HOLLY
You look...peaked.

GLEN
'Peaked.' What is 'peaked'?

HOLLY
My mother used to say it-- and he
looks it.

BRIAN
Need a plate for my salad.

He scoots his chair back from the table, heads for the kitchen.

GLEN
Is that a new shirt?

Brian looks down at it.

BRIAN
No.

GLEN
It looks big on you.

Brian looks down at it, shrugs, heads into

INT. STEVENSON HOME - KITCHEN - EVENING

Brian opens a cupboard, reaches for a plate--and can't reach the shelf. He is puzzled. He reaches up, slower-- his fingers are an inch short of the plates. He goes up on tip-toe and touches them. He lowers himself off tip-toe, looking worried.

63.

INT. ATTIC ROOM

Brian rummages through his dresser. He pulls out a ruler.

INT. ENTRY WAY - CLOSET

Brian runs his finger up the family growth chart, finds the mark for his twelfth birthday. He turns, stands with his back against the door. He levels the ruler on top of his head. Holding it steady, he slips out from beneath it to look.

The ruler is a full inch below where it was on his last birthday. Brian stares unbelieving at the chart.

INT. ATTIC ROOM - NIGHT

Brian paces the room, waiting. He crouches beside the bed, leans forward and extends a hand toward the shadow-- and the hand goes through. He yanks it back like its been scalded.

Brian examines his hand wonderingly. He regards the shadow, then again extends his hand toward it. The hand passes through, and Brian keeps putting his arm in, up to the elbow. Suddenly, his arm is jerked and his face hits the mattress.

Brian wrenches his arm out, dragging Maurice, who is gripping Brian's wrist, part-way out through the shadow. Maurice pulls again, and this time Brian goes into the shadow.

INT. UNDER-THE-BED - ATTIC STAIRS

--as Brian and Maurice catch themselves halfway down the stairs. Brian is a little amazed, but Maurice is ebullient.

MAURICE

A natural! A one-hundred percent,
no holds-barred, died-in-the-wool,
no-assembly-required natural! I
knew you had it in you.

Brian looks at him, realization coming slowly to him.

BRIAN

...what?

MAURICE

What do you think? Geez, I
thought I caught on quick-- but
you! You're already moving
through shadows!

BRIAN

No, I'm not--you pulled me
through.

64.

MAURICE

What's this false modesty? You
put your hand through all on your
own.

(he salutes)

Brian...It is an honor to have you
on our side. Now-- let's go.

He scampers down to the bottom of the stairs.

BRIAN

Hold it!

Maurice looks back up at Brian, halfway down the stairs, the shadow exit visible above him.

MAURICE

What?

BRIAN

(accusingly)

You used to be normal? I'm going to end up like you?

MAURICE

Well, normal's a relative term, but...Yeah. Where do you think monsters come from? Ugly storks? No-- they were all kids once, just like you--and me.

The full weight of this hits Brian.

BRIAN

I'm turning into a monster.

MAURICE

Bitchin', huh?

Brian springs toward the top of the stairs.

MAURICE

Hey! Where you going?

Brian stops. He looks angrily down at Maurice.

BRIAN

You should've told me, Maurice! I thought you were my friend.

MAURICE

...slipped my mind. Okay-- listen. You're upset. That's understandable. I remember when I found out.

(more)

I went totally batshit. But--look
where I am today.

(beat)

Take some time, Bri. Think about
it.

Brian turns away from his words--looks up at the shadow. He
swallows, extends his hand. It goes through.

MAURICE

If you want to talk it over,
well...

(significantly)

--just drop in anytime.

Brian glares down at him, then spins--and is gone.

MAURICE

(calling after him)

After all, what are friends for?

Maurice folds his arms, slumps back against the wall. Smiles.

INT. ATTIC ROOM

Brian lies in bed fuming, his arms crossed. He stares angrily
up at the ceiling. With a decisive jerk, he rolls over, away
from the under-the-bed, toward the wall.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. STEVENSON HOME - ATTIC ROOM - NIGHT

Brian has fallen asleep. He is shaken by the shoulder. He
pulls his covers around him. The gentle shaking continues.

GLEN

C'mon, Brian. Wake up.

Brian sits up sleepily. Glen leans over him. Eric, in his
pajamas, stands in the stairwell, leaning on a railing.

INT. DINING ROOM

Holly sits at the table. Brian warily takes his seat. Glen and
Eric are already sitting, Eric still yawning.

Holly reaches across the table and squeezes Eric's hand.

HOLLY

We wanted to talk to you two
because...your father and I have
come to a decision, and it affects
all of us.

GLEN

We feel you're grown up enough to understand it.

Brian is immediately suspicious. Eric looks suddenly worried.

HOLLY

Your father and I have decided to separate for a while.

Brian's face is frozen--but his eyes show understanding.

ERIC

(a little foggy)

A business trip?

HOLLY

Not exactly--

BRIAN

No. Can't you see? They're getting a divorce.

Eric looks away from him quickly, to his mother.

HOLLY

No, we're not getting a divorce. We're going to try to work things out, but we have to be apart for a while. It's just a trial separation.

BRIAN

It's what you do before you get a divorce.

GLEN

Enough of that, Brian.

HOLLY

We're not getting a divorce.

ERIC

(relieved)

So Dad's not leaving. Good.

GLEN

Eric, listen to me. I'm going to live in the city for a while. It

might--I hope--we hope it won't be
for long.

ERIC
You don't have to go.

67.

GLEN
Yes, Eric. I do. And it would be
a big help if I knew I could count
on the two of you to understand--

ERIC
I'll be good! I promise I'll be
better-- you won't have to go live
in the city. I swear to God, I'll
be better. Brian too-- he'll stop
being bad, he promises. Right?
Promise, Brian!

Brian looks away, ignoring Eric.

ERIC
Brian--promise.

HOLLY
Eric, it's not your fault, or
Brian's fault--or anybody's fault.
Sometimes two people--

ERIC
(to Brian)
This is your fault!

Brian pushes his chair back, stands, heads for the stairs.

HOLLY
Brian--it's not your fault--

GLEN
Are you all right, Brian?

Brian turns back, no emotion in his eyes for his crying brother,
his mother, his father.

BRIAN
Sure, dad. Don't worry about me.
I'll be fine.

Glen gives Brian a hard look, nods. Brian turns away.

INT. ATTIC ROOM - NIGHT

Brian puts his watch-care paraphernalia into his bookbag, including the watchstand. He crouches by the bed, puts one hand into the shadow--still amazed he can do it.

He takes a last look around--and the mask cracks. For a moment, he looks as if he is going to cry. The look becomes one of determination; he slips under the bed, and is gone.

68.

INT. UNDER-THE-BED - HALLWAY

Seven monsters play what looks like a street craps game. Cigarette smoke fills the air; Maurice kneels for his turn; monsters chatter for or against him, depending on their bets.

Maurice fires into the chalk circle, nailing the aimed-at cat's eye. The monsters groan and cheer; money changes hands. Brian appears in the doorway, spreads his arms wide.

BRIAN

You got me!

Maurice leaps up and lets out a WHOOP--

INT. UNDER-THE-BED - HALLWAY

Maurice and Brian make slow progress as a drunken two person conga line. Maurice wears a beerhelmet, sucking from the plastic straw that hangs near his head.

Brian carries a teddybear and a plastic bag filled with water and two live goldfish. In the other hand he carries a beer.

BRIAN

Hey! Let's go scare Ronnie some more!

MAURICE

Yeah! Let's steal all his clothes so he'll have to go to school naked!

BRIAN

Yeah! Let's nail all his furniture to the ceiling! So he'll wake up upside-down!

MAURICE

Yeah!

INT. RONNIE'S ROOM - NIGHT

The pair appear beneath Ronnie's bed. Maurice scrambles out-- and a baseball bat slams down dangerously close to his head.

MAURICE

Wow!

Ronnie, crouched on his bed, takes another cut at Maurice-- --who squirms, barely avoids the blow, grabs Brian--

69.

INT. UNDER-THE-BED - RONNIE'S STAIRS

The two tumble down, THUDDING to the floor in a tangle.

MAURICE

We...we gotta go get him!

BRIAN

(inspired)

No. Let's--not.

Maurice considers this, then grins. The two sit in the hall, snickers turning to belly laughs.

INT. RONNIE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Ronnie crouches on the bed, tense, a baseball bat held at ready in each hand, prepared to wait all night. He cocks his head. From far away, is that the sound of laughter?

INT. UNDER-THE-BED - HALLWAY

Brian and Maurice, still chuckling, use each other for support as they struggle to their feet. Spike barrels around the corner, red-faced--he stops right in their faces.

SPIKE

(winded)

Night light...at

Guberman's...burned out...party!

He rockets off. Maurice grabs Brian by the shoulders.

MAURICE

The nightlight at the Guberman's
is burned out! PARTY!

INT. UNDER-THE-BED - STAIRS TO NURSERY

A queue of monsters, fidgeting, anticipating, goes up the stairs
to the shadow. Maurice escorts Brian through.

MAURICE

Coming through! New guy! Excuse
me, pardon me, coming through!

(aside, to Brian)

Stick with me kid--I know the
doorman.

(back to business)

Get out of the way! Yeah, you!

70.

INT. NURSERY - NIGHT

A baby in Dr. Dentons sleeps. Six monsters stand around the
crib-- a macabre variation on adults cooing over a newborn.

Maurice rises up from beneath the crib. Brian appears over
Maurice's shoulder, grinning--until he sees the baby. Maurice
gestures magnanimously.

MAURICE

After you, Brian.

BRIAN

Uh...it's just a baby.

Maurice looks uncomfortably at the other monsters, who exchange
looks. A murmur of 'who's the wimp?' is heard.

MAURICE

Yeah. So? Look, Bri--we can't
have this new generation growing
up not believing in monsters.
Fear is an important character
builder. It's our duty: break 'em
when they're young.

BRIAN

Hey! Let's go watch Kiersten
sleep!

MAURICE
(out of the corner of
his mouth)
Brian, you're embarrassing me.
(louder)
G'head, Bri--just give it a good
scare.

He glowers at Brian, then gestures sharply, prompting him.
Brian leans forward hesitantly. The monsters lean forward,
anticipating. Brian wiggles his fingers at the baby.

BRIAN
Boo. Boo.

The monsters are disappointed. Some 'tsk.'

MAURICE
What are you--the toothfairy?
Like this.

Maurice makes a horrible face, climbs halfway into the crib,
waking the baby with really gross slurping sounds.

The baby's eyes go wide; he cries. The other monsters join in.
The kid really bawls. Brian doesn't like it.

71.

BRIAN
Stop it!
(yanks Maurice back)
Cut it out!

The monsters stare at him, their disgust and anger becoming
palpable. Brian spins, runs to the door--

MAURICE
Brian--

--and yanks it open. LIGHT spills into the room from the
hallway-- the monsters transform--

And so does Brian's arm--it transforms into a sleeve.

Brian stares in horror at his arm. He hurls himself at the hall
light switch, shuts it off, runs.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - NEAR DAWN

Brian rushes out the door of the house, to the sidewalk-- then

slows. Stops. He has no idea where he is. He looks around, spots a street sign. He gets his bearings, turns, and walks away, a tiny lone figure on a long empty street.

EXT. STREET - NEAR STEVENSON HOME - DAWN

The sun breaks the horizon. Brian, terrified, looks at his arms-- but they do not change. He lets out a deep breath. He squints at the sun, pulls out his sunglasses...looks at them. He tosses them into the gutter, where one lens shatters.

INT. STEVENSON HOME - ERIC'S ROOM - DAY

Eric, dressed, lies across the bed, head hanging off, eyes closed. Todd bursts in, rushes over to him.

TODD
(excited; low)
I figured it out. I know what the monster is doing with Brian.

Eric gives no response; Todd plows on.

TODD
It's a body snatcher. See, it's taking over Brian and using his body to prepare the way for the invasion force!

72.

ERIC
(beat)
I don't feel like playing, Todd.
I don't feel good. I'll see you tomorrow.

TODD
But--

ERIC
Tomorrow, okay?

Eric turns his head away. Todd looks at him, crestfallen. He leaves slowly, watching Eric the whole way.

INT. ATTIC ROOM - NIGHT

Brian sits on his bed, light switch in hand. He checks over the

side of the bed; nothing. He pulls his knees up, waits.

Wraith-like, Maurice slips into the room. He stands with his fists on his hips, staring at Brian--who starts, looks up.

BRIAN

I'm not going. I don't want to live down there. I don't want to be--

(beat)

I'm not going.

MAURICE

You don't want to be what? Go ahead, say it. You don't want to be like me.

BRIAN

I am not going.

(he looks away)

You didn't want me to be your friend. You just wanted me to turn into a monster.

MAURICE

(not liking the accusation, 'cause it's pretty accurate)

Can't make somebody do something they really don't wanna do. Now, c'mon--

Maurice grabs Brian by the arm; Brian pulls away. He grabs the light switch. Maurice leaps for his arm--Brian snaps on the lights, and Maurice transforms into clothes.

Brian catches his breath. He reaches into the clothes, ignoring the slapping sleeves. Brian's hand emerges from the pocket of the robe with Maurice's matches. The sleeves freeze, drop.

73.

Brian tears a match from the packet. He holds it to the striking surface.

BRIAN

Leave me alone. Don't come back here. Do you understand?

(no answer)

Do you understand?

Silence. Brian strikes the match. The clothes shrink back.

BRIAN
Don't make me do this. Just
promise to leave me alone.

MAURICE
(a long pause) (muffled)
I promise.

BRIAN
...okay.

He shuts off the lights. The match illumines his face; Maurice re-forms, and moves toward Brian.

MAURICE
(with a sneer)
You trusted me?

BRIAN
Yes.

Maurice, about to mock him, pulls up short.

MAURICE
(shakes his head sadly)
It's not that easy.

Ducking his head, he dives past Brian into the under-the-bed. The match burns down; Brian drops it; the room goes black.

INT. ERIC'S ROOM - NIGHT

A hand covers Eric's mouth gently. He snaps awake, cries out.

BRIAN
(removing his hand)
Shh--quiet.

ERIC
Geez--I thought you were the
monster.

Brian swallows this without comment. He holds the flashlight.

74.

BRIAN
Here, take this. If you hear
anything, turn it on-- and yell--
even if it's only a pile of

clothes. Especially if it's a pile of clothes. Okay?

ERIC

No. I'm not going to. You're trying to scare me again.

BRIAN

No--I'm not--

ERIC

I promised to be good. I'm not going to have any more nightmares.

Eric won't take the flashlight. Brian sets it on the bed. He pauses in the doorway, turns on the lights, and then he goes.

Eric gets out of bed, and shuts off the lights. He climbs back under the covers. He picks up the flashlight. He clicks it on, off, on again. Dead batteries. No light.

ERIC

Thanks a lot, Brian.

He drops the flashlight beside the bed, rolls over angrily.

INT. UNDER-THE-BED - HALLWAY

Maurice backs away from Snik, who looms over him.

SNIK

You did bad, Maurice. Bad for morale. If he rabbits, others will, too.

(beat)

Time to take your medicine.

MAURICE

I told the Boss how to get him--

SNIK

Boss'll get him; yes, always gets 'em. But you shouldn't have lost him.

Snik steps forward, light dancing off his eyes.

INT. ATTIC ROOM - NIGHT - LATER

HOLD ON: Brian sleeping--and then Holly is shaking him awake.

HOLLY

Eric's gone--

Brian, startled awake, snaps on the lights. Holly pauses, takes it in, puzzled--but dismisses it for larger concerns.

HOLLY

Your brother's gone. I went to check on him--Do you have any idea where he is?

Brian shakes his head slowly. She looks down, worried, thinking. She stands up suddenly, heads out of the room.

HOLLY

Todd's house. Maybe he's there.
(halts at the stairs)
My God--Glen. You don't think he'd try to go there, do you?

Brian shakes his head again. Holly hurries down the stairs, leaving Brian alone in the room. He leaps from the bed.

INT. ERIC'S ROOM - NIGHT

Brian surveys the room. The dresser has been pulled away from the wall, two of its drawers almost all the way out. The mattress is askew on the box spring, the sheets strewn on the floor. The overall effect is one of fast packing--or a fight.

Brian picks up the blanket--it is ripped in several places.

BRIAN

Maurice.

Something catches his eye. He kneels--

ANGLE - BENEATH THE BED, where the crushed flashlight lies on the edge of the shadow.

BRIAN

Snik.

EXT. STEVENSON HOME - NIGHT

Brian drops from the tree near his window, backpack on one shoulder. He races down the sideyard, disappears.

EXT. TODD'S HOUSE - REAR - NIGHT

CLOSE ON: Brian, as he crouches beneath a window. He reaches

up, taps on the glass, waits. Nothing. He taps again, harder.

76.

TODD (O.S.)
(muffled)
Go away, Eric. I'm already in
trouble.

Brian taps again. The window slides open.

TODD (O.S.)
If my mom catches me sneaking out--
HEY!

Brian springs, lifts Todd bodily out through the window.

EXT. TRAIN TRACKS - NIGHT

Todd sits on a tie, very suspicious of Brian.

TODD
There really are monsters under
the bed.

BRIAN
Yes.

TODD
And they've got Eric.

BRIAN
Yes.

TODD
(looks closely at Brian)
Have you been doing drugs?

BRIAN
No. Christ, Todd--you gotta
believe me. I mean...you always
believe everything!

Brian is exasperated. Reluctantly, he tries one last gambit:

BRIAN
I know why you're in trouble.
Your mom found a Playboy in your
underwear drawer. The Christmas
issue--there was a girl on the
cover painted like a candy cane.

TODD
How'd you know that?

BRIAN
(ashamed)
Because I put it there.

Brian turns away. Todd stares at him, shocked.

77.

TODD
You're telling the truth.

Brian spins, spreads his arms for emphasis:

BRIAN
Yes!

TODD
At least I didn't lie to my mom.
I told her I got the magazine from
you.

Brian smiles, a sad smile. He holds the backpack out to Todd.

BRIAN
Here. You're going to need these.

Todd takes the backpack warily. He looks inside. He near-reverently takes out a pair of old sneakers.

BRIAN
They're an old pair of mine. They
should fit okay.

Todd looks up at him. A slow smile spreads across his face.

TODD
What's our plan?

INT. KIERSTEN'S ROOM - NIGHT

The blankets are tented, lit from inside. A pebble ricochets off the window. Kiersten pops out of the blankets, startled, holding a penlight and a paperback copy of SALEM'S LOT.

Another pebble hits. Cautiously, she moves to the window.

EXT. KIERSTEN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

As Kiersten's head darts into view through the window, darts back. A beat. She looks back out. She raises the window.

Brian stands there, looking up at her.

BRIAN
Hi, Kiersten.

KIERSTEN
What are you doing here?

BRIAN
Uh...I need some help.

KIERSTEN
Now?

78.

Todd appears out of the shadows, drops a large, heavy rucksack onto the ground.

TODD
It's crucial. The monsters from
under the bed have captured Eric.
We have to save him!

Brian flinches at the sound of the window slamming shut. He looks over, angry and exasperated, at Todd.

INT. KIERSTEN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Kiersten goes back to her bed. A pebble hits the glass. She ignores it. Another hits. A beat. Pebbles hit the glass in a staccato series. Kiersten jumps to the window, raises it.

KIERSTEN
Go away!

EXT. KIERSTEN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Brian tosses away the pebble in his hand, drops the huge collection of pebbles he had pouched in his shirt. Todd sits far off to one side, on the rucksack, dejected.

BRIAN
Todd told you the truth.

KIERSTEN
You expect me to believe that?

TODD
I believed it.

KIERSTEN
That I believe.

She moves to close the window.

BRIAN
Wait! What if I prove it's true?

KIERSTEN
Monsters under the bed? Fat
chance.

BRIAN
If I prove it--then will you help?

Kiersten wavers, considering. That is all Brian needs.

79.

BRIAN
I'll prove it.
(to Todd)
We'll have to split up. You know
what to do?

TODD
No problem.

Brian nods, spins, races from the yard. Todd lifts the
rucksack, slinging it over one shoulder--the rucksack
overbalances him, pulling him over.

Kiersten shakes her head, slides the window shut.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - NIGHT

Todd, the rucksack heavy on his back, peers out from behind a
parked car. He breaks cover, sprints across the street to a
tree, spins to put his back to the trunk--the momentum of the
sack slams it into the tree; jarred, he sinks to the ground.

INT. KIERSTEN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Kiersten, moving sneakily, comes in from the hall, penlight on,

eating an apple.

BRIAN (O.S.)
(a cautious whisper)
Kiersten!

Kiersten freezes, apple in her mouth. Her eyes go wide, her jaw goes slack--Brian's head is now sitting beneath her bed. The penlight, then the apple, thump to the ground.

Brian scrambles out, backpack over his shoulder.

BRIAN
Well? Do you believe me?

Kiersten stares...feels around for her desk chair...sits down slowly, still staring.

KIERSTEN
Holy shit.

EXT. SCHOOL - FENCE - NIGHT

Todd drags the heavy canvas bag, all attempt at subterfuge abandoned. He reaches the high fence and groans. He lifts the bag...jerks it up onto his shoulder...it tilts away from the fence. Todd leaps out from under it as it falls.

80.

INT. KIERSTEN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Kiersten sips shakily from a glass of water, eyes still wide. Brian sits on her bed, checking his equipment from his bookbag: six different flashlights, including a 4-cell.

BRIAN
You okay now?

A pause, then Kiersten gives a single quick bird-like nod.

BRIAN
Good. Okay--what I need is that light you were using for your science project.

KIERSTEN
The fifty-six hundred K?

BRIAN
Huh?

KIERSTEN

Fifty-six hundred K. It's the same color temperature as sunlight--

BRIAN

Yes. Perfect.

(he checks his pocketwatch)

So can I have the key? Sunrise is at six. I gotta get going.

Kiersten picks up her backpack, dumps the contents out.

KIERSTEN

I'm going with you.

(Brian is shocked)

Give me some of those flashlights.

BRIAN

No! Forget it.

KIERSTEN

(holding up the penlight)

You're not going to make me go down there with just this?

BRIAN

But--It's dangerous down there! There are monsters down there.

KIERSTEN

...and you're going to take them all on by yourself? Get real, Brian.

81.

BRIAN

(suspicious)

You'll really help me?

KIERSTEN

I believe you.

A beat. Solemnly, Brian trades the 4-cell for the penlight.

KIERSTEN

Now, turn around so I can get dressed.

Brian blinks, then turns. CLOSE ON his face as he listens, nervous and curious, to the rustling O.S.

EXT. SCHOOL - FENCE - NIGHT

The rucksack is hung up at the top of the fence. Todd, on the other side, his feet braced on the chainlink, hangs on the strap, straining to pull the rucksack over. It goes suddenly, and Todd and the rucksack hit the ground--again.

INT. KIERSTEN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Brian checks his pocketwatch. The Man-in-the-Moon glares out.

BRIAN

Todd should be ready. Let's go.

He hands Kiersten her backpack, shoulders into his own with an audible grunt of effort. He climbs into the shadow.

KIERSTEN

This is where I start getting...
(she shudders)

BRIAN

Look--you don't have to go. It's okay. Just give me the key.

Kiersten examines this escape clause.

KIERSTEN

No...I promised.
(beat)
Besides--I gotta make sure you don't steal answers.

Her shaky smile lets Brian in on the joke. He smiles back reassuringly, reaches a hand out to her. She crawls into the under-the-bed, halts when both arms go through the shadow.

KIERSTEN

Omigod...

82.

BRIAN

It's okay...be careful here...

They disappear into the under-the-bed.

INT. UNDER-THE-BED - KIERSTEN'S STAIRWAY

--more alien and sinister than ever. But free of monsters.
Kiersten steps cautiously down the stairs, followed by Brian.

KIERSTEN
(in awe)
Like down the rabbit hole...

They reach level ground. Kiersten examines her surroundings.

KIERSTEN
These stairs all go to different
rooms? So we grab Eric and get
out.

BRIAN
That's the plan.

But his expression says it may be more difficult than that.

EXT. SCHOOL - NIGHT

Todd moves past the classroom windows in a stoop, rucksack on
his back. He straightens, dumps the rucksack to the ground.

INT. UNDER-THE-BED - HALLWAY

Mary Jane goes by, dragging a mud-filled Barbie Dream House. A
beat; Brian emerges from a hiding place. He checks; the coast
is clear. He signals; Kiersten emerges wide-eyed.

EXT. SCHOOL - NIGHT

Todd wrestles with two hinged wooden poles from the rucksack.
They should fit together, but he can't quite get it.

INT. UNDER-THE-BED - HALLWAY

Brian, Kiersten following, stops along a series of doorways.

BRIAN
Okay. It should be somewhere
right around here.

EXT. SCHOOL - NIGHT

Todd pushes a wooden rod into a tight canvas sleeve. Suddenly it goes, and the rod shoots all the way through the sleeve.

INT. UNDER-THE-BED - HALLWAY

Brian and Kiersten wait, alert, jumpy. All is quiet.

BRIAN
C'mon, Todd.

Behind Brian, one part of the hallway starts to change. Brian turns as the wall twists in on itself...creaking and groaning, it flattens into a stairway rising up. With a SNAP a door springs into place in front of the stairwell.

BRIAN
Yeah! It worked!

Brian pulls open the door, escorts Kiersten through.

EXT. SCHOOL - NIGHT - CLOSE ON

Brian and Kiersten as they crawl out from the shadow under--

--an old army cot, Todd lying on top of it. It looks extremely out of place in the empty schoolyard.

BRIAN
Good job, Todd.

TODD
It actually worked?

KIERSTEN
I think I am definitely going to go crazy.

BRIAN
(leading her to the door)
Not yet.

TODD
Hey! What's she doing here? She got to go? You wouldn't let me!
(he catches up to Kiersten)
What's it like down there? Is it neat?

KIERSTEN
Oh, yeah. Neat.

INT. SCIENCE CLASSROOM - SUPPLY ROOM - NIGHT

as flashlight beams hit a cabinet. Kiersten unlocks it, opens it. She finds the 5600K bulb, gives it to Brian.

Brian opens his backpack, pulls out a mechanic's clamp light with cigarette-lighter attachment and a motorcycle battery. As Todd and Kiersten look on, Brian assembles his Sun-Gun:

With wire cutters, he strips the plug off the floodlight. He attaches the wires to the battery, tightens the wing-nuts. He screws the 5600-K bulb in. He flips it on.

BRILLIANT WHITE LIGHT floods the room. Brian staggers-- flips the light off quickly. A cold sweat stands on his forehead-- he looks ill, but shakes it off.

TODD

(blinking, eyes re-
adjusting)

Oh, man--that'll get 'em. That's
like a howitzer or something.

KIERSTEN

You must know a lot about
electricity to do that...

(Brian grins)

...how come you get 'F's in
science?

(Brian's grin fades)

TODD

Hey, guys, what about this?

>From deep in the now-empty rucksack, Todd extracts a battered plastic miner's helmet with revolving bubble light on top, puts it on proudly. Kiersten smiles at him; Brian does not.

BRIAN

What are you gonna do with that?

Todd stops grinning. He's not fucking around here.

TODD

I'm going. Eric's my best friend.

Brian tries to stare him down, but the kid's not giving in. Brian starts to say something--

GUARD (O.S.)

What're you kids doing here?

He stands in the hallway doorway. Brian moves first, grabbing the other two. They race out the exterior door, slam it shut.

85.

EXT. SCHOOL - NIGHT

The trio beeline for the cot. Brian scrambles under, then Kiersten. Todd hesitates--Brian grabs his arm--

BRIAN

You wanna go--then c'mon!

--and yanks him down. The classroom door bangs open, and the guard hurries out, flashlight on. He sweeps the yard, spots the cot. He approaches it warily. He grabs a corner and yanks it off the ground. The kids--and the cot's shadow--are gone.

INT. UNDER-THE-BED - HALLWAY

The three drop from the shadow as it violently disappears. Only Brian lands smoothly. Brian helps Kiersten up. Todd is awed, body slack. He smiles, spins excitedly to the others.

TODD

(too loud)

It's a parallel dimension!

Brian shushes him. Kiersten hisses 'Quiet!' Todd gulps abashedly, then looks around some more.

TODD

(a knowing whisper)

It's a parallel dimension.

Brian gestures 'quiet,' then 'follow me.'

INT. UNDER-THE-BED - HALLWAY

They walk three abreast; with each step, they become more scared. Todd starts to whistle; random scratchy notes, slowly becoming recognizable: the theme from 'Bridge Over the River Kwai.' Brian joins in, then Kiersten. Brian sings softly:

BRIAN

Comet--It makes your teeth turn
green...

(Todd joins in)

Comet--It's worse than
Listerine...

NEW ANGLE - MAURICE,

sitting on a stairway, back against the railing. His eye is puffy, his robe torn--he's been beat up. Junk food packages surround him: a Chips Ahoy bag rests on his bloated stomach.

Maurice cocks an ear, hearing the group, then turns to watch them through the balusters.

86.

BRIAN/TODD/KIERSTEN

Comet--It makes you vomit-- So get
some Comet--and vomit--today!

The group laughs as they disappear around a corner. Maurice smiles, too--then his face falls. A beat. He rises suddenly, tossing away the cookie bag, and starts up the stairs.

INT. UNDER-THE-BED - HALLWAY

The trio move quickly. A monster crosses their path-- Kiersten and Todd are scared; Brian snaps on his flashlight-- the monster transforms into clothes. Todd and Kiersten stare.

KIERSTEN

It's like chameleons-- protective
camouflage.

BRIAN

Yeah--hand me another flashlight,
huh?

Brian pins the transformed monster in the beam of the second flashlight, sets it on the floor. The monster is pinned.

Todd stares at the clothes. He reaches up to turn on his helmet. It doesn't go on. A tad panicked, he slaps the side of the helmet. The bubble light and the miner's lamp go on--

--and Brian is caught in the beam. Something catches Kiersten's eye--she leans closer to Brian, staring at his arm. The skin looks like cloth. She shines her own flashlight on it--the transformation quickens. Brian yanks his arm out of the lights. Kiersten fixes him with a stare.

KIERSTEN

You're one of them.

BRIAN

No...I was supposed to be...but
I'm not.

He steps toward her. She gestures threateningly with her flashlight. Todd is still staring, frozen in place.

BRIAN

Kiersten...please--we gotta save
Eric.

She looks into his eyes. She decides. She turns off the light. Todd still stares. She nudges Todd; he starts, then turns off the helmet. The three stand there for a moment--

KIERSTEN

Well? Let's go save Eric.

87.

INT. UNDER-THE-BED - HALLWAY

Brian peeks around a corner, then steps out. Kiersten and Todd follow--then stop, staring. Todd's jaw drops.

ANGLE - THE MAIN STAIRWAY,

more imposing and sinister than ever.

TODD

(a squeak)
Up there?

BRIAN

That's where the Boss is-- that's
where Eric is. We'll take side
stairs and stuff as far as we can.

He points toward a hallway, starts for it--

--and Billy rounds a corner, pushing a wheelbarrow full of buttons. He stops when he sees them; they stare back. Billy spins, lets go of the wheelbarrow--buttons scatter-- he runs--

BILLY

(his yells echoing)
Red Alert! Everybody, lookout,
Red Alert--

--and suddenly a beam of light cuts across the hall. The Billy-clothes continue their momentum, sailing through the air,

landing, rolling into a ball in the corner.

Kiersten holds the monster in the beam of her flashlight. Brian pins it with another.

BRIAN
Good shooting.

TODD
Bogies at two o'clock!

Spike and Mary Jane race toward them, shouting--

BRIAN
Let's go!

He leads them at full tilt in the nearest safe direction-- up the main staircase.

INT. UNDER-THE-BED - LOWER LANDING

Our heroes race through an archway, and come to a dead halt--

They are at the main stairwell, higher up, near a dilapidated section of the stairs, on a balcony--which is a dead-end, the main stairway hanging in space, tantalizingly close.

88.

The threesome exchange glances--then turn: this is where they will make their stand. They snap out flashlights. From down the hall come the sounds of their pursuers.

BRIAN
Kiersten...um...about your science project--

KIERSTEN
I figured it out. It's okay.

Brian, surprised, gives her a sideways look, smiles--

TODD
There's one!

He snaps on his light--Brian grabs his wrist, knocking the flashlight down.

It is Maurice.

MAURICE

(gestures to an alcove)
Quick, in here!

Brian appraises him, surprised, suspicious.

MAURICE
C'mon! No time!

TODD
You're gonna trust him? He's a
monster!

Brian gazes at Maurice; Maurice, too, waits for the answer.

BRIAN
He's my friend.

Maurice's face relaxes--the boy he once was can almost be seen.
Out of the dark comes the sound of approaching monsters.

MAURICE
So hide already!

The three duck into an alcove.

MAURICE
HEY! DOWN HERE! HERE THEY ARE!

Kiersten frowns, looks at Brian. Brian keeps watching. The
monsters run up to Maurice--who starts running from them.

MAURICE
C'mon! This way! Let's get 'em!

Monsters race after him, shouting their bloodlust.

89.

Brian smiles, relieved--and happy that he was right.

INT. UNDER-THE-BED - HALLWAY

Maurice shouts encouraging lynch-mob sentiments as he leads the
monsters.

INT. UNDER-THE-BED - LOWER LANDING

As Brian leaps from the landing to the stairs. Todd tosses him
his pack. Kiersten steps onto the banister to follow.

INT. UNDER-THE-BED - HALLWAY

Maurice skids to a halt, points frantically at a stairway.

MAURICE
Up there! There they go!

The monsters rush up the stairs, leaving Maurice in the hall.

MAURICE
(calling up the stairs)
Give 'em one for me!

INT. RONNIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

as Spike scrambles out from under the bed, looks up--

--into Ronnie Coleman's grin, his bat already coming down--

--and Spike is nailed. Mary Jane stumbles over him as she rushes in, and CRACK! she's down, too. The rest of the posse surge out-- easy targets for Ronnie's deadly-accurate swings.

INT. UNDER-THE-BED - RONNIE'S STAIRS

The monsters come flooding back down the stairs, yelping, running scattershot from the Avenging Wraith of Baseball.

INT. UNDER-THE-BED - MAIN STAIRCASE

near the top. Brian peeks out quickly over the top step.

In front of the tall doors are two SENTINEL MONSTERS.

Todd and Kiersten lean close. Brian rubs his jaw. Todd's helmet bumps against Kiersten's head. She gives it a look--then looks at it again. Smiles.

90.

INT. UNDER-THE-BED - UPPERMOST LANDING.

The sentinel monsters, bored at their posts. Unseen by them, a hand sets Todd's helmet on the floor. Gives it a push. It slides across the landing, to in front of the monsters. The monsters look at it. Exchange a puzzled glance. One takes a tentative step closer to the helmet--

--one of Todd's sneaker's, thrown hard, hits the side of the helmet. The revolving light goes on; the monsters are caught, changing back and forth between monster and clothes.

The trio spring onto the landing. Todd and Kiersten go about pinning the monsters; Brian steps past them, eyes fixed on the doors. Immensely tall and impossibly narrow, polished black wood, covered with intricate runes. Nightmare doors.

Brian readies the Sun-Gun. Kiersten and Todd look on as Brian forces himself to touch the knob. He turns it. He pushes.

INT. UNDER-THE-BED - MASTER BEDROOM

The doors part. Brian peers through. He steps in, Todd and Kiersten close behind; they gape at the room--

Toys of all eras fill the room, on tall standing shelves. Train tracks and race-car tracks criss-cross the floor. All is covered with dust and cobwebs--an attic filled with forgotten, worn-out treasures, now rotting, and hiding rats.

Hanging from the ceiling are model airplanes of all sizes and types.

At the far end of the room is a fireplace, a chair to one side. A silhouetted figure rises from the chair.

BRIAN
(over his shoulder)
Watch the stairs.

Brian steps forward, peering through shadow-mottled room at the shape. He brings the light up, thumb on the ON switch.

Backlit by the flames, the figure seems bent over with age, a twisted shape. Then it steps into the light--it is a young boy, Brian's age, possibly younger. A boy who has stopped growing...but hasn't stopped aging.

In one hand he holds a marionette, its strings hopelessly tangled. He wears a Victorian nightshirt and velvet dressing gown. When he speaks, it is the voice of a boy-- but with the rhythms and control of an adult. He gazes directly at Brian.

BOY
Brian. Such a pleasure to meet
you.

BRIAN
I want my brother.

BOY
And you brought friends. How
nice!

Brian brandishes the Sun-Gun, no fooling around.

BRIAN
I want Eric.

A heavy arm shoves Brian to the ground--Brian hits hard, bounces
up, snapping on the Sun-Gun--

--Snik's foot slams down on the cord; it is torn away from the
battery in a shower of sparks. Snik reaches menacingly for
Brian, but a sharp gesture and a dark look from the boy cows
him. Kiersten has been searching her pack; she is out of
flashlights. She looks resignedly at Brian.

BOY
Now, Brian--what sort of greeting
is that? After all, we are so
much alike.

BRIAN
No, we're not.

BOY
Yes, we are, Brian. You're like
all of us down here. You're
already one of us-- under the
skin.

He nonchalantly tries to untangle the marionette's strings.

BOY
When Maurice told me how you
scared Eric--'Monsters are like
moths.' Sheer genius. You belong
here. You know you do.

BRIAN
I do not!

The boy's efforts at the strings get more frantic, less
effective.

BOY
Stay here with us, Brian. You
have friends here.

BRIAN
Maurice only pretended to be my
friend-- to lure me down here--
(beat; grim)

Where's my brother?

92.

Suddenly, the boy smashes the marionette onto a table top. Splintered pieces scatter. The boy looks at the crushed puppet briefly, then drops it.

BOY

Snik. Show him Eric.

Grinning, Snik creaks open a toychest. He pulls Eric up by the hair. He is a poor Jack-in-the-box, one eye blackened, mouth bloody.

TODD

Eric!

Eric's eyes track, finally focus in on Todd. Todd starts toward him--but Snik pulls Eric out of the chest, a huge forearm across Eric's throat. Kiersten grabs Todd's arm.

SNIK

C'mon. This puny neck-- break easy.

BOY

(to Brian)

If you stay, you'll be the one in charge of yourself. You'll be the one with power. Not your parents. Not your teachers. You.

(beat)

Isn't that what you want?

Sounds from outside the doors; Kiersten looks that way.

KIERSTEN

Brian! More monsters--

TODD

(looking out)

--lots more monsters.

Brian looks at Todd, Kiersten. They watch him, waiting for his decision. Brian focuses on the boy.

BRIAN

I want Eric.

Dramatically, Brian pulls a flashlight out of his pocket, brandishes it--looks down at it.

It is the penlight. Snik looks at the puny light, chuckles.

Brian grits his teeth, aims it at the boy, flips it on--

--the boy flinches away, blocking his face with his arms.

Brian whirls, closes on Snik, aims the light at Snik's head. Snik's head--just his head--transforms into an army boot and a pair of sweat socks. His arm is still at Eric's throat.

93.

Brian lowers the light--Snik bellows as his head re-forms and his arm becomes a pant leg; Eric struggles out of Snik's grip; Todd and Kiersten grab Eric and they scramble away.

Snik grabs Brian with his untransformed arm; Brian aims the light below Snik's waist, turning the monster's legs into a shirt and jacket. Snik bellows again as his still-formed torso collapses on top of the clothes.

Brian heads for his friends by the door.

Snik recovers, struggles to his feet, ready to give chase. The boy lays a restraining hand on his arm.

BOY

Don't worry, Snik. They've lost.

EXT. UNDER-THE-BED - UPPERMOST LANDING

Brian, Kiersten, Todd and Eric look down. Monsters crowd up the stairway.

KIERSTEN

We're cut off!

BRIAN

We can make it!

Brian leads the others straight toward the oncoming monsters-- just before they meet, he turns down a side landing.

It dead-ends short of the uppermost level of the stairwell. Brian leaps across; his friends follow. Monsters scatter, taking alternate routes to get at them.

Brian opens a door at random, climbs a stairway to beneath a bed-shadow. He is all set to move smoothly through the shadow--but slams full-tilt into it, his head hitting hard.

Brian holds his skull, stares unbelievably at the shadow.

TODD
What's wrong?

BRIAN
I don't know.

Brian tries to push his hand through; it stops at the shadow.

KIERSTEN
(an idea hits her)
Ohmigod--What time is it?

Brian pulls out his pocketwatch. The watch reads 5:23; the benign sun-face peeks out through the wedge, the malevolent man-in-the moon almost gone.

94.

BRIAN
We've still got almost half an hour...

KIERSTEN
(gestures to the watch)
Are you sure it's right?

Brian looks from the shadowway to the watch. His face falls.

BRIAN
I didn't fix it. It's still broken.

TODD
You mean we're trapped?

A laugh sounds from below. The four look down at the Boss, who grins triumphantly.

BOY
Brian. I'm so glad you decided to stay.

Brian turns back to the shadow, pushes--then slams his fists at the shadow, in frustration, in anger.

BOY (O.S.)
Truthfully, I'm surprised you even came down. Imagine, a selfish little bugger who cares for no one

trying to do a good deed--
 (his taunts lash at
 Brian)
Of course, it did only serve to
deliver your friends unto me. So
I guess that ultimately all this
misfortune is your fault. But,
then, you already knew that,
didn't you?

Brian can take no more. With a roar, he rushes down the stairs,
past the others, at the boy--who steps back. Brian sprawls.

INT. UNDER-THE-BED - HALLWAY

Snik comes at Brian. Brian lashes out with his foot, nailing
Snik in the shin. Snik howls. Brian kicks viciously at Snik's
other leg. Snik howls again, and Brian scrambles to his feet.
He brings his leg up with all his might, as hard as he can--

--and Snik catches it inches from his crotch. He wags one
finger of his free hand at Brian. Brian's eyes widen in dread.
Snik tumbles him backwards to the floor.

Brian tries to struggle up--a huge fist smashes into the side of
his head, stunning him.

95.

INT. UNDER-THE-BED - STAIRWELL

where the others watch the fight--Kiersten winces as another
haymaker pounds Brian--who stops moving. Snik stands over him,
bellows triumphantly. The boy looks up at them.

 BOY
Allie-Allie-otsen-free.
 (beat; harsher)
We're waiting.

Kiersten, Todd and Eric exchange glances, all hope gone.
Kiersten drops her head--then starts down. Todd follows.

INT. UNDER-THE-BED - HALLWAY

Monsters grab Kiersten, Todd and Eric. Spike strips off Brian's
pack--the movement causes Brian to revive. He groans, sitting
up.

 BOY

You see, Brian? You cannot challenge my power down here. If I say you stay, then you stay. If I say the shadows are closed, then the shadows are closed.

MAURICE (O.S.)

Aa, put a sock in it.

He steps out of the shadows. Looks at Brian. 'Tsk's once at his condition.

MAURICE

There's still time to get out.

BOY

The shadow is closed.

MAURICE

To Brian it's closed. He came down here to rescue his brother. Not your typical monster behavior, is it?

Kiersten's eyes widen. She struggles out of the grasp of the monster holding her, grabs up the penlight off the floor. She shines it--on Brian's arm.

Brian does not change. A monster wrestles the light from Kiersten. Brian snaps his gaze to the Boss.

BRIAN

You tricked me.

96.

BOY

All part of the game, Brian. Oh, don't look so surprised. Only monsters can move in shadows. You gave up any claim to that privilege when you chose to rescue your brother.

This surprises some of the monsters.

SPIKE

You told me once you start to change, there's no going back.

BOY

Did you really want to go back?

Spike looks down; maybe he did at one time, but not any more.

BOY
(to Maurice)
As for you--I've put up with your
behavior long enough.

MAURICE
I'm just a natural-born rebel.
Shoot me.

The boy stares at him.

BOY
Snik.
(indicating Brian)
Break his neck.

MAURICE
(steps toward Snik)
NO!

Snik drops Brian unceremoniously, and gestures to Maurice.

SNIK
More medicine, eh? Cure you--of
life.

Maurice hesitates.

BOY
Your move, Maurice.

Maurice looks at the towering Snik--then spins, and runs.

Brian, from the floor, stares after Maurice, drops his head.

INT. UNDER-THE-BED - HALLWAY

Maurice, a bat out of hell, zooms toward a particular door--

97.

INT. UNDER-THE-BED - ALAINE'S STAIRWAY

--though the door, up a flight of stairs--

INT. ALAINE'S BEDROOM - MORNING

as Maurice zooms from under the bed, waking Alaine, who screams; he races across the room and jumps out the window, crashing through the screen to--

EXT. ROOF

--where he leaps across to the next house--he dashes along the eaves, silhouetted against the pre-dawn sky; he dives in through a window--

INT. DEFENSIVE NINE-YEAR-OLD'S BEDROOM - MORNING

The kid comes awake as Maurice crashes in, hits the floor in a shower of glass, rolls, shoots down under the bed--

INT. UNDER-THE-BED - STAIRWAY

--Maurice drops out of a shadowway, dives down the stairs--

INT. UNDER-THE-BED - HALLWAY

--Maurice bursts out of the doorway directly behind Snik, catching him by surprise. He slams him face forward into the floor-- Maurice rolls clear--

Brian commando-rolls to his backpack, grabbing it from Spike, and dives for the Sun-Gun on the floor--

--with his teeth, he strips one of the wires--

--Maurice helps Kiersten, Eric and Todd free themselves--

--Brian twists down the wing nuts on the battery--

BOY

Stop them!

MAURICE

Don't listen to him! What's he ever done for you?

Monsters, starting forward, pause to think.

--Brian brings the lamp up--

--the boy's eyes widen--

--Maurice's eyes widen--

--Brian thumbs the switch--

BRILLIANT WHITE LIGHT cuts across the room, slams into the Boss, slams him up into the lattice--he flattens into a silhouette--the light slices through him--the lattice gives way--the Boss is blasted up and away, into oblivion.

The bulb EXPLODES--

P.O.V. BRIAN--

--as his eyes re-adjust to the darkness, revealing:

The hallway: Some of the monsters have been turned into Hiroshima shadows on the walls. Some are partial shadows. Snik is a mess: part monster, part clothes, part wavering between solid and shadow.

Brian drops the lamp. He looks around wildly.

BRIAN
Maurice? Maurice!

A doorway opens; Maurice peers out warily. He surveys the room.

MAURICE
(shaky)
Now, that's what I call rock 'n
roll.

Brian sighs. Maurice steps out.

MAURICE
Shouldn't you folks be toddling
along?

INT. UNDER-THE-BED - ATTIC STAIRS

Eric and Todd are on the stairs.

TODD
Well, we were right, huh?

Eric smiles, slaps him five, as Maurice, followed by Brian, hurries past them to the top of the stairs.

KIERSTEN
(as Maurice goes by)
You might not be able to get
through now--now that you helped
us--

BRIAN

Yeah--monsters don't help friends--

99.

Maurice slides his hand through, with no problem. He looks at it, half-through, and then looks down sadly at Brian.

MAURICE

Face it, Bri--some of us got it,
some of us don't.

He grabs Kiersten's shoulder, hustles her out--then Eric, and Todd. Maurice looks at Brian, who doesn't move.

MAURICE

Get out of here, you toothfairy.

Brian gives him a long look, climbs through the hole.

INT. STEVENSON HOME - ATTIC ROOM - MORNING

Brian slides out from under the bed. He glances at the window--the sun is up, but it hasn't cleared the horizon yet. He turns and looks at Maurice, still in the shadow.

MAURICE

Well, I promised you excitement.

BRIAN

Those other monsters are going to
kill you.

MAURICE

Thank you, Mr. Sunshine.

Brian spots the penlight, in Kiersten's hand. He takes it. He cocks an eyebrow at Maurice. Maurice arches both eyebrows, a smile spreading on his face. Brian hands the penlight to him.

BRIAN

It's not very big...

MAURICE

(sagely)

In the land of the blind, the one-
eyed man is king.

He loses his wise composure, and grins.

BRIAN

Catch ya later, Maurice.

MAURICE

Not if I catch you first.

He slips back into the shadow, and is gone. Brian pulls out his watch: the sweep second hand ticks to the twelve-- Brian looks up, and the sun clears the horizon. Brian puts his hand to the shadow, trying to reach through it, trying to reach Maurice. It is only a shadow.

100.

Brian turns away from the bed, away from the others. Todd knocks on the shadowed floor. Kiersten steps over to Brian. Brian looks up at her.

BRIAN

Thanks for the help.

KIERSTEN

All you had to do was ask.

Eric puts his hand on Brian's shoulder. Holly and Glen come up the stairs, spot Eric, hurry into the room, relieved and happy.

Glen and Holly hug Eric, Brian a little to the side. Eric looks over at him; they smile at each other. Glen reaches out, pulls Brian into the hug.

CUT TO BLACK

THE END