<u>A PRICE TO PAY</u>

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FADE IN:

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

An OLD MAN sits at the table. Only the side of his bald head, arm and shoulder are visible. ERIC, middle aged with graying hair, sits across from him, pen in hand. A piece of paper lays on the table before him.

The room dances in the flickering light of an old oil lamp.

Somewhere in the house something bangs, wood on wood. He looks towards the noises.

ERIC And this will work, right?

STRANGER Have no doubt.

Eric takes a deep breathe and sighs. He takes a look around and puts pen to paper but hesitates. When something thuds in the next room he quickly scrawls his name on the dotted line.

INT. FOYER - NIGHT

Eric climbs a large staircase that wraps around one side of a curved wall. In one hand he holds the oil lamp.

He stops at a photograph set in an ornate frame and looks upon the face of a young dark haired beauty.

ERIC It won't be long now.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

A glass hutch stretches from floor to ceiling. Eric opens the door and removes one of the many shotguns inside.

He turns back down the hallway and disappears into a room.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

The Victorian mansion stretches its gabled peaks into the darkness overhead. A lone porch light saves it from an air of loneliness and abandon.

A window on the second floor flashes with light and blinks out. A muted boom follows and all goes silent. INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

JENNIFER, early 20's with long black hair and porcelain skin is the same one from the photograph.

She lays on a wooden floor next to a large stain, darkened black by the passage of time. A white night gown hugs her figure.

A delicate finger traces the edge of the stain and a breath hitches in her chest. Tears begin to flow from her eyes.

With the back of her hand she wipes away the tears and gets to her feet.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Jennifer, stands at the back door and looks out into the darkness. She starts to turn the dead bolt when something catches her eye. She turns off the light to better see.

The shape of a man begins to form and it jabs at the earth with frantic motions. Dirt flies in all directions.

Next to him is a body wrapped in what looks like a white sheet and black plastic.

#### JENNIFER

My god.

She slowly turns the dead bolt and it snaps into place with a loud click. A breathy scream escapes her lips as she looks to see if the man outside heard.

He no longer digs but stares at the house where Jennifer now cowers in the dark.

She thumbs the deadlock, opens the door a crack and slams it shut. Her hand twists the deadlock back and forth, locking and unlocking the door.

She pulls on the locked door to make sure it is secure.

When she looks up the man is close and Jennifer runs from the room in terror.

SERIES OF SHOTS - JENNIFER RUNS THROUGH THE HOUSE

-- She opens and closes doors and runs the dead bolt three times before locking them.

-- She opens and closes windows in various rooms. She locks and unlocks them three times before she throws the curtains shut.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

She walks into the room and sits in the middle of the old stain. She crosses her legs, faces the door and waits.

FADE TO BLACK.

### BLACKNESS

Intermittent sounds. Duct tape being torn from a roll and the crinkle of plastic mixed with strained breath.

A hollow thud echoes as if something drops into a metal tub.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

The darkness begins to fall away. Jennifer rolls over as the sounds continue in the other room.

She is half awake and lays on the floor.

### JENNIFER

Eric? What are you --

Her eyes snap open and she clamps a hand to her mouth in shock.

The noises in the other room stop.

Something squeaks on wet tile, followed by squishy footsteps.

She scrambles under the bed as her hands try to stifle the panic in her breath.

The footsteps grow louder and closer. The sound builds and builds like cannon fire until she grabs her ears and drowns them out with a scream.

Once the scream dies in her throat the house is silent. She lays there and listens to the house settle when

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VOICE (O.S.)
(drawn out whisper)
Jennifer.
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She curls into a ball and begins to shake with fear.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Jennifer stands at the back door and looks out into the night. She chews on her lower lip.

She thumbs the deadlock, opens the door a crack and slams it shut. Her hand twists the deadlock back and forth, locking and unlocking the door.

She pulls on the locked door to make sure it is secure.

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INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

She walks into the room and sits in the middle of the old stain. She crosses her legs, faces the door and waits.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT - LATER

The house creaks and groans. Jennifer wakes once again next to the stain. She looks more pale and her eyes float in dark circles of tired flesh.

She walks to the door and peers out.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

The moonlight outside casts everything in an eerie twilight.

Jennifer peeks her head out of the bedroom.

## JENNIFER Hello? Is that you Eric?

She steps from the room and just as she crosses the threshold a bloodcurdling scream fills the air.

She falls into the hallway just as things begin to crash and break inside the bedroom.

A bloody hand explodes from the darkness of the room and claws at the floor of the hallway. Fingernails scratch at the wood as its pulled back inside. Jennifer takes off in a blind panic and darts into another room. She closes the door but leaves a crack for her to spy on the horror that is unfolding.

A man stumbles from the bedroom. It is Eric, but not the one from earlier. This Eric is a much younger version.

He leans against the wall and catches his breath.

Jennifer clamps an unbelieving hand over her mouth as tears spill down her cheek.

He turns around and she sees a long butcher knife in his hand. Blood drips from the knife.

Eric hurries down the hall and into the bathroom.

Jennifer sneaks from her hiding place and follows him.

She peers into the bathroom to find Eric kneeling near the toilet. Blood streaks and pools across the white tile floor.

JENNIFER (CONT'D) (whispered) Oh Eric... What did you do?

His head snaps around as if he heard her.

She flees to the safety of her hiding place as Eric comes out of the bathroom, feet squeaking on the bloody tiles.

He stops at the door and peers out into the hallway. His head cocks as if to hear something far away.

With a sigh he heads back to the bedroom and disappears inside. When he reappears he shuffles backwards out the door.

Jennifer watches as Eric drags a lifeless body out into the hallway and towards the bathroom.

She looks in shock from the white fabric covering the body to her arm. It is the same. Her eyes grow wide with disbelief.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Jennifer stands at the back door and looks out into the night. She chews on her lower lip.

She thumbs the deadlock, opens the door a crack and slams it shut. Her hand twists the deadlock back and forth, locking and unlocking the door.

She pulls on the locked door to make sure it is secure.

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She walks into the room and sits in the middle of the old stain. She crosses her legs, faces the door and waits.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT - LATER

Jennifer's eyes flutter open to the sound of grunts and snarls. She tries to blink her eyes clear and focus on the black shape that hovers over her.

She reaches up to touch her head and winces. Her body jumps and twitches as something is being done to it. She pulls back her hand to see it now gleams with blood.

### JENNIFER Eric... what are you doing to me?

The black shape's arm rises and falls repeatedly. With each stroke Jennifer's body shakes.

The grunts get louder and louder as the thing atop her stops and moves its face within her sight. It's face is pale and demonic, twisted with rage.

It draws something from the darkness and as it does, Jennifer's body arches up with a wet sucking sound.

The demon pulls a bloody knife to his lips and licks the blood that flows from the blade.

He raises the knife over his head and prepares to deliver the final blow when out of nowhere another shadow tackles it.

Free from the weight of her attacker, Jennifer scrambles from the room.

Jennifer sits in the hallway clutching her torn and bloody gown. She stares wildly back into the room where all is silent once again. INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Jennifer thumbs the deadlock, opens the door a crack and slams it shut. Her hand twists the deadlock back and forth, locking and unlocking the door. She has become maniacal.

She pulls on the locked door with both hands to make sure it is secure. An insane giggle slips past her clenched teeth.

SERIES OF SHOTS - JENNIFER RUNS THROUGH THE HOUSE

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INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

She walks into the room and sits in the middle of the old stain. She crosses her legs, faces the door and waits.

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

The door slams shut with incredible force. It instantly snaps Jennifer out of her sleep.

JENNIFER (screams) What do you want from me?

VOICE (O.S.) (drawn out whisper) Jennifer.

Her body involuntarily shivers at the sound of the voice.

JENNIFER Eric, please... why are you tormenting me.

The room has fallen silent.

She rises to her feet and shuffles toward the door. As she is about to put her ear to the door something moves behind her.

She jerks around but the room is empty.

VOICE (O.S.) (drawn out whisper) He's here. The door behind here rocks in its frame by an unseen force on the other side. Over and over beat against the frame as something tries to force its way into the room.

She flees to the opposite wall and cowers against it. She screams at the door.

### JENNIFER Why is this happening to me!?

The door begins to split, losing its battle with the thing outside.

JENNIFER (CONT'D) Please, Eric... No. No!

The door gives way and flies into the room. With it a flood of white light so bright it burns everything into oblivion.

### LIGHT

A hand begins to emerge from the light and reaches out. As the body attached to it becomes visible we see that it is the aged Eric with graying hair.

His voice is calm and tender.

ERIC Jennifer. It's okay.

Jennifer takes shape from the light. She is even more beautiful than before and glows like an angel.

She reaches out and takes his hand.

JENNIFER What just happened?

ERIC Something you will never have to remember. I've made sure of that.

The light begins to fade and with it the room comes into view. They are in the center of the

# KITCHEN

She smiles at him and holds his hand against her face.

JENNIFER

How?

He thinks for a moment.

ERIC

I had to ... rewind you.

JENNIFER

I don't understand.

ERIC

I freed you.

He lets out a weary sigh.

ERIC (CONT'D) Something happened to you in this house. Something so powerful it forced a wedge between you and... eternity.

The smile fades from her lips.

JENNIFER

Eternity?

Eric looks over at the door that leads further into the house. The Old Man is in a three piece suit and stands on the threshold between the two rooms.

Eric shakes his head with a look of grief and pain. Jennifer follows his gaze but he stops her with a hug. He holds on to her fiercely as he takes in everything he loves about her.

> ERIC It's time to go.

He turns to the back door and opens it. The sky outside is turning bright with the same white light from a moment ago.

> JENNIFER Where we going?

He ushers her to the door and kisses her.

#### ERIC

Not me, you.

She looks at him with confusion.

JENNIFER I want you to come with me.

Eric looks over his shoulder at the doorway. The Old Man taps a bony finger on the face of a pocket watch.

He turns back to Jennifer and pushes her further away.

ERIC I can't. There's a price to pay for what I've done.

JENNIFER What did you do Eric?

He nudges her out the door and she doesn't resist. As he closes the door, tears cascade down his cheeks.

### ERIC

I loved you.

Eric closes the door and throws the dead bolt home.

Jennifer pounds on the glasses as the light behind her grows brighter and brighter.

JENNIFER No. Please don't leave me.

As Jennifer begins to merge with the light he puts his hand to the window and she does the same.

He mouths a silent goodbye to her and she is gone.

For a long moment he stares through the door as if to make sure she is really gone.

STRANGER (O.S.) It's time.

Eric turns to the man and shakes his head.

STRANGER (CONT'D) I've held up my end, now its your turn.

Head sunk low, Eric follows the man out of the kitchen.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Eric and the Old Man walk side by side down the hallway. As they approach the bedroom door, Eric notices orange light flickering underneath the closed door.

He pulls back but the Old Man catches him by the elbow.

STRANGER Its best if you don't fight it. With his other hand, the Old Man points at the door and it creaks open as if by magic. The room on the other side is fully engulfed in flames.

The Old Man escorts Eric into the room and turns to close the door behind them.

As he does a wicked smile crosses his face and a deep throated chuckle bubbles past his lips.

He slams the door and throws the world into darkness.

THE END