ALL THAT REMAINS

written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. COAST - DAY

Pacific waves crash against a rugged cape. Forest covered bluffs rise to foggy crests.

On a cleared plateau, a white block lighthouse towers over a nook with its Fresnel lens turning.

A short distance down a winding path sits the old light keeper's house, now a bed and breakfast with a burgundy roof and picket fence.

EXT. LIGHT KEEPER'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

A van pulls into the small gravel lot, followed by a pickup.

Already waiting at the locked door is ERIN, early 20s, pretty with a fragile quality, as though she's always concerned.

She smiles and ambles to the tract to greet them.

JOAN, 30s, climbs out of the driver's seat. She's relaxed and frumpy, busy but never in a hurry.

ERIN

Good to see you again.

Joan nods with a smile.

TIM, 30s, climbs out of the passenger side. He's wiry and rough with a dishonest air.

TIM

Tim.

Erin smiles humbly as they shake hands.

ERIN

It's nice to meet you.

There's a bang on the side of the van from inside. Joan shoulders past Tim.

JOAN

Hold on, I'm coming!

She slides the side door open to reveal...

MITCHELL, 30s. He's feisty, heavyset with a beard and glasses, sitting in a wheelchair.

I'd like some fresh air too.

Joan works a ramp out.

JOAN

Can you give me a minute?

TIM

He's been bitching like that the whole trip.

Joan and Erin help him out.

MITCHELL

I want to get set up before dark. Ghosts are most active during the twilight hours.

Tim snickers. Mitchell rolls to a stop.

MITCHELL (CONT'D)

What are you doing, get the equipment.

Tim shakes his head, annoyed, turns to the van.

MR. HICKS, 40s, climbs out of his truck. Athletic and cocky, he walks with pep, jangling a set of keys.

HICKS

Okay, let's get this show on the road. I wanna get in some diving before the day's out.

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Hicks unlocks the door. Saunters in, followed by his guests.

HICKS

There's plenty of water.

He gestures toward stacks of water bottles. Then opens cabinet doors, displaying supplies.

HICKS (CONT'D)

There's coffee, snacks, beer. Eat all you want.

DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A long myrtle table stretches across a gorgeous carpet. Shipping relics fill every wall and corner.

The guests glance around in awe. Tim sets down a recording device with a cassette inside and a microphone attached.

HTCKS

There are two rooms downstairs. The rest are upstairs.

He hands Erin the keys.

HICKS (CONT'D)

If you need anything, you've got my number.

He pauses, staring transfixed at her face.

HICKS (CONT'D)

It's incredible how much like her you look.

ERIN

You knew my sister?

HICKS

Well, it all happened before I bought the place but I've heard the story a million times.

He scans the team.

HICKS (CONT'D)

So you're ghost hunters?

Joan puts a hand affectionately on Mitchell's shoulder.

JOAN

Mitchell and I have been doing it for years. Tim just joined us.

Hicks turns back to Erin.

HICKS

And you hired them to -- what did the news say -- contact your sister's ghost?

ERIN

My sister kept a diary that was never found. I believe it may reveal the identity of her killer.

Hicks chuckles, steps toward the door.

HICKS

Well, have fun with that. When somebody rents the entire house, I don't argue.

He opens the door and pauses.

HICKS (CONT'D)

Just don't break anything. And have a nice night.

He grins and walks out. Mitchell swivels toward Tim.

MITCHELL

Okay, let's set up for EVPs.

TIM

You know, I'm getting tired of your bossing. You're not the one signing my check.

Mitchell exchanges glances with Erin. She frowns at Tim.

ERIN

Mitchell's in charge. He's the expert.

Tim sighs, picks up the recorder.

MIT

Expert at what, picking up ambient noises?

MITCHELL

We've captured EVPs at haunted spots in the past that have been --

TIM

All right, whatever, where do you want this thing?

ERIN'S BEDROOM - DUSK

Erin steps in with an overnight case. The soft tones are soothing but she looks it over with an uneasiness.

She opens her case on the bed, rummages through. Pauses when Joan appears in the doorway.

JOAN

Mitchell wants everyone downstairs.

Her words drift past a preoccupied Erin.

ERIN

This is where she stayed that night.

Joan gives the room a quick skim.

JOAN

You know, you don't have to stay here. There are two extra rooms.

ERIN

I want to. I need to.

The wind rattles the window in its frame. Erin shivers.

ERIN (CONT'D)

You go on. I'll be down in a minute.

Joan nods, smiling faintly and leaves.

STAIRWELL - MOMENTS LATER

Erin bounces down the steps, refreshed, and enters the...

LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The recorder is set up on a large coffee table. Mitchell plays with its knobs and dials while Joan assists.

Tim watches the ocean through a vintage telescope by the window. With his free hand, he holds a beer.

TIM

I think I see a whale.

He moves the lens over a little.

TIM (CONT'D)

There's a boat of tourists -- oh, you gotta see this chick!

MITCHELL

You're supposed to be helping us set up.

TIM

Unlike ghosts, this woman is real.

He takes a swig of beer. Mitchell spins around angrily.

If you don't believe in ghosts, then why did you join our group?

Tim sighs, pulling the bottle from his lips. He looks at Mitchell and shrugs.

MIT

I've never been on a ghost hunt before. I thought it would be fun.

JOAN

I think it's ready.

Mitchell regards the recorder.

MITCHELL

It's time.

LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The group sits in a circle on the floor, except Mitchell, in his chair. He nods to Joan. She pushes a button, starting the recorder.

Mitchell speaks into the air.

MITCHELL

I'm speaking to the ghost of Emma Chapelwood. We are here with your twin sister, Erin.

He scans the room for any sign.

MITCHELL (CONT'D)

We know that death can be very confusing, especially when it's traumatic. Like yours.

He rests his gaze on Erin, hesitant, then looks away.

MITCHELL (CONT'D)

That night, five years ago, someone murdered you. He slit your throat. He flung you over the cliffs to the rocks below. Do you remember?

The wind clatters the window, unnerving everyone. Joan gasps, clutching her chest.

JOAN

Damn, I nearly had a heart attack.

MIT

It's just the wind.

MITCHELL

It could be a sign.

MIT

Are you serious? First, we have a ghost who's confused. I mean, if someone threw me off a cliff, I'd sure as hell remember. Now the wind blows and everyone has a stroke. What a crock.

JOAN

You know, if you don't want to be a part of this, that's fine. But you don't have to ruin it.

Tim sighs, gestures for Mitchell to continue. Mitchell stares vacantly a moment, then blurts out...

MITCHELL

I'm dying.

All attention shifts to Mitchell. Everyone's riveted.

TIM

Seriously?

MITCHELL

My internal organs are giving out. I don't have much time left.

Joan puts a comforting hand on his knee.

JOAN

Why didn't you tell me?

MITCHELL

I didn't want to worry you. I've known for months.

He fights back emotion.

JOAN

Oh Mitchell.

She climbs to her feet and hugs him.

TIM

Hey, man, I'm sorry to hear that.

Joan pulls back with teary eyes.

Wanna hear something funny? I've been a ghost hunter for fifteen years and I've never seen a ghost.

Suddenly... Erin moans and snaps into an eerie trance. All attention shifts to her. She speaks in a chilling tone.

ERIN

My diary... is in... my room.

She collapses to the floor. Tim leaps up and checks her.

TIM

I can't find a pulse! I think she's dead.

Erin groans, rousing. Mitchell frowns.

MITCHELL

Can she sit up?

Tim helps Erin sit.

ERIN

I don't know what happened. Something just came over me.

MITCHELL

We've got to go upstairs.

STAIRWELL - MOMENTS LATER

Mitchell uses his hands to "walk" up the rail with Tim helping. Joan and Erin drag his chair up.

TIM

I still don't see why you can't just wait down here.

MITCHELL

Because I can't.

ERIN'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Erin enters, followed by Mitchell.

ERIN

The diary is in here somewhere.

MITCHELL

Let's get looking.

He wheels in and opens drawers at the nightstand. Erin and Joan search the closet and dresser.

Tim shakes his head.

MIT

Okay, you know what, I'm gonna go get a beer.

MITCHELL

Let me guess, you don't believe any of this.

JOAN

But you saw what happened to Erin.

MIT

Look, I don't want to call anyone a liar but there's this thing called acting. And I'm starting to think you're all pulling my chain.

MITCHELL

Just go. You're holding us all back anyway.

Tim rolls his eyes and walks off. The others continue searching. After a few moments, Tim calls from downstairs...

TIM (0.S.)

Joan, can you come here a minute?

Joan pauses, glances at Mitchell.

MITCHELL

Go see what he wants.

Joan nods, exits. When she's out of earshot, Mitchell focuses on Erin.

MITCHELL (CONT'D)

So what's going on?

She flashes a bewildered look.

MITCHELL (CONT'D)

I'm a failure at what I do. The most I've got to show for it is some obscure noises on tape. But I've been faking like I'm healthy for the last six months and I know a performance when I see one.

Erin relents with a telling sigh.

DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Joan steps into the room, searching for Tim.

Suddenly... a gloved hand clamps over her mouth from behind.

ERIN'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Erin steps to the nightstand and pulls out a drawer. Taped to the back is... the diary.

She pulls it off and hands it to a stunned Mitchell. He flips through. The pages are all blank.

MITCHELL

It's empty. I don't get it.

ERIN

There is no diary. I planted it.

Mitchell digests, slaps the book closed.

MITCHELL

It's a set up. You're trying to draw out the killer.

ERIN

I was hoping he'd show up.

Mitchell gazes at the diary, pondering. Looks up, realizing.

MITCHELL

Tim.

He stuffs the diary beside him and backs out of the room.

ERIN

What about him?

MITCHELL

I don't know him. We hooked up through an ad.

HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Mitchell rotates toward the stairs.

MITCHELL

Stay in the room and lock the door.

Erin shuts the door. Mitchell wheels toward the stairs.

MITCHELL (CONT'D)

Joan! Joan!

As he nears the edge... a figure quickly advances from a room behind him, grabs the handles of the chair and...

Overturns it.

STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

Mitchell falls out, along with the diary, and hits the jagged steps. He tumbles down, crashes at the foot.

His wheelchair clanks down after him and bangs the wall.

Mitchell groans, forces himself onto his belly.

He hears muffled pleas. Feels for his broken glasses, puts them on. He sees into the...

LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Joan struggles, bound and gagged on the floor. Nearby is... Tim. Also bound and gagged.

STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

Mitchell whips his head toward the stairs.

MITCHELL

Erin!

He crawls with all his strength and desperately climbs.

ERIN'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Erin backs away from the door. The knob violently shakes. Someone bangs on it. Finally, it's cracked open.

Erin looks up in horror at... Hicks. Holding a knife.

STAIRS - CONTINUOUS

Mitchell forces himself to climb. He pauses when he sees... the diary, resting on a step. He snatches it and moves on.

ERIN'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Hicks brandishes the knife.

HICKS

Just tell me where the diary is.

ERIN

I just want to know why you did it.

HICKS

I searched for the treasure of the Devil's Eel for twenty years. She was just diving from a tourist boat. I saw her with some statues from the wreckage. So I followed her here. I heard her talking about the souvenirs she'd found.

He steps closer. Erin backs away.

HICKS (CONT'D)

Souvenirs! She had no idea that what she'd found could buy this hotel. I just wanted to know where she found them... but she panicked.

He grabs Erin by the arm.

HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Mitchell mounts the top of the stairs. Hicks pulls Erin out of the bedroom with a knife to her throat.

Mitchell holds up the diary.

MITCHELL

I've got the diary! Don't hurt her, I've got it right here!

Hicks notes the diary, grins slyly. Then... he slices Erin's throat! She drops to the floor dead.

MITCHELL (CONT'D)

No! You bastard!

He throws the diary at him. It flops across the floor, to a stop at Hicks' feet. He picks it up, opens it.

HICKS

What's this?

It was a trick. You killed her for no reason, asshole!

Hicks absorbs, tosses the diary aside. He steps to Mitchell, forces the knife to his throat. Mitchell blurts out...

MITCHELL (CONT'D)

Emma doesn't have a sister!

Hicks pauses, taken off guard. Mitchell shakes his head, baffled himself.

MITCHELL (CONT'D)

I don't know why I said that.

They look down the hallway at the body of Erin.

Suddenly... she opens her eyes. Her body rises off the floor to a standing position.

Hicks stands, horrified.

HICKS

What is this?

ERTN

My name's not Erin... it's Emma.

Hicks steps back.

HICKS

It can't be. You can't be a ghost!

She advances.

EMMA

I was on vacation. I'd just graduated college. I had a life.

When she gets close enough, Hicks swipes at her with the knife. The blade phases right through her.

Hicks jumps back with wide eyes. He steps too close to the edge of the stairs and trips.

STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

He topples down and collides with the floor. Dead. The knife protrudes from his bloody abdomen.

HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Emma peers down from above. She turns to Mitchell, helps him sit against the wall. He stares, enthralled.

MITCHELL

So you're a -- ghost?

EMMA

I've wandered these cliffs for five years. And it always came back to the same thing. I just had to know what happened.

MITCHELL

So what happens now?

EMMA

I don't know. But I'm ready to find out.

She smiles tenderly as she stands.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Thank you.

Mitchell watches dazed as she walks to the end of the hall.

The swirling wind whips the window. Emma walks through the wall and glass and vanishes into the night.

Mitchell smiles with an air of sadness.

FADE OUT.