

CREAK AND SHRIEK

written by

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FADE IN:

A record spins, the surface slick as midnight oil.

INT. BOY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Curly-haired NOAH, 8, sticks his nose close to the turntable, transfixed by the rotating vinyl grooves.

At the moment, his entire world turns at 33 1/3 RPM--the speed of the record.

Gradually, Noah draws back, lifts the record player's thin arm, and settles the needle carefully into place.

A warm crackle emits, followed by a jarring blast of noise--wind shrieks, thunder booms, chains shake and clank.

Noah's eyes widen with fear and fascination as the sounds of horror blare across the room.

He grips the album cover. Its large letters say "Scary Sounds of the Night"--A sound effects record.

A fanged ghoul adorns the album cover, too. His face resembles a mashed plum.

Noah nervously paces as he listens. He treads upon torn wrapping paper from a birthday party.

A discarded ribbon stretches snakelike across the carpet.

A tag near the wrappings says "Happy Birthday, Noah, Love Auntie W."

Also scrawled on the tag: "Don't be scared."

More sound effects flow from the record player: a witch's cackle, screams, footsteps. Noah chews his thumbnail as he listens.

He jumps when a voice calls out from the doorway--his MOM.

MOM (O.S.)

Gonna give yourself nightmares,
kid.

A heart beats on the sound effects record: lub-dub, lub-dub.

Noah's mom stands just out of view in the doorway. He turns off the record player, letting it groan to a stop.

MOM (O.S.)
 I don't know why you'd wanna listen
 to that. It's hell's soundtrack.

Remaining out of sight, Noah's mom takes an audible sip from
 a glass and rattles the ice cubes. She's definitely tipsy.

Noah never takes his eyes off of her.

MOM (O.S.)
 The person who sent you that
 record--Auntie W.--is a kook.
 You've never met her 'cause she
 lives in the woods and talks to
 skunks. Grows daisies and eats 'em.

Noah nods. His eyes are wide, soaking in everything.

MOM (O.S.)
 She's not the type that remembers
 birthdays or sends gifts, so this
 is outta the blue. Makes you
 wonder, doesn't it?

NOAH
 Wonder what?

Noah's mom shakes her glass and changes gears.

MOM (O.S.)
 Why'd nobody come to your birthday
 party this afternoon? We sent
 invites to the whole class.

NOAH
 Isaiah came.

MOM (O.S.)
 Isaiah barely counts. He didn't say
 two words the whole time he was
 here. He didn't eat cake. Didn't
 bring a gift. He's not a friend,
 he's a tree stump. And if the two
 neighbor ladies didn't show up, it
 would have been just you and me.

Noah stares.

MOM (O.S.)
 What if we end up like Auntie W.--
 crazy and all alone.

NOAH
 But we're together.

MOM (O.S.)
Maybe, but we've been in regression
ever since your dad...

She rattles the ice cubes again.

MOM (O.S.)
You know what regression is? It's
going backwards.

NOAH
I know, mom.

A moment crawls by.

MOM (O.S.)
You deserve more.

Noah nods. His mom shuffles off without another word. The ice cubes clink as she trails away.

Noah peers to the empty doorway.

NOAH
Mom?

The room is quiet.

NOAH
(softly)
I love you. Good night.

Noah keeps his eyes on the doorway for awhile, but turns his attention to the ghoul on the album cover.

After a minute, he flips on the record player and listens to howling werewolves and fluttering bats.

He acts out in conjunction with the record, growling and flapping his arms like wings. He pretends he is a bat.

But then he looks around nervously, as if he can't decide whether to enjoy this record or fear it.

He throws away scraps of wrapping paper, and then turns off the record player, just as ghosts start to moan.

He hops into his bed and turns out the lamp on his nightstand.

The darkness settles and the Noah's vague outlines emerge. He stares directly at his record player. He can't keep his eyes off of it.

INT. BOY'S BEDROOM - LATER

Noah sleeps.

Then the room crackles with sound: clanks, desperate breathing, rattling doors.

Noah stirs and sits up.

NOAH

Mom?

Noah grabs a flashlight from his night stand and directs it toward the sound.

The beam wavers in the darkness. It finds the record player.

The turntable spins on its own. It's alive.

Noah groans and leaves his bed. He steps cautiously past the album cover on the floor. The ghoul on the cover looks especially ominous in the shadows of the flashlight beam.

One step. Two steps. Noah approaches the record player.

He stretches his hand toward it. He's both desperate to turn it off and frightened to touch it.

His hand fumbles on a switch. It's not turning off.

NOAH

(softly)

C'mon. Please.

Success. The player grinds to a stop.

Noah flies back into bed and throws the covers over his head.

He flicks on the flashlight under the blankets, creating a small dome of light.

After several moments, Noah clicks it off. All is dark.

A moment slogs by...and then...

...the record resumes playing. The room fills again with terrible noises--growls, gnashing teeth, flesh being chewed.

Noah sticks a reluctant foot out of the covers and sets it on the floor. The rest of his body follows.

He covers his eyes as he steps toward the revolving record.

More sounds: knocks, screeches, someone scratching out of a coffin.

Noah drags himself to the record player.

Then a voice sounds from the record...

GHOUL (O.S.)
(from record)
Come closer...

Noah winces.

GHOUL (O.S.)
(from record)
...Noah

Noah stops dead in his tracks.

The record spins. Round and round and round.

Noah lunges. Desperate.

He rips the record from the turntable and flings it away.

He also yanks the power cord from the outlet. No more messing around.

He bounds back into bed and is under the covers once more.

Under the blankets, Noah's eyes are wide and full of shock. He gulps for air.

A thud. Noah quiets his breathing.

Then footsteps sound. These aren't from the record, but from someone--or something--in the room.

Clomp. Clomp. Each step closer to Noah's bed.

Under the covers, Noah bites his lip to keep from screaming.

Then an unseen hand or claw presses Noah's cheek from the other side of the covers. A voice--grim and unholy--whispers hotly into the boy's ear. It's the voice of the GHOUL.

GHOUL (O.S.)
(from other side of
covers)
Yum-Yum, Noah.

Noah closes his eyes tightly.

GHOUL (O.S.)
 Your auntie...
 (licks his lips)
 ...sent me.

NOAH
 Go away.

GHOUL (O.S.)
 She said...to get you.

NOAH
 No. You're not real.

The ghoul snorts.

NOAH
 (shouts)
 Mom! Help!

GHOUL (O.S.)
 She's not here, No--ah.
 (licks lips again)
 I already got her.

The pressure on Noah's face releases.

Somehow the record player starts up again, even though it was disabled by Noah.

The effects record is back, too. There are loud footsteps. Someone runs on an empty street.

Then a voice cries out from the record--It's Noah's Mom.

MOM (O.S.)
 (from the record)
 Lemme out. Please. Oh, God.

Under the covers, Noah's face is pure shock.

NOAH
 Mama!

A roar sounds from the record and Noah's mom screams.

MOM (O.S.)
 Noooooooo!

Noah leaps out of bed and flings aside the covers.

His flashlight is on and it whirls crazily in his hand. Beams of light go everywhere.

Noah punches wildly into the air as he moves to the record player. He is pure rage, ready to hit whatever gets in his way.

The flashlight flies out of his hand in his frenzy.

After several more swings, Noah pauses. He is mystified to find he is alone. The ghoul isn't there.

The effects record turns, but it emits just a soft hiss and a few light crackles.

NOAH
Mom? I'm here. I'll help.

No response. The record spins along. It looks particularly dark and oily from Noah's view.

Noah gets close to the turntable.

NOAH
Mama?

No reply.

Noah doesn't see the shadow growing in the circle of light that the discarded flashlight cast on the wall.

Long, skinny, crooked arms and fingers extend as shadow.

It's the ghoul.

By the time Noah turns to face what's coming, he is already covered in shadow. Noah screams, but it is quickly stifled.

Then he is gone.

The room is empty. The record emits only a its soft hiss.

Then a small, tinny voice sounds from the record--Noah.

NOAH (O.S.)
(speaks from the record)
This isn't real. No, please. This
isn't real.

Thunder cracks. Footsteps draw closer to Noah.

NOAH (O.S.)
(speaks from the record)
Mom! I'll find you. I'll find...

His voice is drown out by a cacophony of horrific sounds-- screams, shrieks, howls, roars, booms. Nothing can be heard over such awful noise.

Then the noise dies away and is replaced by a single voice. It's the ghoul. He speaks slowly, enunciating each word.

GHOUL (O.S.)

(from record)

This concludes our recording. Thank you for listening. Keep an eye out for our next our next record. It will be coming soon to your neighborhood. Until then, enjoy your nights. And try to stay alive.

A werewolf howls in the background and the recording ends.

The needle reaches the "dead wax" portion of the record near its label.

Soft thumps and crackles repeat. The record spins, but it has no additional sounds to offer.

It spins and spins...

FADE OUT:

The End.