

Night Naughties

written by

Adam Nadworniak

Address
Phone
E-mail

Scene 1

INT APARTMENT-NIGHT-(8:00)

news anchor's voice, slightly muffled from a nearby TV.

MARTHA (40s) is meticulously wiping down surfaces, her movements precise and quick. DAVID (40s) is checking the seals on the reinforced windows. The apartment is clean, sparse, prepared.

On a wall-mounted screen, a NEWS ANCHOR (50s, calm but serious) speaks over a graphic of a spinning DNA helix.

NEWS ANCHOR (V.O.)
...as we approach the top of the hour, our nightly reminder of the global phenomenon known as the "Night Naughties." Scientists continue to theorize, but the prevailing belief remains consistent: an evolutionary mutation believed to be a unforeseen side effect of the 'Panacea' vaccine, administered globally to combat the 'Crimson Plague' pandemic over a decade ago.

David glances at the screen, a grimace on his face.

DAVID
"Prevailing belief." More like the only one anyone's willing to admit to.

Martha just shakes her head, securing a final latch on a window.

MARTHA Five minutes until countdown. Get Lily ready.

Lily (8), already in her restraint chair, clutches her worn teddy bear, her gaze fixed on the screen, listening to the familiar words.

NEWS ANCHOR (V.O.)
...While the daily transformation into what medical experts term 'Regressive Aggressive Syndrome' remains terrifying, the global infrastructure developed over the years has proven remarkably effective in minimizing casualties.
(MORE)

NEWS ANCHOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Citizens are reminded to be secured
in their designated safe zones by
8:15 PM local time.

SOUND of frantic last-minute locking and barricading,
methodical now, not panicked.

Martha secures the final bolt on her reinforced steel door.
Her movements are practiced, efficient.

Her husband, David, straps himself into a heavy-duty
restraint chair in the center of their living room. His eyes
are wide with a familiar dread.

Across the room, Lily sits calmly in her child-sized
restraint chair. She looks more resigned than scared.

MARTHA (TO LILY)
Five minutes. You feeling okay,
sweetie?

Lily nods silently, her gaze fixed on the digital clock on
the wall: 8:10:30 PM.

DAVID (STRAINED)
Just hurry, Martha. Get yourself
secured.

Martha moves to her own restraint chair, positioned opposite
David. She meticulously checks the straps before clicking
them into place.

MARTHA
Almost there. Deep breaths, both of
you. Just like every night.

The clock ticks down: 8:11:45 PM. A low GROWL echoes from the
apartment next door, followed by the muffled THUDS of
furniture being thrown.

DAVID It's starting.

Scene: 2

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT (8:14 PM)

The street is eerily deserted. Buildings are boarded up,
windows covered with thick metal shutters. The only sounds
are the distant GROWLS and SHOUTS emanating from within the
sealed structures. A lone DRONE, equipped with flashing blue
lights, flies overhead, its camera panning across the silent
cityscape.

VOICE (O.S.) (CALM, AUTOMATED)
 Three minutes until Night Naughties
 commence. All sectors report full
 lockdown. Remain secure.

Scene: 3

EXT. RURAL ROAD - NIGHT (8:08 PM)

The setting sun casts long shadows over a deserted, rural road. LIAM (20s) is kneeling beside the front driver's side tire of his compact, heavily modified car. It's completely flat. He's clearly frustrated, wiping grease from his hands. CHLOE (20s) stands a few feet away, her phone in hand, the screen displaying a rapidly ticking digital clock. A news app is open, showing a live feed of the same news anchor from Scene 1.

NEWS ANCHOR (V.O. FROM PHONE)
 ...an evolutionary mutation
 believed to be an unforeseen side
 effect of the 'Panacea' vaccine,
 administered globally to combat the
 'Crimson Plague' pandemic over a
 decade ago.

CHLOE (VOICE TIGHT, ALMOST A WHISPER)
 Eight-oh-eight, Liam. We're not
 going to make it.

LIAM (GRITTING HIS TEETH, WRESTLING
 WITH A LUG NUT)
 Just... give me two more minutes.
 It's almost off. Why did this have
 to happen now?

CHLOE (LOOKING AROUND WILDLY)
 There's nowhere to hide out here!
 No buildings, nothing!

LIAM (STRAINING)
 I know, I know! Just keep an eye on
 the time! If I can just get this
 spare on—

A distant, low GROWL echoes through the quiet countryside.
 Chloe's eyes snap to the clock: 8:09:15 PM.

CHLOE (PANICKED)
 Liam! It's starting early! Get in
 the car, now!

Liam, covered in sweat and grease, looks up, his eyes wide as another, louder growl rumbles. He scrambles to his feet, abandoning the tire iron.

LIAM Damn it!

EXT. RURAL ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Chloe dives for the passenger side door, yanking it open. As she scrambles inside, she glances back at Liam. He's fumbling with his own door, but his movements are already becoming jerky, uncoordinated.

Suddenly, a faint, whirring sound approaches from down the road. An **ANCIENT MAN** (80s), his face deeply wrinkled with age and worry, is trying to rush his motorized mobility scooter along the shoulder. He pushes a small shopping bag with his foot. He looks up, sees Liam, and his eyes widen in terror.

OLD MAN (A FRAIL, DESPERATE CRY)
No! Not yet! Please!

But it's too late. The scooter sputters, then dies, just a few feet from Liam. The digital clock on Chloe's dashboard flashes **8:10:00 PM**.

From inside the car, Chloe is already reaching for the locks, her heart pounding. She watches in horror as Liam's body **CONVULSES** violently. His head snaps back, veins bulging in his neck, and a guttural, inhuman **ROAR** tears from his throat. His eyes roll back, then snap open, now blazing with a terrifying, primal fury.

The transformed Liam doesn't even register the car. His gaze locks onto the terrified old man, who is struggling to get off his dead scooter. With a sickening snarl, Liam charges.

Chloe quickly slams her passenger door shut, her hands flying to the reinforced locks, clicking them all into place. She fumbles with her seatbelt, yanking it taut across her chest, securing herself with trembling fingers.

Through the thick, reinforced polycarbonate windshield, she has a clear, horrifying view. Liam is upon the old man in an instant. He grabs the old man by the shoulders, lifting him with surprising strength. The old man screams, a thin, reedy sound that is quickly cut short. Liam throws him to the ground with a sickening **THUD**.

Chloe presses her face against the window, tears streaming down her face, but she can't look away. Liam begins to **BRUTALLY BEAT** the old man, a relentless, primal assault of fists and feet.

Every muffled impact against the old man's body sends a sickening jolt through Chloe. The growls that tear from Liam's throat are not human.

The old man barely makes a sound now, just limp, twitching movements. Liam continues his savage assault, driven by pure, unadulterated rage. The shopping bag has spilled its contents - a loaf of bread, some fruit - scattered on the asphalt, pristine against the unfolding horror.

Chloe pulls herself into a fetal position, pressing her head against the dashboard, trying to block out the sight and sounds, but the image is seared into her mind. The car rocks slightly from Liam's movements just outside, a constant, horrifying reminder. The distant sounds of the "Night Naughties" from far-off towns now feel like a chorus to this intimate, brutal violence.

Scene: 4

INT. GRANDPARENTS' HOUSE - NIGHT (8:13 PM)

The house is old but meticulously maintained, with a cozy, lived-in feel. GRANDMA ELARA (70s), with kind, tired eyes, is gently securing her granddaughter, AVA (7), into a child-sized restraint chair. Ava is quiet, clutching a faded drawing of a woman with long hair.

GRANDPA SILAS (70s), his face etched with sorrow, is already in his own restraint chair, his gaze fixed on a framed photograph on the mantelpiece - a smiling woman, roughly 30.

ELARA (SOFTLY, TO AVA)
Just a few more minutes, sweet pea.
Be brave for Grandma.

Ava nods, her lower lip trembling slightly.

SILAS (VOICE RASPY)
Still feels like yesterday, doesn't it? She would have been strapping you in herself.

Elara's eyes well up, but she blinks back the tears. She moves to Silas's chair, reaching out to briefly touch his hand, then quickly secures herself. The silence in the room is heavy with unspoken grief.

ELARA She'd be proud of you, Ava. So proud.

Scene: 5

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT (8:15 PM)

The digital clock flashes: 8:15:00 PM.

David's body suddenly convulses against the restraints. His eyes roll back, and a guttural ROAR erupts from his throat. His face contorts into a mask of pure rage.

Martha flinches, her own body tensing. Lily closes her eyes tightly, clutching her teddy bear harder.

David strains against the heavy straps, his muscles bulging. Saliva drips from his snarling mouth.

From outside, the sounds intensify - a cacophony of SCREAMS, GROWLS, and the CRASHING of objects.

Scene: 6

INT. GRANDPARENTS' HOUSE - NIGHT (8:15 PM)

Silas's transformation is swift and brutal. His face twists, veins bulging in his neck, and a low, mournful ROAR tears from his throat. He strains against the restraints, his powerful, aged hands clenching into fists, eyes wide and unfocused.

Elara's own transformation is slightly less dramatic, but her body stiffens, and a low growl escapes her. She is still, but her eyes are wild, vacant.

Ava squeezes her eyes shut, clutching the drawing so tightly the paper crinkles. The house, usually a haven of warmth, now vibrates with the raw, animalistic energy of her transformed grandparents. The memory of her mother, lost to this very hour, hangs heavy in the air.

Scene: 7

EXT. RURAL ROAD - NIGHT (8:45 PM)

The sounds from Liam have somewhat subsided to a constant, low growl, punctuated by occasional, frantic movements. Chloe is still curled up, her eyes squeezed shut, but she occasionally peeks out.

Liam is no longer actively beating the old man, who lies motionless on the asphalt. Liam now paces erratically in a small circle around the body, sniffing and occasionally nudging it with his foot, a chillingly animalistic behavior. The silence of the rural road is broken only by Liam's growls and the distant, fading screams from towns.

Scene: 8

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT (8:45 PM)

The violent thrashing from David has lessened slightly, replaced by a constant, low GROWL. Martha watches him with a mixture of fear and sadness in her eyes. Her own body is rigid against the restraints.

Lily remains still, her eyes still closed, her breathing shallow. The sounds outside are relentless, a terrifying reminder of the global chaos unfolding beyond their reinforced walls.

Scene: 9

INT. GRANDPARENTS' HOUSE - NIGHT (8:45 PM)

Silas and Elara's thrashing has settled into a low, guttural concert of growls. Ava, still strapped in, has opened her eyes to slits, watching her transformed grandparents with a quiet, heartbreaking understanding. She doesn't cry. She just waits. The weight of her mother's absence is most keenly felt during these moments.

Scene: 10

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT (9:14 PM)

The digital clock reads: 9:14:30 PM.

David's growls begin to subside. His frantic movements slow. His eyes begin to focus, a flicker of recognition returning.

Martha watches him intently, her breath held.

DAVID (GASPING, VOICE HOARSE)
...Martha?

MARTHA (SOFTLY)
It's almost over, honey. Almost there.

Scene: 11

EXT. RURAL ROAD - NIGHT (9:14 PM)

Liam's furious energy drains from him. His growls become softer, more like deep sighs. His eyes slowly clear, and the tension in his body slackens. He stumbles, looking around confusedly, his gaze eventually falling upon the motionless form of the old man. A look of dawning horror spreads across his face.

LIAM (WEAKLY, CONFUSED, HIS VOICE
TREMBLING)
Chloe...? Oh god... no...

Chloe slowly uncurls, her body stiff. She looks at him, the fear slowly receding, replaced by profound sorrow and trauma. She doesn't answer immediately.

Scene: 12

INT. GRANDPARENTS' HOUSE - NIGHT (9:14 PM)

Silas's growls fade first, replaced by ragged breaths. His eyes slowly clear, the wildness replaced by exhaustion and a familiar ache. Elara follows moments later, her body slumping, the vacant look leaving her eyes.

SILAS (VOICE TREMBLING)
Ava? Are you... are you alright,
sweetheart?

Ava nods, her eyes still red-rimmed but now filled with relief.

Scene: 13

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT (9:15 PM)

The clock flashes: 9:15:00 PM.

David slumps back against the restraints, his breathing ragged. The rage in his eyes is gone, replaced by exhaustion and confusion. Lily slowly opens her eyes, looking at her father with a hesitant relief. The sounds from outside begin to die down, fading into an uneasy silence.

DAVID (WHISPERING)
...What... what happened?

Martha reaches out a trembling hand towards him, unable to touch him through the restraints.

MARTHA
You're okay. We're all okay.
Another night done.

The digital clock ticks to 9:15:01 PM. The world slowly begins to breathe again, waiting for the next descent into the Night Naughties.

FADE TO BLACK.