

FADE IN:

EXT. GIBSON'S HOUSE. FRONT DOOR- NIGHT

MR BRENTWORTH, aged early forties, runs up to the front door of his neighbor's house. BANG! BANG! He pounds his fist on the door.

MR GIBSON opens the door.

MR GIBSON  
What's up?

MR BRENTWORTH  
That thing on the news! It's  
in our street!

MR GIBSON  
The Sneaky Snatcher?

MR BRENTWORTH  
Yes.

MR GIBSON  
It's real?

MR BRENTWORTH  
We're trying to catch it!

EXT. FRONT LAWN - CONTINUOUS

Mr Gibson and Mr Brentworth rush out on to the front lawn.

Mr Gibson stops, glances around the street.

MR GIBSON'S POV - STREET.

Wives stand on the front lawn of their homes, frightened.  
Their husbands dash about between the houses, searching.

WIFE  
THERE IT IS! OVER THERE!

SERIES OF SHOTS

- A shadowy figure sprints down the side of a house.
- A group of men with flashlights run across the road.
- The men dash down the side of the house.

## BACKYARD

The MEN spread out in a backyard. Light beams from the flash lights are pointed in every direction.

MAN  
(pointing)  
There it is!

## HOUSE NEXT DOOR

The shadowy figure is silhouetted against a bedroom window with the light on. It peers through the window.

## SERIES OF SHOTS

- The four men scramble over the fence.
- The shadowy figure runs away from the window.
- The men pursue it.

MAN 1#  
Get him! Before he gets one of us!

## EXT. JENKINS' HOUSE. FRONT LAWN

MR and MRS JENKINS, mid thirties, step out of their house and on to the front lawn. Their son CHAD JENKINS, aged eight, is with them.

A NEIGHBOR approaches the Jenkins family.

MR JENKINS  
What's going on?

NEIGHBOR  
The Sneaky Snatcher's prowling around our street.

MR JENKINS  
Shit!

MRS JENKINS  
Oh my God! Has it tapped on anyone's window?

NEIGHBOUR  
Not yet! The men are trying to catch it.

MR JENKINS  
Chad. Get in the house! Lock the door!

Chad hesitates.

MRS JENKINS  
Do as your father says.

Chad runs to the house.

INT. JENKIN'S HOUSE. LOUNGE ROOM

Chad hurries into his parent's house, closes and locks the front door. He stands alone in the middle of the lounge room, afraid.

EXT. STREET

The four men with flashlights return to the street.

WIFE  
What happened?

MEN 1#  
It got away.

MEN 2#  
I think we scared it off.

INT. LOUNGE ROOM. WINDOW

Chad moves towards the lounge room window, pulls back the curtains to look outside.

CHAD'S POV - WINDOW.

Out in the street under a streetlight, all the adults gather in a group, talk amongst themselves.

EXT. STREET

Mr and Mrs Jenkins joins the group.

WIFE 2#  
I've phoned the police.  
They're on their way.

MAN 1#  
I reckon we should all wait  
out here until the police  
arrive.

MR JENKINS  
Did anyone get a good look at  
it?



Mr Jenkins kicks in the front door.

INT. LOUNGE ROOM

Chad is gone.

Mrs Jenkins collapses onto the floor, bursts into tears.

MRS JENKINS

Oh my God! It kidnapped our  
boy.

Mr Jenkins comforts his wife, tears slide down his cheek.

EXT. HARRIS HOUSE. FRONT YARD - DAY

A thirteen year old girl rides her bike onto the front yard  
of a typical suburban house.

The teen girl still has her puppy fat, her shoulder length,  
dark hair is pulled back by a head band with a set of cat  
ears attached. She wears a shirt with a picture of a cartoon  
cat on the front. On her back is a furry kitten backpack.

She is JODI DAWNDALE

FRONT DOOR

Jodi approaches the front door, knocks three times.

A cat, with a bell on its collar, rubs its head against  
Jodi's leg. She crouches down to scratch the cat's chin.

JODI

Hi Slotty.

The front door opens. MRS. HARRIS stands in the doorway, her  
depression evident by the dark rings under her eyes. She is  
aged thirty-eight.

JODI

Hi Mrs. Harris. Is Melinda  
home?

Mrs. Harris stares at the teenage girl with desperate  
longing.

JODI

I didn't see her at school  
today. . . are you okay?

Suddenly Mrs. Harris wraps her arms around Jodi, clings to  
the teenager tightly, cries and sobs.

Jodi doesn't know what to do.

MR. HARRIS, aged thirty-eight, rushes to his wife's side, pulls her away from Jodi.

Mrs. Harris struggles against her husband, reaches out for Jodi.

MRS. HARRIS  
I want to hold her.

MR. HARRIS  
Melinda's gone Jodi.

Jodi gasps, distressed by this news.

MR. HARRIS (CONT'D)  
It came round last night and  
tapped on the window, and now  
she's gone.

Mrs. Harris squirms in her husband's tight grip, she sobs uncontrollably.

MRS. HARRIS  
Please Jeff! Let me hold her!

Jodi is on the verge of tears. This is all too much for her.

MR. HARRIS  
Go home Jodi!

Jodi stumbles back, uncertain what to do.

MR. HARRIS  
GET OUT OF HERE!

Jodi runs off.

EXT. FOOTPATH - MOMENTS LATER

Jodi pumps the pedals hard on her bike as she rides away from the house. She speeds along the footpath.

In the f.g., a poster is stuck to a telegraph pole with masking tape.

INSERT- POSTER

On the poster is a black & white school photo of a eight year old boy plus in bold black print: MISSING, CHAD JENKINS.

INT. DAWNDALE HOUSE. KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

BRICE DAWNDALE is aged fourteen. He is tall and lean with messy, dark curly hair.

He is dressed in black jeans, work boots and a T-shirt worn inside out. He wears six ear rings in one ear.

Brice stands in the kitchen of his home, opens the doors of the cupboards.

BRICE  
Ah, damn it!

The cupboards are empty.

Brice opens the fridge door.

BRICE'S POV- INSIDE FRIDGE

All of the shelves in the fridge are empty.

BRICE (O.S.)  
Ah crap! This sucks!

BACK TO SCENE.

Jodi enters the kitchen. She is distraught, but trying her hardest to hide it.

Brice is relieved to see her.

BRICE  
There's no food in the house  
sis.

JODI  
(Annoyed)  
Go to the shop and buy some.

BRICE  
Oh what with? Vanessa would've  
spent all of dad's pension  
cheque by now.

Brice looks expectantly at Jodi, as if she is the only one that can fix this problem.

Jodi stares back at Brice with narrowed eyes.

BRICE  
C'mon Jodi, you know what to  
do.

JODI  
No Brice. I'm not doing that.

BRICE  
You've got to. It's the only  
way.

JODI

No! We asked Kitty to get us some food yesterday. We can't keep asking him.

BRICE

C'mon sis! I haven't eaten all day. I'm starving.

JODI

No! Kitty providing us with food is a special gift. We shouldn't take it for granted.

BRICE

It's the only food we can get. Vanessa don't give a stuff about us.

Jodi sighs.

JODI

All right, all right. I'll see what Kitty can do.

By the look of Jodi's glum expression, it is clear that she doesn't think it is all right.

EXT. BACKYARD

Jodi opens the door of a wooden hutch, pulls out a scrawny, brown rabbit wearing a cat collar with bells.

The rabbit is named KITTY.

Jodi kneels down, places Kitty on the grass. The rabbit has a composed manner, its nose and whiskers slightly twitch.

Brice stands besides Jodi, watches her stroke the fur on Kitty's back.

JODI

(whispering)

Help us Kitty. We need food.

Kitty bounds across the backyard, the bells round his neck JINGLING. Jodi and Brice follow him.

The rabbit hops towards a tool shed, ducks in behind it.

EXT. TOOL SHED

Jodi and Brice stand behind the back of the tool shed.

Between the back of the tool shed and the wooden fence that marks the property boarder is a red cloth, spread with a small feast containing a roast chicken, loaf of bread, butter, tomatoes, cheese and a clay pitcher of milk.

The rabbit sits next to the food, gazes up at the brother and sister with relaxed indifference.

BRICE

Hey sis. Do you reckon your pet rabbit could fly? 'Cause that'd be cool.

JODI

Just don't be a garbage guts and eat all that food yourself. Leave some for dad.

EXT. BACKYARD. PERGOLA- LATER

BERNARD DAWNDALE is a kind faced, skinny man with a wild mess of hair. He wears glasses and is aged forty. Unfortunately, he is also an epileptic paraplegic bound to a wheelchair.

Bernard sits in his wheelchair on a pergola overrun with ferns. The pergola is located on a fern garden in a corner of the backyard.

Bernard paints on a sheet of canvas stretched out on a frame. He is focused on his work, unaware of Jodi and Brice stepping on to the pergola.

Brice and Jodi carry the food and pitcher of milk, place it on a wooden table.

BRICE

Oi dad! We're about to eat dinner.

Bernard's focus is ruined by his son's voice.

BERNARD

Hmm?

BRICE

Food dad. Come and have some dinner.

BERNARD

Sounds good. What have we got?

BRICE

Same as yesterday.

Bernard steers his wheelchair towards the table.

The table is surrounded by Bernard's completed paintings that rest on easels. All of the paintings depict Hindu gods, heros and demons in fantastic situations.

Brice tears a drumstick off the roasted chicken.

Bernard notices the depressed mood that Jodi tries hard to hide. He gives his daughter a concerned look.

BERNARD

What's wrong cupcake? You look upset.

JODI

Nope, not me dad, I'm fine.

Bernard is dubious, turns his wheelchair around to face his son.

Brice chews meat off the drumstick bone.

BERNARD

Your sister's upset. Haven't you talked to her about it?

Brice stiffens mid-bite on his drumstick. He looks stupidly at his father.

BRICE

I didn't notice dad. Honest.

JODI

(agitated)  
I'm fine dad!

BERNARD

What? How could you not notice. Look at her.

JODI

I'M FINE! I SAID I'M FINE!

Brice and Bernard are silenced by Jodi's outburst. They fix their attention on her.

A tear spills down Jodi's cheek. She begins to cry.

Bernard moves his wheelchair closer to his daughter.

Jodi rushes to her father's out stretched hands, buries her face in his chest and weeps.

JODI  
Melinda is gone daddy! She's gone!

BERNARD  
Melinda who?

BRICE  
Hey! You're talking about Melinda Harris from school?

JODI  
The Sneaky Snatcher tapped on her window last night and now she's gone.

Bernard and Brice exchange concerned glances.

JODI  
Everyone at school says the Sneaky Snatcher is a killer.

Bernard strokes his daughter's hair.

BERNARD  
There's no proof that the Sneaky Snatcher is even real.

BRICE  
Yeah sis, that's right. The police have found nothing.

JODI  
But people have gone missing!

BERNARD  
Ah, but they've all been reported missing, not killed.

Jodi looks up at her father who gives her a comforting smile.

BERNARD  
Do you believe in the Bogey Man?

Jodi's sniffles, rubs tears out of her eyes.

JODI  
No.

BERNARD  
What about Dracula? Is he real?

JODI

No way.

BERNARD

Well, don't you think this whole Sneaky Snatcher thing is just as silly?

JODI

I guess so.

BERNARD

I think so. I'm sure the police will find all the missing people.

JODI

You really think so daddy?

BERNARD

I hope so cupcake, for your sake and Melinda's.

Bernard kisses Jodi on the forehead, pats her shoulder.

Jodi pulls away from her father, stands up, adjusts her cat ears head band.

BERNARD

Vanessa will be home soon. You know what she'll do if she sees you like this.

By Jodi's sudden trepidation, it is apparent this Vanessa will do something bad.

BERNARD

Hide in your room tonight, cupcake.

Jodi nods her head, leaps off the pergola, runs across the backyard.

Brice stands beside his father. Both are surrounded by Bernard's Hindu mythological, style paintings.

BERNARD

If there's one thing I want more than being able to walk again, it'd be getting a divorce from Vanessa.

BRICE

Welfare's never gonna let an epileptic paraplegic raise two teenagers dad. Vanessa's the only thing keeping this family together.

BERNARD

Yeah I know son, and I hate it.

Both are thoughtful. Brice continues chewing on his chicken drumstick.

INT. JODI'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The furniture in the bedroom is cluttered with plush toys, dragon and unicorn figurines.

Jodi sits on a bean bag in a corner of her room. A puffy Doona is wrapped around her. She draws in a sketch book with crayons.

A lamp next to the beanbag is the only light in the room.

Stuck all over the wall behind Jodi are dozens of colored drawings of cartoon style, female cats in various outfits and action poses.

LOUNGE ROOM

Brice slouches across a double seater sofa. He is quiet and glum as he watches a news program on television.

Bernard sits in his wheelchair. He swallows two of his anti-epilepsy drugs, washes them down with a glass of water. His eyes are fixed on the TV screen the whole time.

INSERT- TELEVISION SCREEN

A PRESENTER sits at a news desk, unemotional as he speaks.

PRESENTER

. . . despite the fact that police have found no physical evidence of the existence of the Sneaky Snatcher, dozens of people continue to report sighting this elusive serial kidnapper.

A shot of a police sketch of someone wearing an animal mask and plastic poncho.

PRESENTER (V.O.)

The number of victims  
kidnapped by the Sneaky  
Snatcher has risen to eight.  
All of the victims are under  
the age of eighteen.

BACK TO SCENE.

Brice sits up, expresses unease as he concentrates on the news report.

PRESENTER (V.O.)

Last night, at around nine PM,  
a thirteen year old girl  
vanished from her home after  
the Sneaky Snatcher tapped on  
the lounge room window.  
Melinda Harris is the name of  
the victim.

Bernard shakes his head.

BERNARD

What a tragedy.

INSERT- TELEVISION SCREEN.

Footage of the front of the house owned by Mr and Mrs Harris. The married couple are both heart broken, hold each other as they cry. Several police officers stand around them, solemn and patient.

PRESENTER (V.O.)

The parents of Melissa Harris  
reported to police that the  
Sneaky Snatcher did not enter  
their home when Melinda  
vanished . . .

INT. FRONT DOOR

The front door opens. A woman in her late thirties steps in. She has a slender, lithe build, dressed in a stylish blouse, tight skirt and fancy boots. Her long blonde hair is wound tight in a bun. She has a permanent, sour face.

Her name is VANESSA ROSKELL.

Vanessa carries several shopping bags in one hand and a video camcorder in the other.

LOUNGE ROOM

Vanessa strides straight to the television, switches it off.

She turns to face Brice and Bernard, smiles lovingly at them both.

VANESSA  
Forget the TV. I've got a game  
for us to play tonight. It'll  
be a blast.

Vanessa tosses one of the shopping bags at Brice, hits him in the chest.

VANESSA  
There's a costume inside that  
bag. Put it on now.

Brice clutches the bag, wary as he regards his stepmother.

Vanessa drops the remaining bags onto Bernard's lap. She pushes the wheelchair towards the kitchen.

VANESSA  
Your father and I will just be  
in the kitchen. We have  
something important to  
discuss.

Vanessa gives Brice a phoney smile.

VANESSA  
Than we can all have some fun.

Vanessa exits the lounge room.

Brice is bewildered as he pulls out of the shopping bag a rubber, bloodhound mask and a black, plastic poncho.

KITCHEN

Vanessa pushes Bernard's wheelchair into the middle of the kitchen. She removes the shopping bags from her husband's lap, dumps them on the kitchen counter.

She is flushed with excitement, faces Bernard and grins.

BERNARD  
You look like you've had a  
pleasant day.

VANESSA  
I've done it Bernard! I've  
thought up a plan that will  
get us rich fast.

BERNARD

Oh no, not another one. They never work.

VANESSA

This one will. It's brilliant!

BERNARD

That's nice Vanessa, it truly is. But it's not necessary-

Vanessa glowers at Bernard with sudden contempt.

VANESSA

Are you Joking? Of course it's necessary. You're a dead weight cripple. You'll never earn a descent wage.

BERNARD

You know I get a disability pension. You're always spending it.

Vanessa leans over Bernard in the wheelchair, glares at him.

VANESSA

That pension is as useless as you are!

Brice enters the kitchen, wears the plastic poncho and bloodhound mask.

Brice lifts up the rubber mask to expose a puzzled expression.

BRICE

What's going on?

Vanessa smiles sweetly at Brice.

VANESSA

Where's your sister?

Brice casts a swift glance at his father.

BERNARD

Please Vanessa, leave Jodi alone. She's very upset. She needs to be by herself right now.

Vanessa opens a draw and a cupboard, grabs a meat tenderizer and a metal box.

VANESSA

We're going to make my plan  
work and we're going to do it  
together as a family.

Vanessa storms out of the kitchen.

JODI'S BEDROOM

Jodi is still under the Doona as she sits on the beanbag. She  
draws in her sketch book.

Vanessa enters the room. Her hands are hidden behind her  
back.

Jodi is nervous in the presence of Vanessa.

VANESSA

(Patronizing)

What's wrong Jodi? Your daddy  
said you're feeling unwell.

Jodi cringes in the beanbag, pulls the Doona tighter around  
herself.

JODI

I'm just a little sick, that's  
all.

VANESSA

Oh that's a shame. I had a fun  
game planned for all of us  
tonight.

Jodi frowns, puzzled and suspicious of Vanessa's 'game'.

JODI

I just want to be alone.

Vanessa removes the metal box and meat tenderizer from behind  
her back, places them both on the writing desk.

VANESSA

Ah you sure about that?

Jodi panics at the sight of the box.

Vanessa unlocks the box, opens the lid.

INSERT- METAL BOX

Four small, ornament angels are inside the box.

BACK TO SCENE.

Jodi quivers with dread.

Vanessa lines the angel ornaments out on the desk in a row.

VANESSA

I remember not long ago you  
owned about eight of these  
lovely little angels.

Vanessa holds the meat tenderizer above one of the angels,  
threatens to pulverize the ornament.

VANESSA

I doubt your mother would've  
wanted you to have her angel  
collection if she knew how  
careless you were with them.

Jodi gives Vanessa a desperate, pleading look.

VANESSA

I've asked nicely so now I'm  
telling you. Go to the kitchen  
now so we can all spend some  
quality family time together.

Jodi leaps off her beanbag, her sketch book tumbles to the  
floor. She runs out the door of her room.

On the floor, the sketch book is opened on the page Jodi was  
drawing on.

INSERT - SKETCH BOOK.

A drawing of a girl wearing an oversized yellow raincoat and  
gumboots. She stands in a puddle, holds an umbrella over her  
head. Above her are thick grey clouds. It is raining. The  
girl is miserable.

KITCHEN

Jodi rushes into the kitchen, freaks out when she sees Brice  
in the poncho and bloodhound mask.

Brice quickly lifts up the mask to expose his face.

BRICE

It's just me sis!

Jodi is dumbfounded. Brice shrugs.

Vanessa enters the kitchen. She tosses the locked metal box onto the kitchen counter, knocks over one of the shopping bags.

A bottle of chloroform rolls out of the bag and onto the counter.

Brice and Jodi stand on either side of Bernard.

Vanessa focuses on her stepchildren.

VANESSA

Do you both want to go to a foster home?

Brice bows his head to hide the hatred for Vanessa that he expresses. He is too afraid to say or do anything.

VANESSA

I can arrange it if you want?  
It wouldn't be that hard. I'll just divorce your father and welfare will do the rest.

Jodi is miserable as she stares at Vanessa. She steps closer to her father.

Bernard takes his daughter's hand.

VANESSA

Is that what you want?

Brice shakes his head.

VANESSA

No? Well then do as I say. I will operate the camera. Brice, you go outside, pretend to be the Sneaky Snatcher and look in through the windows. Jodi, you are the victim so that means you scream a lot, and Bernard. . .

Vanessa pauses to consider what sort of job she should give Bernard, comes up blank.

VANESSA (CONT'D)

. . .you're a useless cripple. Go wheel yourself into the corner and stay there.

EXT. BEDROOM WINDOW - MOMENTS LATER

Brice wears the plastic poncho with the hood pulled over his masked head. He hurries down the side of the house, stops at the bedroom window.

Brice waits, leans against the fence. The window is dark.

The bedroom light goes on. The blinds pull up. Jodi stands inside the window, working the string that lifts up the blinds.

Vanessa stands in the middle of the room, faces the window.

INT. BEDROOM

Jodi steps away from the window, looks at Vanessa with loathing and fear.

VANESSA

Jodi, I wanna hear you scream  
your head off when your  
brother comes to the window.  
Understand?

Jodi bites her bottom lips, nods her head.

VANESSA

Good girl.

Vanessa looks through the view finder of the video camera.

VANESSA

BRICE! COME UP TO THE WINDOW!

EXT. BEDROOM WINDOW

Brice starts to move towards the window, but suddenly freezes. Something has caught his attention.

BRICE'S POV - NEIGHBORING HOUSE.

A shadowy figure sneaks through the garden of a neighboring house. The figure stops near a bedroom window. The bedroom light is on.

The figure is silhouetted as it peeks through the window.

BACK TO SCENE.

Brice leaps out of the square of illumination coming from the bedroom window. He ducks into the shadows, eyes wide with terror.

EXT. NEIGHBOR'S HOUSE

The shadowy figure creeps towards the next window of the house.

EXT. BEDROOM WINDOW

Brice is immobilized by fear, his back is pressed up against the side of the house.

TAP! TAP! TAP! Vanessa taps her fist on the glass of the bedroom window.

VANESSA  
DO YOU WANNA BE A FOSTER  
CHILD? HURRY UP!

Brice's breathing is sharp and fast. Terror has a firm grip on him.

BRICE'S POV - NEIGHBORS HOUSE.

The shadowy figure moves across the backyard towards a wooden fence. The dim light reveals that the figure is dressed in a black, plastic poncho. Its head is completely covered by a full goat mask with long horns.

No doubt this is the Sneaky Snatcher.

EXT. BEDROOM WINDOW

Vanessa opens the window, sticks her head out.

VANESSA  
DO AS YOU ARE TOLD!

Brice knees buckle, he slumps on to the ground as he stares wide-eyed at the Sneaky Snatcher.

BRICE'S POV - SNEAKY SNATCHER

Suddenly the Sneaky Snatcher runs off, jumps over another fence into another neighbor's backyard. It is gone.

INT. BEDROOM

Vanessa slams the window shut. She holds up the video camera, gets ready to record.

VANESSA  
COME UP TO THE WINDOW AND TAP  
ON IT!

VANESSA'S POV - BEDROOM WINDOW

Brice moves up to the window. His body is stiff with fear and he glances nervously about before he taps on the glass.

BACK TO SCENE

Vanessa shakes the camera about for effect.

Jodi screams, backs away from the window.

VANESSA  
All right Brice. That'll do.

EXT. BEDROOM WINDOW

Brice bolts away from the window.

KITCHEN

The back door swings open as Brice charges into the kitchen. He rips off his mask, his body trembling, his breathing heavy.

Vanessa and Jodi enter the kitchen.

BERNARD  
What's wrong?

BRICE  
The Sneaky Snatcher was  
outside!

Jodi gasps, puts her hands to her mouth. Vanessa frowns at Brice.

VANESSA  
Yeah, sure it was.

BRICE  
I saw it!

BERNARD  
I believe you son.

VANESSA  
Excuse me? Can we all focus  
here. We still have a lot to  
do.

Vanessa picks up the bottle of chloroform off the counter plus two rags. She extends the rags out to Jodi and Brice.

VANESSA

I need the two of you to  
inhale this chloroform.

BRICE

What?

JODI

Daddy! No!

Bernard glares at Vanessa, steers his wheelchair between his wife and two kids.

BERNARD

You're not chloroforming my  
children!

VANESSA

I have to Bernard. Can't you  
see what I'm trying to do?

Pause for a beat as husband and wife glare at each other.

BERNARD

You haven't told us.

Vanessa holds up the video camera.

VANESSA

If we can pass this footage  
off as real, convince the  
media it is the truth, than  
think what it will do for us,  
how much we will benefit from  
it.

Bernard regards Vanessa with narrowed eyes.

BERNARD

You'll never pull it off.

BRICE

How are you gonna hide us?

VANESSA

I've arranged for someone to  
take you and your sister away.  
But they will only collect you  
both if you're unconscious.

BRICE

Unconscious? What for?

VANESSA

How should I know? It will probably make you easier to transport.

JODI

When can we come home?

VANESSA

When I've got my money and this whole Sneaky Snatcher thing blows over.

Brice and Jodi glance at each other, reach out for the offered rags, hesitate.

Vanessa gives them a reassuring smile.

VANESSA

C'mon, take the chloroform. If you do, you'll help mummy get rich and I'll let you spend your remaining teen years with your father.

JODI

You're not our mother.

Brice and Jodi each take a rag. They are committed.

BERNARD

No! Don't even think about it!

Vanessa smiles smugly at her husband.

BRICE

I'm not going to a foster home.

JODI

Me neither. I want to be with you dad.

Brice and Jodi hold out their rags. Vanessa soaks them with chloroform.

BRICE

Besides, look on the bright side dad. If we go into hiding, then there's no chance of the Sneaky Snatcher kidnapping us.

BERNARD

No! Think about what you're doing!

JODI

You're worth it dad.

Bernard is exasperated, desperate.

BERNARD

No! I beg you! Don't do it!  
Vanessa, for God's sake, don't  
make them do it.

Brice and Jodi sit down on the floor, lean their backs against the kitchen cupboards.

JODI

I love you dad.

BRICE

Same here.

BERNARD

Brice! Jodi! Stop it! You  
don't have to do this!

Brice and Jodi cover their mouth and nose with their rags, take a deep breath. Their eyelids become heavy. . .

BERNARD

(whimpering)

No, no, oh God no!

. . . their shoulders slump and their heads droop forward as they slip into unconsciousness.

Bernard is devastated. His eyes are rimmed red with grief and anger.

BERNARD

How can you be so heartless?

Vanessa puts a comforting hand on Bernard's shoulder.

VANESSA

Don't be upset darling. You'll  
see your two children again .  
. . as soon as I get my money.

KNOCK! KNOCK! KNOCK!

Someone pounds their fist on the front door.

Bernard jumps, startled by the noise.

Vanessa shoots Bernard a warning glance.

VANESSA  
Don't say a word.

Vanessa exits the kitchen.

Bernard stares mournfully at his two children. A tear and a broken heart is all he has to offer them.

BERNARD  
I'm so useless.

Vanessa returns to the kitchen with MAC.

Mac is a sinewy, thin bloke with a harsh ugly face. He is dressed in faded jeans, flannelette shirt, and scuffed work boots. He wears a large green baseball cap. Mac is aged in his early forties.

Following behind Mac is DAVE. He is a broad shouldered, bulky giant with no neck and a bald head.

Dave is in his late thirties.

Bernard quietly despairs as he stares at the two men.

Mac and Dave loom over the senseless teens, studies them.

MAC  
So this is them, 'ey.

VANESSA  
That's them.

MAC  
Yeah, they look like they can handle a hard days work.

Mac crouches down, sweeps Jodi up in his arms, carries her.

Dave slings Brice over his broad shoulder.

Mac turns to face Bernard, smiles at him.

MAC  
You've got a real smart misses there mate. She's gonna make your family rich by the end of the week.

Bernard is to repulsed to reply.

MAC

You're lucky to have married  
her.

Mac exits the kitchen. Dave follows him.

EXT. FRONT DOOR

Mac and Dave step through the front door onto the verandah.

Vanessa follows behind them.

MAC

It's been a pleasure doin'  
business with you Vanessa. I  
hope you get plenty of money.

VANESSA

And I hope these two work hard  
for you and double your quota.

FRONT YARD

Mac and Dave carry the Dawndale teens across the front lawn,  
locks them both in a cage in the back of a mud splattered  
Toyota Hilux.

VERANDAH

Vanessa stands on the verandah, looks smug.

TOYOTA HILUX

Mac and Dave climb into the Hilux and drive off.

MONTAGE

A) Mac's dirty Toyota Hilux cruises down a back street in the  
suburbs.

B) In the back of the Hilux, Brice and Jodi's senseless  
bodies lay side by side in the cage.

C) Two police vehicles are parked out the front of Bernard  
Dawndale's home.

D) Vanessa cowers in a corner of the main bedroom, clutches a  
cordless phone. She is relieved to see a police officer barge  
into the room.

E) The Toyota Hilux speeds down a Freeway. In the middle of  
the night, it is the only vehicle on the long stretch of  
road.

F) Lounge room. Vanessa moans and wails her grief as she clutches Bernard.

G) Two police officers study a framed picture of Brice and Jodi.

H) The Toyota Hilux rumbles down a muddy dirt track that streaks across a vast corn field. The track leads the Hilux to a derelict farm house that is enclosed by a tall, barb wired fence.

K) Vanessa stands on the front verandah of her home. She is surrounded by reporters who thrust their microphones and mini tape recorders into her face.

END OF MONTAGE

INT. TELEVISION SCREEN - MORNING

Epic, dramatic music as flashy graphics open the Ten News program.

REPORTER (V.O.)  
 . . .Tonight. . .

Grainy, murky footage of a bedroom. Jodi screams in terror as the Sneaky Snatcher outside the window presses the rubber nose of its bloodhound mask against the glass.

REPORTER (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 . . .an exclusive first look  
 at chilling footage of the  
 elusive "Sneaky Snatcher". . .

Footage goes blurry and shaky as the camera zooms in on the Sneaky Snatcher. The masked kidnapper slides away from the window into the shadows.

REPORTER (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 . . .caught on video tape by a  
 courageous woman as the serial  
 kidnapper attacks her home and  
 kidnaps her two stepchildren.  
 . .

Footage of several detectives stand around a computer monitor. They watch Vanessa's footage of the Sneaky Snatcher.

REPORTER (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 . . .plus, frustrated police  
 let out a sigh of relief.  
 (MORE)

REPORTER (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 Could the footage of the  
 mysterious Sneaky Snatcher be  
 the first lead that they  
 desperately need to help them  
 solve the case?

INT. DAWNDALE'S HOUSE. LOUNGE ROOM - MORNING

Bernard sits in his wheelchair in front of the television.

REPORTER (V.O.)  
 . . . Good morning. I'm Sandra  
 Sully and you're watching Ten  
 news.

Bernard shakes a bottle containing his anti-epilepsy drugs,  
 takes two tablets.

He frowns, looks inside the container. He tips the four  
 remaining tablets into his open hand.

Bernard is concerned as he stares at the tablets.

KITCHEN

Vanessa paces back and forth as she talks on a cordless  
 phone.

VANESSA  
 . . . I've told you, Today  
 Tonight has already offered me  
 sixty thousand dollars for  
 exclusive first rights to my  
 story . . . What? . . . No. I  
 won't except that. A hundred  
 thousand dollars! I want a  
 hundred thousand . . .

Vanessa grins, jumps up and down on the spot with glee.

VANESSA  
 I except your offer.

INT. TIN SHED. SLEEPING QUARTERS - MORNING

Brice sleeps. He stirs, his eyes slowly open.

Brice is baffled. He lies on the bare mattress of a single  
 bed.

He sits up, startled as he looks at something off screen.

BRICE'S POV - FAMILY OF BOAT PEOPLE

A family of refugees from Indonesia sit together on a bed  
 opposite to the one Brice is on.

They are KOTA the father, MINJING the mother, BANKA and TANGA, two boys under the age of ten. They are wary and timid as they study Brice in silence. They are dressed in full cover work overalls.

BACK TO SCENE.

Jodi stands next to the bed that Brice sits on. She stares at the Indonesian family, uncertain.

They are all inside a large tin shed with a concrete floor. There are no windows. a sky light is the only source of light. Eight beds and a table are the only furniture.

JODI

They haven't said a word. I  
don't think they speak  
English.

Brice glances around the room, nervous.

BRICE

Are we still even in  
Australia?

Jodi gives her brother an "you're an idiot" look.

The door opens. Mac and Dave enter the room, close and lock the door. They are both suited up in padded coveralls that the army use when training attack dogs.

Dave carries a large pot while Mac holds a long stick.

MAC

I wants ya all to have a big  
feed. There's heaps here.

Dave places the pot on the table, removes the lid. Steam rolls out of the pot.

MAC (CONT'D)

I don't want to see no one  
slackin' on the job cause  
they're hungry.

Mac adjusts his green baseball cap, focuses on Jodi and Brice.

MAC (CONT'D)

I ain't puttin' up with that  
crap in my sweatshop.

JODI

Sweatshop!

BRICE

Sweatshop!

EXT. COMPOUND - LATER

Mac and Dave escort Jodi, Brice and the Indonesian family across the open space between the tin shed and the sweatshop.

Mac blows a high pitched whistle, swipes his stick at six, big vicious dogs that follow the group, barking and gnashing their sharp teeth.

In the b.g. is the barbed wired fence that encloses the area.

MAC

You step outside any of the buildings here and the dogs will eat you.

Brice and Jodi are both dressed in full cover overalls. Jodi still wears her head band with cat ears.

MAC (CONT'D)

If you refuse to do the work that I order you to do. . . well than, the dogs are gonna have to eat you.

JODI

Dog's don't eat people.

MAC

Ask to many question and . . . (snaps his finger at Dave)

DAVE

The dogs will eat you.

MAC

(adjusts his baseball cap)

That's right.

EXT. SWEATSHOP - MOMENTS LATER

A decrepit farm house has been converted into a sweatshop. All the windows are boarded up. A conveyor belt runs through a hole that has been cut into the wall, ends at a slapped together loading dock.

A cage around the dock keeps out the dogs.

Mac leads the group towards the front door of the house.

INT. SWEATSHOP. LOUNGE ROOM

Brice walks beside Mac, nods at Kota and Minjing.

BRICE

What's the go with them?

MAC

They're from Indonesia. I paid for 'em to be smuggled into Australia. They'll pay me back by doing six months of slave labour.

The lounge room is empty of furniture. A mess of wires snake up the walls and dangles from the ceiling. A small conveyer belt extends through a hole cut into the wall, angles up to the ceiling, stretches down the hallway.

The Indonesian family go through a doorway into a bedroom cluttered with computers and monitor screens.

HONK! HONK! The distant sound of truck horn.

DAVE

I'll go open the gate.

Dave exits the lounge room.

Mac leads Brice and Jodi up the hallway.

EXT. GATE 2#

Dave blows a whistle as he stands in front of the gate. The dogs circle around him, frustrated, eager to rip him apart with their teeth.

Dave unlocks the padlock, steps through the gate, locks the padlock on the other side.

EXT. GATE 1#

Beyond the gate is an enclosed area separated from the compound patrolled by the guard dogs.

Dave strides towards a second gate. Outside the gate is the rear end of a small truck, ready to reverse in.

INT. SPARE ROOM

MAC

After you've printed up the covers. (holds up a DVD cover)  
You stack sixteen of them into a box and send it down the line.

Mac points to a conveyer belt that continues through a hole in the wall.

Mac and the two Dawndale teens stand in a room cluttered with printers, computers and monitors. Empty card board boxes are stacked up to the ceiling.

Mac opens a draw in a desk.

MAC

When the ink cartridge runs out, you get a new one from here. Boxes of paper are over there.

Brice and Jodi glance around the cramped room.

MAC

Right than. I'm goin' outside to load the truck. So I wanna see plenty of boxes comin' down that conveyer belt. If I don't see any boxes I'll feed you to the dogs.

Brice and Jodi are intimidated, cringe.

EXT. DOCK

The truck backs up to an opening in the cage that confines the loading dock.

Mac enters the loading dock, locks the gate of the cage.

Together he and Dave wait beside the conveyer belt.

EXT. TRUCK'S CABIN

The guard dogs leap at the driver's door of the truck. The TRUCK DRIVER hangs out the window, slaps the side of the door.

TRUCK DRIVER

Yeah! Ya wanna piece of me? Ya wanna go me? C'mon! I'll take ya!

INT. BEDROOM

Kota operates eight computers lined up in a row. One by one he opens the DVD drive, places a disc in them.

Banka and Tanga unpack blank DVD discs from boxes, stack the discs in a pile on a desk near their father.

Minjing stares at a monitor as she uses a mouse. A burner program is displayed on the screen.

The family are withdrawn and numb as they go about their work between the cramped space of the computers and mess of wires.

INT. SMALL CONVEYER BELT. HALLWAY

DVD discs ride the conveyer belt.

INT. SPARE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Brice lifts up a DVD case he has put together, stares at it in awe.

BRICE

Hey! This movie hasn't even  
been released at the cinemas  
yet.

Jodi frowns at her brother as she operates the printer.

Suddenly she cocks her head, strains to hear something.

BRICE

What's up.

JODI

Shh! Listen.

Together they stop to listen. A light RINGING of cat bells can be heard.

BRICE

Hey, that sounds like-

JODI

It is! It's kitty!

Jodi rushes around the equipment, searching.

The JINGLING of bells becomes louder.

Jodi crouches down behind a stack of boxes, jumps back up with her pet rabbit cradled in her arms.

Brice is astonished.

BRICE

No way!

Jodi gasps, eyes wide with disbelief. She holds Kitty out at arms length.

BRICE

What's wrong?

JODI  
Kitty is speaking to me.

Pause for a beat as Brice registers this.

BRICE  
Does he sound like Bugs Bunny.

JODI  
(Scowling)  
What do you think!

Jodi focuses on Kitty as he twitches his nose and whiskers.

Jodi gasps, horrified.

JODI  
No kitty! We can't do that!

BRICE  
What's he saying?

Jodi is distraught, shakes her head.

JODI  
No, Kitty. No! Please, don't  
make us do it. We'll get  
caught!

BRICE  
Jodi! What's he saying?

JODI  
Kitty says we should try to  
escape.

Brice is suddenly distraught also.

BRICE  
Screw that! I'm staying here.  
Vanessa told us too.

Jodi looks pleadingly at Kitty.

JODI  
It won't work Kitty. Those men  
will come in here as soon as  
we stop-

Jodi gasps, she is aghast.

JODI  
No Kitty! It's to risky.

BRICE  
What's to risky?

JODI  
Kitty says he'll pack the  
boxes while we look for a way  
to escape.

BRICE  
Kitty can do that?

JODI  
It doesn't matter what Kitty  
can do. I'm not giving Vanessa  
an excuse to put us in a  
Foster Home.

BRICE  
Me neither.

The two refuse to move, to obey Kitty.

Brice's hard determination softens as he realizes something.

BRICE  
What about dad?

HALLWAY

Brice sticks his head out the doorway of the spare room,  
glances down the length of the hallway. It is empty.

Brice and Jodi press their backs to the wall, nervous as they  
inch down the hallway towards the lounge room.

EXT. LOADING DOCK

Cardboard boxes move down the conveyor belt towards the  
loading dock.

Mac removes a box from the belt, runs tape across the top it.

MAC  
Mate. Those Dawndale kids are  
going hard.

Mac passes the box to Dave, picks up a second one.

Dave places the box in the back of the truck.

INT. LOUNGE ROOM

Brice and Jodi are pale and trembling, sick with fear. They  
crouch down against the wall near the front doorway.

JODI'S POV - FRONT DOORWAY

Through the open space of the front doorway can be seen the loading dock. Mac and Dave load the boxes into the truck. The dogs' BARKING can be heard.

BACK TO SCENE.

JODI

Do you think those dogs will really eat us?

BRICE

I dunno about that. But they sure look hungry.

JODI

What are we gonna do?

Suddenly Brice looks hopeful.

BRICE

What about the truck?

JODI

What about it?

BRICE

We can escape in the truck.

Jodi narrows her eyes.

JODI

You don't know how to drive a truck.

BRICE

Not me! The father of that Indonesian family. He should know how to drive a truck.

Jodi considers this, nods her approval.

EXT. LOADING DOCK

Mac wipes sweat from his brow with the back of his hand.

Dave tosses a box into the back of the truck, huffs. He's had enough.

DAVE

Man, I need a beer.

Dave sticks a high pitched whistle in his mouth, moves toward the locked gate.

MAC

Grab me one to mate.

INT. BEDROOM

Kota freezes, looks faint. Minjing clutches her two children close to her. They are both distressed by the sight of Brice leaning over the computers they work at.

Kota waves his arms, shouts at Brice in Indonesian to go away.

Brice pretends to be clutching a steering wheel.

BRICE

Truck? Truck? Can you drive a truck?

Kota and Minjing beg Brice to go back to work in their own language. They are afraid.

BRICE

(frustrated)

You can't understand a word I'm saying!

Jodi stands in the doorway, looks down the hallway.

She gasps with dread.

JODI'S POV - FRONT DOORWAY

Through the front doorway, Dave can be seen walking towards the house.

BACK TO SCENE.

JODI

Brice! That big bloke's coming!

LOUNGE ROOM

Dave enters the lounge room, pushes dangling wires aside as he strides across the room.

BEDROOM

Brice and Jodi flatten themselves against the wall next to the bedroom doorway. Dave's booted feet can be heard STOMPING up the hallway.

Jodi and Brice exchange terrified glances.

BRICE'S POV- BEDROOM DOORWAY.

Dave strides past the doorway.

KITCHEN

Dave enters the kitchen, opens the fridge, grabs two beer bottles.

BEDROOM

Brice and Jodi are petrified, anticipate the worst.

HALLWAY

Dave stops in front of the doorway of the spare room, peers in to the room.

BEDROOM

Brice and Jodi brace themselves for Dave's wrath.

DAVE'S POV - SPARE ROOM.

Jodi and Brice stand amongst the boxes and printers. They are too busy working to notice Dave.

HALLWAY

Dave continues walking down the hall.

BEDROOM

The sound of Dave's booted steps fades. Brice and Jodi are relieved.

BRICE  
What just happened?

JODI  
Kitty must have done something.

Pause for a beat as they consider this.

Brice gets excited by an idea. He points at Kota.

BRICE  
Hey, maybe Kitty can tell him to drive the truck.

SPARE ROOM

Jodi and Brice freeze in the doorway, shocked.

Dozens of DVDs and boxes twirl and swirl through the air, a hyperactive poltergeist.

Kitty sits in the eye of the psychic storm.

DVDs pack themselves into boxes. The boxes pack themselves onto the conveyor belt.

JODI

Kitty! We've got a plan to escape.

The swirling objects drop to the floor.

Kitty's nose and whiskers twitch as he stares thoughtfully at Jodi.

JODI

We need you to ask someone if they can drive a truck.

BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Kota and Minjing argue nervously to each other in their own language.

Jodi rushes into the room with Kitty held out in front of her. Brice follows behind his sister.

Kota and his family gasp with awe at the rabbit.

KOTA'S POV- KITTY.

Warm, yellow light bathes kitty and Jodi, flower petals shower down on them both. A necklace of flowers adorns the rabbit's neck, a red stripe streaks down between his eyes and ends at his nose.

BACK TO SCENE.

Jodi, Brice and the Indonesian family are all focused on Kitty. Suddenly they all glance at each other knowingly, understanding what part they must play in a plan to escape.

EXT. LOADING DOCK - DAY

No boxes are coming down the belt.

Mac scowls, angry.

MAC

This is not on.

EXT. SWEATSHOP. FRONT DOORWAY - DAY

Kitty leaps out the front doorway of the farm house.

EXT. LOADING DOCK

Mac and Dave spot the rabbit. Mac's eyes narrow with suspicion.

EXT. COMPOUND

Kitty bounds across the open space of the compound.

EXT. TRUCK

The dogs chase after the fleeing rabbit.

INT. LOUNGE ROOM. FRONT DOORWAY

Brice, Jodi and the Indonesian family huddle around the front doorway. They watch the dogs run off after Kitty.

Brice is pale, his whole body shakes. Kota closes his eyes, swallows hard. He nods at Brice

BRICE  
Okay, let's do it!

EXT. SWEATSHOP

Brice and Kota burst out of the sweatshop. Brice snatches up a wooden stick that leans against the wall.

SERIES OF SHOTS

- Brice and Kota charge across the compound. Jodi, Minjing and the two children follow further behind.
- Mac hurries to the cage door as Brice and Kota split up and race past opposite sides of the cage.
- Mac inserts a key into the pad lock.
- Brice sprints along the length of the truck, opens the passenger's side door.
- The Truck Driver is startled as Brice climbs up into the cabin with the long stick.
- Kota opens the driver's side door
- Brice hits the Truck Driver in the head with the end of the long stick.

- Kota grabs a handful of the Truck Driver's clothes, tosses him out of the truck onto the grass.

- Brice and Kota SLAM the truck doors shut. Kota turns the key in the ignition. The motor KICKS OVER.

EXT. LOADING DOCK

Mac bursts out of the caged loading dock. Dave follows behind him. They are furious.

EXT. REAR OF THE TRUCK

Jodi, Minjing and the two children anxiously wait beside the truck.

The children scream with fright as Dave charges towards them.

The truck moves forward. The four escapees' scramble into the back of it.

Jodi BANGS on the side of the truck with the flat of her hand.

JODI  
Go! Go! Go!

Banka and Tanga push boxes out of the moving truck. Minjing and Jodi do the same.

Mac trips over a tumbling box as Dave kicks one aside.

The truck picks up speed.

EXT. GATE 2#

The truck SMASHES through the double gate, rumbles on to the next one.

EXT. GATE 1#

The momentum of the accelerating truck knocks the gate clean off its hinges. The truck skids as it turns onto the dirt track, speeds off down it.

EXT. COMPOUND

The BARKING and SNARLING of the dogs can be heard as they return.

The Truck Driver, kneeling on the grass, screams out in terror as several dogs pounce on him, rip into him with their teeth.

EXT. DIRT TRACK - DAY

The truck speeds along the dirt track, a cloud of dust behind it.

EXT. TRACK SIDE

Kitty calmly sits on the side of the dirt track, waiting.

INT. TRUCK'S CABIN

Brice sits up straight, astounded. He leans forward in his seat, points out Kitty to Kota.

EXT. DIRT TRACK

The truck skids to a stop on the loose gravel.

INT. BACK OF TRUCK

The rear doors are still open. Inside the truck, amongst the boxes, Jodi casts a swift glance at Minjing. Both of them are nervous at having stopped.

EXT. REAR OF TRUCK

Jodi pokes her head out from inside the rear of the truck.

JODI POV - DIRT TRACK

On the edge of the dirt track sits Kitty, patiently waiting. He stares straight at Jodi.

BACK TO SCENE

JODI

KITTY!

Jodi jumps off the back of the truck. Suddenly she freezes, shocked.

JODI'S POV - KITTY

A middle aged woman, with long dark hair and wearing a summer dress, stands next to kitty.

BACK TO SCENE

Jodi recognizes the woman, can't believe she is seeing her.

EXT. TRACK SIDE

The woman gives Jodi a reassuring smile than fades away.

Jodi runs up to Kitty, scoops the rabbit up in her arms. She is shaken, clutches her pet close to herself.

MONTAGE

A) The truck pulls out of the dirt track onto a country road. The truck stops, Brice locks the back doors.

B) The truck cruises along a freeway with other vehicles.

C) The truck pulls into a petrol station.

EXT. REST ROOMS. PETROL STATION - AFTERNOON

The truck is parked at the side of a petrol station near the toilets.

Kota, his wife and two children sit in the truck's cabin, waiting.

Jodi leans against the front grill of the truck. She holds Kitty in one arm, gazes at a photo in her wallet.

INSERT. PHOTO.

The photo is of the same woman that Jodi saw fade away when she picked up Kitty from the side of the track.

BACK TO SCENE.

Brice steps out of the rest room. He walks over to Jodi, stands beside her.

JODI  
I think Kitty might be mum.

BRICE  
(frowning)  
You mean like in  
reincarnation?

JODI  
No, I mean mum's spirit is  
inside this rabbit.

A snort of derision from Brice.

BRICE  
Yeah, but you think Unicorns  
are cool.

JODI  
It would explain Kitty's  
strange powers.

Brice scowls at his sister, he is clearly offended.

BRICE  
Mum's in Heaven.

JODI  
But Brice, that means mum is-

BRICE  
I don't want to hear it Jodi!  
All right! It's disrespectful  
towards mum!

JODI  
But Brice, listen-

BRICE  
Just shut up!

Brice storms off to the back of the truck, climbs inside.

Jodi is upset.

EXT. SUBURB. MAIN STREET - EVENING

Dawn. The sky is a dark orange. The street lights are on.

The truck pulls over to the side of the road.

REAR OF THE TRUCK

Kota unlocks and opens the rear doors of the truck. Brice and Jodi jump out onto the road. Jodi carries Kitty.

Kota smiles gratefully as he shakes Brice and Jodi's hand. He thanks them both in Indonesian.

BRICE  
I hope it's all good for you  
and your family.

JODI  
Me too.

Kota nods his head, not understanding a word.

As Brice and Jodi walk away from the truck, Minjing and her two children wave goodbye from the truck's cabin.

Brice and Jodi wave back.

The truck drives off.

JODI  
You think they'll be okay?

BRICE  
Yeah. They'll be fine.

EXT. BACK STREETS - NIGHT

Brice and Jodi walk along a street of their suburb.

BRICE  
Ah man, I just remembered. I was supposed to be competing in the Hungry Hippo finals at school today.

JODI  
Hungry Hippos? You mean as in the board game?

BRICE  
Yeah.

JODI  
(disgusted)  
You play that at high school?

BRICE  
Sure, why not. It's a barrel of laughs. We play it in the library during lunch.

Jodi glares at her brother as if he is an idiot.

JODI  
You're a freak. Hungry Hippos is a baby's game.

The two walk towards the street corner.

Round the corner, the two freeze on the spot, horrified.

The Sneaky Snatcher strides towards them, its identity hidden under the goat mask and black plastic poncho.

Panic! Brice turns to flee, stumbles and falls. Jodi drops Kitty. Her knees give way as she gapes at the Sneaky Snatcher in horror.

Kitty holds his ground.

The Sneaky Snatcher is oblivious to the two terrified teens, walks right over the top of them.

Brice and Jodi cower behind their raised arms, squeeze their eyes shut.

The Sneaky Snatcher continues walking down the street.

The two teens open their eyes, shock and disbelief mingles with their fear.

The Sneaky Snatcher moves further away, blends into the shadow.

Brice stands up, helps his sister to her feet. They both tremble. Jodi straightens the kitten ears head band she wears.

Kitty waits patiently beside Jodi, calm and quiet.

BRICE  
Did Kitty just save us?

JODI  
No.

BRICE  
Than what happened?

Movement catches both their attention.

On the other side of the street, an OLD LADY walks her pet fluffy dog on a lead. She has a stooped back, wears pearl necklaces, a flower patterned dress, tennis sneakers and a lady's hat decorated with plastic flowers.

The Old Lady is unaware of Brice and Jodi's distress, gives them a pleasant wave as she shuffles along.

Brice and Jodi gawk at her.

BRICE  
She must've scared off the Sneaky Snatcher?

JODI  
Maybe.

BRICE  
She must have.

JODI  
This is to weird. Let's just get home.

The two move off quickly.

EXT. DAWNDALE'S HOUSE. FRONT YARD- NIGHT

A station wagon is parked in the driveway. The logo for a News program is displayed on the bonnet and sides of the vehicle.

Brice and Jodi stop in the middle of the front lawn, gape at the vehicle in disbelief.

BRICE  
She did it! She pulled it off.

Jodi tenses, afraid.

JODI  
I'm not going inside.

BRICE  
We can't stay out here all night.

JODI  
I don't care! I'm not going in there.

The two of them are frozen with fear, unable to move.

BRICE  
Ah man, this sucks.

EXT. LOUNGE ROOM WINDOW - MOMENTS LATER

Jodi and Brice run up to the lounge room window. Brice presses his face to the glass, peers through a gap in the curtains.

BRICE'S POV - LOUNGE ROOM WINDOW

Vanessa sits on the sofa. Bernard sits in his wheelchair next to the sofa.

A camera crew and reporter ready their equipment for an interview.

INT. LOUNGE ROOM - NIGHT

Vanessa holds a cheque, scrutinizes it.

MARY STEVENS, the reporter, sits on a chair facing the sofa, touches up her make-up.

The BOOM OPERATOR sets up lights on stands around the sofa. The CAMERA MAN adjusts the legs of a tripod that his camera sits on.

Bernard is downcast as he sits slouched in his wheelchair. He stares at the floor.

Mary Stevens glances at Vanessa and Bernard as she applies lipstick.

MARY STEVENS

I understand that you are both very emotional. So please, if you're unhappy with the way you've answered a question, don't hesitate to tell us. It's no trouble doing another take.

Vanessa nods, goes back to staring at her cheque.

The Camera man finishes adjusting the legs on the tripod, looks through the view finder of the camera.

CAMERAMAN

Ready when you are Mary.

All shadows on Bernard and Vanessa are burnt away by the bright illumination from the lights on the stands.

VANESSA

When will my cheque clear?

MARY STEVENS

What?

VANESSA

The cheque. When will it clear?

Mary frowns.

MARY STEVENS

Within a day.

Vanessa nods, satisfied.

VANESSA

Good.

Something off screen catches Bernard's attention.

BERNARD'S POV - LOUNGE ROOM WINDOW

Brice's face is pressed up against the glass. He waves his right hand, indicating to his father to meet him outside.

BACK TO SCENE

Bernard's depression evaporates. He wheels himself away from the sofa.

Vanessa's eyes blaze with anger.

VANESSA  
Where are you going?

BERNARD  
I have to go to the toilet.

VANESSA  
They're about to start the  
interview.

Mary and the Camera Man exchange glances, disliking Vanessa's attitude towards her husband.

MARY STEVENS  
That's fine Mrs. Dawndale. We  
will do some close ups of you  
and ask questions until your  
husband returns.

Vanessa excepts this with a slight shrug. Bernard wheels out of the lounge room.

EXT. BACK YARD

Bernard wheels himself through the back door and down the short ramp.

Brice and Jodi run to their father, wrap their arms around him. The three embrace.

BERNARD  
How did you escape?

Jodi holds up her pet rabbit.

JODI  
Kitty helped us.

Bernard is confounded, frowns at Jodi. An awkward silence for a beat.

Brice shakes his head at Jodi.

JODI  
(embarrassed)  
Um . . . yeah, that did sound  
kind of stupid.

BERNARD  
I don't understand.

BRICE  
Never mind dad.

BERNARD

I love you two so much, really  
I do.

Bernard hugs his two children again, his expression is both severe and sad.

BERNARD (CONT'D)

But I'm starting to think that  
maybe you shouldn't live with  
me anymore.

Brice and Jodi are shocked.

BRICE

No way dad! We're not leaving  
you.

BERNARD

I can't do it anymore. I can't  
watch Vanessa mistreat you  
both.

JODI

We don't mind daddy.

BRICE

It's cool dad. We need  
Vanessa. You know that.

JODI

We've already lost mum. We're  
not losing you too.

BERNARD

Go hide in your rooms. We'll  
discuss this later.

INT. LOUNGE ROOM

MARY STEVENS

How has the kidnapping of your  
two stepchildren made you  
feel?

Vanessa feigns grief.

VANESSA

It feels painful. I-I'd never  
have believed it could be this  
painful, losing someone you  
love.

The Boom Operator holds a fuzzy microphone above Vanessa's head.

VANESSA (CONT'D)  
It makes me afraid to love.

Bernard returns, wheels himself next to the sofa that Vanessa sits on.

Mary looks over at the camera man.

MARY STEVENS  
Widen the shot Mike so we can  
get them both in frame.

The Camera Man readjusts the camera lens.

MARY STEVENS  
Mr. Dawndale. . .

Bernard is startled out of his deep thoughts.

MARY STEVENS (CONT'D)  
Can you please move in closer  
to your wife, comfort her.

Bernard wheels closer to Vanessa, awkwardly puts his arm around her.

MARY STEVENS  
That's good. It will make the  
shot more dramatic.

Mary expresses a patronizing concern as she asks her next question.

MARY STEVENS  
What would you say to the  
Sneaky Snatcher if he was  
watching this interview?

Pause for a beat, Vanessa considers how to answer, makes an effort to not cry.

VANESSA  
I beg you, please. Let my  
children go . . .

BRICE'S BEDROOM

Brice stretches out on his bed. He tucks his hands behind his head, stares at the ceiling.

VANESSA (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
They're my little angels . . .

## JODI'S BEDROOM

Jodi enters her bedroom. She is relieved, sits Kitty on the bed, picks up a Unicorn plush toy and hugs it.

VANESSA (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
I'm so lucky to have them in  
my life. . . .

Jodi sits down at her drawing desk. A mess of blank paper, crayons and pencils is spread over the desktop.

JODI  
I missed you guys.

Jodi picks up a pencil, begins to draw.

## LOUNGE ROOM

Vanessa is upset, her eyes red rimmed with grief.

VANESSA (CONT'D)  
I beg you! Whoever you are.  
Find it in your heart to let  
my children go. . . .

Vanessa bursts into tears and sobs, hides her face in her hands as she weeps.

VANESSA (CONT'D)  
I love them so much.

Bernard turns his head to hide his expression of disgust.

Mary Stevens is moved by Vanessa's desperate plea.

Suddenly the Boom Operator drops his pole with the Boom Mike attached. He gapes wide-eyed at the lounge room window.

BOOM OPERATOR  
Look at that!

Everyone in the room turns to look.

## INSERT - LOUNGE ROOM WINDOW

Between a gap in the curtains can be seen the familiar goat mask and poncho of the Sneaky Snatcher.

## BACK TO SCENE

Mary stares at Vanessa with suspicion. Both of them are on their feet.

MARY STEVENS.  
What's he doing here?

Vanessa shakes her head, her eyes wide with disbelief.

VANESSA  
I have no idea.

MARY STEVENS  
Hasn't he already kidnapped  
your children?

Vanessa is silent for a beat.

MARY STEVENS  
Well? Hasn't he?

JODI'S BEDROOM

BOOM OPERATOR (O.S.)  
(shouting)  
Mike! Get a shot of the Sneaky  
Snatcher!

Jodi flinches, fearful. She leaps out of the chair at her drawing desk, dashes out of her bedroom.

INSERT - DRAWING

A half finished drawing of a young girl who smiles with gratitude as she receives a rabbit as a gift from a beautiful angel.

HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Jodi stands in the hallway as Brice rushes out of his room.

Together they run down the hall towards the lounge room.

INT. LOUNGE ROOM WINDOW

The Sneaky Snatcher moves away from the window.

KITCHEN

The News team dashes into the kitchen, face the window.

INSERT - KITCHEN WINDOW

The horned goat mask peers in through the kitchen window.

BACK TO SCENE

BOOM OPERATOR  
There it is.

Mary steps closer to the kitchen sink, awed as she gazes at the Sneaky Snatcher behind the window glass. The Sneaky Snatcher stares back at her.

CAMERA MAN

Man, this is awesome! I've gotta get a close up of it.

The camera man runs to the back door, opens it.

MARY STEVENS

No wait! Mike!

EXT. BACKDOOR - CONTINUOUS

The Camera Man barges out the back door, rushes down the ramp. He holds his camera on his right shoulder, shoots footage of the serial kidnapper.

LOUNGE ROOM

Vanessa spins around, gasps with surprise.

Brice and Jodi stand in the middle of the lounge room.

Vanessa glares at her two stepchildren with naked hate.

Brice and Jodi flinch, cringe in the presence of Vanessa's fury.

Mary Stevens and the Boom Operator rush back into the room. They gasp, shocked by the sight of Brice and Jodi.

Mary glances at Vanessa with narrowed eyes.

MARY STEVENS

This explains a lot.

Bernard turns pale, looks ill, he struggles for breath.

MARY STEVENS

Are you all right?

BERNARD

Please! Protect my children.

Bernard's body stiffens, flops out of the wheel chair and onto the floor. His body is rigid, unmoving. He stares blankly at the ceiling.

Brice and Jodi rush to their father's side.

MARY STEVENS

What's wrong with him?

JODI  
He's having a seizure.

Brice reaches into Bernard's pocket, retrieves the medication container.

MARY STEVENS  
What? An Epileptic seizure?

Brice shakes the now empty container.

BRICE  
Dad's run out of medication.

JODI  
Call an Ambulance!

EXT. KITCHEN WINDOW

The Camera Man lowers his camera, perplexed.

The Sneaky Snatcher continues to gaze through the window, unresponsive to the Camera Man.

Suddenly the Camera man reacts to something off screen. He screams in terror, drops his camera.

KITCHEN

SMASH! An explosion of broken glass and wood as the Camera Man's limp body crashes through the kitchen window. THUD! Hits the tiled floor.

LOUNGE ROOM

Everyone in the room jumps at the sound of the kitchen window smashing.

Vanessa runs to the closet door as . . .

. . . all the cushions on the sofa explode into a cloud of stuffing and shredded fabric.

An invisible force hurls the Boom Operator across the room, slams him up against the wall.

Brice and Jodi grab Bernard, drag him across the floor towards the front door.

Mary Stevens screams as the television set flips through the air, slams into her.

CLOSET

Vanessa tumbles into the small space of the closet, shuts the door. She cowers in the corner, listens in terror to the CRASHING and SCREAMING from the lounge room.

EXT. FRONT LAWN - NIGHT

Brice and Jodi drag their father down the ramp and onto the front lawn.

SMASH! The lounge room window explodes, a shower of broken glass.

Bernard continues to have an epileptic seizure, his body stiff.

EXT. NEXT DOOR NEIGHBOR'S GARDEN

Brice and Jodi slide their father in between shrubs in the next door neighbor's front garden.

Bernard's rigid body goes limp. He is conscious again, exhausted, confused by his surroundings.

BRICE

Relax dad. We've stashed you  
in Mrs. Conroy's garden.

Bernard expresses anxiety.

BERNARD

The Sneaky Snatcher! It's  
real! I saw it!

JODI

We know. We've seen it too.

BERNARD

You have to go! Now! Get out  
of this street!

JODI

Not until we've called you an  
ambulance.

Bernard is distraught, struggles to sit up.

BERNARD

What? No! No!

BRICE

Stay here until the ambulance  
arrives dad.

BERNARD

Don't be stupid Brice! You  
have to run! He'll get you!

BRICE

You need medication dad.

Brice runs off.

JODI

I love you dad.

Jodi races after her brother.

Bernard drags himself out of the garden after his two  
children, his useless legs are a dead weight. It is a tragic  
and pathetic sight.

BERNARD

NO! DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME!

EXT. ROAD

Brice and Jodi bolt across the road and onto the front lawn  
of another house.

INT. LOUNGE ROOM - NIGHT

Silence.

The closet door squeaks open. Vanessa pokes her head out of  
the closet.

All the furniture is smashed to pieces. Mary Stevens and the  
Boom Operator are dead, their bodies twisted out of shape.

INT. KITCHEN

Vanessa grabs a bread knife from knife rack on the kitchen  
bench.

INT. BRINKLE'S HOUSE. LOUNGE ROOM - NIGHT

Mr and Mrs BRINKLE are a prim and proper, married couple both  
in their mid sixties. Together they sit on a two seater  
lounge, watch Television.

INSERT - TELEVISION SCREEN.

Late news. Pictures of Brice and Jodi plus Vanessa's now  
famous video footage of the Sneaky Snatcher.

BACK TO SCENE

KNOCK! KNOCK! KNOCK!

Urgent pounding on the front door.

MR BRINKLE  
It's a bit late for visitors.

MRS BRINKLE  
Go and see who it is dear.

Mr Brinkle gets up off the lounge.

KNOCK! KNOCK! KNOCK!

INT. FRONT DOOR

Mr Brinkle opens the front door.

Brice and Jodi burst into the house.

BRICE  
We have to call an Ambulance.  
Can we please use your phone?

Mr Brinkle recognizes the two teens.

MR BRINKLE  
I just saw you two on the news-

JODI  
Please! It's an emergency! We  
need your phone.

MR BRINKLE  
The phone is over there.

EXT. NEXT DOOR NEIGHBOR'S FRONT YARD

Bernard freezes on the front lawn of his next door neighbor's house.

The Sneaky Snatcher strides past Bernard, ignores him.

EXT. NEXT DOOR NEIGHBOR'S BED ROOM WINDOW

The Sneaky Snatcher stands on a flower bed, peers in through the bedroom window.

He moves on to the next window.

INT. BRINKLE'S HOUSE. LOUNGE ROOM.

Jodi speaks frantically into a cordless phone.

JODI  
. . . Milford Street. Number  
32 . . . Yes that's right.  
Please Hurry.

Jodi hangs up the phone.

JODI  
They said an ambulance will  
get here in ten minutes.

Brice sighs with relief.

BRICE  
Thank God.

EXT. NEXT DOOR NEIGHBOR'S FRONT YARD

BERNARD  
Oh no! No! No!

Bernard expresses dread as the Sneaky Snatcher moves away from the house, strides across the lawn.

EXT. MILFORD STREET

The Sneaky Snatcher calmly walks across the road, heads in the direction of the Brinkle's house.

Bernard drags himself on to the road after the serial kidnapper. His legs trail uselessly behind him.

BERNARD  
HEY! HEY YOU!

The Sneaky Snatcher is unresponsive to Bernard's shouting, keeps moving.

Bernard is frantic, works his arms harder to drag himself faster across the road.

BERNARD  
HEY! I'M TALKING TO YOU!

BERNARD POV - BRINKLE'S HOUSE

The Sneaky Snatcher swiftly strides across the front lawn of the Brinkle's house.

BACK TO SCENE

BERNARD  
DON'T TOUCH MY CHILDREN!

Bernard drags himself towards the gutter.

Suddenly he looks very ill, has difficulties breathing.

BERNARD

Oh God no. Not again.

The sound of cat bells JINGLING. Bernard turns to look.

Kitty hops towards him, stops in front of his face. A soft, warm yellow glow bathes the rabbit.

Bernard gazes at kitty, mystified.

BERNARD

Angela?

Bernard and Kitty fade away.

EXT. DAWNDALE'S HOUSE. FRONT LAWN - NIGHT

Vanessa runs out on to the front lawn, bread knife in hand. She glances about, searching.

The high beam lights of an approaching vehicle catches her attention.

EXT. MILFORD STREET

A familiar, mud splattered Hilux Ute stops out the front of the Dawndale's house.

EXT. HILUX UTE

Mac and Dave sit in the cabin. They both glare at Vanessa.

INT. BRINKLE'S HOUSE. LOUNGE ROOM - NIGHT

Mr and Mrs Brinkle are bewildered as they gawk at the two teens.

MR BRINKLE

The news has been saying you  
two were kidnapped by the  
Sneaky Snatcher.

MRS BRINKLE

How did you escape?

BRICE

We didn't. It was a hoax.

Mr and Mrs Brinkle gasp, scandalized.

MR BRINKLE

That's a disgrace.

JODI

Our step mum is behind it.

Suddenly Mrs Brinkle stumbles back against the wall, eyes wide with fear.

INSERT - LOUNGE ROOM WINDOW

The Sneaky Snatcher stands outside the window.

EXT. FRONT DOOR

Brice and Jodi barge out the front door, flee down the steps of the porch.

EXT. FRONT LAWN

Brice and Jodi freeze mid run, regain their balance.

JODI'S POV- HILUX UTE

Dave and Mac stand besides their Hilux with Vanessa. They spot the two teens, break into a run.

BACK TO SCENE

Brice and Jodi flee. Mac and Dave move fast, tackle the two teens.

Dave grapples Jodi in his beefy arms, ignores her kicking legs.

Mac raises his fist, punches Brice in the face to subdue him.

EXT. BRINKLE'S HOUSE. FRONT DOOR

Mr and Mrs Brinkle watch the scuffle on their front lawn. They hide behind the half open front door. They are both appalled.

MR BRINKLE'S POV - BRICE AND JODI

Dave carries a kicking and screaming Jodi towards the Hilux, shoves her into the cage in the back tray.

Mac drags Brice across the lawn by one leg, kicks the teen to knock the fight out of him.

Vanessa stares directly at Mr Brinkle, knife in hand.

EXT. BRINKLE'S HOUSE. FRONT LAWN

Vanessa charges across the front lawn towards the house. In the B.G. Dave and Mac force Brice into the cage with Jodi.

EXT. FRONT DOOR

Mrs Brinkle screams, shuffles backwards. Mr Brinkle panics as Vanessa leaps up the front porch, knife raised. He attempts to slam the front door shut . . .

INT. FRONT DOOR

To slow. Vanessa barges through the closing door, flings it open, knocks Mr Brinkle off balance.

Vanessa looms over Mr. Brinkle, raises her knife-

DAVE'S POV - BRINKLE'S HOUSE.

SCREAMS of pain and fear plus ornaments SMASHING can be heard from inside the house.

INT. HILUX CABIN - CONTINUOUS

Dave sits in the passenger side, transfixed as he gazes out the window at the house.

Mac settles in the driver's side, starts the motor.

DAVE

Look's like Vanessa has scored herself a one way ticket to prison.

MAC

Good! That's means we get to keep the kids.

EXT. MILFORD STREET

The Hilux ute speeds off down the street.

EXT. BRINKLE'S HOUSE. FRONT LAWN

Vanessa hurries out of the Brinkle's home, bloodied knife in hand.

Police SIRENS wail in the distance as Vanessa stops on the lawn, glances about.

She throws her knife high into the air in the direction of the house.

EXT. ROOF

The knife clatters on the tiles of the roof, slides down into the gutter. Gone.

EXT. MILFORD STREET

Vanessa is composed. She stands on the side of road, fixes her hair as a police car speeds down the street towards her, its blue/red lights flashing.

EXT. MAIN ROAD - NIGHT

Mac's Hilux Ute speeds down a straight stretch of road, turns around a corner into a side street.

INT. HILUX'S CABIN

Mac drives. Dave sit in the passenger seat.

DAVE'S POV - ROAD AHEAD

The Sneaky Snatcher steps onto the road in front of the Hilux, its goat mask illuminated by the headlights.

STREET

The Hilux Ute swerves, skids off the road, hits the gutter and . . .

CRASH!

. . . flips on to its side on the footpath.

EXT. CAGE. HILUX TRAY

The cage is crushed and bent from the crash. Brice and Jodi are knotted together like a game of twister gone horribly wrong.

Brice Is awed by the sight of his uninjured arms and hands.

BRICE

We should be dead.

JODI

I don't even have a scratch.

The bent door of the cage pops off, CLATTERS on to the road.

BRICE

Is Kitty doing this?

Jodi's eyes sparkle with hope and love and happiness.

JODI

No, it's a guardian angel!

BRICE

Huh?

JODI

That's what I've been trying  
to tell you Brice. Mum's  
spirit is our guardian angel.  
She's inside Kitty!

EXT. UTE WRECKAGE

A booted foot kicks through the spiderweb of cracked glass  
that is the front windscreen. Thousands of tiny pieces of  
glass spill onto the road.

Dave crawls out of the Ute, stands groggily on his feet.  
Blood slides down the side of his face.

Mac slides out of the wreckage, wincing with pain as he  
clutches his ribs. Mac left legs is broken.

Brice and Jodi scramble out of the cage. Tools lay scattered  
on the road around an up turned tool box.

Dave and Mac are astounded by the sight of Brice and Jodi.

MAC

You've got to be joking!  
They're not even bruised.

DAVE

That's impossible!

Mac grits his teeth from pain, scowls at the two teenagers.

MAC

They should be worse off than  
us.

DAVE

I'm gonna bust their heads in.

MAC

Yeah, do it!

Dave charges towards the two teens.

Jodi notices something off screen.

JODI

Brice, look!

JODI'S POV - OLD LADY

Further down the road stands the Old Lady in her flower  
pattern dress and tennis sneakers. She has her little fluffy  
dog on a lead. The old lady stands out the front of a large,  
dark, dense garden, barricaded by a tall mesh fence.

The old lady points to the shadowy garden.

BACK TO SCENE

BRICE

Hey! Didn't we see her-

Dave towers over the teenagers, a hulking giant of a man. He slaps his beefy hand against the side of Brice's head.

Smack down! Brice collapses onto the road, clutching his head.

Jodi takes several steps back, snatches up a battery charger, swings it in a circle by the cord.

Dave pauses, amused by the girls stance.

Jodi glares at Dave, attempts to look threatening despite her fear.

JODI

Come any closer and I'll take your eye out.

DAVE

Yeah? You that good a shot girl?

JODI

Try me.

Dave considers this for a beat.

Jodi swings the battery charger faster.

Dave takes a step forward.

JODI

(whispers to self)

Please guardian angel, make my shot true.

Jodi releases the battery charger. It strikes Dave a direct hit in the right eye.

Dave crashes to the ground, roars in anguish.

Jodi helps Brice to his feet. Together they make a run for it.

EXT. MESH FENCE

Brice and Jodi run down the length of the fence that the Old Lady had pointed at.

A hole is in the fence. Brice and Jodi scramble through it into the darkness of the garden beyond.

EXT. UTE WRECKAGE

Mac leans his back against the wreckage of the Hilux ute.

Dave lies on his back, howls in agony as he holds a hand over his right eye.

The Sneaky Snatcher walks towards Mac, stands over him.

MAC

What do you want?

Mac turns his head, stares at something off screen with narrowed eyes.

MAC

Who the hell are you?

Suddenly Mac is dragged off screaming down the road by an invisible force.

The Sneaky Snatcher watches, silent, still.

EXT. MINI GOLF COURSE - NIGHT

The Dawndale teens follow a flat, narrow path through a clump of odd, shadowy shapes over run by a garden.

It is quiet and still.

Brice squints at his surroundings. A plastic mock up of a ginger bread house is visible. Brice recognizes it.

BRICE

Hey! We're inside the Mini-Golf course.

JODI

Since when did our suburb have a mini-golf course?

BRICE

It's always had one.

JODI

Has it?

BRICE

You should spend more time out doors and less time drawing weird cat people.

JODI  
(Muttering)  
Shut up.

The two continue walking.

Brice pushes aside palm leaves as he and Jodi turn a corner.

The two pass a big, fibre glass cartoon style pig.

Brice grins, expresses joy.

JODI  
Why are you smiling?

BRICE  
I just realized something.

JODI  
What?

BRICE  
Things are gonna get better  
for us from now on.

JODI  
How?

BRICE  
We don't have to take anymore  
abuse from Vanessa. If she  
threatens to send us to a  
foster home we can just say:  
"Back off or we'll go to the  
cops and tell 'em what you did  
to us!"

JODI  
You idiot! Why do you think  
we're hiding in a mini golf  
course?

BRICE  
Take a chill pill sis. We're  
in the clear!

JODI  
Don't tell me to take a chill  
pill!

The two suddenly stop.

Jodi and Brice look straight ahead, amazed.

A plump, inflatable jumping castle is bathed in soft, amber light.

BRICE

Cool.

JODI

What's it doing Here?

BRICE

Who cares. We've got somewhere to sleep.

Brice walks towards the jumping castle. Jodi refuses to budge, uncertain.

BRICE

C'mon sis. No one knows we're here.

EXT. MILFORD STREET - NIGHT

Three police cars are parked in the middle of the road. Several police officers question concerned families on the front lawn of their homes.

A police truck, siren BLARING, pulls up next to the parked police cars.

INT. DAWNDALE'S HOUSE. LOUNGE ROOM - NIGHT

Two POLICE OFFICERS are astonished as they glance over the carnage.

All the furniture in the room is busted into pieces. Half of the ceiling is caved in.

The dead bodies of the News crew are twisted and bent out of shape.

The two Police Officers glance at each other, spooked.

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

A third police officer squats next to the dead body of the Camera Man on the kitchen floor.

The camera catches the Police Officer's attention. He frowns at it, thoughtful.

A Police Officer from the lounge room steps into the kitchen.

POLICE OFFICER 3#

Looks like we may have ourselves an eye witness.

POLICE OFFICER 2#  
What? The camera?

POLICE OFFICER 3#  
It's been on record mode for  
the past thirty minutes.

EXT. DAWNDALE'S HOUSE. VERANDAH - NIGHT

Vanessa sits on the front ramp of her home, feigns grief and despair for SARGENT PIKE who stands beside her smoking a cigarette.

SARGENT PIKE  
You probably don't want to  
hear this, but I know exactly  
how you feel.

Vanessa gives Sargent Pike a polite smile, goes back to her grief.

SARGENT PIKE  
The Sneaky Snatcher kidnapped  
my son two months ago.

Vanessa is surprised to hear this.

Sargent Pike has a drag on his cigarette.

SARGENT PIKE  
You know what's funny?

Pause for a beat. Sargent Pike is overcome with melancholy

SARGENT PIKE (CONT'D)  
I'm a cop and I couldn't be at  
home to protect my boy cause I  
was on duty that night. How  
crazy is that?

A police officer hurries towards Sargent Pike.

Sargent Pike flicks his cigarette, turns to face the police Officer.

POLICE OFFICER  
Sir. I just got off the radio  
to Constable Bradley. He's  
investigating a car accident  
three blocks away. Two men are  
dead. They had no ID.

SARGENT PIKE  
How many cars?

POLICE OFFICER  
 Just one? Bradley believes the  
 Sneaky Snatcher may be  
 involved.

Sargent Pike looks pained. The Sneaky Snatcher's killing  
 spree deeply disturbs him.

POLICE OFFICER  
 There's more sir. The station  
 received a call from the  
 hospital. They reported a man  
 suffering an epileptic seizure  
 arrived in the Emergency Room  
 under unusual circumstances.

SARGENT PIKE  
 Define unusual?

POLICE OFFICER  
 The hospital reported that the  
 man in question just appeared  
 out of no where.

Vanessa looks up at the police, focuses on their  
 conversation.

POLICE OFFICER  
 The man's description matches  
 Bernard Dawndale who was  
 reported missing.

SARGENT PIKE  
 I'll go and question him first  
 thing tomorrow morning.

Vanessa scowls with murderous intent.

EXT. JUMPING CASTLE - NIGHT

Jodi and Brice lay side by side on the cushioned floor of the  
 Jumping Castle.

Brice has his eyes closed, sleeping.

Jodi stares at her brother, contemplative.

JODI  
 Brice.

BRICE  
 Mmm?

JODI

Brice.

Brice opens his eyes, looks at his sister.

BRICE

What's up sis?

JODI

Why do you think a guardian angel is protecting us?

Brice considers this, comes up blank. He shrugs.

BRICE

I dunno. Cause we're good people I guess.

JODI

Mum was a good person. Why didn't a guardian angel save her when that truck hit dad's car?

BRICE

Maybe guardian angels are powerless against random accidents.

Jodi frowns, displeased. She rolls over, puts her back to her brother.

JODI

(Sulking)

It's not fair. What's the point in guardian angels if they can't save everyone.

BRICE

Maybe mum is protecting us because she knows that we're the only two people left that cares about dad.

Jodi sits up, looks at Brice, her eyes and smile sparkling with joy.

JODI

So you really do believe Mum's spirit is inside Kitty.

BRICE

It's the only explanation.

HISS! HISS! HISS! The sound of compressed air escaping out of several holes.

The walls of the castle sag, collapse.

The floor sags. Jodi and Brice panic.

The jumping castle deflates, constricts, burying Brice and Jodi alive under a suffocating blanket of thick rubber.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. YULITZA'S HOUSE. KITCHEN - DAY

Brice and Jodi are unconscious, their limp bodies sitting side by side on dining chairs.

Jodi is dressed in a billowing, Victorian style dress decorated with ribbon and lace. Brice wears a sailor suit. Theatrical make-up has been painted on their faces to make them resemble dolls.

They both wear a lace choker around their necks.

Brice and Jodi awaken, tumble out of their chairs with fright.

Standing before them is the Old Lady in the flower pattern dress and tennis sneakers.

Besides the Old Lady, silent and rigid, is the Sneaky Snatcher.

The Old Lady is named YULITZA. She smiles with delight.

YULITZA

Oh, look at you. You both look adorable.

Brice and Jodi stare in wide eyed terror at the Sneaky Snatcher.

YULITZA

My, my, you two little angels where hard to catch. Which is funny really, because the Media has been saying I caught you both two nights ago.

Yulitza chuckles, amused.

Brice and Jodi continue to stare at the Sneaky Snatcher.

YULITZA

Oh don't worry about him. He's not even real.

Brice and Jodi stare stupidly at Yulitza, confused.

Yulitza stands on her toes, pokes the side of the goat mask the Sneaky Snatcher wears.

The Sneaky Snatcher does not respond.

YULITZA

Look, see. He's not even moving. He's just an illusion.

BRICE

But he's kidnapped eight people. The police are after him.

YULITZA

Oh he's just a phantasm. I created him so the police will chase after him instead of me.

BRICE

Huh? Created him? You mean like out of Lego or something.

Jodi gasps, her sudden realization shocking her.

JODI

You're the Sneaky Snatcher!

YULITZA

My, my. You're a clever little girl. Your daddy must be very proud of you.

Brice becomes pale, ill. His whole body trembles.

BRICE

A-are you going to kill us?

YULITZA

That depends young man, on if you are a good little boy or a naughty little boy.

INT. PLAYROOM - DAY

YULITZA (O.C.)

Oh, I know you're going to have so much fun with me in this room.

The playroom is a large room at the back of Yulitza's house.

The room is painted pink with white furniture. Scattered about the room are plush toys and large plump cushions.

Lose, gossamer fabric and pony theme mobiles hang from the ceiling.

Yulitza leads Brice and Jodi into the room.

YULITZA

We will have nice tea parties together.

Brice and Jodi glance around the room, aghast.

Lined up in a row along opposite walls are large, glass display cabinets.

Locked in each cabinet, sitting on a chair, are teenagers and children. They are all dressed in costumes and wear make-up that makes them look like living dolls.

They all have a lace choker around their neck.

GLASS DISPLAY CABINET

A thirteen year old girl, dressed like Scarlet O'Hara, presses her palm against the glass door of the cabinet she sits in. She stares at Jodi and Brice, recognizes them both.

The thirteen year old girl is MELINDA HARRIS.

PLAYROOM

Jodi spots Melinda, is relieved to see that her school friend is alive.

JODI

(Whispering)

Melinda.

YULITZA

I'll display you both in the front cabinets.

JODI

We can't stay here. Our daddy is in hospital. He needs us!

YULITZA

Don't be silly sweetie? Dolls don't have a daddy.

JODI  
 (Begging)  
 No! Please let us go! Please!

Enough is enough! Brice's back straightens, his face is twisted by rage.

BRICE  
 We're not dolls! You can't  
 expect us to act like dolls!

Yulitza's expression is suddenly harsh, nasty as she glowers at Brice.

GLASS DISPLAY CABINET

The children sitting in their cabinets watch Brice and Jodi with dread, anticipate the worse.

PLAYROOM

BRICE  
 I don't even know how a doll  
 should act!

Suddenly Brice drops to the floor, clutches the choker around his neck.

His face is red, he gags, choking.

Jodi is in a panic.

JODI  
 What's happening Brice?

Jodi kneels beside her choking brother, unsure what to do.

JODI  
 What's wrong?

Yulitza snarls at the two teens. For a brief second, her eyes turn red, bloodshot, her mouth is filled with needle sharp teeth.

YULITZA  
 If I say you are my dolls.  
 Then that means you act like  
 dolls. Misbehave again and I  
 will kill you!

Brice flops onto his back, able to breath again. He coughs painfully.

Jodi glances fearfully at Yulitza, touches the choker around her neck.

Suddenly a grey rabbit leaps on top of a dresser, it's ears pricked up.

Jodi is pumped with hope at the sight of her pet.

JODI

Kitty!

Jodi points at the Old lady.

BRICE

Kitty! She's the Sneaky Snatcher!

Kitty boldly sits up on his hind legs, sternly stares at Yulitza, threatening.

Yulitza sneers.

YULITZA

Are you threatening me?

Kitty's whiskers and nose twitch.

YULITZA

You're only a threat because you can channel your power through that . . . rodent.

Yulitza scowls, concentrates as she waves her hand at the rabbit.

Fur explodes off Kitty as his body flips in the air, his back bent in an impossible angle. His spine is snapped clean in half.

Jodi screams in anguish, her heart broken.

Kitty's limp, crumpled body hits the shag carpet on the floor.

Jodi drops to her knees, bursts into tears.

Brice kneels beside his sister, puts his arm around her. Jodi clings to him, crying.

Brice glares at Yulitza, his eyes overloaded with hate.

Yulitza looms over the two teens her fury highlighting her red eyes and needle sharp teeth.

Brice and Jodi recoil in horror and shock at the true nature of Yulitza.

YULITZA  
GET IN YOUR GLASS CABINETS  
NOW!

The glass doors of the two empty display cabinets swing open.

Brice and Jodi scramble into a cabinet each. The doors close and lock.

GLASS DISPLAY CABINET

Jodi is curled up on the floor of her cabinet, leans against the glass. She sobs, tears spill onto her dress.

JODI  
Kitty.

Brice sits on a chair in his cabinet, angry.

EXT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT - ESTABLISHING

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

The elevator doors slide open. Vanessa strides out of the lift, carries a handbag. She is accompanied by a burly, uniformed SECURITY GUARD.

RECEPTION

A lone NURSE sits at the reception desk, reading a magazine.

Vanessa leans on the counter top of the reception desk, expresses concern. The Security Guard stands behind her.

VANESSA  
Hi. Can you tell me which bed  
Bernard Dawndale is in?

NURSE  
It's five twenty five in the  
morning.

VANESSA  
He's my husband.

The Nurse glances at the Security Guard, uncertain.

SECURITY GUARD  
I checked her driver's  
licence. She's the wife of the  
patient.

The Security Guard straightens his cap, nods his head at Vanessa and the Nurse.

SECURITY GUARD

Ladies.

He turns and casually strolls away.

NURSE

Um, your husband is in . . .

The Nurse looks at a list.

NURSE

. . . bed number eighteen.  
That's on your right.

Vanessa smiles sweetly, grateful.

VANESSA

Ta.

BED 18

A private room, one bed.

Bernard sleeps under white bedsheets. A wheel chair is beside the bed.

VANESSA

Honey?

Bernard stirs, awakens. He glances around the room.

BERNARD

Where's Brice and Jodi?

VANESSA

I don't care. I'm concerned  
about the police wanting to  
question you.

BERNARD

I'll tell them nothing. I  
swear.

VANESSA

I can't take that chance.

Vanessa approaches the bed, reaches into her handbag. . .

. . .pulls out a rag and the bottle of chloroform, soaks the  
rag.

BERNARD

No please, wait! NURSE!

Vanessa strikes, smothers Bernard's nose and mouth with the soaked rag.

Bernard struggles, goes limp.

BEDS 12-18

Vanessa sneaks past the rows of beds with sleeping patients in them. She slips in between two beds, presses the buzzer on the wall.

Vanessa hurries out of the room.

CORRIDOR

The Nurse hurries down the corridor, her leather shoes CLICKING on the polished floor.

She enters the dark room that holds beds 12-18.

The corridor is empty for a beat.

Vanessa pushes an unconscious Bernard down the corridor in the wheel chair.

LIFT

The double lift doors open. Vanessa enters the lift, pulls Bernard and the wheelchair in after her.

INSERT - FLOOR LEVEL BUTTONS.

Vanessa presses the button for the top floor.

CORRIDOR

Vanessa stops in a wide corridor with windows spaced in a row on the right side.

Unused bed trollies line the wall to the left.

She unlatches one of the windows. Through the glass can be seen the open car park and street lights five stories below.

Vanessa struggles to lift Bernard's limp body out of the wheelchair, drags him towards the open window.

The sound of footsteps startles Vanessa.

She drags Bernard away from the window, slides him under a bed trolley.

Footsteps become louder.

Vanessa fixes her hair than casually walks down the corridor.

A MALE NURSE pushing an empty bed trolley enters the corridor.

MALE NURSE  
Visiting hours aren't till  
nine o'clock, love.

VANESSA  
Oh. My husband is down in Ward  
G and I'm staying over night  
with him.

MALE NURSE  
Fair enough.

The Male Nurse stops besides the open window, closes and locks it.

LIFT DOORS

Vanessa stops in front of the lift doors, presses the button. She pretends to wait for the lift to arrive as the Male Nurse moves on.

Pause for a beat.

The Male Nurse and the sounds of his footsteps are gone.

Vanessa frowns, angry, rushes off.

BING! The lift doors slide open.

CORRIDOR

Vanessa pushes aside the bed trolley that she had hidden Bernard under.

VANESSA'S POV - FLOOR

Bernard is gone!

BACK TO SCENE.

Vanessa clenches her teeth, furious. She kicks the wall.

INT. GLASS DISPLAY CABINETS - DAY

Melinda Harris sits on a chair in her cabinet, looks distraught.

MELINDA  
Brice. Tell Jodi to start  
acting like a doll. That witch  
will kill her if she don't.

Jodi sits on the floor of her cabinet, her knees pulled up under her chin. She is miserable.

Brice is in his cabinet that is next to Jodi's. He watches his sister with concern.

BRICE

Jodi. Jodi.

Jodi does not respond.

BRICE

Jodi. Snap out of it! Sit on your chair!

Jodi ignores her brother, keeps company with her grief.

BRICE

Jodi! Think about dad. We've got to make sure he made it to a hospital.

JODI

How are we gonna do that? No one else has escaped.

BRICE

I'll think of something, I promise.

JODI

It's hopeless.

BRICE

It doesn't matter what you think! Dad needs us!

A beat. Jodi looks miserable.

BRICE

I'm sorry I yelled at you.

JODI

It's not that. Now I know how dad feels every time Vanessa treats us like crap.

BRICE

Yeah, I know. It feels horrible.

JODI

Dad deserves better than Vanessa.

BRICE

We all do.

JODI

It's not fair. Everyone else  
our age lives with their dad.  
We should too!

BRICE

Oh well, It's just like what  
mum used to tell us: "That's  
the way the cookie crumbles."

Jodi stands up. Sits on the chair.

JODI

I remember mum saying that.  
What's your plan for us to  
escape?

INT. YULITZA'S HOUSE. PLAY ROOM - DAY

Yulitza enters the play room, carries a pot of tea and cups  
on a tray.

All of the display cabinet doors unlock and open.

YULITZA

I feel like a nice little tea  
party.

All of the children scramble out of their cabinets.

Yulitza places the tea tray on a plastic, kids size table and  
chairs set.

The children as a group move towards the table.

Brice and Jodi shuffle along at the back of the group.

BRICE

(Whispering)

I've figured out how to kill  
the witch.

JODI

(Whispering)

How? She's too powerful.

Brice picks up a rag doll in a pink dress.

BRICE

(Whispering)

With love.

JODI

Huh?

All of the children are seated around the table. Yulitza pours tea, smiles lovingly at her living dolls.

WITCH

I have some lovely mint tea.  
The cookies I baked myself.

Yulitza stops pouring tea, glares at a boy who looks pale and frightened.

YULITZA

Why aren't you smiling?

The boy forces himself to smile.

YULITZA

Much better.

BRICE

Can I call you Grandma?

Yulitza gapes at Brice, startled.

WITCH

What?

BRICE

(standing)

I want you to be my Grandma.

YULITZA

I'd like that very much.

Brice acts timid, holds the rag doll behind his back.

BRICE

Can I give Grandma a hug?

Yulitza trembles, expresses excited longing. It is obvious she has secretly wanted this moment for a long time.

YULITZA

Oh, you precious thing.

BRICE

Can I give Grandma a really  
big hug?

Yulitza holds out her arms, inviting Brice to embrace her.

All of the living dolls gape at Brice in disbelief.

Brice moves around the table towards the witch.

Brice and Yulitza embrace, hold each other tight.

YULITZA  
(whispering)  
You'll be my special little  
doll.

Suddenly Brice tightens his grip on Yulitza, pushes her off balance. She collapses onto the floor.

Brice crams the rag doll into Yulitza's mouth, suffocating her.

Yulitza's whole body thrashes about desperately. Brice struggles to pin her down with all his weight.

Yulitza blinks her eyelids. Her eyes are now red, demonic.

The lace choker around Brice's neck tightens.

Yulitza gags, chokes as Brice stuffs more of the rag doll into her mouth.

Brice chokes, his face goes red.

Yulitza unleashes raw psychic energy. Several living dolls in the path of the energy are blasted across the room.

A row of glass display cabinets implode, Plush toys rip apart, showering the room in fluff. Furniture explodes.

Brice is knocked off the witch, crashes into a heap on the floor.

Jodi snatches up the pot of tea . . .

Splash! Jodi flings boiled water at Yulitza's face.

Yulitza screeches in pain. Clutches her face.

JODI  
You idiot! What made you think  
you could kill her with a rag  
doll?

BRICE  
I thought it would work.

Melinda and a teenage boy throw a sheet over Yulitza.

Brice grapples the sheet, tightens it around Yulitza's body.

BRICE

C'mon! She's just an old woman!

Several other children help Brice wrestle Yulitza to the floor.

Suddenly the sheet is empty, billowing out like a sail caught in a wind.

The children back away from the sheet.

JODI

Where did she go?

Yulitza is no where to be seen in the room.

A beat. The children are tense, frightened.

Yulitza's head pops up from behind a bed. She crawls across the bed like a spider.

Brice snatches up a three year old boy in a furry teddy bear suit.

BRICE

Run!

The children make a dash for the door.

HALLWAY

The children burst through the doorway, run down the hallway.

KITCHEN

The fleeing children spill into the kitchen.

Jodi slams the door shut.

Brice and the boys barricade the door with all the furniture in the kitchen.

A girl picks up a knife. The children take turns cutting off their chokers.

HALLWAY

The witch stops in the middle of the hallway, concentrates.

She unleashes her power.

KITCHEN

BANG! The pile of furniture packed against the door is jolted, withstands the psychic blast.

The younger children squeal with fright, begin to wail.

HALLWAY

Yulitza is fully focused, almost straining herself mentally.

KITCHEN

BANG! Splits appear in the door. The pile of furniture quivers.

YOUNG GIRL

What do we do?

BRICE

We're gonna have to make a run  
for it!

All of the children nod their heads at each other in agreement.

HALLWAY

Yulitza lifts her hands above her head. A psychic thrust tears a hole into the ceiling above her.

Yulitza floats up into the hole.

EXT. YULITZA'S HOUSE - DAY

The children scramble through the front door and onto the front porch of Yulitza's federation style house.

Brice freezes on the front step, dismayed.

BRICE

What the hell?

BRICE'S POV - FOREST

Yulitza's house is completely surrounded by a dense forest.

BACK TO SCENE

All of the children are alarmed by the sight of the forest.

Jodi narrows her eyes.

JODI  
Brice? Where's the nearest  
forest to our suburb.

BRICE  
There are no forests.

MELINDA  
Where are we?

All of the children become nervous.

TEENAGE GIRL  
No one knows we're here! How  
will they find us?

Anxiety sets in.

BOY  
What are we gonna do?

Suddenly Yulitza steps from around the corner of the  
verandah. She stops, glares at her living dolls.

The children tremble, shuffle closer to each other.

YULITZA  
My little dolls want to play  
do they? I know a fun game we  
can play. You hide. I find.  
You die!

Yulitza puts her hands over her eyes.

YULITZA  
I'll start counting down from  
one hundred . . .

The children stare at Yulitza, afraid and uncertain.

YULITZA  
One hundred . . . Ninety nine .  
. . . Ninety eight . . .

The children panic, flee into the forest.

INT. HOSPITAL. CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Bernard is frantic, glances over his shoulder as he drags  
himself along the floor.

He grabs a mop out of a bucket, slides himself under a  
washbasin, his back to the wall.

He clutches the mop, sweating, exhausted. He waits.

Faint sound of footsteps. Somebody running.

Bernard holds the mop handle like a weapon, his body tight, poised to attack.

The footsteps become louder, closer.

Vanessa strides down the corridor, spots her husband. She stops, glares at Bernard.

BERNARD

Come near me and I'll kill you.

VANESSA

You're incapable.

BERNARD

I'll do it! I'm not having my children grow up fatherless.

Vanessa chuckles, amused.

VANESSA

Oh, I think someone has just found their backbone. You're finally standing up for yourself.

Vanessa picks up a metal mop bucket.

VANESSA

You can't even stand up on your own two feet you useless cripple! You're a joke!

Vanessa hurls the bucket at Bernard, hits him in the shoulder.

She charges at her husband. Bernard swings the mop handle, strikes Vanessa in the face.

Vanessa side steps away from Bernard, wipes blood from her nose.

BERNARD

You want me to beat you to death with a mop?

VANESSA

I'm not gonna let myself be beat by a paraplegic. No way!

Vanessa glances around the corridor, rushes over to a trolley.

Bernard anticipates the worst.

Vanessa shoves the trolley at Bernard.

CRASH! It slams into Bernard and the basin.

Bernard rolls onto his left side, clutches his ribs, his teeth clenched with pain.

Vanessa kicks Bernard in the stomach, grabs him by his ankles, pulls.

Bernard is dragged down the corridor by Vanessa.

Bernard tries to pry Vanessa's fingers from his ankles, but he can not reach past his numbed legs.

WAITING ROOM

A waiting room is lined with chairs, pot plants and a vending machine.

The entire wall opposite to the entrance is one big window that over looks the carpark five stories below and rows of street lights beyond.

Vanessa dumps Bernard in the middle of the room, picks up a chair.

She staggers with the chair, exhausted. She stands in front of the window.

Bernard notices something on the carpet in front of him.

BERNARD'S POV - ANGEL ORNAMENT.

A small angel figurine, the same one that his daughter keeps in her metal box, stands on the carpet.

BACK TO SCENE

Vanessa swings the chair wide at the window . . .

SMASH!

. . . shatters the glass.

Bernard recognizes the angel figurine, smiles with relief and joy.

BERNARD

Yes, I'll do it Angela, for our kids.

He reaches out to it, closes his hand around it.

Vanessa grabs a hand full of Bernard's clothing, drags him across the floor towards the broken window.

Bernard scowls at Vanessa, rage twists his face, burns away his fear. He relaxes his body so it is limp.

Vanessa struggles to pull him across the floor. He is a dead weight.

BERNARD  
I want a divorce!

VANESSA  
Um . . . Dah! I am about to  
kill you!

BERNARD  
I want a divorce.

VANESSA  
Fine. We're divorced!

Bernard screams in pain, flinches.

His body is dragged through the broken glass, sliced.

BERNARD  
I should never have let you  
mother my children. . .

Vanessa lifts her husband, props him up, prepares to launch him out the window.

BERNARD (CONT'D)  
What I have done is  
unforgivable.

VANESSA  
Yeah? Well tell God about it.  
I don't care.

Vanessa uses all her strength to toss Bernard out of the broken window. He is gone.

Vanessa stumbles back, pants from exhaustion.

She laughs pleased with herself.

VANESSA  
Let's see the cops try  
questioning you now cripple.

She flees out of the waiting room.

INSERT - BERNARD'S EYES

Bernard's eyes are closed. His eyelids flutter, open. Bernard blinks, confused.

He is not dead!

EXT. HOSPITAL BED

Bernard is sprawled out on his back across a hospital bed.

The bed Bernard is on protrudes out of an open window of the hospital. Four stories down is the pavement.

Bernard looks up, his eyes and mouth open wide.

BERNARD'S POV - BROKEN WINDOW

Directly a story above Bernard is the broken window that Vanessa threw him out of.

INT. CORRIDOR

A Nurse sprints down the corridor.

Six male PATIENTS, still in their pyjamas, sit cross legged on the floor in a row. They glance about, fearful and astounded.

The patients sit next to the entrance to the room that contain beds 13-18.

NURSE

What's happened?

The Nurse gasps, stares in disbelief at something beyond the entrance to the room containing beds 13-18.

BEDS 13-18

The Nurse steps hesitantly into the room. She can't believe what she is seeing.

Five of the beds are stacked on top of each other like a pyramid. They support the sixth bed that sticks out the open window.

Bernard drags himself through the open window, flops onto one of the beds in the stack. Blood flows out of the cuts all over his body.

NURSE

Oh my God! Who did this.

Bernard smiles, opens his clenched fingers to reveal the angel figurine resting on his palm.

BERNARD  
My first wife did.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

All of the children, still dressed in "living doll" outfits, flee through the undergrowth of the murky forest.

Some of the older teens carry the youngest children on their backs.

Yulitza sprints through the forest, searches for the children. She sniffs the air like an animal. Her red eyes burn with hatred.

The children glance over their shoulders as they run, push ferns and branches out of their way in their haste.

Suddenly the Sneaky Snatcher blocks their path.

The younger children squeal in fright, cling to the teens.

The Sneaky Snatcher gazes at the children- is aware of them!

Jodi shoves her way through the cluster of children, steps toward the Sneaky Snatcher.

BRICE  
Jodi! What are you doing?

JODI  
C'mon! He wants us to follow him. He knows a way out of the forest.

TEENAGE BOY 1#  
Forget that!

MELINDA  
No way!

TEENAGE BOY 2#  
I'm not following him!

JODI  
Brice! Mum's spirit is inside the Sneaky Snatcher.

The Sneaky Snatcher moves off. Jodi runs after him.

Brice is astounded. He turns to face the other children.

## BRICE

This is our only chance of  
getting out of this forest.  
You have to trust us!

Brice runs off after his sister and the Sneaky Snatcher. The rest of the children follow.

YULITZA'S POV - CHILDREN FLEEING IN FOREST.

In the far b.g. the backs of the children are glimpsed as they flee deeper into the forest.

BACK TO SCENE

Yulitza snarls, bares her sharp teeth. She runs off in the direction she glimpsed the children.

SERIES OF SHOTS

-The Sneaky Snatcher runs through the forest, the children chasing after him.

-Yulitza dashes through the undergrowth. Stops to sniff the air.

-The Sneaky Snatcher leads the children across a shallow creek.

-The girls hike up the skirts of their Victorian style dresses so it is easier for them to cross.

-Yulitza charges through the forest, closes in on her prey.

-The Sneaky Snatcher leads the children towards a yellow light visible between the trees in the distance.

-The light becomes brighter and more intense the closer the group are to it.

-Yulitza bounds easily over the shallow creek, continues running.

-The children slow down their pace, shield their eyes from the harsh light.

-The Sneaky Snatcher runs straight into the light . . .

EXT. MINI GOLF COARSE - EARLY MORNING

A fibreglass Shoe House sits on a small grass mound. It is part of the mini golf course.

The Sneaky Snatcher crawls through the front doorway of the Shoe House.

One by one the children scramble out of the Shoe House, surprised by where they are.

Brice and Jodi are the last two to appear. They are astounded.

JODI  
(pointing)  
Look!

INSERT - SHOE HOUSE'S DOORWAY

Through the doorway, inside the Shoe House, can be seen the forest that the children just came out of.

BACK TO SCENE

BRICE  
No wonder the cops couldn't  
find us.

Jodi suddenly gasps, troubled.

JODI  
She's coming!

BRICE  
What?

JODI  
Over there! Look!

BRICE'S POV- SHOE HOUSE'S DOORWAY

The witch can be seen deep in the forest, darting between the trees. She speeds towards the direction of the doorway.

FOREST

Yulitza charges for the intense yellow light between the trees. Her old, frail body moving with the speed and agility of youth.

SHOE HOUSE

JODI  
What do we do?

A beat. The siblings are uncertain what to do.

Brice starts kicking at the fibreglass Shoe House.

BRICE  
Hey! Help me break this thing!

TEENAGE BOY  
Dude! What are you doing?

BRICE  
The witch is coming.

SERIES OF SHOTS

-The children gather around the Shoe House, kick it.

-Yulitza is meters away from the Light.

-The children kick harder at the Shoe House.

-The Shoe house breaks apart, collapses into a heap.

-Yulitza dives into the light that suddenly winks out. She crashes on to the forest floor.

-The children are all exhausted, panting. They all look relieved.

-Yulitza screams in rage, rips ferns out of the ground and flings them about.

END SERIES OF SHOTS.

A GROUNDS KEEPER appears. He is furious as he glares at the children and the smashed Shoe House.

GROUND KEEPER  
You bloody little vandals. I'm gonna call the police.

The children swarm around the ground keeper.

MELINDA  
Call the police.

TEENAGE BOY  
Hurry! Call the police!

Brice and Jodi are left standing alone near the wreckage. The Sneaky Snatcher moves towards them.

A familiar woman with long dark hair and wearing a summer dress steps out from behind the Sneaky Snatcher.

Brice gapes at her, his eyes and mouth open wide. He recognizes the woman.

None of the other children respond to this woman, making it obvious she is not visible to them.

The goat mask, plastic poncho and black clothing worn by the Sneaky Snatcher collapses into a heap on the ground.

The woman smiles at her children. She is ANGELA DAWNDALE.

BRICE

Mum!

JODI

Mum, you saved us!

ANGELA

Ah honey, that's not why I'm here.

JODI

You're not?

BRICE

What do you mean?

ANGELA

I've returned because there was something very important I wanted to tell you both. But that whole thing with the witch got in the way.

BRICE

But you did save us. You were using Jodi's pet rabbit.

ANGELA

Well of course I did Brice. I had too. There's something urgent I want to speak to you both about.

BRICE

What could be more urgent than being hunted down by a witch.

JODI

What did you want to tell us mum?

ANGELA

It doesn't matter now. I don't have to tell you. You've already figured it out for yourselves.

JODI

(understanding)

Oh, you mean dad.

BRICE

We know what to do mum.

ANGELA

Good. Than I don't have to worry about you two anymore- or your father for that matter.

Angela begins to fade.

BRICE

Mum! Do you have to go now?

ANGELA

I'm sorry Honey. But that's the way the cookie crumbles. You'll see me again. But not anytime soon.

JODI

I love you mum.

ANGELA

I know. Remember, it's fine looking after your dad, but make sure you look after yourselves as well.

Angela is gone.

MONTAGE

A) Sargent Pike strides through the front entrance of the hospital. He is accompanied by a detective.

B) Vanessa stands at a bank counter, places bundles of hundred dollar notes into a gym bag.

c) A nurse and doctor gather around a hospital bed, examine the new rows of stitches on Bernard's torso. Sargent Pike and the detective appear at the foot of the bed. Bernard looks very pleased to see them and willing to talk.

D) Mini-Golf Course. Police Officers escort the kidnapped children through a crowd of excited News Reporters and Photographers. Microphones and mini tape recorders are thrust at Brice and Jodi's face.

E) Vanessa yanks her clothes out of the wardrobe in her bedroom, stuffs them into a suitcase. A plane ticket and passport sits on top of a bedside table.

F) Vanessa hurries out the front door of her home, carrying her suitcase and gym bag stuffed with money. Suddenly two police cars pull up on the front lawn.

G) Police officers restrain Vanessa. She clings to her gym bag, screams in anguish as a police officer struggles to pull the bag out of her grasp. The gym bag rips open, bundles of one hundred dollar notes spill out of it.

H) Parents reunite with their child that was kidnapped. News camera men hover around the parents as they embrace their children.

I) Melinda Harris runs into her father's open arms. Both her parents hug her.

J) Sargent Pike kneels down, embraces his six year old son. He weeps with joy.

END OF MONTAGE

INT. HOSPITAL. FRONT ENTRANCE- DAY

Brice and Jodi run ahead of the Police Officer that escorts them into the hospital. They are excited, energized with glee.

PRIVATE ROOM. BED 22

Three pillows prop up Bernard in the bed. He wears no top, the stitched up cuts all over his body exposed.

Brice and Jodi rush into the room, shocked by the sight of their father's injuries.

BERNARD

I'm okay. Don't panic

JODI

What happened?

BERNARD

Oh, Vanessa and I had a little bit of an argument.

BRICE

What with? A chain-saw?

BERNARD

I want you to know that . .  
.Ah . . .

Bernard lowers his head, afraid to speak.

JODI

What's wrong dad?

BERNARD

I've divorced your stepmother.  
You know what that means.

BRICE

It's cool dad. We're willing  
to give a foster home a go.

BERNARD

(astounded)

You are?

JODI

We should've done it years  
ago.

BERNARD

Your mother would be spinning  
in her grave if she knew how  
bad Vanessa treated you.

Brice and Jodi glance at each other, smile knowingly.

BRICE

Yeah, mum's been doing plenty  
of that lately.

BERNARD

(Thoughtful)

Hmm, I suppose she has. Are  
you sure you want to do this?

JODI

No I don't want to do it dad!  
But . . . we have to.

BRICE

That's the way the cookie  
crumbles.

Bernard smiles, enjoys a pleasant memory.

BERNARD

You mother always used to say  
that.

JODI

Yeah, she did.

BERNARD

I'll phone welfare this  
afternoon and have them find a  
foster home for you both.

EXT. SMITH'S HOUSE. BACKYARD - DAY

A clear sunny day.

Jodi lays on her stomach under a tree in the middle of a backyard.

She draws in a sketch book with colored pencils that are scattered in the grass around her.

EXT. SMITH'S HOUSE. BACK DOOR

An average one story house. The back door opens, MIRANDA SMITH stands in the doorway. She is a plump woman in jeans, aged forty-three.

MIRANDA

Jodi! Your brother's on the phone.

EXT. BACK YARD

Jodi sits up, hurriedly packs her color pencils into their tin box.

JODI

I'll be there in a minute.

INT. KITCHEN

Jodi picks the phone up off the wall.

JODI

Hey Brice, about time you phoned me.

BRICE (V.O.)

I got sick of waiting for you to phone me.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Brice is also in the kitchen of his Foster families home, the phone wedged between his shoulder and chin as he looks in the fridge.

JODI (V.O.)

I phoned you last month.

BRICE

Did ya? Oh yeah, that's right you did too. How ya doing?

INTERCUTTING

Jodi on the phone, leans against the wall in the kitchen.

Brice talking on the phone and buttering bread at the same time.

JODI  
Okay. I still miss dad.

BRICE  
Yeah, me too. So what's happening?

JODI  
I got a new pet.

BRICE  
Cool sis.

Jodi clicks her fingers, calls to something off screen.

JODI  
Kitty! Kitty!

The sound of cat bells.

BRICE  
Kitty? Did you get another rabbit.

A grey cat runs up to Jodi, rubs himself against her leg. Jodi picks it up.

JODI  
No I got a cat. He's so cute.

Brice rummages through the shelves of a walk in pantry. He drops a tin of beetroot. It hits him on the foot.

JODI  
What happened?

BRICE  
Ah, I just dropped a tin of beetroot on my foot.

JODI  
Are you going through the kitchen cupboards?

BRICE  
Actually, I'm in a walk in pantry cupboard.  
(MORE)

BRICE (CONT'D)  
It's pretty cool. And it's  
always full of food. How  
awesome is that hey?

Jodi giggles, amused.

JODI  
You must think you're in  
Heaven you starving pig.

BRICE  
Yeah, and no Vanessa. How  
great is that?

JODI  
It's the best.

BRICE  
Oh shit yeah.

Silent pause for a beat as the two become reflective,  
downcast. They express regret.

JODI  
We should of done this foster  
thing years ago.

BRICE  
Yeah.

FADE OUT.

THE END