

The Mute
by
T. J. Hundtofte

Troels Jacob Hundtofte
hund2110@hotmail.com
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PITCH BLACK

A ringing tone sounds with fixed intervals. An answering machine starts playback.

ANSWERING MACHINE

Hi, this is Kayleigh, I'm not home right now...or maybe I just don't wanna talk to you..either way, you know the drill.

BEEP.

Nothing. Slight breathing. The crunching sound of the receiver being hung up.

FADE IN:

EXT. GAS STATION - PAY-PHONE

A desolate suburban pit-stop into the big city. The receiver dangles from the phone in an empty booth. Not a soul in sight.

INT. SUPERMARKET - DAY

The aisles are empty. Digits flash from the Registers' LED displays at the vacant check-outs. Abandoned.

Fluorescent light flickers eerily from the ceiling above one perfectly preserved food aisle after another.

Aside from unobtrusive supermarket muzak, only an ominous stillness fills the air.

INT. SUPERMARKET - BACK AISLE

Red wine oozes from a broken bottle like blood across the linoleum. Cans of food lie scattered beside an overturned shopping cart.

Foot-steps patter indistinctly in the background.

A blood-stained hand GRABS a can from the shelf in a quick jerk.

The can disappears into a satchel-bag as the trespasser hurries further down the aisle.

NICHOLAS, late-twenties, dark, greasy hair in an tattered hoodie. He has a slight limp and a desperate look in his eyes. Blood cakes his sleeves; he looks like he's been in a fight and lost.

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THUD! A door shuts behind him.

He wheels around and pulls out a crowbar from his bag, in nervous anticipation.

INT. SUPERMARKET - BUTCHER

Nicholas moves slowly towards a set of double-doors in the back behind a butcher's counter.

An almost inaudible rattle sounds from beyond the doors.

He halts briefly at the sound. His grip around the crowbar tightens as he picks up the pace towards the back-doors.

INT. SUPERMARKET - COLD STORE

Nicholas pushes open the door and ventures inside the chill room.

Shelves of packaged meat line the walls and in the middle of the room there is a big cardboard box with plastic wrapping sticking out.

Nicholas gasps at the cold, then takes a few steps towards the box.

His eyes dart around the room, alert.

With the tip of the crowbar he carefully opens the cardboard box.

Nicholas sighs, almost disappointed, at a batch of neatly wrapped entrecotes.

He puts the crowbar down on a trolley beside the box and picks up an entrecote. He inspects the expiration-date with a crooked smile, then throws it back in.

Nicholas looks suspiciously at the box's creased sides, as if pressed down recently.

He kicks the box a few times, checking for stowaways.

A dull metallic JANGLE sounds from the corner, beneath the clear plastic covers draping the lowest level of the shelves.

Nicholas averts his eyes to the sound. It's impossible to see anything through the covers.

Could just be metal-fatigue.

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He reaches for the crowbar on the table in a blind move, and knocks it to the floor in a LOUD CLANK.

A creature JUMPS out from beneath the layers of meat, clawing blindly with its tiny human hands as it tries to get out of the box.

Nicholas recoils, losing foothold, and falls back against the shelves.

The box falls over and the thing slides quickly, on all fours, through the plastic draping under a shelf in the corner. Panting incessantly.

Nicholas breathes in composure. He begins a slow and wary trek to the creature's hide-out.

He closes his eyes. A moment's hesitation.

He then pulls the plastic covers aside in one swift motion and raises the crowbar, ready to strike.

A teenage girl quails, knees-to-chest against the wall. ELLIE, 17. She shrouds herself in an old green army jacket, several sizes too big. Her hair is ruffled and unkempt and around her neck she wears a silver necklace, which she clutches tightly.

Her big green eyes twitch, terrified, at her would-be assailant.

Nicholas freezes. He drops the crowbar on the ground and falls back.

The two exchange a fraught look, and Ellie's attention glides to the crowbar.

He slides it away, and makes a gesture with his hands that he won't use it. Ellie looks suspiciously at him, her body still completely closed off.

He reaches inside his satchel and pulls something out. She jars, nervously, and tries to push herself farther into the wall.

Nicholas opens his hand to reveal a red marker. Ellie makes a stifled sigh of relief.

He pens something on the white wall-tiles, then shoves himself a few feet back.

Ellie hesitates, then slowly crawls towards the marker on the floor, constantly keeping one eye on Nicholas. Her eyes move over the message.

"NICHOLAS - FRIEND."

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She throws him a dissecting glance, then grabs the pen and writes:

"ELENO-

Ellie pauses and wipes it clean with her sleeve.

"ELLIE - NEEDS ONE"

She tries to smile. Nicholas carefully extends his hand, "hi".

Her brows furrow at his gesture, but then relaxes and she cautiously puts her hand in his.

She grabs the marker again.

"OTHERS LIKE US - NORMALS?"

She underlines the question twice and looks desperately at Nicholas. He shakes his head.

She pens once more, this time more resigned.

"THE END...?"

EXT. SUPERMARKET PARKING LOT

The suburban parking lot is completely deserted. Only a few cars are scattered across the lot.

The crowbar crashes through the car-door window of an old sedan and Nicholas arches inside as the car-alarm goes off.

Ellie stands a few feet behind him in a reserved self-embrace.

A torn newspaper front-page flutters in the wind under her feet. The caption reads:

"PEOPLE DISAPPEARING! THOUSANDS GONE MISSING!"

The alarm dies abruptly out and Nicholas holds the door, inviting Ellie inside. She crawls into the passenger seat.

EXT. CITY STREET

The sedan careens slowly down the lifeless street. A few cars are parked across the lanes but nothing suggests collisions.

INT. SEDAN - CONTINUOUS

Nicholas scouts the street as he searches the radio for more than static. Ellie lets her absent gaze drift into the heart of dead city.

Her fingers play with the locket around her neck.

Fresh graffiti adorns the buildings. Messages. Ellie locks on one:

"SARAH J. - 10/2/1985 10 PM"

And another one:

"DAVID A. - 3/17/1972"

She looks at the adjacent messages, realizing they're all birthdays.

Across the concrete facade of a residential high-rise in the distance, big, bold letters in red graffiti spell out:

"SURVIVORS?"

And below, in different writing:

"WE ALL DIE ALONE"

Suddenly the car stops.

Up ahead a MAN in a dark mackintosh stands in the middle of the road, fossilized. A revolver protrudes from his dangling hand. His stare is absent. Mad.

Nicholas looks at the man as if he knows him. Or his kind.

Ellie tugs urgently on Nicholas' sleeve, "let's go!".

EXT. BOULEVARD

The car comes to a halt in the middle of the street. Nicholas gets out and Ellie follows suit.

Ellie looks confused as Nicholas sends her a reassuring gesture, "stay". She spots a sign above a store-front. "A & M Gun shop".

INT. GUN SHOP

Dozens upon dozens of hunting rifles line the walls behind a glass counter.

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Nicholas presses his jacket across the tinted glass window in the door and elbows through.

The door CLICKS open and he strides inside.

He grabs a couple of boxes of ammunition from behind the counter as he pulls out a revolver from his satchel-bag. He flicks open the cylinder and looks into the empty chambers.

EXT. BOULEVARD - JUNCTION

Ellie walks into the street towards a city bus parked in the center of the intersection. Nicholas' crowbar dangles feebly from her hand.

A constellation of TVs project a silent emergency alert image behind a store display-window.

Ellie rests her eyes on the screens for a little while, as if expecting something to come. Anything.

She squints as she looks back into the setting sun. Anxious at the waning light of day.

INT. CITY BUS

Ellie climbs onto the bus. Like everything else, abandoned.

She proceeds down the pews, the aisle bestrewn with torn magazines and plastic wrappings.

Suddenly she halts, as her eyes come into contact with something ahead of her.

A German shepherd arches over a human body, FEEDING on it.

Ellie's eyes WIDEN in horror and she instinctively covers her mouth with her hand.

The canine cocks its head towards Ellie as if it feels her stare and lets out a vicious SNARL.

She furrows her brows. Her dread becomes anger as her teary eyes turn small and hostile.

She SWINGS the crowbar hard against one of the metal bars extending from the seats. BANG!

The dog jolts back, then barks rabidly at her.

She moves closer and SWINGS again. BANG! Now the Shepherd only makes a low growl as it slowly back-steps to the end of the bus.

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BANG! Ellie HAMMERS a third time and this time the mutt sends out a slight yelp as it jumps to the end of the bus and out the open emergency door.

Ellie crouches and turns the body over, revealing a carcass of a middle aged man in a cheap suit.

She stares saddened at him, then notices a spiral-bound notepad fixed in small chain around his neck.

She pulls it closer to read:

"NO ONE THERE...ONLY CRAZIES."

She turns to the next page.

"I'M CAMERON"

Below, in different writing:

"DANA :)"

Ellie skips further down the page.

"EVERYONE MUTE. WHY?"

And all the way to the bottom.

"MUST GET INSIDE BEFORE DARK"

"MIGHT BE OTHERS IN TOWN...?"

Ellie flips the page back and re-reads the conclusion she already knows. Her stare fixes on the word "CRAZIES".

In his hand rests a shiny fountain pen, its nib sharp enough to pierce skin.

She carefully pulls the notepad over his head.

INT. GUN SHOP

Nicholas pushes the last round into his revolver's cylinder and clicks it shut.

RING! The chime of the opening door.

Nicholas makes an urgent turnaround with the loaded gun stretched in aim.

Ellie JARS at the chrome revolver pointed at her in the doorway. The notepad around her neck.

Nicholas immediately lowers the gun with a hefty sigh.

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He puts the remaining boxes of ammunition into the bag and places the revolver on the counter.

Ellie slouches past Nicholas, around the counter and into the back-room, not once turning her back fully on him.

INT. GUN SHOP - BACK-ROOM

Strewn pieces of paper clutter a small desk in a tiny room.

Ellie spots a ham radio in the book-case by the desk.

She turns the knob, looking for a signal. Nothing but STATIC.

She collapses, defeated, over the desk.

BEEP. A faint sound emits from the radio.

She pulls up her head from her arms.

BEEP. BEEP. BEEP.

The beeps now come through clearly with designed intervals. MORSE CODE.

Ellie grabs the notepad and slams it eagerly onto the desk. She yanks out the fountain pen from her breast-pocket and starts scribbling, manically.

Nicholas appears in the door-way. He looks confused at the source of the beeps.

Ellie grabs the notebook and presents it to Nicholas.

"SURVIVORS. SHERBOURNE STATION. MEDICINE AND FOOD."

He takes a hold of the paper and looks at Ellie who almost beams with hope in her eyes.

Nicholas looks unconvinced at her quick transcription.

Ellie impatiently rolls her eyes at him and pulls forward her shoulder. A "pathfinder special forces" insignia is stitched into her over-sized army field jacket.

She presents a mock-salute.

INT. SUBWAY CORRIDORS

A long, empty barrel-vaulted corridor slopes downward to a still escalator at the end.

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Nicholas and Ellie move warily deeper into the station.

Across the white wall-tiles a plethora of messages scribbled in different writing, color and size grace the archway.

Ellie lets her eyes glide over the writings, taking in every last one.

She stops at one of them by the end.

"KATIE, DON'T COME HOME. SOMETHING'S WRONG. DON'T TRUST THE MILITARY. GET OUT OF THE CITY. LOVE YOU. DANIEL"

Ellie stares wistfully at the entry, then scurries to catch up with Nicholas.

SUBWAY - PLATFORM

The two of them descend the steps to the train's platform.

The plateau is only sporadically lit by struggling light bulbs in the ceiling. Ghostly indistinct echoes sound from the tunnels.

Nicholas halts. He shakes his head at the unlit tunnels.

He grabs Ellie's pad and writes with the marker:

"FIND ANOTHER WAY."

Ellie frowns and shakes her head frantically.

She pens down:

"KEEP GOING."

Nicholas sighs and looks around, unwilling to argue. He then pulls out a semi-automatic from his bag and hands it to Ellie.

She just looks at him. Then shakes her head.

He takes her hand, insistingly, and tries to fit the gun into her palm. Ellie shoves him away, flustered, and looks at him with contempt.

Nicholas gives her a resigned look and puts the gun away.

Ellie, eager to transition, signals towards a public restroom at the far end of the platform and mouths:

"Pee."

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Nicholas nods as he eyes a couple of pay-phones behind a column.

INT. RESTROOM

Ellie shoves open the door and walks brazenly to the mirrors as her eyes instinctively case the stalls. She scowls into the glass and turns the water on.

Carefully she pulls off her shirt and reveals fresh cuts across her stomach. She's been in a fight.

Her hands move slowly over the lacerations.

She opens up the locket around her neck:

Inside there is a photo of Ellie alongside two boys in their early teens and a man in his mid-forties.

She caresses the family portrait with her thumb.

A DEEP CREAK sounds from one of the stalls. Ellie cocks her head around.

A door pushes open, as if by a slight gust of wind.

Ellie approaches hesitantly.

She squats and looks under the stalls. Nothing.

The door has swung open all the way. Markings in the painted wood. A message is carved across the door:

"I KILLED HER. REMEMBER HER."

A bundle of polaroids are taped to the door. Ellie pulls them off and inspects them one by one.

Pictures of woman in her early thirties, smiling. Happy. Oblivious.

Ellie runs her fingers into the jagged imprint of the carvings, her mind elsewhere.

Then something catches her attention out of the corner of her eye.

Inside the stall a compact polaroid camera lies tugged away behind the toilet-bowl.

Ellie bends down and pulls the camera out by its wristband.

INT. SUBWAY - PHONES

Nicholas drops a couple of quarters in the pay-phone's slot and dials a number.

He looks reverentially down to a small note in the palm of his hand.

ANSWERING MACHINE (O.S.)

Hi, this is Kayleigh, I'm not home right now...or maybe I just don't wanna talk to you..either way, you know the drill.

Ellie emerges from the restroom and gives him an absent look. The camera bulges slightly from her side pocket.

A BEEP sounds.

Nicholas hangs up. His gaze locks on message painted across the wall into tunnel.

"WHO INHERITS THE EARTH?"

INT. SUBWAY - TUNNELS

Ellie and Nicholas venture into the dark tunnels, directing the puny beam from a small flashlight around the tracks.

The light cone locks on something by the side of the rails. A carcass.

Ellie squats beside the thing. A dead dog.

Nicholas puts his hand on her shoulder, nods forward.

Ellie gently pushes the mutt's head back to reveal a gaping cut-wound in its throat.

She grabs a hold of Nicholas and looks urgently into his eyes.

She puts her index-finger to her temple and turns; the universal gesture for "crazy".

Nicholas hesitates as a breeze runs through his hair. He then nods ahead again, "come on", and continues into the dark.

Ellie lingers for a few seconds, then pulls out the polaroid camera and takes aim at the dead animal. The flash illuminates the tunnel.

INT. TUNNELS - FURTHER INSIDE

Ellie sags behind Nicholas and sits herself down on the tracks for a pause. Nicholas squints into the darkness.

Something appears ahead as the tunnel bends into blackness.

As he moves closer, a structure becomes visible.

It's a battered train adorned in graffiti, with paint peeled off the chrome doors.

The rusted metal of the car glints as Nicholas pans the flashlight over the train.

On both sides of the tracks heaps of old furniture, vending machines and rubble barricade the tunnel.

A make-shift wall, as if to keep something out.

INT. TRAIN - BACK CAR

The back-door of the car pulls open and Nicholas and Ellie wade inside.

The car is furnished with faux silk rugs and mattresses. Like a make-shift dormitory.

Ellie and Nicholas eyes feast on the proof of human life. They then look at each other in smiles.

They move eagerly to the separating doors.

INT. TRAIN - SECOND CAR

The door slams open and Ellie and Nicholas go through another dormitory. A portable TV displays snow from its place on the ground.

Ellie keenly grabs the door-handle for the next door, but falls back as she tries to push it open.

LOCKED. She gives Nicholas a frustrated look. Nicholas grabs the handle and puts all his strength into it.

It won't budge.

Ellie eyes a fire-extinguisher in the corner and lifts it off the wall. BANG! She smashes it against the door-handle again and again.

Nothing comes of it. Nicholas grabs a hold of her arm as she raises it for another blow. He mouths "Stop".

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He falls exhausted into one of the seats, and starts rummaging through the bag. Ellie jots something down on her pad and pushes it in Nicholas' face.

"YOU GIVE UP?!?"

Nicholas throws her a can of corn from his satchel and smiles, leniently. He puts his hand to his mouth and gestures "eat".

INT. TRAIN - BACK CAR

Ellie and Nicholas slouch against opposite walls in the tarnished car.

Nicholas gorges into a can of corn while Ellie sits with the notebook. She moves the pen meticulously over the same letters again and again.

"ELLIE M. - 10/21/90."

She looks up and traces Nicholas' stare to a poster in the window. It's an advert for Paradise Hotel: Barbados. Lean, tan bodies crouch under palm trees on a white beach.

Nicholas feels Ellie's eyes on him and dons a sheepish smile.

Ellie scribbles something on her notepad and shows it to Nicholas.

"A PENNY FOR YOUR THOUGHTS."

She throws him the pad and he pens his reply with the marker:

"I WISH I KNEW SIGN-LANGUAGE!"

She smiles and nods, "I know!"

Their eyes lock for a few seconds. Ellie then shoe-gazes, embarrassed.

He writes again:

"SO HOW ABOUT THAT PENNY?"

She makes a silent grin.

Nicholas turns the pad to her again with a deadpan expression.

"I'M SERIOUS."

Ellie signals for him to throw her the notepad, eager to banter.

INT. TRAIN - NIGHT

Ellie lies on the mattress, flicking her flashlight on and off in automated intervals.

The polaroids from before lie spread out before her. Her eyes carefully glide over each one.

Suddenly a crumbled piece of paper hits her square in the face.

She looks confused over to Nicholas opposite of her who lies on his back, feigning sleep.

Ellie unfolds the paper-ball and reveals a message written inside:

"ONLY CHILD?"

She grins and turns off the flashlight.

The paper-ball hits Nicholas in the back of his head and he pretends to awake, looking around confused.

A sharp FLASH blinds him and he tumbles back.

He squints, confused, as he regains focus. His look then finds an amused Ellie holding the camera.

She yanks out the instant photograph and examines it, smiling devilishly.

Nicholas collapses, smiling, on the mattress and unrolls the paper-projectile.

"FAMILY?"

Nicholas looks over. He shakes his head and cuts his index finger across his throat in a quick move.

Ellie puts on a frown, disappointed.

He raises his brows inquisitively and nods towards her, "you?"

Ellie does a quick shake of the head and looks away.

Nicholas nods and gazes into the ceiling; sensing a sore subject.

She then pats softly on the floor twice to get his attention.

Nicholas turns again and sees Ellie with the note-pad and an embarrassed look. Too proud to look him in the eye.

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"SORRY I WAS A JERK TODAY. I HAVE TRUST-ISSUES."

Nicholas smiles and pulls himself over to her. He takes the pen from her hand and crosses out "jerk". He throws her an overly assessing look and then writes above:

"TEENAGER"

Ellie smiles. Her eyes never leave the pad.

She then takes the pen and looks down to the paper. She writes:

"WHY US?"

Ellie looks at him with big bulging eyes, desperate for an answer.

Nicholas retracts to his bedside without one. He averts his eyes to the ceiling's subway map, as if looking at stars.

She drops the notepad with a glum expression.

After a few seconds she gets up and sneaks across the car towards the connecting doors.

As she passes Nicholas she gently nudges his knees and signals towards the next car.

INT. TRAIN - SECOND CAR

Ellie slinks lazily into the dormitory, arms shielded across her chest.

The flashing portable TV illuminates the car.

She quietly sits down, cross-legged in front of the box.

Ellie moves closer to the warm glow of the screen and rests her eyes on TV snow.

Her face grows calm as she slides her hand over the screen, almost caressing it.

Suddenly the picture disappears. The TV dies.

Ellie looks disappointed at the empty screen.

She pins back her ears.

Somewhere ahead a distant crackling echoes through the cars.

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Ellie moves to the locked door and tries to look through the small window. She rests her body against the handle and...

CLICK! The door opens. Ellie looks amazed at her hands, and then back towards Nicholas in the other car.

She curiously averts her eyes to the sound and proceeds through the door.

INT. TRAIN - THIRD CAR

A single light flickers from the ceiling as Ellie pursues the noise through the empty car.

INT. TRAIN - LIVING QUARTERS

The door opens and Ellie meanders cautiously inside.

The car is tremendously decorated with rugs and makeshift drapes.

A couple of old TV-sets are placed side by side on the seats by the window.

Further in unlit candles rest on a crate storing bottles of wine. Boxes filled to the brim with books line the walls, and in the middle of the car an old portable phonograph racks against the seat.

The needle crackles loudly at the edge of a spinning record.

Ellie gushes in awe. She regards the old-fashioned turntable with reverence.

She lifts the stylus and puts it down at the top of the record.

Soft, quiet pianos fade in behind the vinyl static. Calm. Beautiful. Then a woman's voice gently pierces through.

It's Beethoven's "Ave Maria".

Ellie looks misty-eyed at the musical contraption. She turns the volume knob and the piece grows louder.

She doesn't move a muscle, lost in the music.

A SHADOW moves quickly towards her from behind.

A hand GRABS a hold of her and SPINS her around, as the other hand PULLS the needle off the record.

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Ellie jolts as she faces an obviously distraught Nicholas.

His eyes are despondent and crestfallen. He looks like he wants to scold her, but can't.

Nicholas's stare shoots down the car, towards the door leading to the tunnels. Remnants of the amputated "Ave Maria" bounces off the tunnel-walls into the dark.

Their position exposed.

He takes Ellie by the hand and rushes her through the car to the door leading to the tunnels.

She pouts like sulky child, confused as to what she did wrong.

Nicholas grabs the door-handle and tries to push it open.

It's stuck.

He lets go of Ellie and puts his entire body into to it.

The rug under his feet slides back as he puts his weight into the push.

The door gives way and slings open.

He grabs Ellie again, but she's fossilized. Her eyes fixed on the rug.

Nicholas looks down and notices a red glaze dragged across the floor underneath the carpet. Blood.

Ellie bends down and pulls the carpet away to reveal the entire floor covered in coagulated blood-marks.

A slaughter-house.

Nicholas urgently grabs Ellie's hand and they jump unto the tracks.

INT. TUNNELS

They run, hand-in-hand, along the tracks, deeper into the tunnel. Their foot-steps echo into the gloom ahead.

Further down the tunnel ends in a spur track connecting to the main line.

They reach the junction and Nicholas throws a quick glance down the new tunnel.

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Lights partially illuminate the tracks for a good 500 feet until the tunnel winds.

Nicholas drags Ellie towards the guiding light, but suddenly halts.

Flickering silhouettes of people paint the tunnel walls in the distance. Approaching.

Nicholas casts his eyes in the other direction where no light emits from anywhere.

He tugs Ellie into the darkness, as she twists her head around at the phantoms behind them.

INT. DARK TUNNELS

It's all but pitch black in the tunnel-system now. It's impossible to tell what's wall and what's ground.

Only Nicholas and Ellie's desperate, short breaths can be heard. He pulls out the revolver from his jacket.

Up ahead faint light shines as the tunnel bends. Then more light.

The luminous beacons of a railway platform.

INT. SHERBOURNE STATION

Ellie and Nicholas make their way out of the blackness and into the station area.

A platform sign reads: "SHERBOURNE STATION".

They shift each other a look.

The station looks completely desolate, no signs of human life at all.

In the tunnel ahead the cockpit of a train sticks out into the station.

Nicholas wheels around, confused. He looks back into the tunnel they came from.

He puts his hands together to form a shoe and signals for Ellie to jump on to the platform.

She leaps up to the plateau by way of his hands.

Just as she swings her leg unto to concrete floor, bright, blinding light SHOOTs out from the train parked in front of them.

Nicholas covers his eyes with his hands.

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The silhouettes of four men emerge from behind the train, wielding what looks like blunt weapons.

Nicholas jerks ready the revolver and aims it blindly into the light.

The men converge, unimpressed.

Nicholas swings around and gestures "run!" to Ellie who shakes her head and signals for him to jump up to her.

He fires a warning shot into the air. Ellie jolts, but not the strangers. Again, he WAVES wildly for her to run.

Nicholas squints as the men charge out from the light towards him. Their faces are bloody, eyes madly wide and dilated. Void of fear. Void of anything.

BANG!

Nicholas fires a round into the one man's chest, who goes down effortlessly.

He swings the gun around to the next attacker who raises a MACHETE for a blow.

BANG! A round tears into his throat and he sags to his knees.

Nicholas then aims his piece at the remaining two when a steel pipe CLOBBERS into his back. He falls down in agony, on all fours. He coughs blood unto the tracks.

Two more men step out from the tunnel behind him. Same look in their eyes.

Ellie's face contorts in horror, as the men overpower Nicholas. He sends her a final look and mouths "run", as the attackers come down on him with iron-pipes and crowbars.

One of them halts his onslaught on Nicholas and turns to Ellie.

A young, angel-faced man with curly blonde hair looks right at her with glassy, blank eyes. We'll call him THE CHERUB.

Ellie cowers to her feet and pelts across the platform to the stairs.

INT. SUBWAY - CORRIDORS

Ellie scrambles into the hallway, not looking back.

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She hurtles down the corridor, over the ticket turnstiles, and all the way to the stairs ascending to the street.

As she leaps unto the steps she jars to a halt.

A steel lattice blockades the exit halfway up the stairs.

Ellie throws herself at the grating; her hands shake the laths frantically.

Through the lattice she can barely catch a glimpse of a star-studded night sky from the street above.

Her hands loosen their grip, defeated.

A hand PUSHES out from behind and covers her mouth. Her eyes widen in shock as she's pulled back.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. SUBWAY - TUNNELS

Nicholas' beat body lies mangled across the tracks. His face is a mess, blood seeps from his forehead and his right arm bends out of shape, broken.

His eyes quietly open, as he gasps feebly for air.

Weak soothing classical music echoes off the walls in the tunnel ahead.

Nicholas spots the metal-pipe the attackers dropped on the ground. Ellie's fountain pen beside it.

He clenches his hands into fists.

INT. TRAIN - LIVING QUARTERS

Ellie lies on her side on the floor with a catatonic stare. Her fat lip quivers and her eyes are flooded with tears.

"Ave Maria" fills the car as a bloody hand comes down on her cheek. She makes a slight jolt, horrified beyond comprehension.

The hand runs its fingers along her lips and into her mouth.

Small jerks push Ellie's body back and forth. Over and over. Harder and harder. Panting can be heard.

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Ellie's face contorts terribly and she opens her mouth to scream just as "Ave Maria" moves into crescendo.

But nothing comes.

INT. SUBWAY - TUNNELS

The music blares through the darkness.

INT. SUBWAY - PLATFORM

Even here echoes of the classical movement can be heard.

INT. TRAIN - LIVING QUARTERS

The angel-faced man pulls back and rears over Ellie as he draws heavy, animalistic breaths.

Another man stands behind him in the darkness of the car. His eyes completely lost in the snow of the two TV-sets by the windows.

A figure creeps silently into view under guise of the music.

A slight metallic RATTLE is heard, when iron brushes against chrome.

Both men turn around with wide flailing eyes.

A metal-pipe SMASHES into the first man's temple and blood splatters across the Cherub's face.

Nicholas limps out from the shadows as the one man drops lifelessly to the floor.

The Cherub gets up, enraged, and jumps Nicholas. They struggle on the floor while Ellie pulls her hands over her ears and grits her teeth.

She fixes her eyes on the machete in the seat a few feet ahead of her.

Nicholas tries to thrust the guy away with his one functioning arm, but the man descends unhindered upon him, like a starved cub.

He digs his hands into Nicholas' throat and presses down.

Nicholas' breath begins to stifle and life wane from his eyes as the angel-faced crazy goes in for the kill.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

His clawing hand lowers lifelessly from the Cherub's throat. His eyes twitch, while his body struggles.

He reaches desperately for something on the floor as his entire body starts to convulse. A pained Death-rattle sets in.

Nicholas' eyes SHOOT OPEN.

With his last ounce of strength Nicholas SWINGS his good arm around and JABS Ellie's fountain pen into the Cherub's throat.

The man lets go of Nicholas and falls back, gurgling for air. With a look of utter surprise he puts his hand to the pen and collapses.

The door opens from the other car.

Another man walks calmly but determined into the car with the familiar chrome revolver aimed straight ahead at Nicholas.

Ellie SLINGS the machete into the man's shin as his gun goes off. He falls to the floor with a silent scream and puts his hands around his bloody leg.

Ellie immediately pulls out the machete and SLASHES it into his chest AGAIN and AGAIN. HARDER and HARDER. Her eyes are fireballs. Her spit acid.

Such fury has never been seen.

She swings it down again and buries the blade in his throat. The body goes limp.

Ellie drops the machete and bores her vengeful eyes into her kill. Her face is all but bawling.

She finally sends a spatter of spit into his face and turns around, shivering.

Nicholas rests against the wall at the end of the car, holding his gut. Blood seeps through his fingers. He gargles, gasps for air.

Ellie's eyes widen, completely heartbroken, as she stumbles across the floor to him.

Dumbstruck, she kneels down and pushes her hands futilely over his to stop the bleeding. Nicholas takes a hold of her arm and shakes his head.

Ellie looks down on him with disbelief in her eyes.

She purses her lips, defiantly, as tears roll down her cheeks. She quickly wriggles out of her jacket and presses it against the wound.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Nicholas grabs her arm and pushes her away.

She rushes back and Nicholas tries to push her away again, but she combats his efforts and grabs onto his arms.

He eventually gives in, out of strength, and Ellie fights her way into his arms.

His head tilts feebly to the side as he runs his bloody fingers through her hair.

He draws her head close to his and attempts to mouth something into Ellie's ear.

A WHISPER?

Ellie pulls her head up in a frightened stare. Amazed. Confused. She heard it.

Nicholas tries to smile as his head slants farther down his side.

His eyes grow distant as his body finally collapses against the wall.

Ellie shakes her head, unwilling to yield, and puts her hands around his face, desperately trying to shake him awake.

She then collapses on him too.

After a few seconds she notices his hand is curled up in a fist. She peels the clenched fingers from his palm and pulls out a small piece of paper.

It has ten digits jotted down.

416 538-6552

FADE OUT.

A dial-tone is heard. A number is punched in.

FADE IN:

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

An abandoned street like all the others. The pavement's littered with papers and plastic wrappings. Cars scattered across the lanes.

Ellie stands in a phone-booth resting her hand against the glass, as she writes something on a polaroid.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Aside from the iconic army jacket, her clothes are different -- new. Her hair is wet, she looks changed. Clean. Like a new-born.

The familiar answering machine begins playback.

ANSWERING MACHINE

Hi, this is Kayleigh, I'm not
home right now...or maybe I just-

Ellie is about to hang up, when the machine stops and someone swipes the receiver.

She jerks around, focused. Breathing can be heard in the other end. Ellie looks frustrated around, what to do now?

She then places her index finger over the receiver and taps the tip of her finger against the plastic exterior.

Morse code. She pauses for a reply.

Nothing.

She taps again and waits for an answer.

Silence.

Then faint taps emit from the receiver. Slow and meticulous. Three short taps, three long taps, and three short taps.

"S.O.S."

Ellie grins silently -- overjoyed. She tightens her grip on the phone as her free hand clutches her necklace.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. CITY - DAY

The concrete high-rises of the silent city crusts the rising of the orange sun.

Another day.

EXT. OVERPASS

Empty streets. The wind carries plastic bags across the lanes. The sun cooks the tarmac.

EXT. DOWNTOWN

The same abandoned street from earlier. Ellie's phone-booth shimmers in the morning sun in the middle of the desolate street.

A polaroid taped to the glass flutters wildly in the wind. It's the photograph of Nicholas from the train.

An inscription in red across the edges:

MY FRIEND NICHOLAS - 8/17/07.

FADE TO
BLACK.

THE END