

# **PAPER GIRLS**

"Growing Pains"

#101

Written by  
Stephany Folsom

8<sup>th</sup> Revised NETWORK DRAFT  
November 1, 2020

**Plan B Entertainment**  
846 N. Cahuenga Blvd  
Building D2  
Los Angeles, CA 90038

**Legendary Television**  
2900 W. Alameda Ave  
Suite 1500  
Burbank, CA 91505

Copyright 2020 by OLIVE PRODUCTIONS, LLC ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. NOT TO BE DUPLICATED WITHOUT PERMISSION. This material is property of OLIVE PRODUCTIONS, LLC and is intended solely for use by its personnel. The sale, copying, reproduction or exploitation of this material in any form is prohibited. Distribution or disclosure of this material to unauthorized persons is prohibited.

OVER BLACK an upbeat tune plays. An overly cheery voice announces:

MALE NARRATOR (V.O.)

Welcome to the *Cleveland Preserver*  
where your exciting future in paper  
delivery awaits!

FADE UP ON: A 1950s EDUCATIONAL-STYLE FILM:

Shot on GRAINY BLACK AND WHITE 16mm FILM. A Chinese American girl dressed as a 1950s paperboy (rolled jeans, T-shirt, baseball cap) smiles at the camera. This is ERIN TIENG (12).

MALE NARRATOR (V.O.)

Check out that clean-cut, all-  
American smile. Personal hygiene  
and good manners will go a long  
way.

Erin gives a big smile to the camera as she climbs on her bike. She rides along a well-maintained suburban street.

MALE NARRATOR (V.O.)

A paperboy must be in tip-top  
shape. A good throwing arm is  
essential to get those papers on  
our loyal readers' doorsteps in no  
time.

She tosses a paper from the road. A MISMATCHED CUT shows it landing perfectly on a front stoop.

MALE NARRATOR (V.O.)

*Bullseye!* Nice alley-oop!

The front door opens and a HANDSOME MAN in a wool suit picks up the paper. The Man tosses a nickel to Erin who's waiting at the curb. ANOTHER MISMATCHED CUT -- Erin somehow catches it thirty yards away and gives the camera a thumbs-up.

MALE NARRATOR (V.O.)

A paperboy must always be on his  
toes and ready to face any danger.

Erin's smile fades on hearing this. There's a SUDDEN flash of light on the horizon.

ERIN

What the--

MALE NARRATOR (V.O.)

Watch the language, Erin Tieng. You  
better duck and cover.

ERIN  
(looks around, scared)  
Is it...?

MALE NARRATOR (V.O.)  
Yes, it's the Russians. But you  
still have one chance to save your  
sister before you all go to Hell.

ERIN  
What?

Erins swings around -- her younger sister, MISSY (8), is  
strangely tied to a chair desk in the middle of the quaint  
suburban street.

Missy's mouth moves as if she's saying something, but there  
are no words. Erin strains to hear.

ERIN (CONT'D)  
I don't understand...

MALE NARRATOR (V.O.)  
All you have to do is answer my  
question... Which tribe named our  
town's "crooked river" the  
Cuyahoga? A) The Mohawks. B) The  
Iroquois. C) The Apache. Or D) None  
of the above.

A MUSHROOM CLOUD blossoms on the horizon.

MALE NARRATOR (V.O.)  
You have one minute.

ERIN  
Fuck you.

MALE NARRATOR (V.O.)  
What did you say?

ERIN  
I've had this dream before. This  
isn't real. It doesn't count if I  
swear in here, so fuck you.

MALE NARRATOR (V.O.)  
Incorrect.

SUDDENLY, AN EXPLOSION. Then silence. TOTAL BLACKNESS.

FADE TO:

INT. BEDROOM - PRE-DAWN

CLOSE ON: Erin Tieng as her eyes SNAP OPEN.

ANGLE ON: the DIGITAL CLOCK on her nightstand. Layout reads the date: 11-01-88, 4:27 AM.

Erin SWITCHES OFF the alarm function before it ever has a chance. She leans over the side of her bed. Looks down to the lower bunk. Her little sister is fast asleep on the bunk below.

Erin smiles with relief. It was just a dream. She climbs down from the top bunk, silently slipping out of the room.

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Erin, now dressed in an acid-washed jean jacket, perfectly curled "mall bangs," sits at the kitchen table rolling and rubber-banding NEWSPAPERS.

She glances at the day's headline: NO PROGRESS IN IRAN-IRAQ PEACE TALKS. The band in her hand suddenly SNAPS back. Ouch. But Erin corrals herself, makes no noise. After a beat, she resumes.

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Erin now stands at the counter, packing two identical BROWN BAG LUNCHES. Each bag gets topped off with a Capri Sun.

Then, with Sharpie, Erin writes "Missy" on one of the bags and deposits both of them into the refrigerator.

EXT. FRONT PORCH - PRE-DAWN

Erin uneasily sets down her LARGE SATCHEL of rolled newspapers. With the key held around her neck by an old shoelace, she locks the door behind.

EXT. ERIN'S DRIVEWAY/SUBURBAN STREET - PRE-DAWN

She pedals her bike down the driveway. The heavy satchel of papers strapped across her chest. We get the sense that Erin may have never done this before as she wobbles a little to figure out how best to balance this weight.

She CLICKS on her bike light and starts to pedal slowly down the darkened street, awed by the spooky, recently-vacated quality of the early morning that surrounds her.

Darkened cookie-cutter houses on each side. A BUSH '88 sign hammered into a browning lawn beside an unsettling scarecrow decoration, hinting at Halloween that was just the night before.

Erin carefully steers around glass on the asphalt. She sees crushed beer cans cluster on a curb. A few more HALLOWEEN DECORATIONS -- orange blinking lights and plastic skulls and a SMASHED PUMPKIN in the road...

Erin's legs pump faster now. The wind blows through her hair, yet her perfectly styled bangs stand strong as she takes in the FREEDOM of the empty street --

Erin admits a little SMILE, some release perhaps from whatever she felt in that house... her exciting future in paper delivery awaits --

GO TO:

TITLE CREDIT IN BLACK

"PAPER GIRLS"

The title should be short and simple, graphic and powerful...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD - PRE-DAWN

It's still dark. Quiet. Rows of streetlights shine down on the perfectly manicured lawns. A few Jack-o-lanterns still out from the night before.

Erin, softly humming, rides her bike. She's the only thing moving on the street. Her bike light illuminating the way...

She slows to a stop at the corner. She pulls out her delivery list and stops humming. She's all business as she eyes the subscriber addresses. Got it. She pockets the list, starts down the street, but stops: a sound. Laughter?

Erin is drawn, straining to hear. There's nothing for a moment, and then: she hears it AGAIN. MALE CACKLING.

Erin cautiously pedals forward. A house comes into view... covered in toilet paper, looking more like an art installation than an act of vandalism.

She slows to a stop, awed by the draping loops covering almost every surface.

She hears the LAUGHTER again. Erin tenses. It's close.

She spots TWO COSTUMED TEENS, both dressed as bully skeletons right out of The Karate Kid. They WHOOP as they toss a final roll and dart out of sight between houses.

Erin does her best to shake it off and pedal forward a few more feet. She moves aside the TP covering the mailbox address. Right place. She tosses her first paper -- It bounces off a hedge but manages to barely make the porch.

She adjusts her satchel and pedals over to the next driveway. Okay. One down. She tosses the paper -- NAILS the porch.

Look of satisfaction on her face... but then she stops. She eyes the address printed on the side of the mailbox.

Checks it against her delivery list. Wrong house.

ERIN

Stupid.

She puts down her kickstand. Gets off her bike. As she goes up to the porch, she finds it's covered with PUMPKIN GUTS, the paper she threw resting in the middle of the mess.

Trying not to get any of the obliterated gourd on her sneakers, she lingers on the front step, awkwardly reaching out to pick up the paper...

THE DOOR SWINGS OPEN. Erin freezes mid-reach.

A MIDDLE-AGED MAN in a bathrobe glowers down at her (*and if we're paying careful attention, it's the kind man in the wool suit that was Erin's customer in the training film... but he looks a LOT different in reality...*). A baseball bat in one hand, he moves to snatch the paper up, but Erin instinctually grabs it first. His face turns dark.

MIDDLE-AGED MAN

Put. It. Down.

Erin straightens, holds the rolled paper tight. Every fiber of her being wants to run, but she has a job to do.

ERIN

Sorry, sir. There was a mistake--

MIDDLE-AGED MAN

Don't give me that, ya little shit. Tryin' to steal my paper, I know a dirty thief when I see one.

ERIN

I'm sorry, but you aren't on my list--

Erin, hands shaking, checks her delivery list again.

MIDDLE-AGED MAN

How about you don't trespass and  
remove things from my property.  
It's bad enough you Japs are  
running the plant out of town.

ERIN

I'm-- Chinese...

MIDDLE-AGED MAN

I don't give a shit.

He steps forward, aggressive. Reaching for the paper in  
Erin's hands --

TIFFANY (O.S.)

Here's your paper, sir.

A ROLLED NEWSPAPER is placed in his outstretched hand. Erin  
looks over to find a black girl her same age named TIFFANY  
QUILKIN standing at her side.

He looks at the paper Tiffany just gave him, considering if  
it's good enough.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

My colleague here was confused.

ERIN

I'm not confused...

MIDDLE-AGED MAN

Get the fuck off my porch. Both of  
you.

Tiffany pulls Erin towards the street.

TIFFANY

(quietly as they walk)  
You really want to get your head  
split over a quarter?

They reach the sidewalk. Tiffany looks back to the angry man  
still on the porch. She smiles and waves to him.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

(to angry man)  
Thanks for choosing the Preserver!

She nudges Erin to wave as well. Feebly, Erin does, then  
watches the angry man go back inside and SLAM his door.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)  
(as she goes)  
You're welcome by the way.

Erin turns back to see Tiffany already riding down the street.

ERIN  
Hey.

Erin jumps on her bike, pumping her legs hard and fast -- She catches up.

ERIN (CONT'D)  
Hey, I would have been fine.

TIFFANY  
If you say so.

They ride in silence for a beat.

ERIN  
(admitting)  
It's actually my first day...

TIFFANY  
I couldn't tell.

ERIN  
Really?

Tiffany laughs.

TIFFANY  
Look, I know what the Preserver  
guys say about handling the  
customers, but trust me -- you have  
to talk fast and get out of the way  
even faster if you want to survive  
out here.  
(No argument from Erin)  
What's your name?

ERIN  
Erin.

Tiffany sizes her up with a sidelong glance.

TIFFANY  
Tiff. You really picked a stupid  
morning to start.  
(off Erin's uncertain look)  
Hell Day.

(MORE)



TIFFANY (CONT'D)  
(Erin still looks blank)  
Day after Halloween?

ERIN  
So?

TIFFANY  
So Halloween only ended four hours ago.

Another knowing side-long look from Tiff.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)  
You'll see.

ERIN  
Maybe we should stick together. You know, safety in numbers?

TIFFANY  
Nah, we do that, it takes twice as long.

ERIN  
Right...

So that's it. Erin puts her head down, starts to split off.

Tiffany stops and looks back to Erin. The mall bangs, the squeaky clean bike... a lamb to the slaughter. She sighs...

TIFFANY  
New girl, what's your route?

Erin quickly swings back around, pulling up alongside. She consults her delivery list.

ERIN  
Marion, then Caroline, Fox and back on Maple.

TIFFANY  
Marion is two streets over. You're not even on the right block.

Tiffany takes a set of walkie-talkies from her satchel, hands one to Erin.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)  
Here.

ERIN  
(eyes walkie)  
Nice.

TIFFANY

(showboating now)

Yeah, these beauties cost me \$49.99  
not counting tax or batteries. TRC-  
218 CB with channel 14 crystals.  
Check out the auto modulation on  
this --

ERIN

(talks into it)

Hello?

Erin's voice LOUDLY ECHOES on a split-second delay through  
Tiff's walkie, which also causes BRIEF EAR-PIERCING FEEDBACK  
through both units -- Tiff winces, then it stops.

TIFFANY

Okay, let's maintain proper  
distance during use. You hold onto  
that one, buzz me if you run into  
any trouble, then I'll collect from  
you at the end of the--

Suddenly a twelve-year-old GIRL on a BMX comes tearing around  
the corner.

Erin has never seen anyone like this: cigarette tucked behind  
her ear, walkman headphones around her neck, satchel of  
papers across her chest. This is MAC (12).

MAC

(calls over to Tiff)

*Yo, Tonya!*

TIFFANY

Tiffany.

MAC (CONT'D)

What?

Mac slide-brakes like a pro just inches from hitting Erin's  
front wheel, sending a little bit of gravel into her spokes  
with a *tink-tinka-tink-tink...*

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

My name is Tiffany.

(off Mac's blank look)

We delivered together last year?

MAC

(hurried)

Yeah, whatever. I just saw Wally  
Bund and his dipshit buddies chase  
some paper girl down Hemlock  
towards the school.

TIFFANY  
(already mounting up)  
Shit.

Mac takes off towards the school, Tiffany falling in behind her. Some unwritten code being honored...

TIFFANY (CONT'D)  
C'mon New Girl! We need back up!

Erin hesitates for a moment -- has clearly never thought of herself as someone's "back up" before -- but she likes being with these girls rather than being alone. She makes a decision, takes a deep breath, then pedals after them.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL PARKING LOT - PRE-DAWN

Erin brakes to a stop behind Tiffany. Straight ahead, Mac charges toward three TEEN BOYS dressed in costume -- FREDDY KRUEGER, MICHAEL JACKSON, and THE WOLFMAN. They have a girl -- KJ -- backed against a chain-link fence:

KJ (age 12), fear in her eyes, stands in full field hockey uniform and sweatshirt with her stick raised like a medieval bludgeon.

FREDDY KRUEGER  
Relax, we just want to see what those legs look like under that skirt.

Erin stops breathing -- oh my God. What's happening?

TIFFANY  
Teenagers.

Freddy steps forward -- This is legit terrifying.

MAC (O.S.)  
COOL COSTUMES, FAGGOTS!

He swings around to face Mac.

FREDDY KRUEGER  
What'd you say to me?

Mac doesn't flinch. Erin slowly backs up, but stops as she spots Jackson nudging Freddy, pointing to her and Tiff.

FREDDY KRUEGER (CONT'D)  
Yum, more girls.

MAC

You heard me, AIDS patient. Get  
lost!

Erin starts to turn to go. Too late. Freddy lunges, grabbing onto Erin's handlebars, holding her in place. Erin tries to pull away, but Freddy holds tight.

Tiff tries to back up but Wolfman stops her tire with his booted foot.

MICHAEL JACKSON

(to Freddy)

They look like, ten, man.

FREDDY KRUEGER

Grass on the field.

ERIN

(fronting, failing)

I'm twelve. And we have to get back  
to work...

Freddy puts his hands over hers. Erin tenses at his touch. Now she can't hide that she's scared.

He leans forward. Erin about to vomit from the smell of cheap alcohol on his breath --

BOOM! A bottle rocket EXPLODES at his feet. Freddy staggers back. Erin rubs her now free hands, watching in shock as Mac launches another bottle rocket from a sawed-off plastic baseball bat at the boys.

It bounces off Michael Jackson's chest, EXPLODING on the ground.

MICHAEL JACKSON

You crazy bitch!

Erin watches as they start to charge Mac, but then stop, one of them catching sight of something coming down the street --

MICHAEL JACKSON (CONT'D)

Cops!

The boys take off, running into the darkness.

MAC

Shit.

Erin's relieved to see the SQUAD CAR pulling into the parking lot. Lights flashing. She raises her arms to flag down the police for help. She's finally breathing again!

OFFICER MILLS (early 30s) steps out -- guy's a couple years on the force but he's already putting on patrol weight.

Tiff, out of a sense of self-preservation, grabs Erin's outstretched arm and pulls her to a safer position behind KJ and Mac.

TIFFANY

Hey. Let's hang back...

ERIN

It's just the police.

TIFFANY

Like I said...

Erin watches with surprise as Mills doesn't give the boys running down the street a second glance. He focuses squarely on --

OFFICER MILLS

Mac Coyle!

ERIN

(to Tiffany)

The cops know her by name?

The Officer walks right up to Mac.

OFFICER MILLS

What the hell are you doing?

MAC

Come on, man, those guys were gearing up for a rape-fest.

OFFICER MILLS

You address me as Officer, young lady.

He takes the homemade rocket launcher from her hand. Mac shrugs it off and defiantly places a Camel cigarette between her lips. Lights it.

OFFICER MILLS (CONT'D)

Put that out before I write you up.

KJ

Officer, excuse me, but there's technically no law against her smoking--

OFFICER MILLS

There's one against you underage brats buying them.

MAC

(dragging, then)

I got these trick-or-treating.

Mills shakes his head in haughty disgust.

OFFICER MILLS

You know once I start running you in, we're gonna need a special system down at the station to keep track of which Coyle we're holding for what.

MAC

Whatever, man.

OFFICER MILLS (CONT'D)

...between your Dad, your brother and that... "Mom" of yours--

MAC (CONT'D)

She's not my Mom.

Mills smirks, but the police scanner in his car SQUAWKS, interrupting:

DISPATCH (V.O.)

(over the radio)

Got another smash and grab at the Radio Shack on Acorn and Tenth.

OFFICER MILLS

Put it out.

But Mac stands her ground. Exhales a cloud of smoke.

Officer Mills eyes her, but then walks back to his car.

OFFICER MILLS (CONT'D)

Keep it up, Coyle.

Mac throws up her arms in mock shaky fear, determined not to give Mills the satisfaction even if some small part of her is terrified he might be right.

SIRENS blare. Erin watches as the squad car PEELS down the street and out of sight.

It's suddenly very quiet.

ERIN

(to Mac)

You know you really shouldn't call anybody the F-word... and anybody can get AIDS not just--

MAC

(to Tiff)

Who the fuck is this?

TIFFANY

She's new.

KJ lowers her stick, drains the fear from her eyes and only manages a sidelong chin nod in Mac's direction.

KJ

Thanks for the back up.

Mac nods, "don't mention it," and heads back toward her bike.

KJ (CONT'D)

Hey, it's Mac right?

MAC

Yeah, so?

KJ

So you were the first paperboy around here who wasn't...you know.

MAC

(shrugs it off)

Job pays half what it used to, which is probably why they got a bunch of chicks doing this shit now...so you're the Brandman kid?

Mac takes a step towards KJ. Up closer, KJ is a good foot taller than any of the other girls.

KJ

(quietly)

KJ.

MAC

(judgmental)

Like Brandman First National Bank.

TIFFANY

And Brandman Public Library...

(KJ looks to Tiff who nods)

Nice to meet you.

KJ extends a hand, Tiff shakes it.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

Tiff--

KJ

(tries to explain)

Yeah, my grandfather, he was like a--

MAC

(finishing)

-big fuckin' deal.

(to KJ, confirming)

Right?

KJ

(forced neutral)

Sure.

MAC

My Dad says you people own everything.

ERIN

("yikes")

"You people...?"

KJ's eyes slide to Erin. Tiff follows her eyeline:

TIFFANY

She's new. First ride.

Mac circles around on her bike as KJ throws Erin a small nod.

MAC

Anyway, Brandman, Tonya, New Girl, it's been real, but I gotta get moving, stay clear of the dick-wagglers--

ERIN

Or we could stick together?

Mac slows, then stops. Skeptical looks all around.

ERIN (CONT'D)

I mean, I know it'd take longer, but it's Hell Day...

MAC

You're scared.

KJ

I don't think it's a bad idea.



MAC

No thanks. You girl scouts can team up if you want.

TIFFANY

C'mon Mac. I don't see why not.

(pause)

Maybe we'll even get our full routes delivered, has that ever happened on Hell Day?

MAC

(incredulous)

What, you looking for a promotion?

TIFFANY

I'm looking to finish my stupid route in one piece. I got better stuff to do.

(pause)

We can use my TRC-218s, so we can split up into two groups and go faster.

Off Mac's confusion, Erin translates --

ERIN

She has walkie-talkies we can use to stay in touch.

Off Mac. She chews it over. AN ERRANT TEENAGE BOY YELL echoes out from a few blocks over. There are a lot of crazies out...

MAC

(covering)

Alright, fine, if it'll keep you three from pissing your panties. We'll ride up to Sunnydale together and then split into twos.

(points to Tiff and KJ)

Walkie-talkie Freak and Preppy, you're Team One.

In response, KJ just flips up her kickstand with a shoe.

MAC (CONT'D)

(to Erin)

New Girl, you're with me.

Erin hesitates, only for a second but Mac notices.

MAC (CONT'D)

Oh my god, I'm not gonna like, bite you.

Erin POINTEDLY kicks up her kickstand, trying to project a confidence she doesn't quite feel.

Mac is already pedaling down the street.

MAC (CONT'D)  
Keep up, New Girl.

Erin follows...

TWO LARGE FIGURES stand in the darkness between the houses, eerily watching them go.

EXT. STREETS OF STONY STREAM - MOMENTS LATER

The girls have only ridden a couple of blocks when suddenly, a couple costumed TEENS sprint down the sidewalk.

Erin clocks one of them dressed as BLOODY RONALD REAGAN, iconic rubber mask and all. She tightens her grip on her handlebars, bracing for another fight.

But Mac just flips them off. KJ and Tiff laugh. Erin is just relieved to see them turn the corner and head out of sight.

MAC  
This job gets worse every year.

TIFFANY  
What's with all these old dorks still dressing up? I outgrew trick-or-treating when I was eight. It's a school night for Pete's sake.

KJ  
What was your last costume? I mean before you decided to fully devote yourself to the honor roll.

TIFFANY  
Astronaut.  
(to KJ)  
You?

KJ  
Wayne Gretzky.  
(pause)  
Mac?

They ride in silence for a moment, Mac ignoring them.

KJ (CONT'D)  
Mmmmac?

MAC  
(mumbles)  
A Care Bear...

KJ  
Aww, that's cute.

MAC (CONT'D)  
I was fuckin' four.

TIFFANY  
(to Erin)  
What about you, New Girl?

ERIN  
Um, well, I've only been once...

TIFFANY  
Seriously?

ERIN  
Yeah well, it's stupid but my mom  
used to worry it was, like, too  
dangerous for me and my sister to  
go out at night, but I think she  
was really just afraid to talk to  
our neighbors, because we're not,  
you know... I mean, her English  
isn't so good... but then I tried  
it and was like, I'm too old for  
this, no thanks...  
(sing-song, not  
convincing)  
*Bo-ring...*

No one really knows how to respond to that. They reach the  
end of Sunnydale. Tiff fiddles with her walkie.

ERIN (CONT'D) KJ  
You guys can call me Erin, by the-- So what were you?

ERIN (CONT'D)  
What?

KJ  
The one time you went. What did you  
dress up as?

On Erin...

ERIN  
Batman. My little sister was Robin.  
(only half-kidding)  
The dynamic duo.

TIFFANY  
(tweaks walkie)  
Hey, New Girl, try out channel  
three...

Erin sighs, pulls the other walkie from her satchel.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)  
You just hit the big button on the  
side to talk if anything goes  
down...

Tiff and KJ start to split off and move ahead.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)  
(into walkie)  
Testing check-check, sibilance...

Erin FALLS BACK a few feet, turning the dial as she wobble-  
rides with no hands --

ERIN  
(doubling through walkie)  
I can hear you...

A STRANGE ROAR echoes in the distance like thunder. Erin  
glances up to the dark sky.

ERIN (CONT'D)  
Is it supposed to rain--

-- STATIC BURSTS from her walkie.

THE TWO DARK FIGURES (we clocked earlier) DART FROM THE  
SHADOWS -- RIPPING ERIN FROM HER BIKE IN ONE BRUTALLY  
EFFICIENT MOVEMENT. She doesn't even have time to scream but  
it doesn't matter -- A GLOVED HAND GOES OVER HER FACE --

She gets ROUGHLY CARRIED BACKWARDS -- HER POV: jouncing as  
she sees the other girls ride away, oblivious to the fact  
that she's no longer behind them -- She REACHES OUT --

TIME ALMOST SEEMS TO SLOW. The figures softly whisper. Their  
distorted voices strangely echo in all directions. Erin can't  
understand a word, but it can't be good --

BAM. She's DRIVEN onto her back in the front lawn of a  
darkened Tudor. A dilated BLOODSHOT EYE stares down at her  
through black bandages covering her attacker's face.

Erin struggles to stand, but she's PUSHED BACK DOWN HARD into  
the dew-covered grass --

Even though the breath has been knocked out of her, she TWISTS, KICKS FURIOUSLY as the figures huddle over her, wildly grasping, finally WRENCHING AWAY HER WALKIE.

On Erin, struggling to grasp what's happening as -- quickly as they appeared -- the figures dart off --

Erin manages to sit up, hair messed, wet leaves on her face. She sees her satchel of papers scattered across the lawn. She doesn't know whether to burst into tears or scream --

THE SHADOWED FIGURES TEAR BY THE OTHER GIRLS ON THEIR BIKES --

MAC  
(seeing them)  
What the...  
(looking back)  
Hey... HEY!

Mac does a tight loop back to Erin, sprinting -- KJ and Tiffany follow, stand-peddling --

ERIN (O.S.)  
(pain hitting her)  
AGH, GOD...

Erin looks down, her jeans are ripped at the knee and she's bleeding a little. Not bad, but it stings like hell.

Tiff looks back to see the figures in the exact instant they finally succeed in vanishing into the darkness.

TIFFANY  
HEY-- GET BACK HERE!

KJ  
Real brave, tough guys!

Mac drops her bike, instantly racing to Erin's side with KJ, Tiffany following --

MAC  
The fuck happened?!

ERIN  
Sorry, sorry --

Mac helps Erin to her feet. She has trouble standing.

KJ  
Are you alright?

TIFFANY  
Where's my walkie?!

ERIN  
I'm so sorry, I'll get you a  
new one. I promise.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)  
With 14 crystals? Impossible.  
You have any idea how many  
Christmas bonuses that cost  
me?

MAC  
Kid just got jacked onto her ass,  
Tonya. Can you go a little easier  
on her?

ERIN  
(adrenaline shaking)  
They were speaking some other  
language...

TIFFANY  
It's fine, it's fine...

Nobody knows how to address what Erin just said, so:

KJ  
I think Mrs. Carson down the street  
is usually up by now. We can ask  
her to call the police...

MAC  
The piggies in this town aren't  
gonna do shit.

KJ  
(crouches to Erin's  
knee)  
You'll be okay, walk it  
off...

TIFFANY  
(to Mac)  
So what? We just *take it*?

KJ (CONT'D)  
I'm so sick of being messed with  
this morning.

MAC  
Try every morning.

TIFFANY  
I mean, Jesus, we're just trying to  
deliver newspapers. It's a public  
utility.

KJ  
Bet nobody tried this shit when  
your brother was delivering.

MAC  
Nope. Guaranteed.

ERIN  
(suddenly yells)  
Screw those guys.

The other girls all turn to her at once. She's extremely upset, but holding back her fear. Erin just looks angry, her breaths still coming in heaves. She looks up at the other girls wild-eyed.

Mac considers this for a beat, wheels turning. The walkie in Tiff's hand BUZZES TO LIFE with an unrecognizable (perhaps female) voice that sounds shot through a metallic filter:

VOICE (V.O.)  
(through walkie)  
<:..4-1-6-6--:>

MAC  
(to Erin)  
Is that them?

ERIN  
(can't tell)  
I guess so...

Mac grabs the other walkie out of Tiffany's hand --

MAC  
(into walkie)  
Hey, ass clowns, if you can hear this, get ready... 'cause we're coming to get our shit back.

Mac sets the walkie back in Tiffany's hand. The girls process the declaration she's just made. Okay. Now this is real. Reality washes back over them. They exchange looks.

MAC (CONT'D)  
("are you with me?")  
*Well?*

KJ gets on her bike. Tiff hesitates, but then she does the same. Nods to Mac. Mac turns to Erin -- there's something in the tough girl's flinty eyes that is inveterate and encouraging, like she's bringing Erin into an inner circle.

It's almost like... loyalty.

MAC (CONT'D)  
C'mon. Let's do this.

And in this moment these four girls have forged the tiniest increment of a real bond between them.

Something relaxes for a moment in Erin as she rides on, taking in the three girls around her, each of them pushing forward, staring ahead, together... it's surreal to Erin... but she digs it, and she too looks ahead, into the wind...

EXT. STREET - PRE-DAWN

Erin rides with the other girls in a full sprint in the direction the dark figures fled in -- A mixture of pure adrenaline and nerves as they pass perfectly landscaped yards, turning the corner to a NEW DEVELOPMENT.

MAC

My brother and his friends party in these all the time. Bet these guys are hiding in one of 'em.

KJ

Must be some parties...

MAC

Yeah you seem more like a champagne toast-type, huh...

KJ

No, I just meant...

But KJ gives up. Erin eyes the dark houses on either side. Searching. Finally seeing: the TWO DARK FIGURES about a hundred yards off.

ERIN

(points)  
There!

The FIGURES dart furtively between the houses. The girls follow to a partially built home ahead...

Tiffany points to an open window.

TIFFANY

(keeping voice down)  
They went inside.

The girls slow to a stop. They drop their bikes.

Mac slowly leads the way up the newly poured driveway. KJ takes a few practice swings with her field hockey stick.

But Erin holds back, real fear surging in her.



ERIN

Wait... we're really going to fight these guys? That's our plan?

MAC

No. If Tiff's walkie is broken, we're murdering them.

Tiffany waves her forward.

TIFFANY

Come on, New Girl.

Not wanting to disappoint, Erin bites back her apprehension and follows...

INT. UNFINISHED HOUSE - PRE-DAWN

Sheets of plastic hang from the ceiling. A few tools left scattered about.

Mac leads the way, moving slowly with Erin close by. Tiffany right behind with KJ at the ready with her hockey stick out.

KJ

What is that? It smells like old gym socks and barf.

Erin looking around. Notes a few discarded cigarette butts and beer cans in the corner.

ERIN

Why would anyone want to hang out in here? It's dirty and cold...

KJ and Mac exchange brief looks.

MAC

And there's nobody around to tell you what to do.

KJ looks away and Mac turns to Erin, challenging. Erin doesn't press. They keep walking.

MAC (CONT'D)

You ever been in a fight, New Girl?

ERIN

Not lately...

MAC

Look, if it goes that way, it's not hard. Just keep swinging and try not to move backward.

Erin squeezes her hand into a fist, as if to prepare. Mac looks over to this attempt and shakes her head.

MAC (CONT'D)

Tuck your thumb outside, or else you'll break it.

(pause)

You can always just kick 'em. Biting works, too, if you're in a bad situation.

Erin looks down to her worn Keds, realizing she doesn't stand a chance.

KJ

Hey, you hear that?

They stop and listen. There's a low ELECTRONIC HUM.

Erin points ahead to a thick sheet of protective plastic hanging from the ceiling. The outline of something or someone behind it.

Mac motions for the others to stay quiet. She steps forward...

There's a BURST OF WHITE NOISE from Tiff's walkie. The girls startle. Tiff quickly turns the squelch knob to shut it up.

The girls look back to the thing behind the plastic. It's still there. Unmoved.

MAC

(whispering)

Let's smoke these posers out.

Mac pulls a bundle of M-80 firecrackers from her bag and gives a nod. Erin yanks down the plastic just in time for Mac's throw...

TO REVEAL: AN OLD REENTRY SPACE CAPSULE --

Battered but also bizarrely jerry-rigged and modified in ways that are beyond the girls' comprehension.

Mac lets the M-80s drop back in her satchel, trying to make sense of what she's seeing.

ERIN  
Jesus.

MAC (CONT'D)  
What the hell is it?

The strange HUM is coming from inside.

KJ  
Is it some piece of construction equipment?

MAC  
Not that I've ever seen...

TIFFANY  
It's clearly a reentry capsule meant to withstand heat from the atmosphere.

ERIN  
No way.

MAC  
Let's get these assholes out of their freaky little playhouse.

Mac KNOCKS loudly on its metallic surface.

ERIN  
I'm not sure you should be touching that...

MAC  
Come on out, dickbrains! Give this girl her walkie back!  
(nothing)  
Don't make me come in there and drag your asses out.

Mac knocks again. The HUM grows louder.

INT. "SPACE CAPSULE" - SAME

Dark in here, under-lit as Mac's repeated kicks ECHO through the cabin. Even in the low-light however, we soon become aware of something different about the walls in here... it's almost as though they're "breathing"... something terrifyingly organic about them...

As camera finds a small PORTHOLE (with a view onto the girls) we're surprised to find ourselves in the POV of THE HOODED FIGURES.

Even more surprising is the fact that the figures seem *scared*. They seem to be *arguing* in hushed tones as a BURST OF STATIC from the stolen walkie emits:

VOICE (V.O.)  
(through walkie)  
<:..4-1-6-6--:>

The second hooded figure throws a rusted lever UP into the locked position as we POP BACK OUT TO:

INT. UNFINISHED HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

KJ  
Mac, give it a rest already.

MAC  
Don't tell me what to do--

There's a CRACKLE of STATIC ELECTRICITY. Erin looks up. She stares, transfixed as the air above begins to RIPPLE and move as if they were underwater.

The HUM is suddenly WAY TOO LOUD. The girls duck and cover their ears. A FLASH OF WHITE LIGHT pulses from above. It radiates over the capsule and the girls, BLINDING... suddenly ALL SOUND CUTS OUT. It goes DARK...

FADE UP ON ERIN:

She lies on her back. The silence crushing. She stiffly rolls over. Sits up. She looks around. The other girls sprawled on the floor beside... They begin to stir.

ERIN  
Is everybody okay?

MAC  
What the fuck was that?!

KJ  
I feel really weird...

Erin looks to the strange capsule before them. SMOKE rises from its metallic surface.

TIFFANY  
It's moving...

ERIN  
I think we should get out of here...

Nobody has to wait to hear that idea again... and as the capsule's PANELS BEGIN TO SHIFT, the girls RUN OUT --

EXT. UNFINISHED HOUSE - PRE-DAWN

-- and stumble through the front door, heading to their bikes left on the street by another VOTE FOR BUSH '88 yard sign.

*\*\*NB: at this point in our story, the girls have NOT traveled through time yet. They don't know it, and neither will we for a while, but they are about to witness a process called "ablution" which we'll understand soon enough...*

Erin stops as she picks her's up...

...And then she notices the sky is bathed in a strange shade of pink. KJ, also trying to make sense of what she's seeing...

ERIN  
Um... guys....

KJ  
What's going on?

ERIN (CONT'D)  
Wait, how late is it?

Tiffany clocks it, too. Glances to her digital watch: 5:30AM.

TIFFANY  
Sunrise isn't for another thirty minutes...

Erin mounts her bike --

ERIN  
I have to get home.

KJ  
Me too.

MAC  
Yeah, screw this.

But Erin stops short. Her gaze focused on the teen in the WOLFMAN MASK they encountered earlier. Unmoving, his sights set directly on Erin and the girls.

TIFFANY  
Not this guy again.

KJ  
Wally Bund.

ERIN  
Why's he just standing there like a creep?

KJ  
'Cause he is a creep.

MAC  
(yelling, to Wolfman)  
Hey, creepoid, you want another  
bottle rocket up your ass?

But Wolfman doesn't respond. Doesn't even move...

Mac cautiously wheels towards him. Still no response. This doesn't feel right. Erin scans the street for any sign of help. Nothing on the street moves...

Mac rolls a little closer, about to grab for his mask when... AN ENORMOUS FLASH OF LIGHT on the horizon. Mac stumbles back.

MAC (CONT'D)  
*THE FUCK?!*

They all turn towards the skyline in the other direction --

ERIN  
That... was a nuke...

KJ  
No way... there'd be some kind of  
cloud... right?

ANOTHER FLASH, THIS ONE PINK, right behind them and OFF-SCREEN. They all do a 180 to where Wolfman guy was...

TIFFANY  
WHERE DID THAT GUY GO?

KJ  
He booked, like we should.

Sure enough, the teen is now gone. Like he was never there...

For the first time, the other girls legitimately detect a subtle hint of fear in Mac's voice --

MAC  
We gotta go...

All the lights on the street go dark in a massive power outage.

MAC (CONT'D)  
Come on, my house is close.

And in a flash, the other girls are on their bikes, tearing away from the unfinished house --

BUT WE HOLD ON IT... long enough to see the two dark figures slither from the window... a DISTANT RUMBLE comes and goes... the figures exchange a look, then take off into the night...

EXT. STREET - MOMENTS LATER

The girls tear down the street, legs pumping. Erin slows as she clocks the sky above growing a more unnatural shade of PINK... *whatever is happening up there seems to be building in intensity...* They turn the corner...

TIFFANY

If we live through this, I'm quitting my route. This is bullshit.

KJ

Truth.

MAC

A-fuckin-men to that.

UP AHEAD: the SQUAD CAR they saw earlier. It's pulled over, half up on the curb with its PATROL LIGHTS strangely frozen at full beam... they all see it at the same time, Mac and Tiffany slow... but Erin and KJ stand-sprint towards it...

ERIN

Thank God.

They pull close only to see... The driver's side door is wide open...

Closer still. There's nobody inside... The CB radio dangles from its cord. STATIC and HUMS emitting through its tinny speakers --

Erin turns to the others, but before she can say anything --

MAC

C'mon, it's right up here!

Mac sprints ahead. The other girls fall in behind, pedaling harder as Erin glances back to the empty cop car, not so sure anywhere is safe right now...

INT. MAC'S HOUSE - PRE-DAWN

The girls run inside. Mac deadbolts the door behind them.

Everyone still trying to catch their breath. Erin takes a seat on the floor right by the door. She starts to take off her shoes.

MAC

What are you doing?

Erin stops, realizing that's just a custom in her house, and that now is no time for usual gestures.

ERIN

Nothing...

She pushes the soles of her sneakers back on and notices the rug she's sitting on is stained with years of grime. She gets up and self-consciously wipes off her jeans.

Tiffany flips the light switch. It does nothing.

TIFFANY

Still no power.

Tiffany opens her bag of papers and goes to sit on the couch, but stops -- it's covered with piles of laundry.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

(to Mac)

Clean or dirty?

MAC

Are you serious right now?

(to Erin)

Here. Sit.

Erin warily sits down on the couch. Mac grabs a random dirty white t-shirt from the pile. She RIPS it in half, taking a strip and quickly wrapping it around Erin's skinned knee. When she tightens the knot Erin winces.

MAC (CONT'D)

(shakes head)

Suck it up.

Mac stands, goes to an errant kitchen drawer, opens it. She pulls out a roll of duct tape, returns to Erin. SREEUUCH, pulls a strip loose, tears it with her teeth.

ERIN

Maybe the shirt is fine.

MAC

(tape in mouth)

It won't stay on when you run.

ERIN

We're not running...



MAC  
(eyes her)  
Good chance we might have to.

Mac finishes. Erin flexes her leg at the joint as Mac walks to the windows.

Tiffany pulls two plastic Eveready flashlights from her bag, tosses one to KJ, then one to Erin.

TIFFANY  
(to Erin)  
Try not to lose it.

Erin clicks it on, revealing the full picture of Mac's house in its beam: stained carpet littered with old pizza boxes and cigarette butts. This is not a happy home.

Erin looks to Mac with concern.

MAC  
(defensive)  
What?

Mac cautiously steps forward.

MAC (CONT'D)  
(calls out)  
Dylan...? Dad?

No answer. Mac picks up a pack of Camels from the deeply scratched coffee table.

ERIN  
Maybe they're at work?

MAC  
Nah, factory's not open yet and my brother couldn't get hired to dig a ditch...  
(re: cigarettes)  
This is weird... Even when he's three sheets to the wind, my Dad doesn't go anywhere without his smokes.

She pockets them for safekeeping.

TIFFANY  
Maybe everybody has already been evacuated? That's standard procedure when there's an attack.

ERIN  
(incredulous)  
That kind of "attack" would wipe  
the whole Earth off the map, right?

TIFFANY  
I wonder who had the guts to push  
the button first... Maybe Gorby was  
playing us the whole time--

MAC  
(to Tiff)  
Will you stop pretending this has  
happened before?!

TIFFANY  
Hello! Chernobyl? Three Mile  
Island? Hiroshima--

MAC  
*KNOCK IT OFF.*

Erin slowly starts down the hall, sweeping the first two  
bedrooms with the light:

A messy TEENAGE BOY'S room. Empty.

MASTER BEDROOM with only old magazines, empty bottles of Wild  
Turkey scattered about. Cluttered top of a chest of drawers,  
empty cigarette packs. No one's sleeping in the unmade bed.

Erin stops, spots KJ standing at the threshold of a LAST  
BEDROOM. Obviously Mac's. The beam of KJ's flashlight plays  
over walls covered in rock posters: Danzig. Iron Maiden.  
Megadeth...

Erin joins her, eyes the poster. Trying to front again.

ERIN  
Cool... Megadeth...

KJ  
(also fronting)  
Yeah... They're so... awesome...

That sits there for a beat.

ERIN  
My mom would never let me put  
something like that on my wall.

KJ  
Mine, either. But more because of  
the thumbtacks...

ERIN

Sucks.

KJ

Totally.

They continue to stare at "Vic Rattlehead" -- Megadeth's terrifying welded skeleton mascot. After a beat:

ERIN

(still trying)

I snuck a Kirk Cameron one up in my closet though.

KJ

('what?')

Oh... cool.

Mac peers in from the hallway.

MAC

Get out of my room.

KJ and Erin turn to her, caught.

MAC (CONT'D)

Whatever. Not all of us get to live in a JC Penney catalog.

Mac shuts the door to her room. KJ wanting to explain she's not judging her, searching for the words but...

TIFFANY (O.S.)

Guys!

The girls run to Tiff in the LIVING ROOM. The WALKIE is now CRACKLING with static, a garbled voice leaking through --

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

What the heck language is this?

Tiffany turns up the volume. The girls huddle around to listen more closely. They clearly hear TWO MEN, speaking in a foreign language that's hard to place.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

It's Russian.

MAC

Come on...

ERIN

That's not funny.

TIFFANY

Think about it. That capsule we found?

(MORE)

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

NASA only uses shuttles these days.  
I bet it was Soviet technology.

KJ

'Cause you've seen so much Soviet  
technology.

TIFFANY

There has clearly been a nuclear  
event. You saw the sky same as I  
did. And that flash of light was  
probably just the first detonation.

ERIN

Mac, where's your phone?

MAC

In the kitchen, but--

Erin's already there. She grabs the receiver off the wall  
cradle. She doesn't even have to put it to her ear -- she can  
already hear the drone of the EMERGENCY BROADCAST SIGNAL on  
the other end.

She looks over to the scared faces of the other girls. They  
hear it too.

KJ

It could just be one of those  
tests.

TIFFANY

No way. An emergency broadcast  
sound means we have to evacuate.

MAC

Evacuate to where?

Nobody has that answer... so Erin makes a decision:

ERIN

I... I have to go home.

She starts towards the door.

MAC

Don't go back out there.

KJ

(hoping against hope)  
Maybe a dispatch truck will pick us  
up, like they did in last year's  
blizzard--

ERIN

I can't wait. My mom can't even go to the bank by herself... I *have* to get back there, *I need to be there for her*...

Erin unlocks the door and pushes it open. She cautiously peers outside. The sky still glows an ominous pink, but then -- THE UNMISTAKABLE SOUND OF GUNSHOTS -- maybe a block away --

Mac pulls Erin back inside and locks the door again.

ERIN (CONT'D)

Let me go.

MAC

Are you stupid? That's gunfire.

TIFFANY

KJ

Holy shit, it *is* an invasion! Oh my God...

MAC

(telling, not asking)

We all stay here.

(trying to convince self)

We'll be safe here.

Off the other girls wanting very badly to believe that...

Erin doesn't like it, but what choice does she have. She leans against a wall, folds her arms and sits heavily down.

Mac does the same, but keeps talking...

MAC (CONT'D)

Yeah we'll just... we'll wait... My brother will come back for sure.

A silence falls as each girl resigns herself to being here for a while. For a moment nobody says anything...

ERIN

Anybody hungry?

KJ

Kinda.

MAC

What do you got?

Erin pulls a full-size candy bar from her satchel.

TIFFANY

Whoa, where'd you get that?

Erin breaks off a piece and hands it to Tiff.

ERIN

We hand them out every year for Halloween.

KJ

Full-size?

ERIN

My mom's trying to make our neighbors like us...

(softly admits)

...our neighbors don't really like us.

Erin snaps off a couple more squares and pops them in her mouth, hands the bar to KJ.

KJ

Yeah, well... if it is some kind of invasion... at least I won't have to wear my stupid bat mitzvah dress next week.

TIFFANY

You really think we'll be stuck here a week?

MAC

What the hell is a bat mitzvah?

KJ

(shakes head)

Don't worry about it.

She breaks off a couple squares of chocolate, Mac notices.

MAC

(reaching for Hershey bar)

Don't Bogart the whole goddamn--

KJ

Think fast.

KJ tosses the candy bar. Mac smoothly catches it in one hand.

KJ (CONT'D)

Not bad. Nice reflexes.

Mac shrugs it off. She's not good with compliments. Suddenly a fresh BURBLE of excited language emanates from the walkie in Tiff's hand. Mac jumps, then embarrassed:

MAC

Christ, will you turn that down?

KJ

GUYS.

(pause)

Did you hear that?

She raises a finger to her lips. Tiffany silences the walkie and they all go quiet, listening as the DISTANT RUMBLE they heard earlier becomes distinct -- WHUP-WHUP-WHUP-WHUP. It's directly overhead.

TIFFANY

*(whispering)*

A helicopter?

-- POUND-POUND-POUND-POUND. This sound MUCH CLOSER.

MAC

What the hell is that?

KJ

That almost sounds like it's coming from inside the--

ALICE (O.S.)

Get out or I'll shoot! I swear to God I will!

The girls SHRIEK, startling physically back, Mac even falling to the ground before they turn to see:

ALICE (30s but looks much older) half-hides behind a hallway corner unsteadily waving a .38 PISTOL with one arm -- half-empty bottle of Rumpel Minze in the other...

MAC

ALICE, WHAT THE FUCK!

TIFFANY

You know her?!

ALICE

Watch your mouth, young lady...

ERIN

Ma'am, we're sorry, we had no idea you were even--

MAC

(regaining her feet)

Christ, Alice. They're with me. What are you doing?

Lot of deep breaths, as slowly, uncertainly, Alice lowers the gun, taking in the fact that the intruders are in fact four twelve-year-old girls.

ALICE (CONT'D)

I guess it doesn't matter. Whole world's ending...

She stares at the bottle in her hand. Too drunk to really focus.

MAC

Where's my dad?

ALICE

Gone. Vanished. Right into thin air.

KJ

Just like Wally Bund.

ALICE

You know it's all cause of Dukakis and those people... now we're all living through that Bible thing that predicted this.

ERIN

You mean the rapture?

TIFFANY

(very serious)

It's the Soviets.

ALICE

Jesus, you think you know everything at your age. But you'll see. The older you get... the more it all just turns to shit...

MAC

Come on, Alice, you've had too much to drink...

But then, Alice presses the barrel of the .38 against her temple.

MAC (CONT'D)

Whoa, whoa, whoa--

ERIN

Oh my god!

MAC (CONT'D)

(legit scared)

Alice... Please. Don't...

... WHUP-WHUP-WHUP-WHUP, that same noise RETURNING--

ALICE

You'll understand.

MAC (CONT'D)

*DON'T!*



Mac lunges. She grabs Alice by the wrist --

There's a BLINDING FLASH OF PINK LIGHT -- BANG!

It's dark again. The strange sound above moves off. It's eerily quiet.

Mac stands. She's holding the .38 in her hand.

MAC (CONT'D)  
(breathing hard)  
Alice?

But there's no response. KJ's flashlight beam sweeps to where Alice last was...

MAC (CONT'D)  
(fear rising)  
Where did she go?

TIFFANY  
She was right there...

KJ  
Is anybody hurt?

The sound's still ringing in Erin's ears. She looks around. Everybody seems okay...

ERIN  
It's a miracle...

...and she stops, registering the girls are staring at her with fear and concern... she looks down to see a growing stain of blood spreading across her stomach...

ERIN (CONT'D)  
Oh...

She drops to the ground, rolling onto her back in a growing pool of her own blood...

KJ drops to her knees at Erin's side, trying to stop the bleeding, hands turning red as she applies pressure.

MAC  
Erin! Erin! Oh god, I'm sorry! I'm so  
sorry...

...Mac's voice grows distant, fading, as we --

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE TO:

INT. COYLE STATION WAGON - MOMENTS LATER

ERIN'S POV: Weird, surreal, dreamlike. We're looking up at a ceiling. KJ appears, gazing down at us. Image weaving. Sound strange, distant:

KJ

Hey. Erin. Erin, stay with us...

REVERSE ANGLE

Erin lies with her head in KJ's lap in the backseat, and everything goes normal. Image. Sound. The hallucinatory quality is gone.

Erin smiles. Weakly:

ERIN

Are we going to my house now?

KJ

We're going to the hospital.

ERIN

(more confused)

Who's driving?

KJ

Tiffany.

Erin eases a look to the side. She can just see Tiffany behind the wheel. She's seated on her stuffed satchel of papers for added height, driving as fast as she dares.

She white-knuckles the wheel, squinting at the road ahead, trying to concentrate...

ERIN

I... I have to get home...

KJ

(hoping it's true)

You're gonna get home.

Erin relaxes a little, grateful for the kindness.

Mac is seated shotgun next to Tiff, her affect a tad manic, eyes a bit unfocused.

KJ (CONT'D)

(calls over to Tiff)

Are we close?

TIFFANY

I think so --

MAC

Can't you drive any faster?

TIFFANY

I'm trying. My mom only let me drive once in a parking lot.

MAC

(glances back to Erin)  
She's going to be okay. I mean,  
it's not like I did it on purpose,  
you guys know that, right?

The car jerks as Tiffany hits the gas with an unsteady foot.  
Erin groans in pain.

TIFFANY

(to KJ, in rearview)  
How's she doing?

KJ fixes Tiff with a "this is fucked" look but instead says:

KJ

(for Erin's benefit)  
Hanging in there.

Erin's eyelids flutter. She's drifting off...

KJ (CONT'D)

Hey, hey, hey... you gotta stay  
awake, if you fall asleep you won't  
be able to watch Kirk Cameron...

ERIN

...Growing Pains... I like that  
show...

KJ

Sure, how's the song for that one  
go?

Nothing from Erin...

KJ (CONT'D)

Come on, I need you to help me...

ERIN

(half-heartedly sings)  
*Show me that smile again...*

KJ  
Awesome, there you go. What else?

ERIN  
(feeble)  
...don't waste... another minute  
on... your cryin'...

KJ  
We're nowhere (doesn't know words)  
da-duh-dummm... What's next?

Mac suddenly joins:

MAC  
We're nowhere near the end...

ERIN  
(very weak)  
As long as we have each other...

Erin's eyelids flutter.

KJ  
Hey, hey, hey...

ERIN CLOSES HER EYES. There's suddenly a BURST OF STATIC from Tiffany's walkie, garbled voices --

MAC (O.S.)  
BRAKE! BRAKE!

A SCREECH of tires as the car comes to a sudden and violent halt in the middle of the road.

TIFFANY  
(catching breath)  
Oh my god, I almost hit him--

MAC (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
What is this guy doing?!

Erin opens her eyes. Her breath labored. She moans as she struggles to sit up --

TIFFANY (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Maybe he can help us...

ANGLE THROUGH WINDSHIELD: as a figure steps forward in the headlights. A BALD AND POWERFULLY BUILT AFRICAN AMERICAN MAN IN FUTURISTIC BODY ARMOR. He holds a SIX-FOOT STAFF that pulses with a faint RED GLOW...

Erin hears the car door open as Tiffany steps out.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

Sir, this is an emergency. We need  
to get--

MAN

**No-know how you lurked so  
long, but it be end credits  
for de lot. Grandfather will  
punish you all for your  
transgresses--**

MAC (O.S.)

(beat)  
What the fuck is he saying?

But Tiffany holds her ground.

TIFFANY

Please, I don't understand. This  
girl is really hurt. We need --

MAN

**Hold. R ye locals?**

TIFFANY

Um, we live in Stony Stream... if  
that's what you mean?

He lowers his glowing staff at Tiffany.

MAN

**You won't remember a thing.**

MAC

Get out of there, Tiff!

-- ZAP -- ZAP -- ZAP -- Without warning, the MAN'S armor is  
pierced by three discrete LASER SHOTS. He crumples instantly  
into the road. Tiffany and the girls in the car REACT WITH  
HORROR, SCREAMING, eyes searching everywhere in the dark for  
the shooter...

TIFFANY

Oh my god, oh my god, oh my  
god--

MAC (CONT'D)

Get back in the car!

And then Erin sees them, the HOODED FIGURES that stole their  
walkie earlier. They have their bizarre pistols out and have  
obviously just shot Tiffany's attacker.

KJ

Mac, lock the doors!

Erin drops back. Wheezing in pain. Too late -- She hears the  
back door open.

MAC

Stop it! Hey, leave her  
alone!

KJ (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Hey, HEY! Get your hands off  
of her. No. Where are you  
taking her?

ERIN'S POV: as two HOODED FIGURES -- heavily scarred but YOUNG FACES -- stare down at her. She's shocked at how young they really are -- Fifteen? Maybe sixteen?

They pull her out of the car, lifting her up. Erin sees they are taking her towards... the SPACE CAPSULE! Somehow miraculously transported here and concealed just within the treeline...

Receding, behind her, Erin can hear Tiff, KJ, and Mac giving chase -- *"Come back here!"* -- *"Don't hurt her!"* -- *"Please, leave her alone!"* --

There's a CRACKLE OF STATIC from the walkie they stole from Tiff tucked into their belt --

A CRACKLE of STATIC ELECTRICITY shorts out the walkie and that familiar HUM returns.

Erin looks up, sees the air above begins to RIPPLE like it did before, but it's not stopping... the ripples forming into a 3-D hexagonal shape that resembles something she's seen somewhere before...

ERIN  
(delirious)  
It's a fortune teller.

...and there's that HUM again as she's carried INTO THE CAPSULE.

She takes one last glance back as the girls PILE IN behind, still trying to free her... then lets her eyes droop closed...

OVER BLACK: ...the HUM, which has been a steady drone suddenly DROPS OUT...

...just a HIGH ELECTRIC WHINE left in the negative space... Like you're sitting in your house and your ears pop... Erin sighs one last time, then slips from consciousness...

CUT TO:

INT. SPACE CAPSULE - DARK

TIGHT ON ERIN. She lies on her back. A BRIGHT LIGHT shines down on her -- obscuring all but the faintest edges of what we're seeing.

TIFFANY (O.S.)  
This girl is going to die! We have to get her to a hospital!

HOODED FIGURE 1 (O.S.)  
(metallic English / weird  
language)  
*DWAIB! --BLOOD!-- WAIBEEBHMQU!*

VOICES rapidly speak that strange language we heard through the walkie. FRANTIC MOVEMENT in the light. The sounds still strange, distant. THEN:

MAC (O.S.)  
What the hell are they putting on her? Are those fuckin' crickets?!

TIFFANY (O.S.)  
I don't know, I don't know--

Missy, Erin's eight-year-old sister, appears at Erin's bedside, leans over her. She holds out a kid's FORTUNE TELLER made of wide-ruled notebook paper.

MISSY  
Do you want to know your future?

The next face that appears above Erin's bedside however is unmistakably that of RONALD REAGAN.

REAGAN  
Hey there, kiddo.

ERIN  
Are we dead?

REAGAN  
No, it's like Dad said.

Reagan pulls open his suit coat to reveal DARK BLOOD spreading across his white dress shirt--

REAGAN (CONT'D)  
Not everyone who gets shot dies.  
(gestures to Missy's  
fortune teller)  
You better pick a number between  
one and four.

KJ (O.S.)  
Hey! LET US OUT OF HERE! HEY!

Missy nods as though Erin has chosen, begins to work the action of the fortune teller with her fingers.

MISSY  
1 -- 2 -- 3 -- 4.

Missy folds back one of the fortune teller's paper flaps, reads what it says, GIGGLES to herself.

MISSY (CONT'D)  
(can you believe it?)  
It's blank. Erin, you have no future...

REAGAN  
(recites his own quote)  
The future doesn't belong to the faint hearted -- it belongs to the brave.

ANGLE WIDENS... Hooded Figure 2 (NALDO) grabs onto the console with two hands --

NALDO  
*HMAHG! --HERE!--*

Reagan, Missy, KJ, Mac and Tiffany looking over as -- Hooded Figure 1 (HECK) is the only one who understands the message, grabs a support, braces as--

CUT TO BLACK.

--JARRING THUD in darkness before we--

KJ (V.O.)  
Try to hold onto me, Erin.

--SNAP BACK INTO ERIN'S POV-- normal sound returning as she sees Mac, KJ above her, physically lifting her out of the confining dark space -- Erin WINCING in pain --

EXT. FOREST CLEARING - PRE-DAWN

The capsule rests in a wooded clearing, a location that is immediately visually distinct from the thicket of trees where we last saw it. The light is hard to read, could equally be dawn or gloaming --

Capsule's hatch opens, articulating downward as first Tiffany then Mac and KJ spill out, each bracing Erin (shirt bloody, body limp...) under one arm.

IN THE DOORWAY BEHIND THEM: Heck, calm in bearing and tone.

HECK  
*Eeyowl zahvb.*  
(metallic English, very staticky)  
*--Okay.-- --Okay.--*



He tries to adjust what appears to be a BROKEN RADIO TRANSLATOR hanging around his throat in an attempt to impart something in patient but ultimately alien language... in this light, he seems less terrifying... less hostile... surprisingly young...

But the girls are still too adrenalized to listen, especially as they begin to realize...

MAC  
Where the hell are we?

HECK  
*Vbowlтчgk. --No--Enemy.--*

KJ spots something in the distance: A WATER TOWER.

KJ  
But we were on the complete other side of town...

Meanwhile, Tiffany, crouched down next to Erin --

TIFFANY  
Guys, she's waking up!

Naldo now emerges beside his partner.

NALDO  
--Take you-- --home--

MAC  
Um, we're good thanks!

The figures begin to approach the girls.

KJ  
Hey! Leave us alone or I swear--

TIFFANY  
Back off. What is wrong with you alien dicks?

And Erin's eyes are indeed fluttering open, her color is better, she's coming out of it -- Heck gestures, indicating himself and his companion, Naldo.

HECK  
(nods)  
*Urfyuzawq Keebz. --Not alien.--*

KJ  
What the hell are you?

HECK

*Like--you...*

KJ takes in these two young guys with battered faces.

KJ

You are not like me.

The hooded figures takes another step toward them as if to explain but--CRACK--CRACK--CRACK--

HECK

*Eeyovz. Keebyuz oolz.*

(gestures to follow)

*--Keep-- --Move.-- --Move.--*

NALDO

(static)

*--ENEMY!--*

-- PROJECTILES pock the side of the capsule -- one of them punching through Heck's skull, crumpling him neatly to the ground --

-- Naldo able to get only three intelligible words out of his battered translator:

NALDO (CONT'D)

*VBOOLK! Old Watch-- --RUN!--*

He DIVES from the capsule, already SHOOTING HIS STRANGE LASER PISTOL into the trees beyond as -- MORE TRACERS arc in from unseen SHOOTERS -- some kind of FIRE-FIGHT... an AMBUSH --

ERIN veers AWAY, making it out of the trees just as --

**ANOTHER EXPLOSION** in front of Erin lays her on her back... taking her breath away...

It's suddenly quiet. Serene. She looks up, in awe of the vast sky above.

She reaches up to it, as if to touch the twinkling cosmos, when something strange happens: the tip of her actual finger touches one of the stars.

The glowing orb moves down her hand. The realization quickly dawns -- it's just a LIGHTNING BUG.

She watches it crawl across her palm. She notices its movements are stiff, uncanny. God knows what happened to it. Maybe it's hurt.

But. No. She's starting to register it now:

It's some kind of mechanical insect. A robot.

She stands. Her injured knee no longer stiff and hurting. Heart racing. She lifts up her shirt. Her bloody stomach is crawling with those strange, robotic insects. She frantically swipes at them. Get off --

She closes her eyes.

ERIN  
(softly to herself)  
This can't be real. This can't be  
real...

BAM! An EXPLOSION shakes the ground, THROWING Erin back. She looks up -- the sky above now glows an unnatural pink. Erin struggles to stand.

ERIN (CONT'D)  
(grunts in pain)  
Oh god, this is real.

She grasps onto a nearby tree. Leans against it for support. Halfway to her feet...

SCREECH OF TIRES and the ROAR of an approaching ENGINE --

She looks up -- HEADLIGHTS barrel towards her through UNDERBRUSH -- She catches a glimpse of a RED PICKUP TRUCK --

She TUMBLES BACK down an incline -- Truck speeds out of sight...

Naldo appears above her, yanks her to her feet, waving for her to follow him to safety --

ERIN (CONT'D)  
Who are you?

NALDO  
(lots of static)  
--Here.-- --Okay.--

He runs ahead. She runs after him into the trees -- a hasty, stumbling retreat -- Erin sees KJ, Mac running the same way --

KJ  
You're alive!

MAC  
How are you... how are you  
standing?

Erin peeks underneath her blood stained shirt to find -- no more robotic bugs. No blood. Just her belly button. She lets out a sigh of relief...

Another EXPLOSION rocks the ground under their feet. Tiffany appears from their blind side --

TIFFANY

Keep moving!

Erin doesn't need to be told twice, leads them deeper into the woods.

KJ

We're somehow in Meadowbranch...  
near the water tower--

ERIN

I know. I recognize it. My house  
isn't far. We can get there through  
the woods and contact the army or  
something.

Naldo pivots to return fire, perhaps to cover the girls as they run, but as he does -- HE'S HIT IN THE CHEST -- falls back, body landing hard... Tiffany goes to him --

Blood on his lips, he reaches into his garment and extracts a small, hand-size black metallic rectangle... futuristic but also hodge-podge. The corner of a glass face is cracked, the metal is nicked, scuffed, covered in rust and grime --

He extends the device to Tiffany, imploring her to take it... almost like he KNOWS her.

NALDO

(tons of static)  
*Swrneebs. Tchahk.--*  
(breathless nodding)  
*--Then.-- --Kids.-- --Okay.-- --*  
*Okay.-- --Kids.--*  
(he's dying)  
*--Underground.-- --Go to-- Home.--*

TIFFANY

I think I understand...

He forces the device into her hands. She's about to ask what it is and what it does, but --

KJ

Tiff, we've gotta go!

KJ helps Tiffany to her feet. Erin holds back --

ERIN

We can't just leave him!

He waves them on, beseeching them to do just that -- gestures as if to say "THEY'RE COMING" --

LASER FIRE erupts on all sides. With no other choice, the girls SPRINT ON for another twenty yards before THROWING THEMSELVES into a shallow depression in the underbrush --

SOUNDS OF MORE LASER FIRE, Naldo covering their retreat as -- The girls duck down, covering each other in the dirt as...

It grows frighteningly quiet. The girls steal glances back toward Naldo as...

A WOMAN IN ARMOR walks out of the trees, leading a small platoon of similarly adorned soldiers. She easily avoids a final SHOT from Naldo's weapon, before knocking it from his hand.

She presses the barrel of her own gun against Naldo's head....

The girls DUCK BACK DOWN... they HEAR THE SHOT, even if they don't see it... and when they chance a look back... the Armored Woman is addressing the others.

WOMAN IN ARMOR

**Tell Grandfather it B over...**

Dragging Naldo's corpse with them, the Armored patrol heads back toward the direction of the capsule. The girls wait until they are out of view, then SPRINT ON --

EXT. WOODS - MOMENTS LATER

LIGHTER now. The girls' pace slows to a stop. They heave for breath as they nervously look around, taking in their surroundings, still hyper-alert.

ERIN

They... they *murdered* them... They were just--

TIFFANY

Teenagers.

Wow. It's true. Those hooded figures were only a few years older than these girls. That lands on them heavily. Then:

ERIN

They saved our lives.

MAC

Wait, how the hell are you not  
(dead)?

Erin again pulls up her shirt to check her stomach, relieved to see it has still miraculously been healed. The other girls take this in.

KJ

That's not possible...

Erin pulls up her pant leg -- her knee is healed too.

TIFFANY

Those bug-robot things...

Mac starts to reach out to touch her healed belly, but thinks better of it and pats Erin on the back.

ERIN

(realizing)  
They healed me.

They all fall silent, rapidly running out of explanations for whatever the hell is going on.

KJ

We've got to find help.

MAC

Who's going to help us?

TIFFANY

What if the whole town is  
under attack?

ERIN

What if everyone else is...  
dead...?

-- SNAP OF A BRANCH -- whips them around to see a MAN covered in futuristic white armor approach.

MAN

**U don't move!**

They stay still, eyeing the long, glowing staff in his hand. This man, too, is bald, just like the one we saw laser-blasted to death in the road earlier.

The girls are trapped. Nowhere to run. This is it. They all vibrate with sheer terror.

ERIN

Don't shoot. Please, please,  
please don't, please--

TIFFANY

We're not soldiers, I swear,  
we're not part of your fight--

MAC  
(shaking voice)  
C'mon, man... c'mon... please.

He considers all of them... huddling, sniffing, trying not to cry, hands up... BUT THEN HE STILL AIMS HIS STAFF --

TIFFANY  
(holds up device)  
Hey, HEY, is it this? Is this what you're after? Here--

The man looks at the device. Lowers his staff and moves to take it when--

--KJ SCREAMS, the scream of a cornered animal. She unsheathes her hockey stick from her satchel, brandishing it like a club--

MAC  
**KJ!**

**SHE DEFENSIVELY BRINGS THE TOE OF THE BLADE DOWN ON HIS HEAD.**

The armored man crumples to the ground in a sickening heap. KJ stands over him with her field hockey stick, trying to process what has just happened-- THE MAN LIES PERFECTLY STILL--

The other girls run up from behind, pulling KJ back--

MAC (CONT'D)  
(catching breath)  
Jesus, KJ...

Tiffany stares at the body. Doesn't breathe. Can't really.

Erin's mouth hangs open as she sees the tremendous amount of blood. It's like her brain can't even begin to process it.

KJ drops her stick, her breath coming in hard and fast. She bends over, trying not to throw up. The adrenaline rush wearing away as the realization begins to hit --

KJ  
Is he...?

Mac eyes the growing pool of blood around his head. She turns away, unable to look anymore.

MAC  
I... I don't know.

TIFFANY  
You think there's more of them coming for us?

The girls look around. It's eerily quiet. Unsettling. They all arrive at the same conclusion instantaneously and break into a sprint... Only KJ holds back a moment.

MAC

KJ!

ERIN

(highly emotional)

My house is just up ahead, we'll call for help there...

Then KJ takes off running... leaving her field hockey stick discarded on the ground...

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Erin and the girls emerge from the woods into their middle-class housing development. The back of her house coming into view... inside it the end of a very long morning.

EXT. BACKYARD, ERIN'S HOUSE - DAY

Erin jumps down from the fence. She runs up the few steps to the backdoor. The other girls close behind.

Erin twists the door handle, ready to fling the door open, but it won't budge. It's locked. That's strange.

Unsettled, she makes her way along the side of the house. The girls follow...

Erin slowly unlocks the front door with the key she keeps on a shoelace around her neck. Pushes it open.

INT. ERIN'S HOUSE - DAY

Erin gives the entryway a cursory glance. Seems normal. She sits on the floor and takes off her shoes. The other girls following Erin's lead, remove their shoes too.

ERIN

*Mom? Missy? Mom!*

Mac checks the light switch by the door.

MAC

Power's back.

TIFFANY

Thank god.



Erin's quickly on her feet, runs into the living room.

WOMAN (O.S.) ERIN  
*Who's there?* Mom! Missy!

WOMAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
I'm calling the cops...

ERIN  
Mom--

An ASIAN-AMERICAN MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN in a ratty bathrobe comes down the stairs, defensively holding up an old curtain rod for protection.

MAC  
That your mom?

ERIN  
No...

WOMAN  
What are you doing in here!?

ERIN  
I live here.

WOMAN  
I live here. What, are you guys on drugs or something? I don't have any money...

But the woman calms as she realizes the girls are just kids.

WOMAN (CONT'D)  
What the hell is going on?

ERIN  
Where's my mom?

Tiffany spots a series of FAMILY PHOTOS on the wall. Each one with a slightly older Erin...

WOMAN  
This isn't funny, I mean it...

ERIN  
Where's Missy?

The woman turns to Erin when she hears that name. A glint of recognition in her eye as she looks at this young girl.

WOMAN  
Who are you?

ERIN  
Who are you?

MAC  
Who's Missy?

Tiffany nudges Erin, pointing out the photos... Erin looks at them, then to the woman before her. The realization hitting hard. This woman is ADULT ERIN.

ADULT ERIN  
No. This is not real. This  
can't be real.

ERIN  
No way. This can't be real.  
This can't be real.

TIFFANY  
We got back to the fucking  
futures...

ERIN  
(recalls softly to  
herself)  
The future belongs to the brave.

Mac steps out from behind the couch and looks out the window.

MAC  
(re: view)  
Doesn't look different...

KJ  
Wait... When is this?

ADULT ERIN  
What do you mean "when?"

ERIN  
What's your name, can you  
tell me your name, please??

KJ  
Is this some kind of-- Did we jump  
forward... or is it still -- 1988?  
(frantic)  
When the hell is this?

ADULT ERIN  
1988...?  
(tries to convince  
herself)  
This... what's happening...

ERIN  
(slowly comes closer)  
What... is... your... name?

The Erins stare at each other for a long moment.

ADULT ERIN  
It's... Erin... Erin Tieng...  
(pause)  
(MORE)

ADULT ERIN (CONT'D)

Who... who are you?  
(dreading the answer)  
Holy shit.

Adult Erin runs out of the room.

A pensive silence as the frightening realization hits the FOUR GIRLS -- They're just kids, now trapped in this unthinkable future.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

THAT SAME ARMORED WOMAN -- a top lieutenant of some kind that we will come to know as PRIORESS -- searches the area with a weapon-like staff. A SOLDIER of lesser rank close behind. She stops. The other soldier does the same.

It is deeply silent here. All we hear is the breeze through the trees.

She motions the other soldier to hold back. She starts to walk. Notices something on the ground. She defensively raises her staff. The other soldier now taking position behind.

She approaches, sees the man in armor on the ground. Takes in the growing pool of blood around his head.

SOLDIER

Thy enemy is slaughtered. Who  
commit dis?

She kneels, checks his pulse, hoping against hope and confirms what she already knows. Her icy exterior gives way to tear-filled eyes. This man was not a stranger.

She grasps the man's hand tightly and holds it...

PRIORESS

(under breath, English)  
In this time you fall, here you  
rest, for all infinity.

She lets go, gently caresses his cheek, getting streaks of blood on her. She wills herself to stand and stares at the wet redness running like thick watercolor...

SOLDIER

What update for Grandfather?

PRIORESS

None.

SOLDIER  
But dis casualty--

PRIORESS  
(over shoulder, sharp)  
None.  
(soldier flinches)  
It. B. Over.

The Soldier nods in understanding and heads back. Prioress turns away from her fallen comrade to follow, spotting something on the ground nearby...

She picks up what we'll recognize as KJ's FIELD HOCKEY STICK.

The blade covered in her companion's blood. The name "KJ BRANDMAN" carved into its side.

Prioress looks around to make sure no one else is looking, then tucks the stick under her arm, and starts down the path towards Stony Stream to find its owner.

CUT TO BLACK.

END EPISODE