

NIGHT OF THE LIVING DECORATIONS

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FADE IN:

EXT. BARKER CREEK ELEMENTARY - DAY

Yellow, orange, and brown leaves fall through the crisp air along a small town street reminiscent of Upstate New York.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL-AGED KIDS in a myriad of Halloween costumes traipse along the sidewalk towards the school's entrance, shout excitedly at one another as they compare outfits.

RONNIE (11), wears braided pigtails and a determined air, but no costume. Next to her, in a Pennywise costume, is her little sister, ISLA (7).

Isla lags a couple steps behind Ronnie, pretends like she is about to pounce on her. Ronnie, without turning around, senses the attack.

RONNIE
Knock it off, Isla.

ISLA
Aw, you're no fun.

Isla kicks at the ground, catches up with Ronnie, makes faces at her. Ronnie stares straight ahead.

RONNIE
I can't believe Mom let you wear that.

ISLA
I can, 'cause she's cool, unlike you. And she knows how much I want to win the costume contest.

A group of kids run by - an ELVIS (8), a FRANKENSTEIN, and a TRANSFORMER.

ELVIS
That costume rocks, Isla!

He strums a fake guitar that hangs from his neck.

ISLA
(to Ronnie)
See?
(yells out)
I love you, Elvis!

More kids rush past as Ronnie and Isla reach the front gate.

In the drop off lane, NEVIL (11) - Indian, thin, tall for his age - struggles to extricate himself from the back of a Mercedes-Benz eSprinter.

He wears a costume that looks like an enormous clear beach ball with light pulses in all the colors of the rainbow coursing through it.

Two BIGGER KIDS (12) in Dumb and Dumber costumes rush up on either side of Nevil, body slam him. Nevil ricochets helplessly between them.

BIGGER KIDS
New kid! New kid! New kid!

They laugh, run off. Nevil steadies himself, gives them a "you jokesters" wave.

NEVIL
Ha ha, good one, guys!

He spots Ronnie, hobbles to catch up to her.

NEVIL (CONT'D)
Hi, Ronnie.

RONNIE
Oh hi, Nevil.

NEVIL
Where's your costume?

ISLA
She doesn't participate in Halloween.

NEVIL
Why not?

ISLA
She peed her pants in the haunted house in fir--

Ronnie gives Isla a shove in the opposite direction.

RONNIE
K, bye.

Isla shouts as she skips off:

ISLA
First grade!

A group of MEAN GIRLS classmates, all dressed as Barbie, overhear and chant:

MEAN GIRLS

Ronnie Vance peed her pants, Ronnie
Vance peed her pants!

The girls laugh hysterically, dart off. Ronnie sighs.

RONNIE

Do you have brothers and sisters,
Nevil?

NEVIL

No, I'm a single.

RONNIE

You have no idea how lucky you are.

Ronnie takes in Nevil's costume.

RONNIE (CONT'D)

What are you supposed to be?

NEVIL

The God Particle. Isn't it obvious?

RONNIE

Um, no.

A GROUP OF FIFTH GRADE BOYS in Squid Game jumpsuits, including TREVOR (11) - the most popular boy in school - rush up behind them, knock Nevil over and roll him past the office into the school yard.

RONNIE (CONT'D)

Hey! Stop that!

Ronnie tries to stop them, pulls on Trevor's arm. He shakes her off, then sees who it is and gets real close.

TREVOR

Hey Ronnie, wanna go on a date with
me?

The other boys continue to roll Nevil around. Ronnie gives Trevor a suspicious look.

RONNIE

You're asking me?

TREVOR

Yeah. I thought we could go to the
Haunted House. I hope you wore your
Depends.

The group cracks up, a couple of the boys spin Nevil around.

NEVIL

Ahhhh!

A TEACHER appears, blows her WHISTLE furiously in staccato
bursts. The boys scatter.

Ronnie looks at the large digital clock mounted outside the
office.

RONNIE

(to herself)

I just have to make it for sixteen
hours and three minutes more, and
then it'll all be over.

Nevil, stuck on his side, rocks slowly back and forth.

NEVIL

A little help, please...

INT. BARKER CREEK ELEMENTARY - HAUNTED HOUSE - DAY

Utilizing a large mobile classroom, the layout winds through
separate rooms of a house - entrance, living room, kitchen,
dining room, and bedroom at the end.

GASPS and SCREAMS from startled kids throughout punctuate the
SPOOKY MUSIC.

In the "kitchen" area, Trevor and his gang jump out from
behind a row of skeletons with aprons and chef's hats, scare
a TRIO OF FIRST GRADERS, who scream in terror.

One first grader, dressed as a NINJA, bursts into tears.
Trevor gets in his face.

TREVOR

Aw, do you want your Mommy, little
Ninja boy?

The Ninja nods.

TREVOR (CONT'D)

Too bad!
(makes claws with his
hands)
Rah!

The Ninja SCREAMS, runs off. Trevor and his gang laugh.

TREVOR (CONT'D)

It's just too easy.

They walk on to the last section, the bedroom. A grim reaper stands next to a bed.

A fake fire crackles in the fireplace. Above the mantle hangs a haunted changing mirror that turns one's reflection to a horned devil. The boys jostle each other for a turn.

On the mantle sit two IDOLS, one stone and one marble, each about a foot tall. They appear quite old and valuable, out of place compared to all the cheap plastic Halloween decorations throughout the rest of the attraction.

The MARBLE IDOL is a beautiful woman with flowing robes and hair. Her eyes are covered with squares of gold. She wears a crown of candles, holds a flamed torch.

The other IDOL is demon-like; half-man, half hideous beast, with long horns and cloven hooves, claws and fangs. Its eyes appear to be inlaid rubies; they light up when Trevor gets close.

A GROUP OF THIRD GRADERS runs past screaming and laughing, pushes through the exit door.

Trevor notices the demon IDOL, steps closer to it. Its eyes pulse with red beams. Trevor looks around, swipes the idol, and tucks it inside his jumpsuit. He gives his friends the "shh" sign, motions towards the exit.

EXT. BARKER CREEK ELEMENTARY - YARD - DAY

PRINCIPAL CANTRELL - 50s, disgruntled look about him - uses a megaphone to announce the start of the costume contest from a dais on the edge of the blacktop.

Dozens of costumed kids, including Isla and Nevil, make their way to judging area. Trevor and his friends pop out of the haunted house.

EXT. BARKER CREEK ELEMENTARY - CLASSROOMS - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Trevor leads his gang to the fifth grade classrooms where backpacks line the outside walls. He spots a yellow backpack adorned with white daises and a tag emblazoned with "Ronnie" in fancy cursive.

Trevor unzips the top of the backpack, takes the idol out of his jumpsuit and slips it inside the pack. His friends laugh as he zips the pack closed. MARCUS (11), claps Trevor on the back.

MARCUS

Epic, dude.

They run back to the yard.

EXT. BARKER CREEK ELEMENTARY - YARD - DAY

Costumed kids parade past the judging table, in order of grade.

Ronnie sits on the edge of a cement planter as far away as she can get. She spots a BEETLE flipped over on its back, its legs wave helplessly. She locates a small twig, turns it gently over.

RONNIE

There you go.

The insect scurries away into the dirt.

Principal Cantrell announces the winners for each class, passes out awards. Isla excitedly claims her trophy.

Trevor and his gang win the fifth-grade prize, whoop loudly, jump up and down. Disappointed, Nevil extends his hand to Trevor to be a good sport.

NEVIL

Excellent win, well-deserved.

The group responds by picking him up and body surfing him, his arms and legs wave just like the beetle's.

Ronnie marches towards them.

MARCUS

(in a high-pitched voice)
Help me! Help me!

TREVOR

I've fallen and I can't get up!

RONNIE
Put him down!

TREVOR
Uh oh, new kid. Looks like your
little girlfriend's here to protect
you.

RONNIE
You're just a bunch of bullies. And
your costumes have no imagination,
you didn't deserve to win.

TREVOR
What do you know, tool. You're too
scared to even wear a costume.
You're afraid the ghosts and
goblins are going to get you.

He circles around her, pretends to be a ghost.

TREVOR (CONT'D)
Oooo...oooo...oooo!

Ronnie gets right in his face.

RONNIE
I may be afraid of ghosts, but I'm
not afraid of you.

MARCUS
(sarcastic)
Whoa, you better watch out, Trevor.

The final BELL rings, all the students YELL in excitement.
The boys drop Nevil, run for the gate. Nevil bounces off the
asphalt.

Ronnie steadies Nevil, helps him to his feet.

NEVIL
Thanks.

They head towards their classroom.

RONNIE
Are you okay?

NEVIL
Well, I'm a little disappointed at
the contest results. How could I
not win? It's clearly rigged.

RONNIE

It's just a popularity contest.
Your costume's really good, even if
nobody knows what it is.

EXT. BARKER CREEK ELEMENTARY - CLASSROOMS - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Ronnie and Nevil reach their room. Ronnie locates her yellow backpack, swings it over her shoulder.

RONNIE

I gotta go get my sister. See 'ya,
Nevil.

He waves.

NEVIL

Bye. Thanks for your help.

She smiles at him over her shoulder, waves back.

RONNIE

Any time.

EXT. ELMBROOK STREET - DAY

Ronnie and Isla walk home. Isla dances around with her trophy, thrusts it in Ronnie's face.

ISLA

Did you see, did you see, did you
see?

RONNIE

Would you like to live to see third
grade?

They reach the SCARY HOUSE on the corner, made to look like a dungeon. It is the most frightening house on the block, the kind kids dare each other to go up to, each decoration more gory than the last.

Ronnie squeezes her eyes shut tight as they pass, her BACKPACK GLOWS RED, unseen by the girls.

A MOTION-ACTIVATED ROTTING CORPSE jumps out at them. Ronnie startles, walks faster to get away. The RED GLOW FADES from her backpack.

Isla pretends to attack the corpse, then hurries to catch up with Ronnie.

ISLA
 I can't believe my older sister is
 more afraid than I am.
 (sings)
 Ronnie is a fraidy-cat, Ronnie is a
 fraidy-cat...

INT. RONNIE'S HOUSE - LIVING AREA - DAY

Ronnie comes in the front door, pushes it hard to close on Isla. Isla catches it before it slams in her face, continues to sing:

ISLA
 Ronnie is a fraidy-cat--

Their mother, CHERYL (mid 40s), yells from the kitchen:

CHERYL (O.S.)
 Isla!

ISLA
 Aw, you always take her side!

RONNIE
 That's because you're always
 annoying.

Cheryl, a soccer mom who actually plays soccer herself, enters with a large candy jar shaped like a jack-o-lantern, minus its top.

CHERYL
 Enough. Please.

Their dog, HERCULES, a scruffy terrier mix, bounds in the room, BARKS at Isla. Ronnie slips her backpack off her shoulder, crouches down to pet him.

RONNIE
 I know, I don't like her costume
 either.

Isla shakes her trophy.

ISLA
 Look Mom, I won!

Hercules continues to BARK.

CHERYL
 That's great, honey.
 Congratulations!

Dad BEN - mid 40s, dressed in gym clothes with a "Sutherland High School" logo - walks in the front door.

BEN
Congratulations for what?

ISLA
I won the second-grade costume
contest, look!

Isla shows Ben her trophy as her brother, 12 year-old QUINN, bursts down the stairs. Dressed as Ted Lasso, he yells out:

QUINN
Dad!

BEN
Quinn! How about a hello?

QUINN
Yeah--hey, Dad.

BEN
(to Cheryl)
I guess "hey" is as good as I get
these days.

Ben walks over to give Cheryl a kiss.

CHERYL
(shrugs)
He's twelve, Ben.

QUINN
(to Ben)
So, did you decide?

Ben looks at Cheryl.

BEN
Did we decide?

CHERYL
Well...

QUINN
Ah, come on! You guys are killin'
me!

BEN
You know my costume's not going to
make any sense without you...

QUINN

Dad, you're so embarrassing.
Please!

Dramatic pause.

CHERYL

All right. I suppose you can go out
tonight without a parent--

QUINN

(interjects)
Yes!

CHERYL

But you are to stick to our
neighborhood only. Dad will give
you his phone--

BEN

(interjects)
Do not lose it, or damage it, or
watch anything inappropriate on
it...

CHERYL

--and you are to check in with us
every thirty minutes, home by nine-
thirty, sharp. Understood?

BEN

And no pranks! I don't want to get
any calls from the neighbors.

QUINN

Yes, yes, yes, yes, and yes. Thanks
guys!

Quinn grabs a piece of candy from the jar in Cheryl's arms,
runs back up the stairs.

CHERYL

No candy before dinner!

BEN

(to Cheryl)
"Guys"?
(takes a piece of candy)
I know, I know, he's twelve. But I
don't have to be happy about it.

Cheryl grabs the candy from him, puts in back in the jar.

EXT. RONNIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The STREETLAMPS CLICK ON as the last bit of daylight fades. In contrast to all the other houses around them, Ronnie's only has smiling, happy, friendly-looking Halloween decorations.

Ronnie's grandmother, HARRIET (early 70s) - stylish hair and clothes, still moves with ease - exits her car in the drive.

Harriet waves to the next-door neighbor in his garage, DARREN (late 60s).

Darren's house is adorned with a handful of scary decorations - rubber snakes, a giant spider in a web, a few tombstones, a zombie holding its own head. Skeleton arms line the walkway.

Darren moves closer to greet Harriet.

HARRIET

Happy Halloween!

DARREN

Harriet, lovely to see you, as always. Taking the little ones out trick-or-treating tonight?

HARRIET

Oh no, I leave that to Cheryl and Ben. I'm staying in with Ronnie.

DARREN

Oh, right. She still doesn't--

Harriet shakes her head.

HARRIET

It's popcorn and T.V. for us.

DARREN

Well, you two ladies have a nice time. Remember, if you get scared, I'm right next door.

He tips his hat to her.

INT. RONNIE'S HOUSE - LIVING AREA - NIGHT

The candy jar rests on a small table near the front door. Harriet hangs her bag on the coat rack. Isla, in her Pennywise costume, rushes her.

ISLA
Grandma!

She wraps her arms around Harriet.

HARRIET
Oh gracious!

ISLA
Did I scare you?

HARRIET
You most certainly did.

ISLA
Well, I'm Pennywise, the dancing
clown.

Harriet feigns fear, hurries further into the living room to escape as Isla chases her.

Ben and Cheryl now wear costumes; Ben as Coach Beard and Cheryl as a large, red balloon. Except for Ronnie, they all prepare to depart for a night of trick-or-treating.

QUINN
Hi, Grandma!

Quinn gives Harriet a kiss on the cheek.

BEN
Grandma gets a hi, how come I
don't?

HARRIET
You can't compete with Grandma.

She slips Quinn a ten-dollar bill, gives him a conspiratorial smile.

QUINN
Thanks, Grandma!

BEN
I give up.

Ben gives Harriet a hug and a kiss.

BEN (CONT'D)
Hi, Mom. How are you?

HARRIET
Look at you all, what wonderful
costumes! Cheryl, what--

Isla grabs the string hanging around Cheryl's waist.

ISLA
She's my balloon!

Cheryl pretends like she's floating.

CHERYL
You might say she roped me into it.

BEN
Ronnie, are you sure you don't want to come with us? You could be my Ted Lasso since Quinn is deserting me.

RONNIE
Every year you ask me, Dad, and every year my answer is the same.

BEN
Okay, honey. I just don't want you to feel left out.

Ronnie makes a "duh" gesture.

RONNIE
Hello. I get Grandma all to myself for the evening.

BEN
She's got me beat, I guess.

He kisses Ronnie atop her head.

BEN (CONT'D)
Have fun.

They all head towards the front door.

CHERYL
Harriet, there's more candy in the pantry if you run low. Is there anything else you need before we go?

Harriet looks to Ronnie.

HARRIET
I think we're good. Us gals are just gonna hang out, make some popcorn and watch--

Ronnie clears her throat.

HARRIET (CONT'D)
--ah, some Fuller House.

QUINN
Bye, Grandma!

Quinn exits out the front door, followed by Isla and Ben.
Cheryl turns to Harriet and Ronnie.

ISLA (O.S.)
Come on, Mom!

CHERYL
That sounds great. Call if you need
us, love you!

She steps over the threshold.

EXT. RONNIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Cheryl waves good-bye to Harriet and Ronnie at the door as a
FOURSOME IN SCARY COSTUMES runs up the drive.

Ronnie sees them through the open door, immediately
disappears. Cheryl notices, sighs to Ben.

CHERYL
Do you think she'll ever get over
it?

Ben hands his phone to Quinn, who grabs it, takes off with
his friends.

BEN
Remember--

QUINN
I got it, Dad! Later!

BEN
(to Cheryl)
I hope so. We just have to give her
time.

ISLA
Everybody at school makes fun of
her because she won't go near the
haunted house. It's not even that
scary.

CHERYL
Well, I hope you're not one of the
kids making fun of her.

(MORE)

CHERYL (CONT'D)

You're sisters, you need to stick up for each other.

ISLA

Oh, all right. I'll stop. Can we go scare some little kids now?

INT. RONNIE'S HOUSE - LIVING AREA - NIGHT

Ronnie - on the couch, T.V. remote in hand - clicks through channels.

Harriet makes popcorn at the oven in the open kitchen. The DOORBELL RINGS. Ronnie looks up at her.

HARRIET

I got it. You come shake the popcorn.

Ronnie takes over for her while Harriet heads to the front door. The kernels PING against the metal pan. A chorus of "TRICK-OR-TREAT!" rings out.

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

Oh, look at you! What an adorable kitty cat you are! And is that Tinkerbelle? Here you go, and one for you. And one for you. Happy Halloween!

Replies of "thank you" and "Happy Halloween!" in return, then the door CLICKS shut and Harriet reappears.

HARRIET (CONT'D)

The little ones are just so adorable!

She tweaks Ronnie's nose.

HARRIET (CONT'D)

Just like you were. How's the popcorn coming?

RONNIE

Good, I think it's done.

Ronnie pours glasses of soda while Harriet places the popcorn in a large bowl, pours melted butter over it.

They head to the sofa, settle in. Hercules jumps up in between them, begs for popcorn. Ronnie CLICKS play on the remote.

HARRIET

Did you use my account?

Ronnie nods, slips Hercules a piece of popcorn.

HARRIET (CONT'D)

Good. We'd both be in trouble if
your mother knew I was letting you
watch this.

Ronnie gives her a wide grin. A THEME SONG from a popular
teen romance show plays.

EXT. RONNIE'S STREET - NIGHT

Cheryl and Ben go house to house with Isla. The ratio of
houses decorated with scary decorations versus friendly
decorations runs 20 to 1.

They chat with neighbors as they work their way down the
street. Costumed kids shriek, rush about. Isla terrorizes as
many kids as she can, calls to Cheryl:

ISLA

Mom! I need my balloon!

INT. RONNIE'S HOUSE - LIVING AREA - NIGHT

The credits roll on the T.V., Ronnie hugs a pillow to her
chest.

RONNIE

I am so Team Ben. Even though
that's Dad's name. Ew, that's kind
of weird. Can I like a boy with the
same name as my dad?

HARRIET

I forgot to ask, how did you do on
your biology project?

RONNIE

Well, as a matter of fact...let me
show you.

Ronnie fetches her backpack, flops back down on the couch.
She UNZIPS the top, reaches in, feels around.

RONNIE (CONT'D)

What the heck is this?

She pulls out the demon IDOL, turns it to the front, its eyes GLOW RED. Hercules GROWLS at it.

Ronnie screams, throws the idol away from her, onto the hardwood floor. A SMALL CRACK opens along the top.

HARRIET

Goodness! What in the world was that?

Harriet goes to pick it up.

RONNIE

Be careful, Grandma! It's alive!

HARRIET

Oh honey, it's not. It's just some sort of statue. Kind of a mean looking one, but--

RONNIE

It is! Its eyes, they're on fire!

HARRIET

It's not honey, look.

She holds it out for Ronnie to see, Ronnie turns away. Hercules WHINES.

RONNIE

Get rid of it, Grandma, please! I've seen that before, it's very bad!

HARRIET

All right, sweetie. I'll take care of it.

EXT. RONNIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Harriet steps out the front door with the idol, contemplates all their smiling, happy decorations.

She sets the idol down next to a cute little black cat with a witch's hat and a broom. Shakes her head, picks the idol up, puts it next to a cheerful parrot with a pirate's hat and an eye patch.

HARRIET

Doesn't quite fit the decor here.

She takes the idol across the grass to Darren's yard, places it next to the decapitated zombie. It hits the cement with a DULL THUD. The CRACK OPENS a little wider.

HARRIET (CONT'D)

There. That's better.

As she walks away, a greenish-black VAPOR seeps slowly from the crack.

INT. RONNIE'S HOUSE - LIVING AREA - NIGHT

Ronnie, cuddled with Hercules on the couch, looks up anxiously as Harriet reappears.

RONNIE

Is it gone?

HARRIET

It's gone. How on earth did it get in your backpack?

RONNIE

(sighs)

The kids at school...they all make fun of me because of what happened in first grade.

HARRIET

In the haunted house?

Ronnie nods.

RONNIE

Some boys were chasing me, scaring me...

INT. BARKER CREEK ELEMENTARY - HAUNTED HOUSE - DAY - FLASHBACK

YOUNG RONNIE (6), in a "Rockford Peaches" costume, runs through in a panic, lost in the maze. Close behind, YOUNG TREVOR (6) and his friends chase and taunt her.

Young Ronnie desperately searches for the exit, makes it to the bedroom, backs into the fake fireplace. The HAUNTED MIRROR lets out an EVIL LAUGH.

Young Ronnie spins around. Her gaze briefly lands on the MARBLE IDOL, then on the stone IDOL as its EYES LIGHT UP a fiery red. A PUDDLE OF LIQUID pools around her feet.

Young Trevor and his friends find her, laugh hysterically at her, point at the floor.

END FLASHBACK

INT. RONNIE'S HOUSE - LIVING AREA - NIGHT

Ronnie continues her story.

RONNIE

That...thing, it was alive. It stared right at me.

Hercules WHINES, licks Ronnie's face.

RONNIE (CONT'D)

I know it sounds silly, but it did. I was so scared. And the boys just laughed and laughed.

Harriet puts an arm around Ronnie.

HARRIET

I'm so sorry that happened to you.

RONNIE

I stood up to Trevor today, he was being mean to another kid. I'm sure he's the one who put it in my backpack.

HARRIET

Well good for you for sticking up for your friend. That was a brave thing to do, I'm proud of you.

RONNIE

I'm not brave, I just don't like seeing people get hurt.

HARRIET

You are, and don't let anyone tell you otherwise, not even Isla.

The DOORBELL RINGS, Ronnie stiffens.

HARRIET (CONT'D)

It must have seemed very scary at the time, and you also know that thing can't really hurt you. It's just a decoration.

(MORE)

HARRIET (CONT'D)

Just like all the other decorations in the neighborhood that get put up in the same way year after year.

(squeezes Ronnie's hand)

The Carlyles with their graveyard theme, Mr. Juster next door with the same decorations he's had for thirty years when his kids were little, the spooky house on the end of the street.

The DOORBELL RINGS again.

HARRIET (CONT'D)

And that funny-looking statue that gets put up in the haunted house at school every October. It's just make-believe for a little while.

(stands up)

And a good excuse to eat lots of candy. Now why don't you put on another episode and pour us some more soda and I'll go take care of the little goblins. Deal?

Ronnie gives a half-smile, nods.

RONNIE

Deal. Thanks, Grandma.

Ronnie collects their glasses while Harriet opens the front door to "TRICK-OR-TREAT!"

HARRIET (O.S.)

Oh my, now that's a costume!

EXT. RONNIE'S HOUSE - FRONT PORCH - NIGHT

Harriet hands out candy from the doorway. Two kids in SKULL TROOPER costumes walk away, inspect their loot. One of them kicks at a smiling scarecrow.

SKULL TROOPER #1

What stupid decorations they have.

SKULL TROOPER #2

Yeah, but they give good candy.

Next door, at Darren's house, the VAPOR swirls slowly up and around the leg of the decapitated zombie - it's LEG JIGGLES. The VAPOR climbs higher.

Three smaller kids dressed as TWO SUNFLOWERS AND A HONEY BEE (4-5 years old) run up to Ronnie's door, yell "TRICK-OR-TREAT!", their mom, WENDY (30s) not far behind.

HARRIET

Aren't you three just the cutest!
 (calls inside the house)
 Ronnie, come look, it's the
 Watermans from across the street.
 Come see how cute they are!

Ronnie peers around the corner, Hercules in tow. Honeybee lights up.

HONEYBEE

Puppy!

Honeybee runs inside, both Sunflowers follow.

INT. RONNIE'S HOUSE - LIVING AREA - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Honeybee and the Sunflowers squat down to pet Hercules. Honeybee gives him a big hug, Hercules licks his face. The little kids all giggle. Ronnie laughs, loosens up.

Wendy calls from the door:

WENDY

Kids, come on, let's go.

HARRIET

It's all right, they're fine. Come on in.

Wendy steps inside.

WENDY

They've been begging me for a dog.

HONEYBEE

How come you're not dressed up,
 Ronnie?

RONNIE

Well, somebody has to give out the
 candy, right? Be sure to get
 another piece on your way out.

The kids give a chorus of "YAY!", run for the front door. Wendy follows.

HARRIET

Bye, now. Have fun!

The door closes behind them. Harriet wraps an arm around Ronnie.

HARRIET (CONT'D)
See, that's not so bad, right?
Halloween can be fun.

RONNIE
I guess so.

EXT. DARREN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Honeybee and the Sunflowers stand on the porch, the IDOL near their feet. Darren passes out candy, waves bye.

SKELETON ARMS stuck in the dirt lining the walkway WAVE GOODBYE too, unnoticed by Darren or the children.

Darren begins to close the door when the IDOL catches his attention.

DARREN
Now where did that come from?

He bends down to inspect it. Behind him, the DECAPITATED ZOMBIE BENDS DOWN also.

INT. RONNIE'S HOUSE - LIVING AREA - NIGHT

Ronnie settles on the sofa, Hercules jumps up beside her. Harriet pushes open the door to the hall bathroom.

HARRIET
Go ahead and start the next one,
I'll be right there.

RONNIE
Okay.

Harriet closes the bathroom door behind her.

The DOORBELL RINGS. Ronnie freezes, remote in hand. The DOORBELL RINGS again.

HARRIET (O.S.)
Ronnie, do you think you can get
that?

Ronnie approaches the front door with trepidation, cautiously opens it, her whole body tense.

EXT. RONNIE'S HOUSE - FRONT PORCH - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Nevil stands on the porch in his God Particle costume.

NEVIL
Trick-or-treat!

INTERCUT RONNIE'S HOUSE - LIVING AREA/FRONT PORCH

Ronnie lets out an audible sigh.

RONNIE
Oh, hey Nevil.

NEVIL
Hi, Ronnie. Is this your house?

RONNIE
Yeah. Are you out here by yourself?

She puts a handful of candy in his bag.

NEVIL
Yeah. I, you know, I'm kinda new.
Haven't really found my friend
group yet. That's what my parents
always say. You don't like to trick-
or-treat? You could...come with me
if you like.

RONNIE
No, it's not my thing.

NEVIL
Right. Of course.

He turns away. Ronnie puts a hand on his arm.

RONNIE
Thanks for asking though.

They share a moment.

NEVIL
You're welcome. See you at school.

A GROUP OF PRINCESSES (7-8 years old) rush past Nevil, yell
"TRICK-OR-TREAT!"

Ronnie offers the jar of candy, they crowd around her,
deciding which treat to pick. They finally make their
choices, skip down the drive.

As soon as Ronnie closes the door, the DOORBELL RINGS. She turns back to open it; no one is there.

RONNIE

Huh. I guess you're going for tricks instead of treats. Fine, more for me.

She takes a piece of candy for herself, closes the door. The DOORBELL RINGS again immediately. Ronnie spins around, flings the door open.

RONNIE (CONT'D)

Gotcha!

The porch is empty except for a DISMEMBERED SKELETON ARM on the step.

She doesn't see it at first, looks out, left and right, then her eyes drop to the arm. Her brow creases. She bends down to get a closer look, candy jar in hand.

RONNIE (CONT'D)

What the heck--

The HAND springs into life, FURIOUSLY GRABS at the candy, which flies everywhere.

Ronnie stares in disbelief, then jumps back, SLAMS the door.

RONNIE (CONT'D)

Grandma!

HARRIET (O.S.)

I'll be out in a sec, sweetie.

The DOORBELL RINGS REPEATEDLY. Hercules BARKS at the door.

RONNIE

(in more of a panic)
Grandma!

Harriet exits the bathroom.

HARRIET

Goodness gracious, those are some impatient trick or treaters.

Harriet takes the candy jar from Ronnie, puts her hand on the doorknob. Ronnie grabs her arm.

RONNIE

No, Grandma! Don't open it!

HARRIET

Oh honey, you were just starting to relax. What happened?

Harriet opens the door. Two kids in costume, A BATMAN and ROBIN (9-10 years old) yell "TRICK-OR-TREAT!" Their parents wait at the curb.

Ronnie lets out a huge breath.

HARRIET (CONT'D)

See? It's fine.

Harriet hands out candy, makes small talk. Behind them, the DECAPITATED ZOMBIE from Darren's house lurches up the walk.

Ronnie's eyes go wide, she points wordlessly with one arm, frantically paws at Harriet's shoulder with the other.

HARRIET (CONT'D)

Now who was your favorite Batman?
When I was a girl, there was only...

(turns to Ronnie)

...what on earth, Ronnie?

Harriet follows the direction Ronnie points in. The decapitated head in the zombie's arms BLINKS ITS EYES, its MOUTH OPENS AND SHUTS.

HARRIET (CONT'D)

Oh. Now there's a costume you don't see every day. How did they do that, I wonder?

The ZOMBIE HEAD makes a horrific MOAN, BATMAN and ROBIN scream, scatter to their parents.

Harriet doesn't move, wags a finger at the zombie.

HARRIET (CONT'D)

Now that is just not necessary, you should be ashamed! Stop scaring the little ones.

The zombie head open its mouth, a SNAKE SLITHERS OUT.

HARRIET (CONT'D)

That's it. No candy for you.

Harriet SLAMS the door.

EXT. RONNIE'S STREET - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

The rest of the now LIVING DECORATIONS from Darren's house join the zombie.

The VAPOR swirls around, animates the decorations at the next house, including a WEREWOLF that HOWLS at the moon.

The ever-growing group chase trick-or-treating families down the street as the VAPOR moves down the row of houses.

A NEIGHBOR pokes his head out his door at all the commotion. The EVIL WITCH decoration on his porch, now alive, CACKLES at him.

INT. RONNIE'S HOUSE - LIVING AREA - NIGHT

Harriet leads Ronnie to the couch, sits down with her arm around her. Blood-curdling SCREAMS can be heard from outside. Hercules runs in circles, BARKS.

RONNIE
(terrified)
Grandma, what's happening?

HARRIET
It's just some kids playing a
prank, sweetie. Hercules, hush!

Ronnie looks at her in doubt.

RONNIE
But the...and the...

HARRIET
Probably some kind of remote
control or battery-operated. Those
costumes get more and more advanced
every year, don't they?

There is a LOUD THUD at the window behind them. Ronnie screams. They turn to find Nevil outside, plastered to the window.

NEVIL
(muffled through the
glass)
A little help...

HARRIET
What in the world?

Ronnie looks closer.

RONNIE
That's Nevil, he's from my class!

HARRIET
Well, for goodness sake. What is he
doing out there?

Harriet moves to the glass side door that leads from the living room to the back yard, opens it.

HARRIET (CONT'D)
Young man--

More SCREAMS ring out, Ronnie jumps up, runs to the door.

RONNIE
Nevil, come on! Hurry!

Much CRASHING about, then Nevil appears at the doorstep, stumbles and falls.

Harriet and Ronnie drag Nevil inside, he struggles to get to his feet in his costume. Ronnie helps him up as Harriet shuts the side door.

Nevil wheezes, puts his hands on his knees to catch his breath, tries to speak between his panting.

NEVIL
They...are...a...li...ve...

HARRIET
What?
(looks at Ronnie)
What is he saying?

Nevil grabs Harriet's arms with both of his, a challenge with his costume.

NEVIL
They're alive!

Ronnie spins him around.

RONNIE
What's alive?

NEVIL
The zombies! And the ghosts! And the skeletons, and the witches, and the bats, and the mummies, and the spiders, and the tombstones, and the--everything! In everyone's yards.

(MORE)

NEVIL (CONT'D)

It's incredible and amazing--and completely terrifying--all at the same time. All the Halloween decorations have come to life!

RONNIE

(beside herself)

I knew it, I knew it, I knew it, I knew it all along. No one would believe me, but I knew it.

Harriet comforts her.

HARRIET

It's all right, dear. Nevil--Nevil, is it? Those things are just make-believe, honey. They're not real.

NEVIL

They are tonight, and your street is ground zero.

EXT. RONNIE'S STREET - NIGHT

The decorations at every house on the block have come alive, except for the friendly decorations at Ronnie's. A string of LIVING DECORATIONS trail after the VAPOR down the block.

INT. RONNIE'S HOUSE - LIVING AREA - NIGHT

Ronnie and Harriet listen from the couch as Nevil paces back and forth.

NEVIL

I saw it. It was some kind of ectoplasm. Not Ghostbusters-level thick, but more like smoke, or a vapor. As soon as it touched any of the decorations, they started moving. It's got to be an electric force, a source of kinetic energy.

HARRIET

That sounds very fanciful, dear. It would make a wonderful story. I bet you're a writer!

RONNIE

Grandma, Nevil is the smartest kid in my class, in the whole school even--

Nevil smiles, puffs up.

NEVIL
You really think so?

RONNIE
--so if he says that's what
happened, that's what happened.

NEVIL
The question is, why here? Is your
house on top of some ancient burial
ground, like in *Poltergeist*?

RONNIE
I didn't see that...but no! At
least I don't think so.

She looks at Harriet who shakes her head.

HARRIET
Of course not.

NEVIL
Well, something had to be the
catalyst. Some dark force has been
set loose.

Ronnie's gaze lands on her backpack.

RONNIE
I know what it was.

EXT. CHURCH STREET - NIGHT

Isla traipses down the sidewalk, Ben and Cheryl follow.
SCREAMS from the next block carry over. Isla turns her up
nose in the air like a bloodhound.

ISLA
I feed on their fear. This way.

Isla heads towards the screams.

BEN
(to Cheryl)
Should we be worried about her?

CHERYL
Nah. I'm sure it's perfectly fine
for a seven year-old to quote a
killer clown. It's Halloween.

(MORE)

CHERYL (CONT'D)
Besides, we already have one child
to be worried about.

INT. RONNIE'S HOUSE - LIVING AREA - NIGHT

Nevil perches on the coffee table, listens intently to
Ronnie, Harriet next to her on the couch.

NEVIL
What do you mean "demon statue-
thingy?"

RONNIE
It's from the haunted house at
school. Somebody put it in my
backpack. Probably Trevor.

NEVIL
But I thought you never went in the
haunted house.

RONNIE
I remember it from first grade, the
only time I ever went in there.

NEVIL
That was a long time ago. How can
you be sure it's the same one?

RONNIE
It's the same one, I could never
forget it. It seemed...

NEVIL
What? It seemed what?

RONNIE
(quiet)
It seemed like it was alive. Like
it was watching me.

HARRIET
Oh Ronnie, you were so little then.
Your imagination just got the
better of you.

NEVIL
Okay, so where is it? Let's take a
look.

RONNIE
I didn't want it in the house. My
Grandma put it outside.

Ronnie looks at Harriet.

HARRIET

It's in the neighbor's yard.

(shrugs)

It didn't exactly fit with our theme this year. Listen, you two. Everything's fine now, it was just a prank.

Harriet gets up from the couch, heads to the kitchen.

HARRIET (CONT'D)

Nevil, why don't you call your parents and let them know where you are so they don't worry. I'll warm us up some nice spiced cider and we can all relax and watch a show together. Doesn't that sound nice?

Harriet busies herself getting mugs from the cupboard.

NEVIL

(to Ronnie)

She doesn't believe us.

RONNIE

She's an adult.

NEVIL

Go get the statue.

RONNIE

What? No! Why?

NEVIL

I need to see it so I know what we're dealing with. You said it seemed alive. The vapor seemed alive, too. I'm sensing a connection.

RONNIE

How about if I just describe it to you? It's about this--

(holds her hands apart)

--big, kinda heavy, like made out of stone. It had red eyes, and horns, and looked like this--

She makes her hands into claws, makes a mean face, holds the pose. The microwave BEEPS from the kitchen.

NEVIL

You'd make a terrible eyewitness,
you're lousy with details. We've
got to go get it. And by we I mean
you.

RONNIE

Me? Why me?

NEVIL

Because I'm the smart one, you said
so yourself.

RONNIE

So?

NEVIL

So, you can't lose the smart one in
the horror movie, everyone knows
that.

RONNIE

I take it back, you're not smart,
you're out of your mind. I'm not
going out there.

NEVIL

Well, I'm not going out there.

Harriet enters with a tray of mugs. Nevil looks at her, back
at Ronnie, who shakes her head "No!"

EXT. RONNIE'S HOUSE - FRONT PORCH - NIGHT

Harriet wraps a sweater around her as she steps out. Ronnie
reaches out from the threshold to pull on her arm.

RONNIE

Grandma, don't go out there!

HARRIET

Now don't worry, Ronnie. I'll just
pop over and grab it, that way we
can all see that it's not alive.
Maybe your friend will come up with
some more to his story once he sees
it.

She gives Ronnie a reassuring pat, heads next door. It seems
eerily still out.

HARRIET (CONT'D)
 No one's even out here. They've all
 moved on to the next block.

Ronnie holds the front door open a crack, Nevil's head
 appears above hers.

NEVIL
 (to Ronnie)
 See anything?

RONNIE
 No. Do you see the vapor?

NEVIL
 No.

Harriet calls out from Darren's yard:

HARRIET
 Come look, everything's fine.

Ronnie opens the door a little wider, takes a step out, Nevil
 as close to her as his costume will allow.

Harriet reaches down to get the IDOL. Darren has been turned
 into a decoration, frozen in place.

HARRIET (CONT'D)
 See? I got it!

Harriet holds out the IDOL.

HARRIET (CONT'D)
 No goblins here.

Ronnie and Nevil take a few more steps out. Harriet notices
 Darren.

HARRIET (CONT'D)
 Darren?

She waves her free hand in front of Darren's face. Darren's
 FRONT DOOR OPENS and SKELLY, a 12 FOOT SKELETON, doubled
 over, steps outside then unfolds to its full height.

Harriet tips her head back, her mouth forms an "O". The
 skeleton places a bony hand on top of her head, she freezes
 in place, the IDOL still in hand.

RONNIE
 Grandma!

Skelly turns towards the sound, heads towards them with giant, plodding steps.

Ronnie can't move. She opens her mouth, but no sound comes out. Nevil yanks her by the hand, pushes her inside, then shimmies through the doorway.

INT. RONNIE'S HOUSE - LIVING AREA - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Nevil SLAMS the front door, locks it behind them. Ronnie's chest heaves with sobs. She sinks to the ground, Hercules comes to comfort her.

Ronnie continues to sob in loud, gasping breaths. The DOORKNOB TWISTS BACK AND FORTH. Nevil motions to Ronnie to be quiet. Ronnie claps her hands over her mouth, they watch the knob in rising panic.

The knob finally stops twisting, HEAVY FOOTSTEPS recede. Ronnie and Nevil let out their breath.

NEVIL

That idol. It's Roman and very old,
maybe as early as fifth century,
but I've got to get a closer look
to be sure.

RONNIE

What is happening!

Nevil moves to the coffee table, grabs a mug of cider and gulps it down.

NEVIL

Wow, that was really hot.
Do you have a laptop I can use? I
think it might be a burial doll...

SKELLY'S head appears at the side door glass, butts it with considerable force. Ronnie and Nevil scream, Hercules BARKS.

Skelly bangs repeatedly against the glass; it CRACKS. A group of other living decorations - BATS, SPIDERS, GHOULS - appear behind Skelly.

RONNIE

It's trying to get in!

They dash to the front door.

EXT. RONNIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Nevil flings open the front door, tries to run out and promptly gets stuck. Ronnie pushes on the back of Nevil's costume, catapults him out.

Nevil, followed by Ronnie and Hercules, hurries next door, snatches the idol from Harriet's hand. Ronnie reaches out for Harriet.

RONNIE

Grandma!

NEVIL

Let's go!

RONNIE

But what about my Grandma? We can't just leave her!

Skelly and his crew CRASH THROUGH Ronnie's side gate.

NEVIL

There's no time! We'll come back for her!

Skelly REACHES OUT ITS ARM, inches from Ronnie's face, they all take off running.

EXT. RONNIE'S STREET - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Ronnie, Nevil, and Hercules tear down the block; mid-way they encounter a bevy of LIVING DECORATIONS.

Nevil zig zags to avoid them, uses his costume as a shield to bounce them away. Hercules BARKS to scare them off.

Ronnie stays close behind Nevil, pauses when they pass a house with Wendy, Honeybee and the Sunflowers frozen in the front yard.

RONNIE

Oh no!

A GIANT SPIDER gets close.

NEVIL

Don't stop, keep moving!

Ronnie speeds back up.

RONNIE
(yells)
Where are we going?

NEVIL
Away from all of this!

They get to the end of Ronnie's street, round the corner.

EXT. ELMBROOK STREET - NIGHT

Ronnie, Nevil, and Hercules run like the wind. Half-way down the block, they stop abruptly; everything is in normal order here.

Ronnie and Nevil gasp for breath as they take in the groups of costumed kids trick-or-treating as though nothing is amiss.

NEVIL
(confused)
Everything's fine here.

RONNIE
No. It doesn't feel fine.

NEVIL
Where's the giant skeleton?

RONNIE
I don't see it anymore.

Nevil tentatively kicks at a decoration in front of a house - nothing happens.

NEVIL
Nothing. Maybe it was really just a trick.

RONNIE
That's a pretty elaborate trick, my grandmother is frozen!

NEVIL
Good point.

Ronnie scans the area.

RONNIE
Something's not right. I can feel it.

A GROUP OF TRICK-OR-TREATERS that includes Trevor, darts past, yelling and laughing. He recognizes Ronnie and Nevil.

TREVOR

Hey, look who it is. The scaredy-cat and her nerd boyfriend. Aw, and you brought your dog for protection, how cute.

He puts out a hand to pet Hercules, who BARKS at him. Trevor snatches his hand away.

TREVOR (CONT'D)

Dumb dog. Did you finally get the guts to go across the street to the dungeon, Ronnie? I have an idea, why don't we all go?

Trevor and his gang sweep up Ronnie and Nevil, usher them over to the SCARY HOUSE. Ronnie and Nevil protest, try to break free. Hercules circles around them, BARKS.

They get to the edge of the sidewalk, Trevor and Marcus push Ronnie and Nevil forward. The gang chants "dun-geon, dun-geon, dun-geon".

TREVOR (CONT'D)

Well, go on!
(to his gang)
Stand back guys, there's likely to be some waterworks with Ronnie around.

Ronnie and Nevil exchange glances, they have no choice, they're surrounded. They take small steps forward, on high alert.

RONNIE

Nevil!

NEVIL

What?

Ronnie points to Nevil's treat bag.

RONNIE

Look!

A thin trail of VAPOR rises out of Nevil's bag. They follow the trail with their eyes, it joins a larger CLOUD OF VAPOR swirling above the house.

NEVIL

That can't be good.

Hercules WHINES. Nevil takes the IDOL out of his treat bag. One last little PUFF OF VAPOR escapes from the crack in the idol.

The PUFF darts over to a large DUNGEON MASTER figure that wears a helmet with a demon-face and horns, wields a wicked-looking axe.

The PUFF HOVERS just in front of the Dungeon Master's face. Ronnie and Nevil slowly back away. Trevor makes CLUCKING sounds. His friends laugh, join in.

TREVOR

Chicken!

Suddenly, the CLOUD OF VAPOR swoops down, absorbs the PUFF, and swirls around the DUNGEON MASTER, which springs to life. It gives a menacing GROWL and moves forward.

NEVIL

Oh boy...

Ronnie and Nevil turn around, scream at the group as they start to run.

RONNIE/NEVIL

Go, go, go!

Trevor and his gang stop them.

TREVOR

Whoa, where are you going?
 Seriously, you two aren't afraid of
 Mr. Martin in a costume, are you?
 Sheesh.

Trevor steps up to the Dungeon Master, jumps up and pulls off its helmet, turns to the group.

TREVOR (CONT'D)

See?

Everyone's eyes grow big as saucers.

TREVOR (CONT'D)

What?

Trevor looks back at the Dungeon Master. Its face under the mask has the exact same demon face as the mask. It bares its rotted teeth and gives a mighty ROAR, raises the axe.

All of Trevor's friends scream and take off. A PUDDLE OF YELLOW LIQUID appears around Trevor's feet on the cement.

The Dungeon Master LAUGHS, pokes at Trevor's chest - Trevor freezes in position.

The VAPOR swirls around and through the rest of the decorations in the yard, brings them all to life - PRISONERS IN SHACKLES, RATS, GARGOYLES, SPIDERS, and BATS. They chase after the trick-or-treaters.

A WALL OF SKULL HEADS click their jaws open and shut. The PRISONERS MOAN and RATTLE THEIR CHAINS. A GIANT RAT runs past, a femur clutched in its jaws.

NEVIL

Uh, we gotta move.

Ronnie stares at the scene. A PRISONER breaks free of its shackles.

NEVIL (CONT'D)

Ronnie! You want to stay that way permanently?

Ronnie still doesn't move. The PRISONER crawls across the grass towards them.

NEVIL (CONT'D)

When I say we gotta move, I mean now!

He SNAPS his fingers in front of her face. Ronnie comes to as the PRISONER reaches out for her feet. Hercules yanks the prisoner away from Ronnie by a tattered pant leg.

RONNIE

Hercules!

More decorations advance in their direction.

NEVIL

Okay, seriously...let's go!

He takes off, Ronnie and Hercules follow.

EXT. VARIOUS STREETS - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Ronnie, Nevil, and Hercules run like their lives depend on it, occasionally glance back.

The streets are quiet as they cross over to the "money" part of town - EASTVIEW TERRACE. They doggedly make their way up a hill, their steps get slower and slower. They stop and pant for air.

RONNIE

Now what?

NEVIL

We'll go to my house, regroup and figure out what to do next.

RONNIE

Where is your house?

NEVIL

There.

He points to the gated community at the bottom of the hill.

RONNIE

Any more smoke coming out of the...thing?

Nevil peers in his treat bag.

NEVIL

I don't th--

Nevil suddenly loses his balance, his arms pedal to keep himself upright. Ronnie grabs for him, but only comes away with the treat bag.

Nevil falls back and rolls down the hill, his costume cushioning his decent.

NEVIL (CONT'D)

Ahhhhhhh.....!

RONNIE

Nevil!

She and Hercules take off after him.

EXT. GUARD SHACK - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Nevil comes to a stop when he hits the large, ornamented gates.

NEVIL

Oof!

The gate guard, KEVIN - 60s, unassuming, a bit out of shape - pokes his head out.

KEVIN

Nevil Varma, is that you?

NEVIL
A little help, please...

Kevin opens the gate, comes around to help. Ronnie and Hercules reach the gate.

RONNIE
Nevil! Are you alright?

NEVIL
I think so.

Kevin and Ronnie pull Nevil upright.

KEVIN
Clever costume, a giant eyeball.

NEVIL
It's the God Particle.

Kevin scratches his head in confusion.

KEVIN
Oh. That's very...how was trick-or-treating?

NEVIL
Believe me when I say it was treacherous, Kevin. I don't want to alarm you, but there's a strange black and green vapor that is bringing all the Halloween decorations to life. We're heading to my house to figure out what is.

KEVIN
You don't say?

NEVIL
I do. Lock yourself in and call for backup. It's going to be a bumpy ride.

INT. NEVIL'S HOUSE - FOYER - NIGHT

Nevil swings the door open, enters the massive room. Ronnie and Hercules follow. Nevil locks the door behind them.

Ronnie stands in the middle of a large tile mosaic. Everything hits her; she sinks to the floor in tears. Hercules WHIMPERS, licks her face.

RONNIE
My grandma...

Nevil awkwardly pats Ronnie's shoulder. She suddenly sits up, gasps. Nevil, alarmed, spins around to look for intruders.

NEVIL
Ahhh! What? Where is it?

RONNIE
My family! They're all out there!
My parents and my sister and
brother. They're in danger!
(stands up)
I have to call them. Where's your
phone?

NEVIL
Right here. Er, here. Wherever my
pocket is.

He pats his costume somewhere in the vicinity of a pants pocket.

RONNIE
You have your own cell phone?

NEVIL
Duh. Doesn't everyone?

RONNIE
I don't.

NEVIL
Why not?

RONNIE
My parents won't let me. Not until
middle school.

NEVIL
I bet they will now.

He struggles to get to his pocket, turns this way and that.

NEVIL (CONT'D)
Just...a...any...second...

Impatient, Ronnie takes her HOUSE KEY out of her pants pocket and plunges it into the side of his costume; it deflates with a WHOOSH, hangs limply off his torso.

NEVIL (CONT'D)
Hey!

Ronnie pulls at the costume, yanks the phone out of Nevil's pocket, punches in a number.

Nevil kneels, gently cradles his crumpled costume around him.

NEVIL (CONT'D)
This was a masterpiece.

RONNIE
This is an emergency.
(into the phone)
Mom! Are you okay? Is everyone
okay?

EXT. MARIGOLD STREET - NIGHT

Cheryl stands on a curb while Isla terrorizes some smaller kids and Ben chats with another DAD. Several other GROUPS OF TRICK-OR-TREATERS go noisily house to house.

CHERYL
Hi honey! What did you say? It's a
little hard to hear.

She presses her free hand to her other ear.

INTERCUT NEVIL'S FOYER/MARIGOLD STREET

Ronnie yells into the phone:

RONNIE
Is everything okay!

Unseen across the street, the VAPOR brings decorations to life.

CHERYL
Yes, of course--Isla, stop that!--
Are you and Grandma enjoying Fuller
House?

Isla chases the kids. Cheryl lowers the phone from her ear.

CHERYL (CONT'D)
Isla, I'm not telling you again!

The LIVING DECORATIONS target the groups of trick-or-treaters, kids and parents left frozen in place.

RONNIE

Mom, listen. There's this green
smoke stuff, it's making all the
decorations come alive--

Cheryl, distracted by Isla's antics, shouts to Ben:

CHERYL

Ben, can you get her?
(into the phone)
Uh huh, that sounds like a funny
episode, glad you two are having a
good time.

A CORPSE'S BRIDE floats over to Ben.

RONNIE

Mom! Do you hear what I'm saying?
You're in danger. You're all in
danger!

CHERYL

Isla!
(into the phone)
Okay, honey. Sounds good. We'll see
you a little later.

Cheryl disconnects, walks over to Ben. He and the other dad
are frozen.

CHERYL (CONT'D)

Ben?

END INTERCUT

INT. NEVIL'S HOUSE - FOYER - NIGHT

Ronnie shouts into the phone:

RONNIE

Mom! Mom!

She lowers the phone in disbelief.

RONNIE (CONT'D)

She hung up.

NEVIL

Are they all right? What did she
say? Have they seen anything?

RONNIE

She said hope you're having a good time. She wasn't even listening.

NEVIL

What about your dad?

RONNIE

He's with my mom, my brother has his phone, but...

She types another number into the phone. It RINGS and RINGS, then voicemail with Ben's voice: *"You've reached Benjamin--"*

EXT. PEONY STREET - NIGHT

Quinn and his friends flirt with a GROUP OF GIRLS in costume. Other kids pass by, SHOUT excitedly. Quinn waves, shouts back. Quinn's phone LIGHTS UP unheard in his back pocket.

INT. NEVIL'S HOUSE - FOYER - NIGHT

Ronnie shakes her head at Nevil.

RONNIE

Voice mail.

(into the phone)

Quinn! Call me as soon as you get this! Everyone's in danger, you've got to get to Mom and Dad!

She disconnects.

RONNIE (CONT'D)

Now what do we do? Should we call the police?

NEVIL

And tell them what?

RONNIE

That the decorations are alive!

NEVIL

Exactly. You think they're going to believe you? This is Halloween. Every kid in town is making crank calls.

RONNIE

Ahhh! Why doesn't anyone listen to eleven year-olds!

NEVIL

By the time they figure this out,
it's going to be too late. We're
just going to have to solve this on
our own. Come on, let's go see what
we're dealing with.

INT. NEVIL'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Nevil leads Ronnie and Hercules down a long length of
polished marble. Motion-sensor lights illuminate their steps.
Ronnie gapes in open amazement.

RONNIE

This place is huge.

Amazing works of art adorn the walls, rest on pedestals. The
house is beautiful, but feels more like a museum than a home.

They reach a set of heavy, double metal doors, a touchpad on
the wall to the right. Nevil types in a code, the doors CLICK
open.

INT. NEVIL'S HOUSE - WORK LAB - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Nevil pushes through the doors, Ronnie and Hercules right
behind.

Nevil pulls the IDOL from his treat bag, goes straight to a
large lab table with lots of expensive-looking equipment.

RONNIE

What is all this?

A large, wall-mounted television broadcasts world news, the
volume on mute.

RONNIE (CONT'D)

Is anybody here? Where are your
parents?

Nevil sets the IDOL on a clear platform connected by wires to
a computer.

NEVIL

They're in Japan.

RONNIE

Japan?

Nevil types on the keyboard. Ronnie peers over his shoulder,
Hercules next to her.

NEVIL

At the Yukawa Institute for
Theoretical Physics. They go to a
lot of conferences, it's part of
their work.

RONNIE

Then who takes care of you?

NEVIL

I'm very independent.

RONNIE

You're eleven.

NEVIL

(shrugs)

I'm mature for my age.

BEAMS OF COLORED LIGHT emanate from the platform, SCAN up and
down the idol.

RONNIE

What does that do?

NEVIL

It's a spectrometer with object
recognition software.

RONNIE

Oh right, I have three of those at
home...

Hercules GROWLS at LAWRENCE (70s), British, impeccably
groomed and formally dressed - who suddenly materializes in
the doorway.

Ronnie screams, backs away.

NEVIL

Relax, he's not a Halloween
decoration. He just looks like one.
He's like a hundred years old.

Lawrence comes into full view.

LAWRENCE

I can hear you, Master Nevil. And
I'm seventy-two, not that it's any
of your business.

Ronnie and Lawrence size each other up.

RONNIE
(to Nevil)
I thought you said you were
independent.

Nevil doesn't look up as he types on the keyboard.

NEVIL
Well, I can't drive. At least not
legally. Ronnie, Lawrence.
Lawrence, Ronnie.

Ronnie gives a small wave.

RONNIE
Hi.

Hercules trots over to sniff at Lawrence's pants, circles all
around him. Lawrence wrinkles his nose at him.

LAWRENCE
Delighted, I'm sure. What is this
animal doing to me?

RONNIE
That's Hercules. He's just saying
hello.

Hercules thrusts his snout in Lawrence's crotch.

LAWRENCE
Kindly remove it.

RONNIE
Hercules, here.

Hercules returns to her side, she pets him reassuringly.

Lawrence brushes off his suit.

LAWRENCE
What are you doing in here, Master
Nevil? I'm sure you are quite aware
your parents do not wish you to be
in the lab unsupervised. Your last
experiment was - ahem - tragic for
the family pet.

Ronnie looks at Nevil sharply. Hercules gives a head tilt.

NEVIL
Bit of sticky wicket here,
Lawrence. We're saving the world.

LAWRENCE

Oh, by all means then, do carry on.

Ronnie continues to stare at Nevil, aghast.

NEVIL

(to Ronnie)

Oh stop. It was a goldfish. He survived, he just won't leave the castle now. Lawrence has something against pets with fur, so this is all I get.

He taps on a FISHBOWL at the edge of the lab table.

Lawrence picks up the IDOL, examines it.

LAWRENCE

Where, pray tell, did you get this, Master Lawrence, and what are you doing with it?

Nevil takes the idol from him, places it back on the platform, types faster and faster as he talks.

NEVIL

Some bully at school swiped it from the haunted house and put it in Ronnie's backpack to scare her, which normally would be ludicrous since it's only a hunk of pottery, only this actually happened to contain some sort of entity which is now animating all the Halloween decorations and turning humans into frozen statues.

Nevil hits a key on the keyboard with emphasis.

LAWRENCE

Oh yes, naturally. I should have known.

NEVIL

This should tell us exactly what it is any...second...now...

He hits a final key. A computer monitor LIGHTS UP, detailed information scrolls up the screen.

NEVIL (CONT'D)

Whoa.

Ronnie moves closer to peer at the monitor.

RONNIE

What is it?

NEVIL

I was right, it's a burial doll, at least fifteen hundred years old. But get this, it was stolen four years ago from a traveling exhibit on it's way to Britain from the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, along with other Roman artifacts.

LAWRENCE

Curious. I believe I have something for you. One moment.

Lawrence exits.

RONNIE

Four years ago? That's when I first saw it in the haunted house! How did it end up there?

Nevil and Ronnie continue reading.

EXT. SOUTH STREET - NIGHT

Quinn and his friends roam another street still full of trick-or-treaters, as of yet uninhabited by the living decorations.

A house across the street plays SPOOKY MUSIC, ANIMATED BATS fly around a STANDING COFFIN; it CREAKS OPEN to reveal DRACULA surrounded by the VAPOR.

DRACULA sits up.

QUINN

Cool.

Quinn steps out into the street to go get a closer look, a friend in a SCREAM GHOST costume yanks him back as a NEWS VAN WHIZZES by.

SCREAM GHOST

Whoa, dude. You almost got flattened.

QUINN

Let's go see where they're going. Maybe we can get on TV!

INT. NEVIL'S HOUSE - WORK LAB - NIGHT

Lawrence returns with a large, heavy tome, titled *ARTIFACTS OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE*.

NEVIL

What's that?

LAWRENCE

This is called a book, Master Nevil.

Lawrence puts the book down on the lab table, a CLOUD OF DUST rises up from it. Nevil waves the dust away.

NEVIL

It's too late for a career in standup, Lawrence.

Lawrence carefully leafs through the pages.

RONNIE

He actually is kind of funny.

NEVIL

Don't encourage him.

LAWRENCE

As I recall...aha, yes.

(taps on a page)

I believe this is your stolen idol.

NEVIL

Incredible. How did you know where to find this?

LAWRENCE

If you'd ever cared to ask, my degree is in library science, with a minor in Greek and Roman antiquities.

NEVIL

Huh.

(reads)

"...unearthed during the construction of a railroad in the late nineteenth century. Roman folklore contends the artifact houses the spirit of Lucius Cornelius Scipio, an outcast from a noble Roman family in the fifth century CE.

(MORE)

NEVIL (CONT'D)

Lucius fell from grace after blinding his sister, Lucia, in a jealous rage."

RONNIE

See! I knew it was evil.

NEVIL

(continues reading)

"The siblings died together in a questionable accident a year later. While Lucia was heralded in death, and indeed later canonized as the patron saint of the blind, Lucius' body was burned and his ashes placed in this grotesque effigy and buried, dishonored, in an unmarked grave."

Hercules jumps up to join them, puts his front paws on the table. He hits the TV REMOTE; the channels switch, it lands on a local affiliate.

Lawrence waves Hercules away.

LAWRENCE

Go. Down. Shoo.

The TV catches Ronnie's attention.

RONNIE

Hey, turn that up!

Nevil locates the remote, ups the volume.

EXT. WOOD STREET - NIGHT

A local news REPORTER - female, 40s - gives a live report from the sidewalk in front of a row of houses. A CAMERA OPERATOR films her.

An EYEWITNESS - male, 40s - stands next to the reporter. He smiles nervously, shifts back and forth. Several costumed kids wave, make faces at the camera from behind them.

The Camera Operator pans the scene, then focuses on the reporter.

REPORTER

...apparently, local authorities initially dismissed the reports as a Halloween prank, but an anonymous source tells us the calls are now pouring in by the dozens, all with similar descriptions. We're here live with an eyewitness. Sir, tell us what you saw-

She holds the microphone out to the Eyewitness. The Camera Operator pans to him.

A SCORCHED SCARECROW with a large evil pumpkin head stands with its arm around the Eyewitness, now frozen. All the kids behind them are frozen too.

The scarecrow smiles at the reporter, one of its recorded sayings plays in a crackling voice:

SCORCHED SCARECROW

I'm looking for some ripe souls to roast over my embers until ready to eat.

The reporter screams, drops the microphone. The Scorched Scarecrow reaches out for her. A large group of LIVING DECORATIONS stream out from behind the frozen kids.

The Camera Operator runs for the news van.

INSERT

The TV broadcast cuts out, the screen BEEPS and goes blank.

LAWRENCE

Well now, that does seem to be a bit of a sticky wicket.

BACK TO SCENE

The NEWS VAN fishtails down the street with a loud SCREECH. The swarm of LIVING DECORATIONS, led by the VAPOR, follow it, leave the frozen humans in their wake.

Quinn rises slowly from amongst his frozen friends and neighbors, runs in the opposite direction as fast as he can.

INT. NEVIL'S HOUSE - WORK LAB - NIGHT

Lawrence heads for the door.

NEVIL
Where are you going?

LAWRENCE
To make tea.

NEVIL
At a time like this? That's your
solution? Make tea?

LAWRENCE
Do you have a better idea at the
moment?

Nevil's mouth opens, but he has nothing.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
Precisely. I'll be back.

Lawrence's dress shoes CLICK on the hard floor as he exits.

EXT. LOCUST STREET - NIGHT

Quinn, out of breath, ducks behind a dense hedge in someone's front yard.

With trembling hands, he pulls the phone from his pocket, hits 9-1-1. The phone plays ERROR TONES and the message "...all circuits are currently busy..."

He hangs up, calls Cheryl; it goes to voicemail: "Hi, it's the Vances..." He shouts into the phone:

QUINN
Mom! Mom, where are you? Call back!

He notices the voicemail, listens to the message, hits the call button.

INTERCUT WORK LAB/LOCUST STREET

Nevil's cell RINGS.

NEVIL
Hello?

QUINN
Hello? Who is this?

NEVIL
Nevil. Who is this?

Ronnie gasps, snatches the phone from Nevil.

RONNIE
That's probably my brother!
(into the phone)
Hello? Quinn?

She realizes the phone is upside down, hurriedly turns it around.

RONNIE (CONT'D)
Quinn? Is that you?

QUINN
Ronnie! Where are you?

RONNIE
I'm at my friend Nevil's house.
Where are you?

Quinn glances around.

QUINN
I'm not sure, I've been running--

RONNIE
Are you all right? Where's Mom and Dad? And Isla?

QUINN
I don't know. Mom's not answering her phone and then I got your message...something really weird is happening.

RONNIE
I know, it's too much to explain now, but Grandma's frozen and Nevil, he's a scientist, well his parents are, well they're not here right now but, we're trying to figure it out. Just get somewhere safe and stay away from all the Halloween decorations -- and the green cloud!

Ronnie disconnects, turns to Nevil in distress.

RONNIE (CONT'D)
There's got to be something we can do! What else did that specter-thingy say?

Nevil scrolls through the information, Ronnie leans in.

NEVIL

Let's see...

(paraphrases)

...it was part of an exhibit entitled "Sinners and Saints" relating to burial traditions and beliefs. The collection spanned several centuries and included artifacts from cultures around the world. The theft is believed to have occurred when the pieces were being prepared for transport to the exhibit's next destination in London. In all, five items were taken--

CLOSE ON:

Monitor screen. Slide show of the stolen artifacts. The first picture is of the IDOL that was in Ronnie's backpack. The fourth picture shows the MARBLE IDOL from the haunted house.

BACK TO SCENE

Ronnie grabs Nevil's arm.

RONNIE

Wait, stop! I think I've seen that.

NEVIL

You have? Where?

She thinks, looks at the IDOL.

RONNIE

Yes, it's in the haunted house too! I saw it just before I saw that thing. If the spirit of Lucius was in the mean idol, maybe the spirit of Lucia is in the nice idol. Maybe it could help us.

NEVIL

How?

RONNIE

I don't know, but think about it. The spirit of Lucius is only animating the mean, scary decorations. None of the nice, happy decorations are coming to life.

(MORE)

RONNIE (CONT'D)

If Lucia could make the friendly decorations come alive, they could us help us fight the mean ones.

NEVIL

Well, we've never seen a wormhole but we believe they exist. I suppose anything's possible at this point. I'll call Principal Cantrell and get him to meet us at the school to open the haunted house.

He grabs his phone off the table, punches a button.

RONNIE

You have Principal Cantrell on speed dial?

NEVIL

My parents gave the school a sizable donation.

He puts it on speaker. Phone RINGS and RINGS.

RONNIE

Come on, answer...

EXT. PRINCIPAL CANTRELL'S HOUSE - PORCH - NIGHT

Principal Cantrell stands frozen in his open front doorway, his mouth open in a silent yell. His phone BUZZES in his shirt pocket.

A ZOMBIE GORILLA plucks it from the principal's pocket, answers it.

ZOMBIE GORILLA

Ooo ooo ooo ooo waaaaaaaah!

INT. NEVIL'S HOUSE - WORK LAB - NIGHT

A high pitched SCREAM from the Zombie Gorilla comes through the speaker.

Nevil grimaces, disconnects the call.

NEVIL

Well, there goes that idea.

RONNIE

I can't believe I'm going to say this, but we're just going to have to break in and get it.

NEVIL

Trick-or-treating, the extreme edition. Let's roll.

He heads for the door. Lawrence enters with a tea tray.

NEVIL (CONT'D)

Lawrence, ditch the tea, we've got an idea.

Lawrence puts the tray down, takes a teacup and saucer, drinks it on the way out.

INT. NEWS VAN - MOVING - NIGHT

The Camera Operator SKIDS around a corner, fights for control of the vehicle. He checks the side mirrors, the coast is clear. He relaxes slightly, looks forward out the front windshield.

A VAMPIRE BAT with an 8-foot wingspan lands on the front windshield with a loud SPLAT. The Camera Operator screams.

INT. NEVIL'S HOUSE - GARAGE - NIGHT

Nevil opens the driver's door to a TESLA MODEL Y, steps one foot in. Lawrence arches an eyebrow.

LAWRENCE

Ahem.

NEVIL

Oh, did you want to drive?

LAWRENCE

Preferably.

Ronnie opens a rear door for her and Hercules as Nevil runs around to the front passenger seat. The GARAGE LIGHTS CLICK OFF, they're plunged into darkness.

NEVIL

That's probably not a good sign.

EXT. STATE STREET - NIGHT

The news van is smashed into an electric transformer; it SPARKS and SIZZLES. The Camera Operator is frozen mid-scream, his eyes open wide.

The VAMPIRE BAT flies away into the night.

INT. TESLA - MOVING - NIGHT

Lawrence backs the car out of the garage. All the street lights are out, houses are dark.

LAWRENCE

Are we making it up as we go, or is there an actual plan?

Ronnie leans forward.

RONNIE

Yes. Drive like hell and don't stop for anything.

Nevil gives her a look of surprised admiration.

LAWRENCE

As you wish.

Lawrence PEELS OUT the driveway.

EXT. GUARD GATE - NIGHT

The automatic gate doesn't open at the Tesla's approach, the car SCREECHES to a stop.

Kevin steps out from the guard shack with a flashlight.

INTERCUT TESLA/GUARD GATE

Lawrence lowers the driver's window.

KEVIN

Good evening, Mr. Waters. Sorry about the gate. We seem to be having a power outage.

LAWRENCE

How astute of you to notice. Do you think perhaps I could trouble you to open it for us?

KEVIN

Sure, right. Just a moment, I'll
have to activate the manual lever.

Kevin flips a switch, pushes on the gate to open it - a slow process. Ronnie bites her nails as they wait.

RONNIE

Open, open, open.

Lawrence glances in the rearview mirror, a GROUP OF LIVE DECORATIONS heads their way. He calls to Kevin:

LAWRENCE

A bit of haste would be in order.

Kevin waves at him, continues at the same speed, the gate now halfway open.

KEVIN

Probably some kids up to no good.
Have you out in a jiffy!

Nevil glances out the window to his right - more LIVE DECORATIONS.

NEVIL

Uh...

Ronnie looks out the window to her left - even more LIVE DECORATIONS.

RONNIE

Lawrence...

LAWRENCE

I see them.

The three groups of LIVE DECORATIONS GET CLOSER AND CLOSER, the gate now three-quarters open.

NEVIL

Lawrence...

Closer. Ronnie and Nevil scream together:

RONNIE/NEVIL

Lawrence!

LAWRENCE

I'm not damaging the car.

At last there is enough room to get through, Kevin gives a thumbs up.

KEVIN

Got it!

Lawrence rolls the car up to Kevin.

LAWRENCE

Get inside, lock the door, and
hide.

The Tesla takes off. Kevin finally notices the decorations,
drops the flashlight.

END INTERCUT

INT. TESLA - MOVING - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Ronnie and Nevil look back to see Kevin dive inside the guard
shack. Ronnie hugs Hercules close.

Every street they pass is devoid of movement; dozens of
costumed kids and parents frozen in place, the landscape
dotted with COLORED LIGHTS from safety glo-sticks.

RONNIE

What if they've made it to the
school?

They exchange uneasy glances, no one answers. Outside,
unseen, the VAPOR trails behind them.

EXT. BARKER CREEK ELEMENTARY - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

The Tesla pulls up to the gated entrance. Everyone hops out
of the car. Lawrence carries a flashlight.

Ronnie pulls on the gates.

RONNIE

Locked.

NEVIL

Now what?

RONNIE

Up and over.

She grabs at the gate.

LAWRENCE

Not in this suit.

Hercules BARKS at Ronnie, jumps up; it's too high.

NEVIL

I doubt you could make it over
anyway.

LAWRENCE

I beg your pardon--

RONNIE

Hercules, stay here with Lawrence.
Bark if you see anything.

Hercules gives two short BARKS in agreement. Ronnie and Nevil scramble over the gate. Lawrence hands Nevil the flashlight through the bars.

LAWRENCE

Do be careful, Master Nevil.

EXT. BARKER CREEK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - YARD - NIGHT

Ronnie and Nevil run across the blacktop to the haunted house. Ronnie hesitates at the sight of all the signs outside it: "*Beware!*" "*Enter if you dare!*" "*Haunted area, do not enter!*"

Nevil tries the door handle. Locked.

NEVIL

How're we getting in?

He goes left, Ronnie goes right, they search the perimeter.

Ronnie circles back, notices the front window has a one-inch opening. She tugs on it; it doesn't budge.

She spots a janitor's mop in a bucket by the restroom. Using the stick end for leverage, she pries the window open, takes a deep breath, shimmies through.

Nevil wanders back around.

NEVIL (CONT'D)

Ronnie? Ronnie! Where did you go?

The front door of the haunted house opens. Rubber snakes hang from the doorframe like beaded curtains. Ronnie fights her way through them.

RONNIE

Nevil!

He spins around, screams. Frightened, Ronnie looks around for the threat, the snakes swing on either side of her head.

RONNIE (CONT'D)

What is it?

Nevil exhales loudly.

NEVIL

Whew. Sorry. I thought you were a live Medusa there for a second.

INT. BARKER CREEK ELEMENTARY - HAUNTED HOUSE - NIGHT

A FLASHLIGHT BEAM clicks on. Nevil sweeps the light across the first section, the entry, with Ronnie close behind him.

They move forward, right onto a floormat activated by their steps. It lets out a BLOODCURDLING SCREAM.

Ronnie jumps back, ready to bolt out the door. She steps on another mat that lets out a MANIACAL LAUGH. Yet another says "*Beware, beware!*" in a spooky voice.

Ronnie spins around in terror, bumps into a motion-activated CREEPY BUTLER; it says "*Good evening, may I take your head?*"

Ronnie screams. Nevil puts a hand on her arm.

NEVIL

It's not real. It's okay.

Ronnie bites her lip to keep from crying.

NEVIL (CONT'D)

Just follow me.

EXT. BARKER CREEK ELEMENTARY - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Lawrence and Hercules stand watch at the gate. Hercules puts a paw on Lawrence's leg.

LAWRENCE

I know. They'll be all right.

He pets the top of Hercules' head.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)

Don't tell anyone I did that.

Hercules enjoys the head rub, then suddenly lets out a LOW GROWL. Lawrence turns around.

The VAPOR, glowing in the night sky, heads towards them, followed by the growing troop of decorations.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)

Oh dear.

Hercules growl turns into a FEROCIOUS BARK, he squeezes under the gate, runs into the school yard. Lawrence yells out:

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)

Master Nevil! Hurry!

INT. BARKER CREEK ELEMENTARY - HAUNTED HOUSE - NIGHT

Ronnie and Nevil move into the next section, the living room. A motion-activated RABID DOG lunges at them, GROWLS and SNAPS its jaws, fangs red with blood.

Ronnie screams, grabs at Nevil.

NEVIL

It's okay, it's just got a motion sensor. It's not alive. See?

Nevil waves his hand in front of the dog, it lunges again. Ronnie nods. They move further in. An motion-activated SEVERED HAND skitters by. A CREEPY DOLL rotates its head 360-degrees.

INT. TESLA - NIGHT

Lawrence gets in, locks the door. He observes the approaching decorations in the rear view mirror. He straightens his ascot.

LAWRENCE

This should be most interesting.

EXT. BARKER CREEK ELEMENTARY - YARD - NIGHT

Hercules runs through the school, BARKS furiously.

INT. BARKER CREEK ELEMENTARY - HAUNTED HOUSE - NIGHT

Ronnie and Nevil enter the kitchen section. The open pantry hosts an array of ingredients in glass jars including EYEBALLS, COCKROACHES, and BLOODY FINGERS.

Ronnie stops, cocks her head. She pulls on Nevil's arm.

NEVIL

What is it?

RONNIE
Hercules. Something's wrong. We
need to hurry.

NEVIL
You go left, I'll go right. It'll
be quicker if we split up.

Ronnie hesitates.

NEVIL (CONT'D)
You can do it. Here. You take the
flashlight, I'll use my phone.

They go in opposite directions. Ronnie swings the flashlight
around desperately. Hercules' BARK gets closer. Nevil calls
out:

NEVIL (O.C.) (CONT'D)
Anything?

RONNIE
Not yet!

NEVIL (O.C.)
Keep looking!

RONNIE
What do you think I'm doing!

Ronnie keeps going, fights her way through HANGING GHOSTS,
enters the bedroom section.

RONNIE (CONT'D)
(to herself)
Wait, this looks familiar.

She shines the LIGHT all around the area, steps in front of
the mantle. She catches her REFLECTION in the changing
mirror, screams.

INSERT

The VAPOR swirls in under the front door of the haunted
house.

BACK TO SCENE

Nevil calls out from another area:

NEVIL (O.S.)
Ronnie! Are you okay?

Ronnie lifts the MARBLE IDOL off the mantle, gazes at it with reverence, then yells out:

RONNIE
I'm okay! I got it! Let's get out
of here!

She winds through the rest of the maze to the back door. Several CRASH SOUNDS later, Nevil appears.

NEVIL
You got it? That's it?

Ronnie nods, shows him.

NEVIL (CONT'D)
Well, what are we waiting for then?

He pushes open the back door. About ONE HUNDRED LIVING DECORATIONS cover the blacktop.

NEVIL (CONT'D)
Nope. No good.

He SLAMS the door shut.

NEVIL (CONT'D)
To the front!

EXT. BARKER CREEK ELEMENTARY - HAUNTED HOUSE - NIGHT

Hercules SCRATCHES repeatedly at the front door, jumps up at the handle, tries to push it down to open the door.

INT. BARKER CREEK ELEMENTARY - HAUNTED HOUSE - NIGHT

Ronnie and Nevil weave through the different areas to get to the front, set off a CACOPHONY OF MOTION-ACTIVATED DECORATIONS along the way.

They make it to the entry section, skid to a halt.

The VAPOR hovers mid-air, the CREEPY BUTLER and the SNAKES hanging in the doorframe now alive.

NEVIL
Aw sh--

The front door BURSTS open, knocks over the butler. Hercules rushes in with teeth bared, BARKS. The VAPOR darts to the ceiling.

NEVIL
Legally, I said. Legally.

He puts the car in drive.

RONNIE
Wait--Hercules!

She puts her hand on the button to open the door.

NEVIL
Don't--

Hercules JUMPS up outside the window -- Ronnie and Nevil's screams quickly replaced with sighs of relief.

Ronnie opens the door, Hercules leaps in. She wraps her arms around him.

Nevil takes off, the car fishtails out of the parking lot.

INT./EXT. TESLA - MOVING - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

From the back seat, Ronnie and Hercules attempt to steady themselves as they toss about from Nevil's erratic driving.

Outside, the town is still. They pass scores of frozen kids and parents.

RONNIE
Look out!

Nevil swerves to avoid a group frozen in the street, goes up on the curb, swerves back onto the road.

RONNIE (CONT'D)
Ugh, I think I'm going to be sick.

She puts a hand to her mouth, holds in a vurp.

RONNIE (CONT'D)
Gross.
(looks out)
Where are we going?

NEVIL
Back to my house. We have a safe room.

He blows through a STOP SIGN. Glances at Lawrence with tears in his eyes.

NEVIL (CONT'D)
Is he...is he...dead?

Ronnie leans forward, gently pokes at Lawrence's face.

RONNIE
He's still warm to the touch.

She puts two fingers on his carotid artery.

RONNIE (CONT'D)
He has a pulse.

Nevil tries to wipe away a tear unseen. Ronnie pats Nevil's shoulder.

RONNIE (CONT'D)
He's going to be okay. We're gonna figure it out.

Nevil takes a corner too fast, the car SKIDS around it straight towards a massive GROUP OF LIVING DECORATIONS in the center of the street.

RONNIE (CONT'D)
Watch out!

Nevil cuts a hard left to avoid them, crashes into a planter in the median, hangs up the bumper. He GUNS THE ENGINE, but the wheels just spin.

Ronnie whirls around to look out the back windshield, the DECORATIONS ADVANCE.

RONNIE (CONT'D)
Reverse! Reverse! Reserve!

Nevil gets it in gear, backs up as fast as he can manage. They plow through the crowd of decorations, then Nevil flips a 180 and they take off.

NEVIL
That was a close one.

RONNIE
I need some air.

Ronnie lowers the window, sticks her head out. Does a double-take at the HEADLESS HORSEMAN galloping alongside them at sixty miles an hour.

Ronnie SCREAMS, Nevil looks over and SCREAMS, the Headless Horseman SCREAMS back at them.

Hercules sticks his head out the window and BARKS menacingly. The HORSE rears up, THROWS THE HORSEMAN. The Tesla speeds off into the night.

INSERT

The Headless Horseman lies still in the road. The VAPOR passes over it, dives down and swirls around it. The Horseman rises, gets back on its horse, joins the army of other LIVING DECORATIONS.

BACK TO SCENE

EXT./INT. TESLA - MOVING - NIGHT

The car flies over the hill towards Nevil's gated community. They're airborne for a few seconds, land hard. Ronnie GRUNTS.

RONNIE
Who taught you how to drive?

NEVIL
Nobody, I taught myself.

RONNIE
It shows.
(she points)
Look, the exit gate's still open.

Nevil veers left.

In the GUARD SHACK, Kevin pops his head up, then quickly back down as they zoom past.

The VAPOR flies overhead, shoots ahead of them and is gone in a flash.

NEVIL
Did you see that?

Ronnie sticks her head out the window, searches.

RONNIE
Where did it go?

Seconds later the VAPOR returns, heads towards them leading not just one, but THREE TWELVE-FOOT SKELETONS.

RONNIE (CONT'D)
Reverse! Reverse!

NEVIL
Why did everyone pick that
decoration this year?

The car keeps moving forward.

RONNIE
Reverse already!

NEVIL
I'm trying!

He hits the brakes with a jolt, speeds backwards, the car swings wildly side to side.

KEVIN PEEKS OUT the guard shack window, sees the car heading straight for him, SCREAMS. The Tesla hits the guard station with a BANG.

NEVIL (CONT'D)
Oh man! My parents are going to
kill me when they see this.

RONNIE
I think they'll forgive you under
the circumstances. Go!

Nevil flips a U-turn, races away.

EXT. MARIGOLD STREET - NIGHT

Quinn moves quietly, stays in the shadows. He checks the frozen people he passes for signs of his family.

He ducks behind a planter, pulls out his cell, hits a button.

QUINN
Come on, Mom. Answer.

He hears a familiar RING TONE, sees a LIGHT across the street. His face falls.

INT. TESLA - MOVING - NIGHT

Ronnie and Nevil drive in silence. No signs of movement, frozen people everywhere they pass.

Ronnie holds up the MARBLE IDOL.

RONNIE
Should we open it?

NEVIL
Let's get somewhere safe first.

RONNIE
Safe, where's that?

NEVIL
My parents' lab.

RONNIE
I thought that was in your house.
We can't get back there.

NEVIL
No, their real lab.

INT. VARMA LABS - PARKING STRUCTURE - NIGHT

The Tesla pulls into the lighted underground structure, promptly HITS a concrete pillar, a front tire flattens with a WHOOSH. A solid metal gate closes and locks behind them.

Ronnie and Nevil cautiously open their car doors, exit the vehicle. Hercules leaps out.

RONNIE
I think we lost it. For now.
(notices the lights)
Is the power back on?

NEVIL
(shakes his head)
This whole place runs on solar,
with a backup generator if needed.

Nevil uses his phone to unlock the glass entrance doors.

NEVIL (CONT'D)
Could you hold the door? I'll be
right back.

He goes inside the building, returns in seconds with a rolling office chair, wheels it to the car.

NEVIL (CONT'D)
Let's get him in the chair.

INT. VARMA LABS - ELEVATOR - NIGHT

Ronnie and Nevil stand on either side of Lawrence, askew in the rolling chair. Ronnie clutches the MARBLE IDOL.

Lawrence's hair is a mess, a HOLE TORN in the knee of his suit, DIRT SMUDGED on his face. Hercules rests his head in his lap, gives a soft WHINE.

Ronnie and Nevil don't look at each other.

NEVIL
Do not ever tell him wha--

RONNIE
My lips are sealed.

The elevator DINGS.

INT. VARMA LABS - RECEPTION AREA - NIGHT

The place is dark and silent, except for the chair's SQUEAKING WHEELS as Nevil pushes Lawrence down the hall.

Automatic lights turn on as they pass. Nevil stops in front of a large, glass-walled room.

INT. VARMA LABS - CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Nevil wheels Lawrence over to a long leather couch.

NEVIL
Let's get him on the couch.

Ronnie gives him a "*are you out of your mind?*" look.

NEVIL (CONT'D)
Right. We'll just leave him in the chair. Do you think...Hercules could stay with him?

Ronnie kneels down, pets Hercules.

RONNIE
Hercules, stay. Protect Lawrence.
Good boy.

Hercules gives a SHORT BARK.

Nevil pulls a blanket off the end of the couch, tenderly covers Lawrence with it. Lingers for a second, then turns around.

NEVIL
Follow me.

EXT. MARIGOLD STREET - NIGHT

Quinn stands next to his frozen parents. No sign of Isla.

QUINN
 (loud whisper)
 Isla! Isla, are you here?

He makes his way down the street through the FROZEN TRICK-OR-TREATERS, searches for her.

QUINN (CONT'D)
 Isla, where are you?

INT. VARMA LABS - QUANTUM LAB - NIGHT

A large, golden QUANTUM computer takes up the center of the room. Long tables and desks laden with monitors, keyboards, and other scientific equipment line the walls.

RONNIE
 Whoa. What is all this?

NEVIL
 It's a QUANTUM lab.

Ronnie picks up a book from a desk entitled "*To the Metaverse and Beyond*". She flips it over to the authors' photos, reads:

RONNIE
 "Drs. Shivneel and Arushi Varma."
 Your parents wrote this?

NEVIL
 Among others. Theoretical
 physicists with an emphasis on
 parallel universes.

RONNIE
 My dad's a gym teacher.
 (shrugs)
 He's pretty smart though.

NEVIL
 And he's home every day I bet.

RONNIE
 Well, yeah.

NEVIL
 My parents are pretty much always
 traveling the world because of
 their research.

(MORE)

NEVIL (CONT'D)

I used to go with them wherever they went, but then last summer they decided I should experience a "typical childhood" and we came here. But my parents still travel all the time.

RONNIE

A butler and a mansion are a typical childhood?

NEVIL

(shrugs)

Lawrence has been with my dad's family since he was a kid.

RONNIE

You care about him.

NEVIL

Who? My dad?

RONNIE

(shakes her head)

Lawrence.

NEVIL

He's always taken care of me when my parents were working.

He pulls a two-inch figurine out of his pocket.

RONNIE

What's that?

Nevil sets the figurine - a tiny mouse wearing a sheet with eyes and mouth cut out and holding a classic pumpkin trick-or-treat bucket - on the table.

NEVIL

This is Boo Mouse. Lawrence gave him to me when I was four. Halloween isn't really celebrated in India, we fast and offer special prayers, but Lawrence knew I wanted to go trick-or-treating like kids in other places, so he...anyway, let's see what we've got here.

He indicates the MARBLE IDOL. Ronnie hands it to him, he places it on a glass platform, adjusts pieces of equipment around it.

RONNIE
Is that another spectrometer?

NEVIL
You're learning. No, this is for
hyperspectral imaging.

Nevil types on a keyboard.

RONNIE
Uh...translation?

NEVIL
It can take a picture of energy,
basically. Look.

Points at the computer screen; it looks like a topographic
map in metallic yellows, greens, blues, and pinks.

RONNIE
What am I looking at?

NEVIL
I don't know exactly, but there's
definitely something inside the
idol that's different from the idol
itself.

RONNIE
So it's Lucia.

NEVIL
We hope.

RONNIE
Well, what else could it be? Let's
open it and get her out.

She grabs for it. Nevil grabs it back.

NEVIL
Don't break it, that's a priceless
artifact.

Ronnie takes hold of the idol again, Nevil doesn't let go.
Tug-of-war ensues.

RONNIE
We're all going to be priceless
artifacts if we don't open it.

NEVIL
I thought you were the one who was
scared of everything.

RONNIE

And I thought you were the
scientist.

Their game of tug-of-war activates a SECRET COMPARTMENT and
the GOLD SQUARES covering the idol's eyes open.

The spirit of LUCIA, an iridescent shimmering vapor in a
vaguely human form, wafts out, unseen by Ronnie and Nevil as
they continue to argue.

NEVIL

I'm telling you, we have to
approach this scientifically. We
can't just destroy a piece of
history until we have all the
facts.

RONNIE

And I'm telling you we need to act
now and super glue later.

Lucia brings BOO MOUSE to life. It wiggles its ears, nose,
feet, gives a little a yawn.

BOO MOUSE

Boo!

Ronnie and Nevil don't pay any attention. Hercules tilts his
head.

RONNIE

I'm the one who found her in the
haunted house.

BOO MOUSE

(a little louder)

Boo!

Hercules paws at Ronnie.

RONNIE

Not now, Hercules. We have to
figure out how to get Lucia out of
here.

NEVIL

And I'm the one who--

BOO MOUSE

(as loud as it can)

Boo!

Boo Mouse takes a few tiny steps towards them, points up.

BOO MOUSE (CONT'D)

Boo!

Ronnie and Nevil spin their heads towards Boo Mouse, then each other, then up. Lucia's beautiful, glowing form spreads a warm light over them.

RONNIE

Lucia?

EXT. MAIN STREET - NIGHT

Quinn rounds a corner where the crashed news van rests. Directly opposite, the ARMY OF LIVING DECORATIONS approaches. Quinn hurriedly SLIDES underneath the van, hugs the ground.

The ZOMBIE GORILLA hops on top of the van, jumps up and down, beats its chest.

ZOMBIE GORILLA

Ooo, ooo, ooo.

Quinn tries to flatten himself even more to avoid being crushed.

Zombie Gorilla hops off, its feet land inches from Quinn's face. It ambles on.

Quinn raises up slightly, the van ROCKS BACK AND FORTH as SKELLY pushes on it, then PUSHES IT OVER.

Quinn scrambles backwards, ducks down behind the TRANSFORMER, still throwing SPARKS.

The army marches away. Quinn peers over the transformer - the VAPOR leads them away from the houses towards the center of town.

Quinn follows, takes care not to be discovered.

INT. VARMA LABS - QUANTUM LAB - NIGHT

Lucia swirls gently around Ronnie and Nevil, envelops them in a soft glow. They look on in wonder. Ronnie moves her hand through the light.

The shape of a SHIMMERING ARM materializes in the vapor, strokes Ronnie's hair. Ronnie delights in the sensation.

RONNIE

It feels like...

NEVIL
Family. It feels like family.

Ronnie smiles at him, turns to Lucia.

RONNIE
Lucia, can you help us stop Lucius?
It's Lucius, right? Your brother
that's making all the decorations
come to life? Our families, our
neighbors, they need you.

Lucia doesn't make a sound, SWIRLS AROUND Boo Mouse. Boo Mouse tap dances forward to Nevil's PHONE lying face-down on the table.

BOO MOUSE
Boo.

NEVIL
Not now, Boo Mouse.

BOO MOUSE
Boo!

Boo Mouse jumps up and down on the phone.

NEVIL
Hey!

RONNIE
I think it wants to use the phone.

NEVIL
That's implausible, it's a mouse.

RONNIE
This whole evening is implausible--
what does implausible mean?

NEVIL
It means you need to read more.

RONNIE
Well, excuse me, Mr. Smarty Pants--

Boo Mouse jumps on the phone again.

BOO MOUSE
Boo! Boo! Boo!

NEVIL
You win.

Nevil flips the phone over, unlocks it.

Boo Mouse types on phone with its tiny feet, jumps off. Nevil and Ronnie lean in to the screen.

NEVIL (CONT'D)
 (reads)
 "You must capture the spirit of
 Lucius."

RONNIE
 How do we do that?

Boo Mouse hops on the phone again, types.

NEVIL
 (continues to read)
 "Tonight is the festival of
 Lemuria, when the angry dead return
 to haunt the living."

RONNIE
 Why is Lucius so angry?

Boo Mouse's tiny feet move in a blur over the phone.

RONNIE (CONT'D)
 (reads)
 "The spirit must be contained by
 midnight, or the havoc wrecked
 cannot be undone."
 (reads again)
 "The havoc wrecked cannot be
 undone."
 (gasps in realization)
 It can't be undone, it can't be
 undone. Oh no! That means they'll
 stay that way! What time is it now?

Nevil checks the phone.

NEVIL
 It's ten-oh-two! We've got just
 under two hours left. We need a
 plan. And fast.

EXT. MAIN STREET - NIGHT

Quinn keeps the decoration army in sight, but remains a safe distance back. He punches a button on his cell, puts it to his ear.

QUINN

Ronnie! What's going on? That cloud thing has a whole army of decorations now.

RONNIE (V.O.)

I know, we're trying to think of something!

QUINN

It's moving towards town square, I'm going to follow it.

RONNIE (V.O.)

Be careful, Quinn! Don't let it see you.

QUINN

I won't.

RONNIE (V.O.)

Any sign of Mom and Dad? Isla?

QUINN

(hesitates)

No. I haven't seen them.

RONNIE (V.O.)

Okay, good. Maybe they're okay. Let us know where it goes. We'll meet up with you when we have a plan.

QUINN

Okay. Ronnie--

He takes in all the FROZEN PEOPLE, two CRASHED POLICE CARS, their RED AND BLUE LIGHTS WHIRL.

RONNIE (V.O.)

Yes?

QUINN

You gotta come up with something, okay? Or else I don't know what...

RONNIE (V.O.)

I know. We will.

INT. VARMA LABS - ELEVATOR - NIGHT

Nevil and Ronnie rush in, Nevil hits the "P" button repeatedly.

He and Ronnie now wear ZOMBIE COSTUMES. Boo Mouse sits on Nevil's shoulder, Lucia floats above their heads.

NEVIL

Come on, come on, come on.

RONNIE

What time is it?

Nevil consults his phone.

NEVIL

Ten fifty-one. Thank goodness for high speed 3-D printers.

The doors close.

RONNIE

Is this really our best plan? We're just going to march out there in these costumes and--

NEVIL

They're not costumes, they're decoy decorations. We need to blend in.

RONNIE

Oh, excuse me--"decoy decorations."

NEVIL

Like you said, Lucia can bring all the friendly decorations to life and they can run interference for us. Lucius won't know we're human, he'll think we're part of his decoration army. That way we can get close to him and grab him.

RONNIE

You're talking about it like it's a person. We can't just "grab" it, it's a spirit!

NEVIL

Okay, I haven't totally thought through that part yet but, do you have a better idea? I can't let Lawrence be stuck like that forever, not to mention the fact that the whole world will be taken over by zombie decorations and we'll all be put out on the lawn every holiday.

RONNIE

But we can't put it back in the idol, because the idol's cracked, and we left it at your house and don't have time to go back and get it anyway. We need another container, but what kind of container? And how do we get it in the container?

NEVIL

Get ahold of yourself, you're starting to panic. Zombies aren't supposed to panic.

RONNIE

Starting? I've been panicking all day!

NEVIL

Boo Mouse, any ideas?

BOO MOUSE

(shrugs)

Boo.

RONNIE

Great.

NEVIL

Let's just get the friendly decorations to life first, we'll figure it out from there.

INT. VARMA LABS - PARKING STRUCTURE - NIGHT

Ronnie kicks the flat tire on the Tesla. Nevil hops out from the driver's seat.

RONNIE

Well, we're not going anywhere in this!

NEVIL

Battery's dead anyway.

RONNIE

We're running out of time!

NEVIL

Over here.

He indicates a bank of electric scooters lined up against a wall.

Ronnie and Nevil pick a scooter, buckle on helmets over their zombie heads. Nevil places Boo Mouse in his shirt pocket.

NEVIL (CONT'D)
You'll be safer in here.

BOO MOUSE
Boo.

RONNIE
Quinn said the army was headed
towards Town Center.

NEVIL
That's good for us, since it's away
from all the houses. The coast
should be clear. We can go street
by street in the neighborhood.

The gate opens, they ZOOM out to the street. Boo Mouse pops his head out of Nevil's pocket.

BOO MOUSE
Boo!

MONTAGE - VARIOUS STREETS - NIGHT

-- Ronnie and Nevil desperately search street by street to locate friendly decorations for Lucia to bring to life, very few houses have any.

-- The FRIENDLY DECORATIONS tag jovially along behind them as they are brought to life.

-- Ronnie checks the faces of the frozen people they pass for her family.

-- Quinn stealthily follows the VAPOR.

-- Nevil checks the time on his phone, his face grim. Ronnie catches his expression, speeds up.

-- Ronnie and Nevil zoom down Ronnie's street towards her house. Ronnie looks over at Harriet, still frozen in Darren's yard.

-- Lucia brings all of the decorations at Ronnie's house to life.

-- Quinn reaches the edge of Town Center. The power is on in this section of town. In the distance, a lighted store sign for "THE SPIRIT SHOPPE".

-- Ronnie and Nevil survey their group of friendly decorations - a very small collection of SMILING GHOSTS, WITCHES, AND SKELETONS.

END MONTAGE

EXT. TOWN CENTER - NIGHT

Quinn watches the decoration army march towards The Spirit Shoppe. He whips out his phone, punches a button.

EXT. RONNIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The group of FRIENDLY DECORATIONS chat excitedly with one another on the front lawn, like kids on a field trip. Ronnie moves through them to do a head count.

A SMILING FRANKENSTEIN approaches a SKELETON BALANCING THREE HAPPY PUMPKINS.

SMILING FRANKENSTEIN
You look like you could use some
assistance there, little fella!

Smiling Frankenstein takes two of the pumpkins.

RONNIE
Thirty-one, thirty-two...thirty-
three.
(to Nevil)
Thirty-three.

Boo Mouse, on Nevil's shoulder, puts its hands on its hips.

BOO MOUSE
Boo!

RONNIE
Thirty-four. Sorry, Boo Mouse.

BOO MOUSE
Boo.

Nevil's cell RINGS. He checks the number, hands it to Ronnie.

RONNIE
Quinn?

INTERCUT TOWN CENTER/RONNIE'S HOUSE

Quinn keeps an eye on the decoration army as he talks.

QUINN

Ronnie! Where are you?

Ronnie puts the phone on SPEAKER.

RONNIE

We're at our house.

QUINN

You need to get here as fast as you can! The vapor is headed for The Spirit Shoppe!

NEVIL

Ohhh, that's very bad. There's got to be hundreds of decorations in there.

RONNIE

You can't let them get to the store! We're already outnumbered as it is. We need more help.

QUINN

I'm going to get ahead of them, try to distract them, but hurry!

END INTERCUT

EXT. RONNIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Ronnie disconnects the call, checks the phone.

RONNIE

Eleven-oh-two. We have time, we can get more!

NEVIL

It'll take us fifteen minutes to get to The Spirit Shoppe. If we take any longer, Quinn...

He trails off.

RONNIE

We don't have enough!

NEVIL

It'll work, we just need to get to Lucius. Lucia can help us distract the others. Now we just need a container!

They quickly search the area for ideas. Ronnie spots a fun-size candy on the ground.

RONNIE

I got it!

She dashes in her house, comes back with their candy jar and her backpack. She dumps out all the candy on the lawn.

The FRIENDLY DECORATIONS light up at the sight of the candy. Those with arms bend down to gather it up.

FRIENDLY DECORATIONS

Candy! Yippee!

RONNIE

Not now!

Their faces fall.

FRIENDLY DECORATIONS

Awwwww...

RONNIE

You can have it later, as much as you want. I promise. But right now, we need to go stand up to some bullies!

FRIENDLY DECORATIONS

Yay!

Ronnie closes the lid on the candy jar, tucks it inside her backpack, hops back on her scooter.

RONNIE

Follow me!

EXT. TOWN CENTER - NIGHT

Quinn races down an alleyway behind the stores, then cuts back to the street.

He crouches down in the bushes, ready to jump out when he spots a four-foot tall PENNYWISE near the middle of the group, on the edge - Isla pretending to be one of the living decorations.

QUINN
 (to himself)
 Wait a minute, I know that clown.

The army advances towards Quinn's hiding spot. Isla appears to march with them, while she falls back with each step to separate herself.

QUINN (CONT'D)
 (loud whisper)
 Isla!

Isla falters, keeps moving. Quinn moves through the bushes to keep pace.

QUINN (CONT'D)
 Isla, it's Quinn!

She turns her head.

ISLA
 Qui--

He reaches out, yanks her into the bushes, puts a hand over her mouth. The rest of the army marches past.

EXT. THE SPIRIT SHOPPE - NIGHT

The ARMY OF LIVING DECORATIONS spreads out along the glass front windows and doors. UN-ANIMATED DECORATIONS stare back at them. The VAPOR searches for a way in.

Quinn and Isla hide in the shadows around the corner of the building, peer around at the army.

QUINN
 You're sure you can do it?

ISLA
 No problem. They already think I'm one of them anyway, they're not very bright.

QUINN
 Let's see where Ronnie is.

Quinn calls, no answer.

QUINN (CONT'D)
 Hopefully that means they're almost here.

ISLA

You really think she's coming? I mean, it's Ronnie...she's afraid of everything. I think it's just you and me, Quinn.

QUINN

Our plan only goes as far as distracting them.

(pause)

She'll be here. She's braver than you give her credit for. Okay, on the count of three, ready?

EXT. MAIN STREET - NIGHT

Ronnie and Nevil lead Lucia and the friendly decorations. First Ronnie's, then Nevil's scooter dies.

RONNIE

No!

(to Nevil)

What's the time?

NEVIL

Eleven twenty. Run!

They take off.

EXT. TOWN CENTER - NIGHT

Ronnie and Nevil reach Town Center with Lucia and their group. They duck back to stay out of sight, survey the scene.

Scores of LIVING DECORATIONS stream out of a BUSTED WINDOW in the front of The Spirit Shoppe, into the street.

RONNIE

We're too late!

She scans the area.

RONNIE (CONT'D)

Where's Quinn?

She spots him a distance away, frozen under a light on the sidewalk.

RONNIE (CONT'D)

Oh no!

She looks back at their meager troop.

RONNIE (CONT'D)

It's never going to work! We can't do it!

NEVIL

We have to try! We can't give up!

Ronnie sinks down on the sidewalk, head in hands. Lucia swirls around her to offer comfort. Boo Mouse crawls out of Nevil's pocket, onto his shoulder.

Isla appears out of the shadows, steps in front of Ronnie.

ISLA

Ronnie?

Ronnie lifts her face, sees Isla, bursts into tears. Isla rushes to her, wraps her arms around her.

ISLA (CONT'D)

You came. You really came.

RONNIE

I thought I could save you, but I can't. It's almost midnight, and then it'll be too late. Everything will stay this way.

ISLA

Quinn held them off for a while, but there were just too many.

She takes in Lucia, all the FRIENDLY DECORATIONS.

ISLA (CONT'D)

You did all this?

Ronnie nods, bereft.

NEVIL

She broke into the haunted house at school and got Lucia here to help us.

ISLA

Quinn was right, you are brave! Mom said sisters stick up for each other and that's what we're gonna do. So what if we're outnumbered. If we're gonna be frozen forever, at least we fight together! I'm just bummed I won't get to ride the e-bike I'm getting for Christmas.

(MORE)

ISLA (CONT'D)

Mom already got it, I saw it down
in the basement.

RONNIE

What did you say?

ISLA

I'm getting an e-bike for
Christmas. Well, I would be if we
weren't all going to be frozen for
eternity.

A thunderbolt hits Ronnie. She jumps up.

RONNIE

I have an idea! Lucia, can you come
with me?

ISLA

What? You can't leave! I just said
you were brave!

NEVIL

Where are you going?

RONNIE

Trust me, I know what to do.

Lucia borrows a BROOMSTICK from one of the friendly witches,
floats it over to Ronnie.

RONNIE (CONT'D)

Wait, I can ride this?

Lucia nods.

NEVIL

That would have been helpful to
know earlier.

RONNIE

How much time do I have?

NEVIL

(consults his phone)
Twenty-nine minutes.

RONNIE

Do whatever you have to, but keep
Lucius here, I'll be back.

She gets on the broom, steadies herself.

RONNIE (CONT'D)

Whoa...

The broom rises in the air.

RONNIE (CONT'D)

And we need an inflatable blower
from the Halloween Store.

(grips the broom tight)

How fast does this thing go?

The broom takes off like a shot, Ronnie's SCREAM fades as she disappears.

Nevil puts Boo Mouse in the palm of his hand, holds him eye level.

NEVIL

We're going to need some help,
buddy. You ready?

BOO MOUSE

Boo!

Nevil addresses the group:

NEVIL

Okay, everyone, listen up. Here's
the plan...

EXT. THE SPIRIT SHOPPE - NIGHT

The army of LIVING DECORATIONS runs back and forth and in circles in the middle of the street, like a football play gone wrong.

Cries of "Mouse, eek!" ring out as BOO MOUSE deftly runs underfoot, leads the VAPOR on a wild chase as it tries to find it amidst the pandemonium.

Nevil and Isla emerge from the melee, back up to the front doors while they pretend to be part of the army.

NEVIL

Oh no! Mouse!

ISLA

Eek! Look out!

Nevil gives a LOUD WHISTLE. The FRIENDLY DECORATIONS emerge from the shadows and advance. Nevil and Isla dash inside.

INT. THE SPIRIT SHOPPE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Nevil and Isla rush through, scan the aisles for a blower.

ISLA
Nothing!

NEVIL
Let's check the stock room!

INT. THE SPIRIT SHOPPE - STOCK ROOM - NIGHT

Nevil and Isla burst in the double doors. They split up, CRASH about, pull items off shelves, run up stock ladders. Isla calls out:

ISLA
Over here!

Nevil catches the time on the PUNCH CLOCK as he passes:
eleven forty-eight PM.

Isla tugs on the box but can't pick it up. Nevil spots a cart, wheels it over.

NEVIL
Help me get it on here.

Isla struggles to lift her end. They get it on the cart, pull on the box to open it; heavy metal staples hinder them.

ISLA
We need to hurry...

NEVIL
I know...

They finally get the box open, turn it on its side to dump out the blower.

ISLA
Go, go, go!

Nevil SLAMS the cart through the double doors.

EXT. THE SPIRIT SHOPPE - NIGHT

The FRIENDLY DECORATIONS fight a valiant battle, but they are hopelessly outnumbered and far too friendly. Pieces of them litter the street.

Nevil and Isla emerge with the blower.

NEVIL

Now what?

ISLA

Do you see Ronnie?

Nevil spies the clock at City Hall: eleven fifty-three PM.

NEVIL

No, and we've only got seven minutes left!

The Zombie Gorilla hops in front of them.

Isla makes an evil face, raises her costumed hands. One of the gloves slips off, reveals her human hand.

ISLA

Whoops.

Zombie Gorilla beats its chest.

ISLA (CONT'D)

Uh oh.

ZOMBIE GORILLA

Oooo oooo oooo waaaah!

It's about to strike when Lucia suddenly appears. She sweeps in, pushes it away with such force it FLIES THROUGH THE AIR several hundred feet, which catches the attention of the VAPOR.

The VAPOR wraps itself around Lucia, she struggles to free herself.

Without Lucia to help, the friendly decorations fall at an alarming rate, until none are left to fight.

The army closes in on Nevil and Isla.

ISLA

Not good.

NEVIL

Nope, definitely not.

Nevil and Isla take steps back towards the store entrance, CRUNCH on broken glass and bits of plastic.

ISLA

Well, nice knowing 'ya, Nevil.

The army is just inches away when a cry from a bullhorn rings out:

RONNIE

Charge!

Everyone stops. Nevil and Isla look up, the ARMY TURNS AROUND, the VAPOR loosens its hold, which allows Lucia to escape.

Fifty feet in the air, Ronnie flies in on a living REINDEER DECORATION.

Behind her are thousands of living decorations from every holiday - SANTAS, CUPIDS, ELVES, FRIENDLY LEPRECHAUNS, FATHER TIMES, EASTER BUNNIES, TURKEYS, BABY CHICKS, SNOWMEN, GINGERBREAD PEOPLE - even an UNCLE SAM.

The MASS OF HOLIDAY DECORATIONS rush forward to engage the army, quickly surround them. The VAPOR joins the fight.

The REINDEER LANDS next to Nevil and Isla, Ronnie slides off. They jump up and down, hug her. Lucia joins them.

Ronnie points to the blower.

RONNIE (CONT'D)

Is it ready to go?

She slips off her backpack, takes out the candy jar.

NEVIL

What are we doing with it?

RONNIE

Capturing Lucius!

Ronnie positions the candy jar behind the blower, Lucia hovers above it.

RONNIE (CONT'D)

Hit it!

Nevil turns on the blower; nothing happens.

NEVIL

It's not working!

RONNIE

Did you plug it in?

NEVIL

Oh.

ISLA
I got it!

Isla runs inside with the cord. Ronnie glances at the Town Hall clock - two minutes to midnight.

RONNIE
Hurry!

A few seconds later:

ISLA (O.S.)
It's in!

Ronnie raises the BULLHORN, yells into it:

RONNIE
Hey, Lucius! Over here! Come and
get us, Lucius!

The VAPOR rises from the battle, heads for Lucia.

RONNIE (CONT'D)
(to Nevil)
Wait until it gets close, then hit
the switch.

Isla rejoins them. Ronnie hands her the candy jar LID. The VAPOR is ten feet away.

RONNIE (CONT'D)
(to Isla)
Keep this ready.

The VAPOR is a foot away.

RONNIE (CONT'D)
Now!

Nevil turns on the blower; it blows the VAPOR away from them.

RONNIE (CONT'D)
Nevil! How many times do I have to
tell you?

NEVIL
I know, I know, reverse!

He hits the correct button, the VAPOR is sucked towards them, it fights to get away.

ISLA
One minute left!

Little by little the VAPOR pulls away. The battle rages on around them.

NEVIL
It's not working!

RONNIE
Point it up!

Nevil lifts the blower, strains under the weight. The VAPOR is pulled a little closer. The clock sounds the FIRST STRIKE of midnight.

NEVIL
It's too heavy, I can't hold it!

STRIKE.

RONNIE
You can do it!

STRIKE.

Nevil tightens his grip. FOUR MORE STRIKES. The blower slowly slips down, the VAPOR pulls away slightly.

NEVIL
It's slipping, I don't think I can hold on!

STRIKE.

RONNIE
You can! Think of Lawrence!

Nevil gives a YELL, strains with all his might, but the VAPOR pulls farther away.

STRIKE.

NEVIL
We're not going to make it!

STRIKE.

RONNIE
We will!

Lucia rises up, dives down and pushes the VAPOR into the blower as the 11TH STRIKE sounds.

RONNIE (CONT'D)
Lucia, no!

The blower spits out a SHIMMERING GOLDEN-GREENISH-BLACK CLOUD into the candy jar. Isla CLAMPS THE LID on tight just as the 12th STRIKE rings out.

Every decoration, friendly and mean alike, falls to the ground in an enormous pile, every holiday melded together.

MONTAGE - VARIOUS LOCATIONS - NIGHT

-- Cheryl and Ben unfreeze, kids and parents all around them unfreeze.

-- Lawrence unfreezes in the chair, Hercules jumps up on him, BARKS.

-- Harriet unfreezes in Darren's yard.

-- Trevor unfreezes, looks down at his feet, puts his hands over his crotch.

END MONTAGE

EXT. TOWN CENTER - NIGHT

Quinn runs through the piles of collapsed decorations, finds Ronnie and Isla. Nevil hangs back to give them their moment.

RONNIE

Quinn!

QUINN

I knew you could do it, I believed in you.

Quinn grabs Ronnie in a big hug. Isla joins in the hug.

ISLA

I knew you could do it, too. Mostly. Okay, I totally doubted you, but not any more.

Ronnie grabs Nevil's arm, pulls him forward.

RONNIE

Quinn, this is my friend Nevil. I never could have done it without him. He's a genius.

QUINN

Hey, Nevil. Flippin' incredible what you guys did. Put it there.

Quinn puts out his fist.

NEVIL

Oh...

Nevil awkwardly fist bumps Quinn.

NEVIL (CONT'D)

Ronnie's...well, she's just amazing. I mean, in a purely intellectual--

QUINN

All good, my man. All good.

Ronnie takes a roll of duct tape from her backpack, rips off strips to secure the lid on the candy jar.

QUINN (CONT'D)

The vapor...it's in there?

Ronnie nods sadly.

RONNIE

Lucia, the good spirit, sacrificed herself. She pushed the vapor into the blower, but it sucked them both into here.

Quinn's phone RINGS, he answers.

QUINN

(into the phone)

Mom! Dad!...Yes, we're all together...In Town Square...Yes, Ronnie too. She did it, she saved everyone, you'll never believe what she and her friend Nevil did...

Nevil searches frantically through the piles of decorations.

RONNIE

What are you looking for?

NEVIL

Boo Mouse!

Ronnie and Isla join the search.

RONNIE

Wait, listen!

BOO MOUSE
 (faint)
 Boo!

They dig through a pile of zombies mixed with Easter bunnies, Nevil emerges with Boo Mouse.

NEVIL
 Boo Mouse!

BOO MOUSE
 Boo!

NEVIL
 You're still alive!

RONNIE
 How is that possible? Lucia's in the candy jar with the vapor.

BOO MOUSE
 Boo!

Boo Mouse holds up its PUMPKIN BUCKET. They look inside, it holds a little bit of shimmering gold.

RONNIE/NEVIL
 Lucia!

People start to straggle in, a NEWS HELICOPTER flies overhead. SIRENS WAIL in the distance.

RONNIE
 You know they're going to want to take the spirits and study them. I don't think that's a good idea.

NEVIL
 (big sigh)
 It goes against everything I believe in scientifically, but you're right.

Quinn rejoins them.

QUINN
 Mom and Dad are on their way with Grandma. Everybody's okay, thanks to you two.

RONNIE
 Thanks to all of us. There's one more thing we have to do, though. Nobody can know about the spirits--

She looks pointedly at Isla.

RONNIE (CONT'D)

--deal?

They all agree as more people stream into Town Center to see the massive pile of decorations.

A BARK gets closer and closer. The four kids turn to see Lawrence approach on an electric scooter. Hercules rides with him, on his hind legs, his front paws on the handle bars.

Hercules jumps off when he sees the kids, runs to them. Lawrence brings the scooter to a stop, steps off, removes his helmet.

LAWRENCE

Master Nevil, do you know anything about this hole in my--

Nevil wraps his arms around Lawrence in a fierce hug, Lawrence hugs him back equally so.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)

You did well, my boy, you did well.

Trevor wanders past, still a bit shocked and fearful.

RONNIE

Trevor!

Trevor looks down at his pants.

TREVOR

I--

Ronnie puts a hand on his arm.

RONNIE

I know. Don't worry. I won't tell anyone.

Cheryl, Ben, and Harriet arrive, everyone hugs, introductions are made, as more police and news crews appear.

EXT. LAKE - DAY

Ronnie, Nevil, Quinn, Isla, and Hercules gather at a picturesque spot a hundred yards from the edge of the water.

A shovel rests on the ground, a three-foot hole dug at the base of a weeping willow.

RONNIE

Lucius was angry because he wasn't given a proper burial. Hopefully, this makes up for it.

Ronnie places the CANDY JAR in the hole, the kids push the dirt on top, tamp it down, cover it with leaves and twigs.

Isla places some hand-picked flowers on top. The kids join hands, bow their heads. Ronnie says a prayer. They all look at one another, nod their heads, walk away.

INT. METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, NEW YORK - DAY

Ronnie and Nevil receive medals from and shake hands with the CURATOR (female, 50s). The IDOL and the MARBLE IDOL are displayed behind them in glass cases. News outlets take photos.

Nevil's parents, SHIVNEEL and ARUSHI (40s), look on proudly, along with Lawrence, Cheryl, Ben, Harriet, Quinn, and Isla.

INT. NEVIL'S HOUSE - WORK LAB - DAY

Ronnie and Nevil sit side by side at a table, face a monitor. Open textbooks, popsicle sticks, and pipe cleaners spread out in front of them.

Boo Mouse, minus its costume, races around the fish bowl, plays hide-and-seek with the fish.

CLOSE ON:

Monitor. News article, Ronnie and Nevil's picture from the museum. Headline reads: *"Fifth-graders crack four year old art heist mystery: Curator's brother responsible for theft, stated 'I was jealous of her success'."*

BACK TO SCENE

Nevil's mother, ARUSHI (40s) enters with a tray.

ARUSHI

I thought you two might like a snack.

NEVIL

Thanks, Mom.

RONNIE
Thanks, Mrs. Varma.

Arushi glances at the monitor as she sets the tray down.

ARUSHI
Are you two enjoying your fame?

RONNIE
Well, it has made us the talk of the school. For once, in a good way.

ARUSHI
I still can't believe your principal did that. To steal from his own sister's museum. Terrible. All right, have fun with your science project and don't spill on the equipment.

She kisses the top of Nevil's head, leaves. Ronnie and Nevil takes water glasses, apple slices from the tray.

NEVIL
Maybe I am lucky to be a single. We know another brother and sister who didn't get along too well.

RONNIE
Do you think it's a coincidence how their stories are similar, a brother jealous of his sister, wanting to do her harm?

NEVIL
Coincidences stem from our need to create order out of chaos.

RONNIE
Well, that's something we sure have experience with.

BOO MOUSE
Boo!

Ronnie and Nevil CLINK glasses.

EXT. RONNIE'S STREET - DAY - ONE YEAR LATER

Ronnie and Isla exit their house. Ronnie wears a Glinda the Good Witch costume, Isla dressed as Cindy Lou Who. They walk down the block; every single house has friendly decorations.

They round the corner to the "scary house" on Elmbrook street - this year it has a Candyland theme.

EXT. BARKER CREEK ELEMENTARY - DAY

Ronnie and Isla approach the entrance, wave to friends. None of the kids wear scary costumes. Isla skips off to her class.

ISLA
Bye, Ronnie!

Nevil exits the back of a Mercedes eSprinter in the drop off lane. His costume is a black column with a cutout for his face, a funnel opening up on top of his head and another opening down at his feet.

Ronnie waves at Nevil's parents in the cab.

RONNIE
Hi, Mr. and Mrs. Varma!

They smile at her, wave back. Arushi calls out the open window:

ARUSHI
Good luck! See you after school,
love you!

The van pulls away. Nevil rolls his eyes.

NEVIL
They're so embarrassing. They're
always around now.

RONNIE
You love it.

NEVIL
I know.

RONNIE
Nice wormhole.

NEVIL
Thanks.

Lots of kids greet them as they walk through the gates.

EXT. BARKER CREEK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - YARD - DAY

Ronnie and Nevil drop off their backpacks outside their classroom.

RONNIE

I can't wait for the party tonight
at your house.

NEVIL

I know, it's gonna be epic.

RONNIE

Is Lawrence back from his trip?

NEVIL

Oh yeah, he said he wouldn't miss
it for anything. He said he has a
surprise for us.

They head for the blacktop. The haunted house has been
replaced by a CORN MAZE with two SMILING SCARECROWS at the
entrance.

RONNIE

Really, what?

NEVIL

He said something he picked up in
Greece.

RONNIE

Cool. I wonder what it is?

Boo Mouse pokes its head out of an opening in Nevil's
costume.

BOO MOUSE

Boo!

RONNIE

Nothing as cute as you, I bet!

Ronnie tickles it under the chin, Boo Mouse wrinkles its
nose.

Trevor and Marcus walk up to them dressed as Mario and Luigi.

TREVOR

Dude, that is the coolest costume.
You are so going to win.

NEVIL

(shrugs)
Eh, it's just a popularity contest.

Trevor shifts his feet, can't maintain eye contact with
Ronnie.

TREVOR
Hi, Ronnie.

RONNIE
Hi, Trevor. See you guys tonight at
Nevil's party?

They both light up.

TREVOR
Yeah!

MARCUS
For sure!

The WARNING BELL rings.

TREVOR
See you then!

Trevor and Marcus run off. Ronnie puts an arm as best she can
around Nevil.

RONNIE
Well, I guess your parents were
right.

NEVIL
About what?

RONNIE
You finally found your friend
group.

They smile at each other, walk to class.

EXT. LAKE - DAY

Construction activity. The BUCKET of an excavator hits the
ground, scoops up dirt. BEEPS from other pieces of equipment,
people in safety vests and hard hats move about.

A FOREMAN stands under a weeping willow, looks over plans.
Next to him, two workers raise a large wooden sign: *"Lakeside
Properties Residential/Retail Project - Coming Soon!"*

FADE OUT.