

(ERASED FOREVER)

by

(Brian Leslie)

COPYRIGHT MAY 23, 2024

INT. JOE'S DINER - EVENING

The neon "Open" sign flickers in the window of Joe's Diner, casting a warm glow on the faces of four teenagers huddled in a booth. The clink of silverware and hum of conversations provide the backdrop as KATRINA DOWELL, 16, leans over the table, her auburn hair falling like an autumn cascade.

KATRINA

(grinning)

So, it's settled then? Adventure
falls this Saturday?

ASHLEY THOMAS, electric with excitement, nods enthusiastically, her black hair swaying.

ASHLEY

You know I wouldn't miss it for
the world!

LUCAS WHITMORE, his sandy blond hair tousled, flips through a textbook with a frown. Mia elbows him playfully.

MIA THOMPSON

Put away the physics, Einstein.
We're planning our epic weekend.

Lucas looks up, corners of his mouth twitching upward.

LUCAS

(epigrammatic)

"An object at rest stays at rest"
- unless acted upon by friends
like you.

Katrina's laughter rings out, genuine and infectious. A WAITRESS passes by, refilling their coffee mugs, unphased by the teens' boisterous energy.

CUT TO:

INT. MEADOWBROOK HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

A cacophony of locker slams and chatter fills the hallway. Katrina, notebook clutched to her chest, navigates the sea of students alongside her friends. Lucas points to a bulletin board plastered with colorful flyers.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LUCAS
(earnestly)
Hey, the science club's hosting a
stargazing night next week. Anyone
interested?

Ashley links arms with Mia, exchanging a knowing glance.

ASHLEY
(teasing)
Only if you promise not to lecture
us on every constellation,
Professor Whitmore.

Mia chuckles, bumping shoulders with Katrina.

MIA
(sarcastic)
Yeah, save the space talk for when
we're actually staring at stars.

Katrina smiles, the threads of camaraderie weaving
tighter with each shared moment. They round the corner,
stepping into the throng of students heading to class,
their laughter a bright note in the mundane melody of
high school life.

INT. MEADOWBROOK HIGH SCHOOL - MORNING

Students bustle through the halls, locker doors clanging
like cymbals in a discordant symphony. Katrina navigates
this familiar chaos, her auburn hair catching glints of
sunlight from the high windows. She glances around, brow
furrowing.

CLOSE ON Katrina's phone as she swipes and taps
furiously.

KATRINA
(mutters to herself)
That's weird...

Her fingers pause over the glowing screen, confusion
etched on her face. The list of contacts flickers but one
name is conspicuously absent.

EXT. MEADOWBROOK HIGH SCHOOL COURTYARD - NOON

Under a cerulean sky, students scatter across the lawn
like a living mosaic. Katrina sits at a picnic table, her
lunch untouched.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Lucas approaches, his gait hesitant, eyes scanning a scientific journal. Mia trails behind, her red hair a fiery banner.

KATRINA

(urgently)

Guys, have either of you heard from Ashley today?

Lucas lowers his journal, a slight crease forming between his brows.

LUCAS

Ashley? Who's that?

Mia slides onto the bench beside Katrina, popping open a soda can with a sharp fizz.

MIA

Yeah, Kat, who are you talking about?

Katrina stares at them, heart pounding in her ears. She holds out her phone, the missing contact like a gaping wound.

KATRINA

(desperate)

Ashley Thomas! Long black hair, blue eyes, ring any bells?

Lucas and Mia exchange puzzled glances, then look back at Katrina with blank expressions.

LUCAS

(thoughtful)

Nope. Can't say I know an Ashley.

Mia nods in agreement, sipping her soda nonchalantly.

KATRINA

(incredulous)

But... she's our friend. We were just with her this weekend!

The air grows heavy, laden with a sense of unreality. Katrina's hands tremble, her steadfast resolve quivering under the weight of her friends' collective amnesia.

MIA

(concerned)

Kat, are you feeling okay? You're acting really strange.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Lucas reaches out, placing a comforting hand on Katrina's shoulder.

LUCAS
(sincere)
We're here for you. Maybe you just
need some fresh air?

Katrina shakes her head, pushing away from the table, her chair scraping loudly against the concrete. Her gaze sweeps over the faces around her, searching for any sign of recognition, any thread of shared memory.

KATRINA
(voice cracking)
Something's wrong. This isn't
right.

She stands alone, her plea hanging in the void, unanswered. The laughter and chatter of the courtyard seem distant now, as if she has stepped into another world—one where Ashley never existed.

FADE OUT.

INT. ASHLEY THOMAS'S HOUSE - DAY

The house looms in front of Katrina, shrouded with an unsettling stillness. She hesitates at the doorstep before finally ringing the bell. Heavy footsteps approach from inside and the door swings open to reveal the GRUFF MAN, his presence like a dark cloud spilling into the sunlight.

GRUFF MAN
(gruff)
Can I help you?

KATRINA
(tentative)
I'm looking for Ashley Thomas.
This is her house, right?

GRUFF MAN
(scoffing)
Ashley who? No one by that name
lives here. Been just me for
years.

Katrina's eyes dart past him, peering into the familiar hallway behind him, now stripped of all its warmth.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KATRINA

(confused)

But... I was just here last weekend. Where are her parents?

GRUFF MAN

(agitated)

Listen, you got the wrong place. Now scram.

He begins to close the door but Katrina wedges her foot in the gap.

KATRINA

(determined)

No. Something's not right. I need to find my friend.

The Gruff Man glares down at her, the door paused mid-motion.

GRUFF MAN

(warning)

Last time I'm gonna say this. Leave.

The door slams shut, leaving Katrina in the quiet street, her heart racing against the silence.

CUT TO:

INT. JT WULF'S "DEAD ENCOUNTER" PODCAST STUDIO - NIGHT

The studio is dimly lit, creating an eerie atmosphere. JT WULF, a charismatic host with a voice made for radio, sits across from Katrina. A microphone hovers between them, capturing every word, every breath.

JT WULF

(gravely)

You're sure you want to do this? Once we air your story, there's no turning back.

Katrina nods, her eyes resolute. Her hands clasp tightly together, knuckles white, as she leans toward the microphone.

KATRINA

(steady)

Yes. I need answers. Someone out there has to know something about Ashley.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JT WULF

(encouraging)

Alright, let's get into it. Tell us, Katrina. What exactly happened to your friend, Ashley Thomas?

Katrina takes a deep breath, her voice a mix of fear and defiance as she speaks into the void, hoping her words will reach someone, anyone who can help.

KATRINA

Ashley's gone—vanished—and it's like she's been erased from everyone's memory but mine. Her own parents don't remember her. How is that possible? How does someone just disappear from the world, leaving no trace behind?

JT WULF

(intently)

And what did you find when you went to her house today?

KATRINA

(frustration seeping)

There was this man. He claimed he'd lived in Ashley's home for years. But it's not true. It can't be. I've been to her house countless times. Something is very wrong in Playsfield, and I'm going to find out what it is.

A beat of silence follows, heavy with the weight of her admission. The red light on the microphone glows ominously as Katrina's plea echoes in the small studio, a desperate call to action in the darkness.

JT WULF

(soberly)

Ladies and gentlemen, you've heard it first on "Dead Encounter" — if you have any information about Ashley Thomas or the strange occurrences in Playsfield, Kentucky, reach out. Help Katrina find her friend.

FADE OUT.

INT. THOMAS RESIDENCE - ATTIC - DAY

Dust particles dance in the shafts of light piercing through the small attic window. Katrina, eyes wide with a blend of trepidation and determination, climbs the creaking wooden ladder. She finds MR. THOMAS rummaging through old boxes.

KATRINA

(pleading)

Mr. Thomas, you have to remember
Ashley! Think!

MR. THOMAS

(puzzled)

I've told you, Katrina. There's no
one by that name here. But...
there was this journal I found.
Maybe it can help you.

He hands her a worn leather-bound book, its pages yellowed with age and secrets. Katrina's fingers brush over the cryptic symbols embossed on the cover.

INSERT - THE JOURNAL

Katrina flips through the pages, her eyes scanning the scrawling handwriting, absorbing each word like a lifeline.

KATRINA

(whispers to herself)

"An ancient evil..." What does
this mean?

The camera follows her finger as she traces a passage about a malevolent force that feeds on the essence of its victims.

MR. THOMAS

(curiously)

What are you reading?

KATRINA

(shaking her head)

It speaks of something dark and
timeless, haunting Playsfield for
centuries. It says here it erases
people... their very existence.

MR. THOMAS

(concerned)

That sounds like a nightmare.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KATRINA

(resolute)

It might be our reality. This
could be what happened to Ashley.

Katrina looks up from the journal, her resolve hardening.
The dim attic seems to close in around them, the air
thick with the weight of forgotten history.

MR. THOMAS

(sympathetically)

If such evil exists, how will you
fight it?

KATRINA

(defiantly)

With every ounce of strength I
have. I won't let Ashley be
forgotten. I can't.

She closes the journal with a sense of purpose, her mind
racing with the implications of its contents.

CUT TO:

EXT. PLAYSFIELD - SUNSET

Katrina sits on an old park bench, the fading light
casting long shadows across the empty playground. She
pores over the journal once more, connecting the dots
between past disappearances and the eerie silence
surrounding Ashley.

KATRINA

(mutters to herself)

There's a pattern here. Someone
else must know something.

Her gaze lifts to the horizon where the last rays of
sunlight struggle against the encroaching darkness. A
chill runs down her spine, but her eyes burn with
unwavering courage.

KATRINA

(determined)

I'll uncover the truth. I have to.

As night falls over Playsfield, Katrina tucks the journal
under her arm and stands up, ready to delve deeper into
the mystery, into the heart of the darkness that has
taken her friend.

FADE OUT.

INT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Dust motes swirl in the air, illuminated by the beam of a flashlight as KATRINA and LUCAS step cautiously through the decrepit doorway of the abandoned warehouse. The weathered floorboards creak under their weight, echoing through the vast, empty space.

KATRINA

(whispering)

The journal mentioned 'a place
where shadows whisper.' This has
to be it.

Lucas nods, his eyes scanning the darkness for any sign of danger. They progress deeper into the building, their footsteps a steady drumbeat in the otherwise silent expanse.

LUCAS

(pointing)

Katrina, look at this.

He directs the flashlight toward the wall, revealing etchings that seem to pulsate with an otherworldly energy. Katrina approaches, her hand hovering just above the symbols, feeling an inexplicable chill emanating from them.

KATRINA

(fascinated)

They're the same as in Mr. Thomas'
journal. They could be centuries
old.

LUCAS

(concerned)

Do you think they're connected to
Ashley's disappearance?

KATRINA

(nods)

And probably others who've gone
missing.

They exchange a look of shared determination before Katrina pulls out a small notebook from her backpack and begins sketching the symbols, her hands steady despite the fear gripping her heart.

LUCAS

(impressed)

You're handling this better than I
thought.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KATRINA

(resolute)

I have to be strong. For Ashley.

As Lucas watches Katrina work, his admiration for her bravery is clear. He steps closer, ready to offer help or protection should she need it.

Suddenly, a SHARP CRACKING SOUND pierces the silence. They both freeze, hearts pounding as dust falls from the ceiling.

LUCAS

(tense)

We should go. Now.

Katrina snaps her notebook shut, her earlier courage giving way to an instinctual urge to flee. Together, they retreat toward the entrance, the unknown dangers of the warehouse pressing close behind them.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

The beam of Lucas's flashlight quivers as they navigate the labyrinthine corridors, each step an echo in the cavernous space. Katrina clutches her notebook to her chest, her breaths shallow and quick.

KATRINA

Lucas, did you hear that?

A GUTTURAL GROWL rumbles through the warehouse, followed by a series of disjointed whispers that seem to come from every direction. Lucas points the flashlight toward the source, but only darkness meets their gaze.

LUCAS

(squinting)

There's something moving... there!

Lucas's finger trembles as he indicates a shadow that seems to undulate against the far wall. It stretches, contorts, and takes on a vaguely human shape, its edges blurring with the darkness.

Katrina steps back, heart racing, as the shadowy figure glides towards them, silent but for the SCRAPING SOUND of its movement against the concrete floor.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KATRINA
(urgent whisper)
We can't let it touch us. Run!

They turn on their heels, sprinting towards the entrance, dodging debris and overturned crates. The flashlight bobs crazily, throwing monstrous shadows on the walls.

LUCAS
(panting)
Left here!

Katrina follows Lucas's lead, nearly tripping over a protruding steel bar. She catches herself and keeps running, the sound of their pursuers growing louder, closer.

KATRINA
(terrified)
What is it?

LUCAS
(out of breath)
I don't know, just keep moving!

Another FIGURE emerges from the darkness ahead, blocking their path. Lucas skids to a halt, grabbing Katrina's arm.

LUCAS
(yelling)
This way!

They veer into a narrow aisle between towering stacks of crates. The gap is barely wide enough for them, the splintered wood scraping against their clothes as they squeeze through.

KATRINA
(gasping)
It's like the warehouse is alive!

The SHADOWY FIGURES multiply, emerging from behind columns and crates, reaching out with elongated arms. Katrina and Lucas dodge and weave, their escape becoming more desperate.

LUCAS
Can you see the exit?

Katrina looks ahead and sees a sliver of moonlight filtering through a distant doorway.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

KATRINA
(excited)
Yes! There!

As they near the door, a LOUD CRASH resonates behind them. They glance back to see the figures coalescing into a tidal wave of darkness, threatening to engulf them entirely.

Lucas pushes Katrina forward, propelling them both through the exit. They tumble outside, landing hard on the gravel lot.

EXT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE LOT - CONTINUOUS

Katrina and Lucas scramble to their feet, gasping for air. The doorway looms behind them, an abyssal mouth from which no shadows emerge.

LUCAS
(looking back)
What happened? Why aren't they following?

KATRINA
(catching her breath)
Maybe... they can't leave the building.

They stand there, chests heaving, watching the warehouse as if expecting the darkness to spill out onto the street. But it remains confined, a silent sentinel of Playsfield's hidden terror.

Katrina's eyes meet Lucas's, a mix of fear and resolution reflected in them.

KATRINA
(resolute)
We need to find out what this is.
Before it comes after anyone else.

LUCAS
(nods)
Yeah. Let's get out of here first.

They back away slowly, keeping their eyes on the warehouse until they're sure they've put enough distance between themselves and the lurking menace within.

FADE OUT.

INT. MEADOWBROOK HIGH - LIBRARY - DAY

Katrina and Lucas, with books and papers strewn across a table, are in hushed conversation. Mia approaches, her red hair like a beacon among the rows of bookshelves.

MIA
(arches an eyebrow)
You two look like you're plotting
to take over the world. What's up?

KATRINA
(sighs)
Mia, we need to talk to you about
something serious.

Lucas nods solemnly, his eyes locked on Mia's.

MIA
(sarcastic)
Did Henderson give us another pop
quiz? I swear—

LUCAS
(interrupting)
It's about Ashley.

Mia pauses, her expression turning from jest to concern.

MIA
Ashley? What about her?

Katrina leans in closer, lowering her voice to barely above a whisper.

KATRINA
She didn't just transfer schools
or move away. Something...
happened to her.

Mia's expression shifts from concern to confusion.

MIA
(confused)
But nobody has mentioned her. Not
even her parents.

Lucas slides a photocopy of a page from Mr. Thomas's journal across the table to Mia.

LUCAS
This is why. We think something is
erasing people, stealing memories
of them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Mia skims the page, her brow furrowing as she tries to make sense of the cryptic words.

MIA
And you believe this stuff?
Ancient evils, memory eaters?

Katrina reaches for Mia's hand, her gaze intense.

KATRINA
We've seen it, Mia. Last night, we
were almost swallowed by darkness
that had... form, intent. It was
terrifying.

MIA
(taken aback)
Okay. Say I believe you. What now?

LUCAS
We have a plan, but it's risky. We
can't do it without you.

Mia looks between them, a storm of skepticism and fear in her eyes. After a moment, she exhales sharply.

MIA
(reluctant)
Fine. Tell me everything.

Katrina and Lucas exchange a glance before Katrina begins weaving the tale of their harrowing escape, the strange symbols, and the journal's ominous warnings.

EXT. MEADOWBROOK HIGH - COURTYARD - DAY

The trio sits on a bench under the shade of an old oak tree. The sun is bright, but there's a chill in the air that seems out of place.

KATRINA
We think these symbols are a key
part of stopping whatever is
happening. And we found them all
over the old warehouse.

Mia runs her fingers over a rough sketch of one such symbol Lucas drew earlier.

MIA
(skeptical)
Symbols. Great. How does that help
us?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LUCAS

They're connected to the entity somehow. If we can decode them, maybe we can find a way to fight it.

MIA

(shakes her head)

"Fight" it? With what, library cards and sarcastic remarks?

Katrina gives a wry smile despite the gravity of their situation.

KATRINA

Your sarcasm might actually come in handy. But seriously, we need to be smart about this. Careful.

MIA

(looks at both)

You're really serious about this, aren't you?

Lucas nods, his demeanor grave.

LUCAS

Deadly serious.

Mia takes a deep breath, looking off into the distance, then back at her friends.

MIA

(decisive)

Alright. Count me in. But if we're doing this, we're doing it together. All for one...

KATRINA

(and one for all)

Exactly.

They clasp hands, forming a circle of unity. As they release their grip, determination lights up their faces, a shared resolve to face the unknown.

FADE OUT.

INT. MEADOWBROOK HIGH SCHOOL - LIBRARY - LATE AFTERNOON

The library is dim, the only light filtering in through the heavy drapes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A sense of foreboding hangs in the air as Katrina, Lucas, and Mia shuffle through old newspapers and books, their faces illuminated by the glow of a laptop screen.

KATRINA

(murmuring)

"Disappeared without a trace... no known relatives remaining..."

MIA

(peering over

Katrina's shoulder)

That's the fifth one this month.
All traces just wiped clean.

Lucas leans back, rubbing his eyes wearily.

LUCAS

It can't be a coincidence. They
have to be connected.

Suddenly, a book falls from a shelf behind them, thudding onto the floor. The trio jumps, turning toward the sound.

MIA

(angry whisper)

Who's there?

Silence. Katrina approaches the fallen tome with caution, her heart pounding.

KATRINA

(picking up the book)

"Local Legends and Lore"...

She flips to a page marked by a hastily stuffed newspaper clipping - an article about a mysterious symbol found etched into a tree at the edge of town decades ago.

EXT. MEADOWBROOK HIGH SCHOOL - FOOTBALL FIELD - DUSK

Fog rolls across the empty field as the friends gather under the flicker of weak stadium lights.

LUCAS

(pointing to the
book)

See this? This symbol was found
right here in Playsfield, in 1946.

A cold gust of wind sweeps across the field, causing Mia to shiver.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MIA
(arms crossed)
Feels like it's watching us.
Laughing.

Katrina gazes across the foggy expanse, her breath visible in the air.

KATRINA
We're getting closer. It knows.

Suddenly, the stadium lights flicker, then extinguish, plunging them into darkness. A low rumble echoes around them - not thunder, but something else, something alive.

LUCAS
(tense)
Back to back!

They stand in a tight circle, scanning the shadows that dance just beyond their vision. From the darkness, shadowy figures emerge, circling them like predators.

MIA
(sarcastic fear)
Was this part of the plan?

KATRINA
(determined)
It doesn't matter. We stand together.

The shadows creep closer, their forms indistinct but menacing. Katrina steps forward, her resolve steeling her voice.

KATRINA
(shouting)
We're not afraid of you!

As if in response, the figures halt, a momentary pause in the encroaching gloom.

EXT. MEADOWBROOK HIGH SCHOOL - FRONT ENTRANCE - NIGHT

The trio bursts out of the building, gasping for breath, the door slamming shut behind them. Katrina leans against the wall, trying to calm her racing heart.

MIA
(voice shaking)
What the hell was that?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LUCAS
(regaining composure)
We need to regroup. Figure out
what it wants.

KATRINA
(eyes fierce)
And how to stop it.

They exchange looks of mutual understanding, their bond
forged even stronger in the face of the unknown terror
that haunts their town.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Katrina, Lucas, and Mia navigate the decrepit interior of
the warehouse, flashlights piercing through the musty
darkness. The atmosphere is tense, every shadow a
potential threat.

KATRINA
(checking her notes)
This is it. According to Mr.
Thomas' journal, we should find
something here.

They come across a wall covered in faded symbols, barely
discernible under layers of dust and grime. Katrina
reaches out, tracing the outlines with her fingertips.

Suddenly, the beam of a flashlight cuts through the
darkness from behind them. They whirl around, startled.

GRUFF MAN
O.S.

I wouldn't do that if I were you.

The gruff man emerges from the shadows, his face obscured
by the harsh light of his torch.

MIA
(defiant)
What do you want?

GRUFF MAN
(smirking)
Just to offer a friendly warning.
You're meddling in things you
don't understand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LUCAS

(angry)

You're the one who claimed to live
at Ashley's house. What did you do
to her?

The gruff man laughs, a cold sound echoing off the walls.

GRUFF MAN

You think too small, kids. It's
not about one person. There's a
bigger picture.

Katrina steps forward, her voice unwavering.

KATRINA

(determined)

We're not leaving until we find
out what happened to our friend.

The gruff man's expression darkens, and he steps closer.

GRUFF MAN

(threatening)

You have no idea the forces you're
dealing with.

He raises his hand, revealing a strange device. With a
click, the lights on their flashlights flicker and die,
plunging them into pitch blackness.

MIA

(panicked)

My phone, it's not working!

LUCAS

(frustrated)

He's jamming the signal.

In the darkness, sounds of scuffling fill the air as they
struggle to orient themselves. The gruff man's mocking
laughter fades away, leaving them alone with the eerie
silence.

KATRINA

(whispering)

Stay close. We can't let him stop
us.

They huddle together, using the faint glow of Katrina's
watch to guide them out of the warehouse, their resolve
hardening amidst the betrayal.

FADE OUT.

INT. MEADOWBROOK HIGH - LIBRARY - NIGHT

Katrina, Lucas, and Mia gather around an aged book sprawled open on a dimly lit table. The dusty air is thick with the scent of old paper and anticipation. Katrina's finger traces the arcane symbols drawn on the yellowed pages as she deciphers the ancient text.

KATRINA

(reading)

"Bound to this realm by memory, it
thrives in the shadows of
forgotten lore..."

Lucas leans closer, squinting at the cryptic illustrations.

LUCAS

(concerned)

So this thing... it eats memories?

MIA

(disbelief)

But that means Ashley...

Katrina's eyes meet Mia's, filled with a harrowing realization.

KATRINA

(somber)

Every moment we waste, she's
fading away.

The trio exchange a silent, grave look. In the background, the clock ticks ominously, underscoring the urgency.

EXT. PLAYSFIELD - MAIN STREET - NIGHT

The group exits the library, the night eerily quiet. Fog creeps along the desolate street, curling around lampposts like ghostly fingers. They huddle together under the dim glow of a streetlight.

KATRINA

(determined)

We need a plan. We can't let
Ashley disappear into... whatever
this is.

LUCAS

(resolute)

Right.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LUCAS (CONT'D)

But how do we fight something
that's been here longer than us?
Longer than anyone can remember?

MIA

(hopeful)

There has to be a way. There's
always a way.

Katrina nods, her resolve steeling as she pulls out the journal from her backpack, flipping through the pages feverishly.

KATRINA

(insistent)

This journal, Mr. Thomas', it's
key. He said he found it after
Ashley was gone. It must have
answers.

They cluster around the book once more, the pale light casting long shadows across their faces. Lucas points to a passage.

LUCAS

(excited)

Here! "Only through recollection
can the ephemeral be made tangible
again."

MIA

(realization)

We need to remember her,
everything about her!

Katrina closes her eyes, summoning every memory of Ashley—their childhood games, shared secrets, and whispered dreams.

KATRINA

(passionate)

Ashley's laugh, the way her eyes
sparkle when she's up to no good,
her terrible dance moves...

Tears glisten in Mia's eyes as she joins in, her voice trembling.

MIA

(nostalgic)

Her obsession with vintage
cameras, the strawberry scent of
her shampoo, those ridiculous
knock-knock jokes...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Lucas smiles faintly, lost in his own recollections.

LUCAS

(wistful)

That time she convinced us to go
on that impromptu road trip, or
how she'd defend anyone, no matter
what.

A wind picks up, rustling the leaves, as if acknowledging
their efforts. Katrina's watch glows 11:59 PM—time is
slipping away.

KATRINA

(frantic)

We need to act now! Before
midnight, before it's too late for
Ashley.

They grab each other's hands, forming a circle of unity
beneath the flickering streetlight.

LUCAS

(focused)

Together, we'll bring her back.

The chimes of the town clock begin to sound, signaling
the witching hour. The friends close their eyes, focusing
all their energy on the essence of Ashley, willing with
all their might to keep her memory alive.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. ABANDONED LIBRARY - NIGHT

The group stands in the darkness of the derelict library,
books strewn about like fallen soldiers on a battlefield.
Katrina's eyes dart around, trying to pierce the gloom as
the echo of the chimes fades into silence.

KATRINA

(whispers)

Stay close. It knows we're here.

They inch forward, their steps hesitant. The air is thick
with the mustiness of decay and the undercurrent of dread
that seems almost palpable.

Suddenly, a CHILL BREEZE sweeps through the room, and the
pages of old books flutter like the wings of disturbed
birds. Mia shivers and wraps her arms around herself.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MIA
(jokingly)
Anyone else feel like we're in a
horror cliché?

A SHADOW moves, swift and silent, a dark shape that darts between the bookshelves. Lucas tightens his grip on a rusted pipe he's been carrying for protection.

LUCAS
(tense)
Not the time for jokes, Mia.

The SHADOW SUDDENLY LUNGES, and Mia SCREAMS as it envelops her. Katrina and Lucas rush towards her, but the shadowy figure holds Mia in a vice-like grip. Her body convulses as if being drained.

KATRINA
(desperate)
Let her go!

Katrina wrestles with the shadows, her hands finding no solid form to fight against. Mia's screams grow weaker, her face contorting in pain and terror.

MIA
(struggling)
I can't... remember...

Lucas swings the pipe with all his might, and it passes through the shadow, dispersing it momentarily. Mia slumps to the floor, gasping for air, her memories flickering at the edges of her consciousness.

LUCAS
(frantic)
We have to get out of here, now!

Katrina kneels beside Mia, who looks up with eyes clouded by fear and confusion.

KATRINA
(concerned)
Mia, what's your mom's name?
Quick!

MIA
(panicked)
I... I don't...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

KATRINA

(firm)

Mia Thompson, focus! Your mom, the lullaby she sings, remember?

Mia's eyes snap with recognition, and she whispers hoarsely.

MIA

(relieved)

"Sleep, my child"... Sally, her name is Sally.

Katrina helps Mia to her feet, and they stumble towards the exit, driven by a newfound desperation. Lucas leads the way, constantly looking back to ensure they aren't followed.

EXT. LIBRARY ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

They burst out into the night, panting and disheveled. The once comforting glow of the moon now feels like a spotlight, exposing them to unseen watchers.

KATRINA

(determined)

This ends tonight. We're not losing anyone else.

Lucas nods, his face set in grim resolve.

LUCAS

(resolute)

If it wants a fight, we'll give it one it'll never forget.

Mia grips Katrina's hand, her knuckles white.

MIA

(defiant)

Let's show this thing it messed with the wrong town.

They share a look, their bond strengthened by the ordeal. With Mia supported between them, they head towards their next destination, ready to face whatever horrors await.

FADE OUT.

INT. ABANDONED TEXTILE MILL - NIGHT

The trio's footsteps echo in the cavernous space, where rusted machinery looms like dormant beasts. Shadows cling to the walls, whispering secrets of a bygone era. Katrina leads them to a makeshift table lit by a single flickering lantern, its light throwing grotesque shapes against the peeling paint.

KATRINA

(urgent)

Here, this is what we've found.

She unfurls an ancient map of Playsfield, its edges frayed and brittle. Lines converge at a spot marked with an arcane symbol that mirrors those etched into their memories.

LUCAS

(pointing)

That's the old well outside town... the epicenter.

MIA

(tense)

It's drawing power from there.
That's how it spreads, erases—

A sudden CLATTERING resonates through the mill. They freeze, every nerve on edge. Mia clutches her flashlight like a talisman.

LUCAS

(low)

We're not alone...

GRUFF MAN (O.S.)

(nasally laugh)

You kids are smarter than you look.

The Gruff Man steps out from the shadows, flanked by figures shrouded in darkness. His weathered face splits into a malicious grin.

KATRINA

(defiant)

What do you want?

GRUFF MAN

(sardonic)

To offer you a chance to forget
all this nonsense. Wouldn't that
be easier?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LUCAS

(angry)

We're not giving up!

The Gruff Man gestures, and his allies advance, their forms flickering unnaturally. The air crackles with malice.

MIA

(terrified)

Katrina, the evidence!

Katrina snatches up the map, but a cold wind gusts through the mill, tearing it from her grasp. It floats tantalizingly above them, just out of reach.

KATRINA

(desperate)

No!

LUCAS

(yelling)

Run! Now!

They sprint towards the nearest exit, dodging debris and spectral hands that claw at their clothes. Mia slips, her cry cut short as Lucas hauls her up without missing a stride.

EXT. TEXTile Mill - CONTINUOUS

They burst into the open, lungs burning, the chill night air a slap to their faces. The mill looms behind them, a tomb of secrets they're leaving unguarded.

KATRINA

(breathless)

We have to go back. The map—

LUCAS

(firm)

It's too late. We need to move!

Sirens wail in the distance, a mournful dirge for the loss they've suffered. The Gruff Man's laughter echoes in their ears, a haunting reminder of their failure.

MIA

(crying)

It's gone... all our work...

Katrina grips her friends' hands, steeling herself against the despair threatening to crush them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

KATRINA

(resolute)

We still have each other. And
we'll find another way. We have
to.

Their silhouettes fade into the night, three against the
darkness, fleeing the ruins of hope with nothing but
their resolve to guide them.

FADE OUT.

INT. KATRINA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The moonlight filters through the curtains, casting
ghostly shadows across Katrina's room. She sits on the
edge of her bed, her hands clasped tightly in her lap,
the weight of the night's failure pressing down on her.

KATRINA

(whispers to herself)

What if I'm not strong enough?

She glances at a photograph on her bedside table, one of
her and Ashley, their smiles wide and carefree. Now, that
memory feels like it belongs to someone else.

FLASHBACK - EXT. PARK - DAY

Ashley swings higher and higher, laughing as Katrina
pushes her.

ASHLEY

(shouting)

To the moon, Katrina!

BACK TO PRESENT

Katrina's eyes well up with tears as she clutches the
photograph to her chest.

KATRINA

(tearful)

I can't lose you to this... thing.

A soft KNOCK on the door startles her. Lucas enters, his
face etched with concern.

LUCAS

(gentle)

You okay?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KATRINA
(shakes her head)
Everything we did... it's gone.
How do we fight something that's
always one step ahead?

Lucas sits beside her, offering silent solidarity.

LUCAS
(sincere)
Together. We'll keep fighting
together.

Katrina's gaze drifts to the window where the night seems impenetrable, an abyss waiting to swallow them whole.

KATRINA
(voicing her fear)
But what if we're not just
fighting for Ashley? What if next
time, I can't protect you or Mia?

Lucas takes her hand, his grip firm and assuring.

LUCAS
(determined)
We've got each other's backs.
Always have, always will.

Katrina nods, but the shadow of doubt lingers in her eyes.

KATRINAS
(voice breaking)
I can't bear the thought of losing
any of you to that darkness.

Lucas pulls her into a hug, and they sit in silence, two friends clinging to each other in a world that has suddenly become much darker.

FADE OUT.

INT. KATRINA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

In the dim light of her desk lamp, Katrina pores over scattered notes and clippings, a map of Playsfield spread out in front of her. Her fingers trail along the lines connecting various points on the map, eyes searching for patterns where none seem to exist.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KATRINA
(mutters to herself)
There has to be something we
missed...

She stops at a photograph of an old, gnarled tree in the town square, its roots deep and twisted. A memory flashes in her mind - Ashley mentioning the tree as a landmark for a time capsule they buried as children.

KATRINA
(excited)
The time capsule!

Katrina scrambles through her drawers, pulling out an old keychain with a miniature diary attached. Flipping through the worn pages, she finds a scribbled entry:

"Time Capsule: Under the watchful tree, secrets lie."

Her breath catches. The realization hits like a thunderbolt.

KATRINA
(whispers)
"Watchful" tree... What if it's
more than just a landmark?

CUT TO:

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - NIGHT

Bathed in moonlight, the imposing tree stands sentinel. Katrina, flashlight in hand, digs frantically at the base of the tree. The shovel hits something solid. She uncovers a rusted metal box, heart racing as she pries it open.

Inside, among childhood trinkets, is an envelope addressed to "Ashley" in Mr. Thomas' unmistakable handwriting. Katrina tears it open, her eyes devouring the words.

MR. THOMAS (V.O.)
(heartbroken)
My dearest Ashley, there are
things about our family I've kept
hidden, hoping to spare you...

Images flash in Katrina's mind: Mr. Thomas' sad eyes, the strange absence of family photos in their house.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MR. THOMAS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I was once ensnared by that
darkness myself, but I escaped, my
memories fragmented...

Katrina's hands tremble as she absorbs the gravity of his
confession.

MR. THOMAS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I fear that I may forget you, my
precious daughter, should it ever
return for me...

Tears stream down Katrina's cheeks, a mixture of sorrow
and resolve crystallizing within her.

KATRINA
(determined)
You fought it once, Mr. Thomas.
We'll fight it again. For Ashley.

She looks up at the tree, its branches swaying ominously
as if whispering secrets long kept.

FADE OUT.

INT. KATRINA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The room is shrouded in darkness, save for the faint glow
of a desk lamp casting long shadows across the walls.
Katrina sits hunched over a sprawl of notes and the aged
journal. She scans the cryptic text once more, her brow
furrowed in concentration.

KATRINA
(under her breath)
"Where memories sleep, the shadow
creeps."

She glances at the clock. It's late, but this is no time
for rest. With a determined exhale, she grabs her phone
and types a message with trembling fingers.

INSERT - CELL PHONE SCREEN

"Emergency meeting at my place. Now."

BACK TO SCENE

There's a soft knock at the window. Katrina doesn't
flinch; she knows who it is. Lucas' solemn face appears
in the moonlit glass. She hurries to let him in.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KATRINA

(hushed)

They're erasing her, Lucas.
Erasing Ashley from us, from
everything.

Lucas nods, his eyes reflecting understanding and fear.
He steps inside as another knock sounds at the door. Mia
enters, her expression fierce and questioning.

MIA

What's going on, Katrina? Your
text sounded urgent.

Katrina pushes the envelope from Mr. Thomas toward them.

KATRINA

(resolute)

It's about Ashley. We have to stop
this thing before she's gone
forever.

Mia and Lucas exchange a glance, then focus on Katrina,
ready to follow her lead.

LUCAS

(intently)

We're with you. Tell us the plan.

Katrina paces, her mind racing with strategy.

KATRINA

(quickly)

First, we need to isolate where
this... entity feeds. It's rooted
here, somewhere in Playsfield.

MIA

(sarcastically)

Great, so we just stroll up to a
demonic buffet and ask it to
leave?

Katrina stops pacing, eyes alight with a spark of
inspiration.

KATRINA

(excited)

No, we draw it out. Mr. Thomas
said it feeds on memories, right?
What if we offer it something it
can't resist?

Lucas leans in, catching on to Katrina's audacious idea.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LUCAS
(thoughtful)
A trap. We bait it with a memory
so powerful that it exposes
itself.

MIA
(skeptical)
And risk one of us being
forgotten? That's your plan?

KATRINA
(firm)
I won't let it take anyone else.
We'll be careful. We have to be.
It took Ashley because we weren't
paying attention.

Lucas stands, placing a reassuring hand on Katrina's
shoulder.

LUCAS
(steady)
You're not alone in this. We'll
find a way to protect each other.

Mia sighs, her resistance crumbling under the weight of
their shared resolve.

MIA
(determined)
Alright. Let's do it. But we do it
smart. We learn its rules and we
use them against it.

Katrina nods, her gaze returning to the journal. The trio
huddle around, their heads close together, plotting and
planning. They are united, a single force against an
unseen enemy that preys on the essence of their bonds.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. KATRINA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Katrina's room is bathed in the soft glow of a desk lamp,
casting long shadows against the walls lined with
bookshelves. Maps of Playsfield are spread out across the
floor, dotted with notes and symbols. She hunches over
her desk, pouring over Mr. Thomas' cryptic journal, while
Lucas and Mia sort through an assortment of items: salt,
candles, protective charms, and ancient-looking tomes
borrowed from the restricted section of the local
library.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KATRINA

(mutters)

"Three circles of protection, bind
the shadow... Salt at each
cardinal point..."

MIA

(mockingly)

And I thought AP Chemistry had
weird formulas.

LUCAS

(focused)

Salt's a purifier. It's used in
lots of rituals. Makes sense it'd
work against this thing.

Katrina glances up, catching her reflection in the
window. The weight of their task reflects back at her,
but she shakes off the doubt creeping into her eyes.

KATRINA

(sternly)

We need focus. This isn't some
high school project.

The room falls silent, save for the rustle of pages and
the occasional clink of glass as they assemble their
makeshift arsenal.

CUT TO:

EXT. MEADOWBROOK HIGH SCHOOL - PLAYGROUND - NIGHT

The trio stands in a deserted playground, the moonlight
casting eerie shadows on the abandoned swings. They're
marking a large circle in the dirt with salt, following
the instructions meticulously.

MIA

(voice trembling)

You know... I always hated this
place at night.

Lucas looks at Mia, seeing the fear behind her usual
bravado.

LUCAS

(reassuring)

We'll protect each other. Like we
always do.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Katrina stops, her hand hovering over a half-opened bag of salt. She locks eyes with each of them, the gravity of their situation sinking in.

KATRINA

(resolute)

This thing preys on our
memories... our fears. We have to
be stronger than that.

ASHLEY (V.O.)

(sweet, distant)

Do you remember the time we camped
out here? Made s'mores and told
ghost stories...

Katrina's heart clenches at Ashley's voice, a memory fighting its way through the fog.

LUCAS

(softly)

What's wrong?

KATRINA

(voice cracks)

Just... thinking about Ashley.

MIA

(boldly)

We're going to get her back. This
entity has no idea who it's
messing with.

Katrina nods, swallowing hard. She returns to the circle, sealing it with the last of the salt.

KATRINA

(whispers)

For Ashley.

They stand together within the circle, a fortress of friendship amidst the encroaching darkness. Each of them carries the unspoken terror that they might be the next to vanish into oblivion, but in their unity, they find strength.

FADE OUT.

INT. ANCIENT UNDERGROUND CHAMBER - NIGHT

The chamber looms before them, an abyssal cavity carved into the earth's bones. Echoes of their footsteps mingle with the drip of unseen water, a chorus of the deep.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ancient symbols crawl across the walls like petrified serpents.

KATRINA
(whispering)
This is it.

LUCAS
(checking the
journal)
We need to set up here. The center
of the chamber.

They move with purpose, arranging candles at strategic points, their flames sputtering defiance at the oppressive darkness. Mia unfurls a tattered cloth, laying it out like a promise on the cold, hard ground.

MIA
(holding back fear)
I drew the symbols from the
journal... just like Mr. Thomas
showed us.

Katrina nods, her eyes scanning the arcane inscriptions as if they whispered secrets to her alone.

Suddenly, a low hum vibrates through the chamber, escalating into a guttural growl that rattles their very souls.

From the shadows emerges THE ENTITY, an amorphous silhouette, edges undulating with malice. It pulses with stolen memories, Ashley's laugh echoing perversely from its form.

KATRINA
(steeling herself)
Remember the ritual. Focus!

LUCAS
(determined)
For Ashley.

MIA
(fierce)
And for all of us.

They join hands, forming an unbreakable chain. Katrina begins to chant, words ancient and powerful rolling off her tongue. The Entity recoils, screeching as the ritual takes hold.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

The chamber vibrates, stones weeping dust, as Lucas joins the incantation, his voice harmonizing with Katrina's. Mia raises the cloth above her head, symbols glowing with ethereal light.

THE ENTITY
(distorted, furious)
You cannot banish me!

KATRINA
(shouting over the
din)
We're not alone! Ashley is with
us!

An image of ASHLEY flickers within The Entity, a beacon of hope struggling against the storm.

The candles flare, a crescendo of light battling the consuming darkness. The Entity writhes, its form fracturing under the weight of the ritual.

MIA
(yelling)
Now, Lucas!

Lucas thrusts a hand forward, pressing a talisman from Mr. Thomas' collection into the heart of The Entity. A shockwave of energy bursts forth, the room shaking as if the earth itself rebels against the abomination.

The Entity screeches, a sound not of this world, its form dissolving like mist in the morning sun, leaving behind only the echo of its rage.

Katrina collapses, breathless but resolute, as Lucas and Mia rush to her side. They look around, the chamber now silent, the threat momentarily quelled.

LUCAS
(breathless)
Did we do it?

MIA
(peering into the
darkness)
Is it gone?

KATRINA
(wearily)
For now... but we have to find
Ashley before—

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

A beam of light cuts through the lingering shadows, illuminating the trio. They turn towards each other, their bond unshaken, ready for whatever comes next.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. ANCIENT UNDERGROUND CHAMBER - NIGHT

The beam of light intensifies, casting unnaturally long shadows against the chamber walls. Katrina's chest heaves as she locks eyes with the ethereal image of ASHLEY, flickering within the weakening grasp of The Entity.

KATRINA
(to Ashley)
I'm coming for you!

She scrambles to her feet, ignoring the throbbing pain that pulses through every fiber of her being. Katrina takes a deep breath and steps into the column of light, her silhouette sharp against the luminous backdrop.

LUCAS
Katrina, wait!

KATRINA
I have to do this. It's our only chance!

Mia grips Lucas' arm, her eyes wide with fear but shining with determination.

MIA
Let her go. She knows what she's doing.

Katrina extends her arms, the air around her crackling with unseen energy. A whisper of a memory surfaces—a feeling of power she's always had but never understood. She closes her eyes, focusing on that sensation, willing it to grow.

KATRINA
(voice rising)
"By the bonds of blood and spirit,
I claim thee from the abyss!"

A trembling begins beneath their feet, rocks tumbling from the cavern ceiling. Katrina's hair floats around her as if submerged in water, auburn strands glowing like embers in the light.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ASHLEY'S VOICE
(echoing)
Katrina?

KATRINA
(straining)
Ashley, hold onto my voice!

The Entity roars, a cacophony of voices that claw at the edge of sanity. Shadows lash out, trying to snuff out the light that envelops Katrina. But she stands firm, an anchor in the storm.

KATRINA
(eyes snapping open)
"Return to us!"

A surge of power erupts from Katrina, radiating outward and shattering the darkness. The Entity recoils, its form dissipating further as though being erased by an invisible hand.

ASHLEY'S FIGURE
(struggling forward)
Katrina...

Mia and Lucas exchange a glance, realizing the impossible is happening before them. Katrina Dowell, their friend, is revealing a strength beyond their wildest imaginations.

LUCAS
(to Mia)
She's doing it... she's actually
doing it!

Katrina reaches out, and at the very edge of the light, she feels a hand slip into hers. Ashley's hand—solid and real. With all the force of her will, Katrina pulls, and Ashley emerges from the fading Entity, gasping for breath.

ASHLEY
(tearful)
Katrina! You found me!

The Entity lets out one final, despairing wail before it implodes into nothingness, leaving behind a calm that settles over the chamber like a gentle sigh. The light dims to a soft glow, illuminating the four friends in a tender tableau.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

KATRINA
(exhausted,
triumphant)
Welcome back, Ashley.

They embrace, a tangle of limbs and relief. Katrina's gaze meets Mia's and then Lucas'. They nod to each other, knowing that together they've faced the darkness and emerged victorious.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. ANCIENT UNDERGROUND CHAMBER - NIGHT

The soft glow fades, and the four friends stand amid the stillness of the chamber, their breaths echoing off the ancient walls. Katrina releases Ashley, who staghs back into reality, her eyes wide with wonder.

ASHLEY
(looking around)
I... I remember everything.

Katrina watches as memories flood back into Ashley's gaze, restoring the vibrancy to her eyes that had been missing.

KATRINA
(squeezing Ashley's
hand)
We couldn't let you go.

MIA
(wiping away a tear)
You're more than a memory to us.

LUCAS
(nods solemnly)
You always will be.

The group comes together in a huddle, their relief palpable in the closeness of their embrace. They share a moment of silence, honoring the bond that has carried them through the darkness.

EXT. PLAYSFIELD - NIGHT

The moon hangs high over Playsfield as the group exits the chamber, emerging into the cool night air. The town seems untouched, blissfully unaware of the terror that lurked beneath.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ASHLEY
(breathless)
It feels like waking up from a
nightmare.

Katrina glances at the town, then back at her friends.

KATRINA
(resolute)
But we woke up. We all did.

They walk through the quiet streets, passing familiar landmarks that now hold new meaning. There is a sense of loss that tugs at their hearts, for the innocence they've shed and the secrets they now carry.

MIA
(voice quivering)
What about the others? The ones we
couldn't save?

Katrina stops, turns to her friends with a weighty determination.

KATRINA
(eyes glistening)
We remember them. We fight for
them.

Lucas places a comforting arm around Mia, sharing a look of somber understanding with Katrina. Their victory is bittersweet, marred by the realization of what they've lost along the way.

LUCAS
(softly)
And we make sure this never
happens again.

Ashley gazes up at the stars, a small smile playing on her lips amidst the shadows of sorrow.

ASHLEY
(whispering)
Thank you... for fighting for me.

The group reaches the edge of the woods that border the town, pausing to take in the serenity of the night. They know their lives have changed forever, but in this moment, they find solace in their unity.

FADE OUT.

INT. MEADOWBROOK HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY

The cacophony of LOCKERS slamming shut and the MURMUR of students fill the space. Katrina, her auburn hair tied back, weaves through the crowd with a mix of purpose and hesitance.

KATRINA
(to herself)
Back to normal, huh?

She catches glimpses of faces that no longer hold recognition for Ashley's ordeal. Katrina's expression is one of resolve tinged with melancholy.

INT. MEADOWBROOK HIGH SCHOOL - CAFETERIA - DAY

Katrina sits at their usual table, now complete with Ashley, Mia, and Lucas. They exchange half-hearted laughs over school lunches, the air thick with unspoken understanding.

ASHLEY
You guys... I can't thank you
enough.

Mia reaches across the table, placing her hand on Ashley's.

MIA
No need. We're family.

Lucas nods, his eyes locking with Katrina's.

LUCAS
Nothing will ever break this.

Katrina gives a small smile, but it doesn't quite reach her eyes.

EXT. MEADOWBROOK HIGH SCHOOL - FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

The group sits in the bleachers, watching their classmates at practice. The SOUNDS of the game drift up to them, but they're engrossed in their own world.

KATRINA
It's like nothing changed... but
everything did.

Ashley gazes out onto the field, lost in thought.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ASHLEY
I keep expecting to forget, like
everyone else.

Lucas leans forward, elbows on his knees.

LUCAS
(half-joking)
Maybe we should start a secret
society. Keep the memory alive.

Mia punches him lightly in the arm.

MIA
Don't even joke about that.

They share a laugh, but it fades quickly as they are
consumed by their collective reverie.

INT. KATRINA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Katrina sits at her desk, surrounded by textbooks and
notes. She tries to focus on homework but finds herself
doodling strange symbols instead. Her mother, Mrs.
Dowell, knocks softly and enters.

MRS. DOWELL
(concerned)
Honey? Are you okay?

Katrina quickly covers her drawings.

KATRINA
(lying poorly)
Yeah, just tired from studying.

Mrs. Dowell sits on the edge of the bed, watching her
daughter.

MRS. DOWELL
You've been through so much. If
you want to talk—

KATRINA
(cutting her off)
I know, Mom. Thanks.

There's a beat of silence as they look at each other, an
ocean of worry in Mrs. Dowell's eyes.

EXT. PLAYSFIELD TOWN SQUARE - SUNSET

The group stands together, the sky painted with hues of orange and purple. They watch as townspeople go about their evening routines, oblivious to the darkness that once threatened them all.

KATRINA
(softly to the group)
We're not the same kids who sat in
that diner, are we?

Mia shrugs, a wistful smile creasing her face.

MIA
I guess we had to grow up
sometime.

ASHLEY
(looking at Katrina)
But we did it together. That means
something.

Lucas puts an arm around Katrina's shoulder.

LUCAS
(reassuringly)
And we'll face whatever comes
next. Together.

They stand in unity, the fading light casting long shadows behind them.

FADE OUT.

INT. MEADOWBROOK HIGH SCHOOL - LIBRARY - DAY

Katrina flips through the pages of a dusty tome, her finger tracing over passages about ancient rituals and forgotten lore. She looks up as Lucas approaches, carrying a stack of similar books.

LUCAS
(putting down books)
Found anything helpful?

KATRINA
(shaking her head)
Just reminders of what we faced.
It's like I can still feel its
presence sometimes.

Lucas pulls up a chair beside her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LUCAS
(sincerely)
It might never fully go away. But
we're dealing with it, right?

Katrina lets out a heavy sigh, closing the book.

KATRINA
Yeah. We are.

She glances across the library to where Mia sits with
Ashley, both laughing over something in a magazine.
Ashley catches Katrina's eye and smiles warmly.

ASHLEY
(calling out)
Hey, K! Come look at this!

Katrina hesitates for a moment before joining them.

CUT TO:

EXT. DOWELL'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - NIGHT

The four friends sit around a small fire pit, the
crackling flames casting a comforting glow. Katrina stirs
the embers with a stick, the sparks dancing into the
night sky.

MIA
(leaning forward)
You know, I learned that it's okay
to be scared. That fear doesn't
make you weak... it makes you
human.

ASHLEY
(nodding)
And I learned that no matter how
dark things get, there's always a
light. You just have to find it.

Lucas stares into the fire, thoughtful.

LUCAS
I think I've realized how
important it is to pay attention.
To see the truth that's hiding
right under our noses.

They all turn to Katrina, waiting.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KATRINA

(softly)

I learned that some battles can't
be fought alone. And that
accepting help isn't the same as
giving up.

The fire flickers, reflecting in their eyes, a silent
testament to their shared ordeal.

ASHLEY

(raising her hand)

To the lessons learned.

They each place a hand on top of Ashley's, their faces
illuminated by the warm light.

ALL

Together.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. MEADOWBROOK HIGH SCHOOL - COURTYARD - DAY

The sun hangs high in the sky, casting a golden glow over
the school grounds. Students mill about, but KATRINA,
ASHLEY, LUCAS, and MIA have carved out a quiet corner for
themselves.

Their laughter is lighter than it has been in weeks, a
sound that seems to push away the lingering shadows of
their recent past. Katrina flips through a worn notebook,
its pages filled with notes and sketches.

KATRINA

(passionate)

If that thing comes back, we'll be
ready. We've got the knowledge
now.

ASHLEY

(teasing)

And all your crazy planning. I
swear you have a strategy for
every day of the week.

Mia leans in, her eyes scanning the notebook's contents.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MIA
(smirking)
"Operation Eldritch" sounds like a
bad sci-fi movie.

Lucas reaches over, tapping a page with a decisive
finger.

LUCAS
(earnest)
But it makes sense. Look at these
symbols we found. They're our best
defense if the entity returns.

Katrina nods, her gaze meeting each of theirs in turn.

KATRINA
(determined)
We've been through hell and back
together. It's only made us
stronger... as a team, and as
friends.

They exchange solemn looks, each one feeling the truth of
her words deep in their bones.

ASHLEY
(softly)
We're more than friends now. We're
guardians of something bigger.

MIA
(grinning)
Guardians with an arsenal of
ancient wisdom and high school
ingenuity.

Lucas stands up, stretching his arms towards the sky.

LUCAS
(prophecy-like)
Our bond is our fortress. And with
every challenge, it grows
mightier.

Katrina closes the notebook, tucking it under her arm.

KATRINA
(resolute)
Let's keep it that way. Training
starts tomorrow after school. We
need to be sharp, in case—

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ASHLEY
(interjecting)
-In case the world decides to
throw us another curveball.

Katrina smiles, a fierce glint in her eye.

KATRINA
(defiant)
Then we'll knock it out of the
park.

They stand together, a united front against whatever
darkness may come.

FADE OUT.

INT. MEADOWBROOK HIGH SCHOOL - LIBRARY - DAY

Katrina flips through the pages of an old town ledger,
her brows furrowed in concentration. Lucas and Mia huddle
around her, while Ashley stands lookout by a shelf lined
with dusty encyclopedias.

KATRINA
(mutters)
Something doesn't add up.

Lucas leans closer, pointing to a series of entries.

LUCAS
These names... look at the dates.
They disappear every twenty years.
Like clockwork.

Mia's eyes widen as she draws connections on a notepad.

MIA
And it's always someone
influential - a mayor, a sheriff,
a school principal...

ASHLEY
(whispers)
Someone who could cover things up.

The group exchanges a knowing glance. Katrina's hand
shakes slightly as she traces a name with her finger.

KATRINA
It's not just one evil we're
dealing with. There's... a whole
network.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Lucas slams his fist on the table, frustration evident.

LUCAS

(agitated)

We beat one monster and now
there's a secret society? What is
this, Playsfield or a bad
conspiracy thriller?

Mia grabs his hand, steadying him.

MIA

(calmly)

We've dealt with worse. We can
handle this, too.

Ashley steps forward, her expression resolute.

ASHLEY

We need a plan. A new mission.

Katrina closes the ledger with a determined snap. She
meets each of their gazes, her voice ringing out clear
and strong.

KATRINA

Then here it is. We take this to
the end. We find these hidden
forces and expose them. We protect
Playsfield.

Lucas nods, the fire of purpose in his eyes.

LUCAS

I'm in. Let's do this. Together.

Mia places her hand atop theirs, her smirk returning.

MIA

Guardians of Playsfield, assemble,
right?

Ashley laughs softly, the tension breaking for a moment.

ASHLEY

Yeah. And let's not forget the
high school part. We've got prom
to plan too.

Katrina smiles, her fear momentarily displaced by the
camaraderie.

KATRINA

One nightmare at a time.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

They stand united, a newfound sense of duty enveloping them. Whatever darkness lurks in Playsfield, they are ready to face it head-on.

CUT TO BLACK.

INT. MEADOWBROOK HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY - DAY

Katrina, with her auburn hair tied back and eyes fierce with determination, slides book after ancient tome across the library table to her friends.

KATRINA

We need to know what we're dealing with, inside and out.

Lucas, his sandy hair falling into his face as he leans over an old map of Playsfield, traces ley lines with his finger.

LUCAS

These energy patterns could be why the entity chose our town.

Mia flips through a dusty grimoire, her red curls bouncing as she nods in agreement.

MIA

And if we can disrupt these patterns, maybe we can cut it off from its power source.

Ashley, looking over Katrina's shoulder, points at a symbol in the margin of a page.

ASHLEY

I've seen this symbol before, near the old mill!

Katrina looks up sharply, a plan forming in her mind.

KATRINA

Then that's where we'll start.

EXT. PLAYSFIELD MAIN STREET - NIGHT

A montage shows Katrina and her friends, under cover of darkness, performing drills in hand-to-hand combat and honing their newly acquired arcane knowledge.

Katrina breaks away from a sparring session with Lucas, breathing heavily but smiling with pride.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ASHLEY (V.O.)
(whispers)
We are the shield in the
darkness...

Mia, chalk in hand, sketches protective sigils on the sidewalk, her eyes scanning for unseen threats.

MIA (V.O.)
...the watchers on the walls.

Lucas, perched on a rooftop, surveys the town with binoculars, always vigilant.

LUCAS (V.O.)
No evil will catch us unprepared
again.

INT. KATRINA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Katrina sits cross-legged on her bed, surrounded by open books and scattered papers, lost in thought. She glances at a photo of her friends, a determined spark in her eye.

KATRINA (V.O.)
Playsfield is our home, our
battleground.

EXT. MEADOWBROOK HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

The group walks through the school courtyard. Students pass by, oblivious to the weight of destiny on their shoulders.

ASHLEY
(to Katrina)
You think we'll ever be normal
kids again?

Katrina looks at her friends, her gaze lingering on each face.

KATRINA
We're more than that now. We're
guardians.

They exchange a look of unity and step forward, together, into the future.

FADE OUT.

INT. KATRINA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The room is dim, lit only by the glow of a desk lamp. Katrina pores over an ancient text, her finger tracing the faded lines of a cryptic passage.

KATRINA

(mutters)

"Vigilance begets survival."

The wind HOWLS outside, rattling the window panes. She glances up, eyes narrowing, then returns to her studies.

A KNOCK at the door startles her; she snaps the book shut and hides it under her bed.

KATRINA (CONT'D)

Come in.

MIA (O.S.)

Hey, are you coming? We're starting.

EXT. KATRINA'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - NIGHT

A makeshift obstacle course stretches across the lawn. Lucas weaves through it with grace, ducking and rolling under a series of ropes.

LUCAS

Time!

Mia checks the stopwatch, impressed.

MIA

New record!

Katrina steps out into the yard, a steely look on her face.

KATRINA

Good. But it's not just about speed.

She approaches a dummy rigged with sensors and delivers a series of precise strikes. The device lights up, signaling a successful hit.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ASHLEY
(clapping)
Now that's technique!

Katrina nods, acknowledging the compliment but never breaking focus.

KATRINA
Every move counts when you're up
against the unknown.

They gather around a fire pit, the flames casting dancing shadows on their faces.

LUCAS
We've come a long way since the
mill.

KATRINA
And yet, this is just the
beginning.

Mia tosses a log onto the fire, sparks flying upward into the night.

MIA
So, what's next?

Katrina looks into the distance, her eyes reflecting the fire's glow.

KATRINA
We train, we watch, and we wait.
And when the time comes...

She stands, silhouetted against the blaze.

KATRINA (CONT'D)
...we fight.

ASHLEY
(nods)
Together.

The four friends stand united, their resolve as strong as the fire before them.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END.