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INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

A YOUNG WOMAN sits facing a dressing table and picks up a small music box, which she proceeds to slowly wind up at its base. Throughout this scene her face is either framed out or obscured, her identity withheld from us. She lifts its lid and the box begins to play a simple tune. The ballerina inside it pirouettes.

The woman HUMS along to the tune and crosses the dimly lit room to place the music box on the window sill, next to a few other children's toys.

She moves again to the bed and perches on its edge. A SMALL BOY of about 3 years of age looks sleepily up at her from under the sheets. The young woman strokes the boy's hair and begins to SING a lullaby in a very low, gentle voice to the tune of the music box.

YOUNG WOMAN

[singing]

If you should hear a silent cry
Speak no more, no word or why
When birds are quiet and day has fled
The hour has come to go to bed.

She picks up a glass of water from the bedside table and brings it to her lap.

Sleep will come to weary eyes
That's the time the blood moon cries
When night draws in and down goes day
You can wish the shadows away.

She brings her free hand in front of the boy's face and unfurls her fist to reveal a small blue pill. The boy eyes it, expressionless. He places it on his tongue and the woman hands him the water to wash it down with.

If you wake before sunrise
And hear the breath of demons lies
Close you eyes, never fear
Peace my child, for mother's here.

The boy drinks and hands back the water. We notice a pendant hanging around the woman's neck. Cast in silver, it depicts a symbol of a P with a line through it, similar to an Egyptian ankh.

YOUNG WOMAN

(continued)

He feels your pain, he dries your tears
He lifts the stone, he quells your fears
He waits for you to join him there
Return to him the gift once shared.

The woman stops singing and kisses the boy gently on the forehead. He closes his eyes. She blows out the candles, leaving the room bathed in moonlight.

She rises and exits the room silently, though the music box stills plays. There is a brief AMBIENT SOUND and a ray of warm light as the door opens and closes.

CLOSE UP of the small boy's face. First his eyes open, then he opens his mouth. The blue pill is still on his tongue.

He takes it out and puts it under his pillow, turning onto his side and looking up at his bedroom window.

SMALL BOY'S POV: The window is slightly ajar, the lace curtain gently billowing. The ballerina gradually stops spinning as the MUSIC grinds to a halt. Slowly PULL FOCUS to the full moon in the distance.

TITLES BEGIN

SOUNDTRACK : A WOMAN HUMMING THE LULLABY FROM THE OPENING SCENE

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

TIGHTER ANGLE of the same full moon. Rain beats down. PAN DOWN to settle on a pathway leading through some trees. A small dark figure is running down the path.

SEVERAL CAMERA ANGLES get progressively closer. The figure stumbles on the rough, wet terrain. We realise it is a child.

CLOSER STILL. We recognise the SMALL BOY dressed in a night-shirt.

CLOSE UP of the boy's bare feet, muddy, bloody. He trips and falls flat on his face into the wet mud. He looks up, distressed but clearly focused on what he must do. His breath is picked out in the cold night air. He rises once more and continues his journey.

Dawn begins to brighten the edges of the sky. We see the silhouette of the little boy disappearing into the trees.

TITLES END

THE WOMAN'S SINGING STOPS.

EXT. WASTE GROUND - NIGHT

An elderly, dishevelled VAGRANT is sitting on an upturned box in a neglected urban waste ground, his back to us. It is grey and raining. There is rubbish and discarded junk is lying all around, including an old TV set. The vagrant tries to light a small fire with a soggy set of matches, sheltering the flame from the wind and rain as he does so. When he lights the match it MAKES NO SOUND.

CUT TO BLACK

The exact same scene plays again, this time with a SOUND added to go with the image of the match striking. However, the sound seems inappropriate for the image - too big for the tiny flame that ignites in the vagrant's hand.

CUT TO BLACK

For the third time the scene is played, this time with a slightly DIFFERENT VARIATION OF THE SOUND of the match lighting. Still the sound seems inappropriate, out of place.

FREEZE FRAME ON THIS FINAL IMAGE.

INT. DUBBING STUDIO - NIGHT

SLOW PULL OUT of the frozen image on the TV monitor, to reveal the back of a YOUNG MAN's head looking at it.

CLOSE UP of the man's hands moving rapidly over the multi-dialled console before him. This movement ends with a decisive stab at a red illuminated button.

The TV image rewinds to the precise frame where the match is about to be struck.

The young man's hands are seen rummaging through two sets of drawers. He pulls out scissors, a packet of cigarettes, scotch tape, and finally what he is looking for, a book of matches.

CLOSE UP of the man's face as he looks up at the screen intently. The TV image is reflected in his striking eyes. This is DAVID, sound designer.

He rises from the mixing desk and enters a small sound booth. As the heavy door closes behind him we can see him inside through the glass wall but WE HEAR NO SOUND. He moves a microphone into

position and then picks up a metal bucket and places it onto a table beneath the microphone.

David re-enters the mixing room, picks up the matches, and with a few key depressions at the console puts it into RECORD mode - a red light comes on.

He returns to the sound booth. Once again the door closes behind him with a gentle THWUMPH, but this time we can hear him inside the booth as the SOUND is relayed through two large speakers in the studio. David strikes three matches at different distances from the microphone.

CLOSE UP of the recording level meters as the last two matches are struck. They jump sharply for the duration of the SOUND.

Satisfied, David leaves the sound booth, returns to the console, and replays the three sounds. With speed and deftness he chooses the best. Using the graphic audio editor he isolates the sound and positions it accurately to the exact frame of the vagrant striking the match.

David spools back to the beginning of the scene and plays it from the start.

EXT. WASTE GROUND - NIGHT

The scene plays again, full screen this time. The vagrant tries to light the small fire with the soggy set of matches, sheltering the flame from the wind and rain as he does so. The new sound fits in well.

ONLY THIS TIME THERE IS SOMETHING ELSE DIFFERENT.

THERE IS A SMALL BOY STANDING IN THE MIDDLE DISTANCE OF THE SCENE, STARING INTO THE CAMERA LENS. THE SAME SMALL BOY WE SAW IN THE OPENING SCENES, STILL DRESSED IN HIS NIGHT SHIRT.

INT. DUBBING STUDIO - NIGHT

CLOSE UP of David. He stares astonished, bewildered at the new image before him.

EXT. WASTE GROUND - NIGHT

The scene plays on. The vagrant has lit the fire.

AND THE BOY HAS GONE.

INT. DUBBING STUDIO - NIGHT

David freezes the playback. He hits the REWIND button.

He presses PLAY.

EXT. WASTE GROUND - NIGHT

The scene plays through from start to finish.

With no sign of the boy.

INT. DUBBING STUDIO - NIGHT

MID SHOT of David. He rubs his eyes and looks back at the screen. He stops the film and checks the clock on the wall to his left.

The digital clock reads 11:45pm. It's late. Reflected in the glass of the clock face, something flickers.

David turns his head to the right. Through the glass wall of the sound booth we see, but do not hear, fire coming out of the top of the waste basket.

David jumps up and we see him disappear into the booth to attend to it.

INT. STUDIO LIFT - NIGHT

David makes his way out of the building, descending four floors in the lift. The lift is of the cage variety so we are able to see through it, out into the other floors as David descends. As we do, we see that the rest of the building is completely deserted, but for a CLEANING LADY hoovering some stairs. As David passes in the lift the cleaning lady stops working for a moment to follow the lift down with her gaze. The SOUND OF HOOVERING FADES as David reaches the bottom and slides open the concertina door.

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

The streets are poorly illuminated and empty. The remnants of a fruit market litter the pavement. David turns and walks briskly up the street, buttoning up his jacket as he does so, his breath picked out blue in the moonlight.

A small GROUP OF YOUNG PEOPLE come out of a bar ahead. They appear slightly drunk and rowdy and are wearing costumes with giant papier-mâché heads. They are carrying collection boxes, and as David passes, one of the people leers and nosily shakes a bucket of coins and notes in his direction. David puts his head down, gives them a wide berth and quickens his pace.

INT. TUBE STATION - NIGHT

David stands alone at the end of the platform, waiting for the last tube. He closes his tired eyes and sways slightly.

There is a FAINT RATTLE from the tracks.

The wind gusts out of the tunnel. Moments later the train roars into the station, whistling past a now alert David.

The train comes to a halt. David opens his shoulder bag and inside we see a portable MINI DISC machine. He unravels a pair of headphones and places them on his head. He switches on the MINI DISC machine, and as the doors open, steps towards the train.

INT. TRAIN - NIGHT

David sits staring at his reflection in the black glass opposite him. The curve in it distorts his features, making him look like he has no eyes, just elongated blackened sockets.

CLOSE UP of David's bag. Poking out is the tip of a small microphone.

FROM NOW ON WE HEAR WHAT DAVID HEARS VIA THE MICROPHONE.

DAVID'S POV: TWO MIDDLE AGED WOMEN dressed in dowdy work clothes, cleaners returning from work.

MIDDLE AGED WOMAN 1

...but he just gave me some more pain killers and told me to be patient.

MIDDLE AGED WOMAN 2

They make it sound like it's your fault and you've done something wrong don't they ?

MIDDLE AGED WOMAN 1

Well that's exactly how he made me feel, like I was just wasting his time. I mean I expected some sympathy, and anyway I never take pills, so I just threw them away.

MIDDLE AGED WOMAN 2

These young doctors just give them away like Smarties nowadays....

CLOSE UP as David readjusts the microphone to point further down the carriage. Two seats down from David is a TEENAGER with a walkman, the HISS OF MUSIC leaking out of his headphones. He taps his foot, but nervously and out of time to the music.

The teenager stares across at a YOUNG COUPLE opposite, making out.

The girl is WHISPERING something in her boyfriend's ear. We just about hear the sibilance in the words, but not the words themselves.

PULL FOCUS to the final occupant of the carriage, a SLEEPING VAGRANT. He is hunched forward, twitching occasionally, breathing heavily and MUMBLING to himself. A sudden lurch of the train wakes him for a moment, and he straightens up, opens his eyes, and gazes around the carriage, wondering where he is.

Then relaxing again, he yawns.

The CAMERA PANS back to the young couple.

They both yawn.

CAMERA PANS across the aisle to the teenager.

He stops tapping his foot, and yawns.

CAMERA PANS back to the two middle aged women, still in full flow.

MIDDLE AGED WOMAN 1
...would say that, stands to reason..

She pauses to yawn.

Then her friend yawns.

MID SHOT of David. He yawns.

INT. TRAIN - NIGHT, LATER.

David awakes with a start as the tube train pulls into his station. The carriage is completely empty now, except for the sleeping vagrant who is TALKING LOUDLY, if incoherently in his sleep.

The vagrant's sleep becomes relaxed again and he snores.

The train doors open.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

David walks through suburban streets on the way home. A passing car headlight illuminates him for a moment. As it does David cuts into a park.

EXT. PARK - NIGHT

As David walks through the park he feels something and looks up at the sky - it is beginning to rain.

Further along the path he spots something on the paving stones; chalk drawings and messages. He is intrigued and stops to look at them.

They are a dense mixture of words and pictures, not unlike those of 18th century artist William Blake. One shows a baby angel perched on a man's shoulders. Another is of a pagan-like crossed 'P' symbol, with snakes curling around the lines that make up the symbol. As he tries to read the words the rain gets heavier. The drawings begin to disintegrate before his eyes.

He starts for home again.

EXT. DAVID'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A large terraced house in a quiet but unremarkable street. David takes out his keys and lets himself in. Muffled RAISED VOICES come from inside.

INT. DAVID'S HOUSE HALLWAY - NIGHT

On the stairs David's neighbours, an ITALIAN MAN and ITALIAN GIRL, are having an argument in their native tongue. At the sound of David entering they fall silent. David slowly begins to ascend the steps and as he passes they all exchange a quick nervous "Hello". The girl smiles at him. David reaches the next landing and starts to ascend the flight of stairs. Midway up he pauses and cranes his ear. Silence. He finishes his ascent and reaches his own front door. He uses his keys to let himself in.

INT. DAVID'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

David enters the flat and double locks the door behind him. He removes his jacket and hangs it up, along with the bag containing his portable MINI DISC. He opens the top of the bag and flips out the disc from the recorder.

The flat is a small one bedroom bachelor pad; compact, a little lifeless, and lacking the female touch. The main features are a small TV and stereo set-up. Along the wall are several shelves stacked with mini discs and CDs. He walks through the living room to the kitchen.

INT. DAVID'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

David dries his hair on a tea towel and tries to fill the kettle. The water pipes groan and the water comes out slowly as strange CLANKING NOISES come from the plumbing. He eventually gets enough water and turns the kettle on. He opens a cupboard and inside is a supply of Pot Noodle instant meals. He removes one and opens the lid.

INT. DAVID'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Still drying his hair on the tea towel, David closes the venetian blinds and sits down to remove his shoes.

On the floor is a large jigsaw puzzle, fairly recently started. The unused pieces are in a pile next to it. There is no reference image so we do not know what the picture is going to be. David spots a piece, takes it out, and after searching for a few moments fits it into the jigsaw.

David pulls out the empty MINI DISC box from his pocket and picks up a pen from the coffee table. He writes something on the box. He puts the disc into the box and places it onto the shelf above the hi-fi, next to many other discs similarly catalogued with dates and David's handwriting on the spine.

The SOUND OF THE BOILING KETTLE comes from the kitchen.

INT. DAVID'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

David is lying in bed, the bedside lamp still on. He stares up at the ceiling.

DAVID'S POV: A white, featureless ceiling.

He hears the sounds of the ITALIAN MAN and ITALIAN GIRL making love through the ceiling : The SQUEAK of bedsprings, a THUMPING SOUND, along with ECSTATIC EXCLAMATIONS of desire in Italian.

David takes a small box from the bedside table and removes two ear plugs, inserting them into his ears. The exterior sounds become dull and muffled and we hear David's HEARTBEAT and breathing inside his own head. He turns the light off. He closes his eyes.

There is a pause as we focus on the beating of his heart. And then...

MAN'S VOICE
[off screen]

What is that?

INT. DUBBING STUDIO - DAY

CLOSE UP of David's face, eyes still closed. We see reflections of pictures on his face, and the sounds of the film he has been editing, as if playing in his head.

The sound of the heartbeat slowly gives way to a CLANKING SOUND - the sound of DAVID's pipes, but this time distant and creepy.

MAN'S VOICE
(off screen)

What's that clanking sound ?

David's eyes jerk open.

WIDER ANGLE: David is back in the dubbing studio watching the TV monitor with a man of about 50 sitting behind him. This is STEPHEN JAY, director of the film David is working on.

STEPHEN

David, wake up for fuck's sake! I didn't ask for that sound.....did I?

David sits bolt upright, takes a moment and tries to gather his thoughts. He pauses the film.

DAVID

No. It's the pipes from my flat. I thought it added...something.

The director stares incredulously at the back of David's head for a moment.

STEPHEN
(curiously)

Again...

David replays the scene again. This time we focus on Stephen's face, his brow furrowed in concentration.

Staying on his face, we hear a heavy door SWOOSH open and a man's cough, as if to get attention. Stephen Jay ignores it.

INTERRUPTING MAN
(off screen, whispering)

Stephen?

Stephen continues to ignore him.

INTERRUPTING MAN

(Louder)

Stephen? Selby Sheridan is on line one for you.
He says he needs two things...

Stephen, still listening hard to the film, slowly raises two fingers to the intruder without giving him the courtesy of looking at him as he does so. Eventually the man retreats and the door closes quietly behind him. Stephen continues to watch. As the CLANKING SOUND rises on the soundtrack, he begins to nod slowly.

STEPHEN

All right. It's not shit. Pause it there.

The sound stops abruptly and Stephen and David sit silently, and stare at the frozen image on the screen for a few moments.

STEPHEN

What did you think of the location sound?

DAVID

Um...well, we will probably have to dub in most of the backgrounds and perhaps loop in some of the dialogue....

STEPHEN

Shit! I knew it. That coke-snorting moron. Is any of it useable?

David turns to face Stephen for the first time. He screws up his face, opens his mouth as if to speak, but then closes it again.

STEPHEN

Jesus! Right, I'm starting reshoots this week and I want you to do it.

DAVID

The dubbing? I'm not sure...

STEPHEN

(overlapping his words)

No, not the sodding dubbing! I want you on location.

David frowns. Thinks for a while.

DAVID

But I haven't done anything like that for ages. I don't think Nigel would....

Stephen is already standing, putting his jacket on and preparing to leave.

STEPHEN

(cutting David off)

I'll square it with Nigel, never mind about that. Unless he wants to lose his best client he's going to let you out of this cage for a few weeks. Christ, you can't be any worse than that monkey no matter how out of practice you are.

Stephen opens the door and disappears behind it.

Keep it up. It's almost passable.

Stephen leaves. David stares at the door as it closes behind him. He sighs.

The door opens again. Stephen pops his head into the room.

STEPHEN

Do you play squash?

David opens his mouth to speak.

Excellent! I'll have my PA book us a game.

He slams the door shut.

EXT. TUBE STATION - NIGHT

On the curved surface of the tube wall is an advertisement for The National Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse. The image depicts a small, hollow-eyed boy gazing out into the middle distance, and the line "I can't sleep. When I sleep, that's when the monster comes".

A gust of wind comes out of the tunnel. An empty bag blows across frame and we follow it until it comes to a momentary halt against a man's body. It is David, staring at the poster. He seems to notice the bag below and shakes it off. It continues its trajectory down the length of the tunnel. David watches it travel the remainder of the deserted platform.

As his eyes reach the exit we hear the sound of footsteps hurrying down the steps. David watches and waits as the footsteps get louder. Finally a woman emerges - she is in her late 20's, dressed in a long red coat and red high heels. She stands about 40 metres from David, her head bowed. When she looks over her shoulder across the length of the platform we see her face. Though full of consternation, it still has an intriguing beauty to it.

This is ELIZABETH.

Their eyes meet but David quickly averts his gaze and stares at the platform.

They stand in silence for a few moments. Then the very faint sound of more footsteps. David looks up again at ELIZABETH. She has frozen in fear. The footsteps are irregular, as if the person descending to the platform has a limp.

Elizabeth begins to walk down the platform towards David, her high heels clicking. As she comes within a few more steps of David his breathing is amplified on the soundtrack. She seems to be about to talk to David, but she walks past and stops a few feet beyond him, so that DAVID is now between her and the entrance to the platform.

David steals a sideways glance at her.

The footsteps continue, becoming louder. They are slow, heavy and the rhythm is accentuated by a tapping sound every other step. David looks towards the exit then glances to look at Elizabeth. She is still facing the train track but her body has become rigid with fear, and her eyes fixed.

There is A RATTLING SOUND and another gust of wind as the train approaches. We hear it roar and the descending footsteps are drowned out.

The train begins to emerge from the tunnel and slows. The train stops and the doors open. David looks at Elizabeth - she casts a terrified glance back at the station entrance and then jerks forward quickly into the train. David looks back towards the entrance. A man's shadow seems to loom just beyond.

The electronic signal that the tube doors are going to close starts to sound. David quickly steps into the carriage in front of him, just as the doors close.

INT. TUBE TRAIN - NIGHT

David boards the carriage next to the one Elizabeth boarded, and stands for a moment just inside the doors listening. After a few moments the doors close and the train moves off.

David sits down in the carriage, which is otherwise completely empty. The train moves away from the station. He begins to relax.

Suddenly Elizabeth enters David's carriage via the adjoining doors, breathing heavily. She meets his gaze and he looks away.

Elizabeth sits in the seat directly opposite David. She looks at him, but he is pretending to read the adverts above her seat. Elizabeth nervously lights a cigarette. David glances up at the "No Smoking" sign above her head.

Elizabeth draws on the cigarette as if her life depended on it. Then she takes the cigarette from her mouth and stretches across, holding it under David's face. He stares at it for a moment then takes the cigarette from her, holding it as if it were semtex.

ELIZABETH

As long as I'm with you, he won't try anything.