

THE ORPHAN

by

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based on the novel by

Robert Stallman

TITLE ON BLACK : Michigan, 1938

SOUND : Heavy, strained breathing.

FADE IN:

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

POV - bolting through a dark forest. Trees rushing by. Twigs lashing.

Turning around. In the distance, wavering lights of torches. Two groups. Faint shouts of MEN. Dogs barking.

PREY (V.O.)
Hide! Must hide!

POV - charging on. Leaping over a fallen tree. Landing with a THUD. Heavy breathing.

Ahead in the dark! A dark figure lurking behind a tree.

A HUNTER. Rifle ready.

HUNTER
(whistles/shouts)
There!

The man stands and aims. The finger squeezes the trigger.

POV - ducking. A SHOT. The tree behind SPLATTERS bark. Leaping forward. No stopping now. Breakneck.

The barking grows louder. Frantic.

Another SHOT. Another tree hit. Torches dance among the trees.

POV - the edge of the forest. Breaking through branches.

EXT. FOREST / PATH - NIGHT

POV - sliding down a slope onto a dusty path.

HUNTSMAN (O.S.)
My God!

POV - whirling around - onto the POSSE. Guns and torches. Barking DOGS on leashes. The MEN are frozen in terror.

In front of them their quarry. A MONSTER. A creature straight out of legends and nightmares. Big as a grizzly. Teeth like a shark. Traces of wolf, gorilla, sabre tooth. Fiery eyes. INTELLIGENCE.

THE BEAST moves towards the pursuers. A mind-numbing ROAR. The men fall back, unleashing the yapping dogs. The first brave one jumps at the creature.

With one crunching swipe by a mighty paw the hound is beheaded in mid-air.

CUT TO BLACK:

TITLE : The Orphan

INT. BARN - NIGHT

Pitch-black. The barn door swings open. (*swiping title*)

Pale moonlight sketches the shape of a shotgun pushing in. Then the man. JOHN NORDMEYER, in his forties. The tough farm work has kept him lean. So have the lonely, waking nights. Cautiously he edges forward.

Cows move and grunt in their stalls.

John sneaks further into the barn. ... He freezes. A NOISE. Rustling. Up in the hayloft.

JOHN approaches a wooden ladder and starts climbing up.

JOHN'S head slowly moves up in the loft. Another rustle! Behind a bale of hay.

The farmer starts to creep forward. The shotgun leads the way. Movement - behind a haystack. John stops. Then he charges.

EXT. FARMLAND - NIGHT

An owl hoots. On a branch. Fluorescent eyes. A cold stare like the stars above.

INT. FARMHOUSE / DOOR - NIGHT

LAURA NORDMEYER stands behind the screen door. She draws on a rolled cigarette and peers into the night. She'd look younger than mid-forties if it wasn't for her buried heart. Her bitter resolve like armor.

Laura watches the barn door. A shape appears. John carries a form wrapped in his jacket.

Laura opens the screen door, flicks the cigarette out.

She steps on it, as John approaches over the dark yard.

John carries the bundle up on the porch. Laura catches his lost expression. She lifts a corner of the jacket.

Her heart stops for a beat. She looks at John for an explanation. He doesn't have one.

Laura opens the door. John walks inside. Laura follows. Blood and thoughts rushing through her head.

INT. FARMHOUSE / KITCHEN - NIGHT

John carries the bundle through the kitchen into the living room. The slipping jacket reveals a little dirty leg. The farmdog tries to get a sniff.

INT. FARMHOUSE / LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Carefully John places his find on the couch. Big blue eyes. Laura and John try to grasp the image in front of them.

A BOY. Maybe five years old. Naked, shivering. After a moment Laura moves towards the child.

Gently she picks up the foundling and carries him up the stairs.

John remains. Unable to move.

INT. FARMHOUSE / ROBERT'S ROOM - NIGHT

Laura places the child into a small bed in the dark room.

A dirty wide-eyed face looks at the woman. The boy shivers. Laura turns and starts rummaging in a wicker basket under the window, observed by watchful eyes. She returns with a blanket which she exchanges for her husband's jacket. Laura tucks the naked child in.

LAURA

Hush now... Shhhhh...

The boy calms. He meets her eyes for a meaningful second, then turns around, drawing the blanket up to his chin. A deep sigh of relief.

Laura stands in silence, looking down at the child. She hardly dares to breath.

INT. FARMHOUSE / KITCHEN - MORNING

An egg. Broken into a sizzling frying pan.

INT. FARMHOUSE / ROBERT'S ROOM - MORNING

The boy lies in bed, sleeping. Sunlight stands against the wall over his head. Birds sing outside.

JOHN (V.O.)
(faint echo)
Hold on. ...

LAURA (V.O.)
(faint echo)
Not so fast. ...

A faint echo of laughter past. John, Laura and a child.

The boy wakes. His eyes open and he finds his bearings. Everything is where it should be. The stand with the basin, the pitcher of water, the chest of drawers, the wicker basket under the window, curtained with gauze. Light shines on the wall. A faint border of children's wallpaper. The rattle from dishes sounds from the kitchen.

The boy sits up. At his feet he sees the woman lying on the floor. She's asleep, one hand on the bed.

INT. FARMHOUSE / KITCHEN - MORNING

Frying eggs in a pan.

The boy walks into the kitchen. The blanket around his skinny shoulders, his little bulge of belly sticking out.

John at the cast-iron stove turns around, unable to speak.

He takes in every feature of the child's face. Then he motions to the chair. The boy climbs on it. John throws the eggs on a plate and places it in front of the child. The boy starts eating. Ravished. John stares.

INT. FARMHOUSE / ROBERT'S ROOM - MORNING

Laura on the floor awakes. Her head shoots up. She looks to the bed. Empty! Was it a dream? A nightmare?

INT. FARMHOUSE / KITCHEN - MORNING

The boy eats. John sits opposite, cradles a cup of coffee, watches. Laura comes in. She sees the boy. Relieved. Gently she draws the blanket up the naked shoulders. She kneels next to the chair, not taking her eyes off the boy. After a moment she strokes a lock of hair from his forehead.

John watches wife and child in awe.

INT. FARMHOUSE / ROBERT'S ROOM - DAY

Laura kneels in front of the boy. His hair is wet and combed. He wears some trousers. Laura holds a shirt up to the small body and then puts it on him. The boy looks down on himself.

Laura can hardly contain her emotions. Her hands go to his shoulders. Carefully she pulls him in. She embraces the boy. Holding him tight. And tighter. She will never let go again.

EXT. FARM / FARMYARD - DAY

CHOCK! An axe splits a chunk of wood.

John wipes sweat off his brow. He sees Laura and the boy approaching over the farmyard. The dog runs to greet them. The boy pats the animal, which jumps around him.

BOY
What's her name?

Laura and John exchange a look. - He has spoken!

LAURA
Josie.

BOY
Hello Josie.

JOHN
What's your name?

The boy stops and thinks, then shrugs. A picture of lost innocence. With a warning glance to her husband, Laura nudges the boy on.

LAURA
We've got cows, hogs, a team of horses and a mule.

The dog follows Laura and the boy. After a moment the hands of woman and child find each other. A natural inclination. John looks after them, as if biting on something hard.

INT. FARMHOUSE / KITCHEN - DUSK

A plucked chicken sits on top of the stove. Next to it a kettle boils. John throws wood into the fire.

The door opens and Laura and the boy come in. Laura holds a paring knife and a dishpan full of vegetables. The boy carries a pail with corn on the cob.

LAURA
He knew exactly which ones to pick.

The boy follows Laura to the sink, where both of them start cleaning the vegetables. John starts cutting the chicken. He stops.

JOHN
Laura... !

Laura doesn't break her scrubbing. She smiles at the boy.

LAURA

How 'bout you help John milk the cows in the morning. Would you like that?

BOY

Yes! I want to! ... Please!

John chews on it, then he nods. The boy and Laura exchange a smile of complicity.

LAURA

Take that to the table, Robert.

John freezes. He turns to his wife, taken aback. Laura ignores the reproach. Robert carries the bowl to the table, unaware of the tension.

INT. FARMHOUSE / ROBERT'S ROOM - NIGHT

The boy sleeps in his bed. Shallow, peaceful breathing. The moonlight from the window casts his shadow on the wall.

BEAST (V.O.)

(faint whisper)

Boy. ... Wake up. ...

Robert's breathing grows disturbed. A troubled sigh.

BEAST (V.O.)

(loud whisper)

Boy!

The boy's eyes open as his shadow grows on the wall, slowly spreading ... into something else.

Outside the window, the night gives way to light. The sun rises and chases the moon out of its sky.

Robert is asleep in his bed. A hand moves in and stirs him gently.

JOHN (O.S.)

Wake up.

The boy opens his eyes and sees John above him.

INT. BARN - DAWN

John sits on a milking stool, making the teats of a cow squirt milk into a bucket. Robert and the dog wait at the barn doors and watch.

After a moment John extends his hand to the boy. He goes to John who leads him between his legs. He takes Robert's hand and puts it on the teat. With the farmer's help, Robert is able to force some milk out. He gets the hang of it. Milk flows. Robert smiles. spurts of frothy milk hit the bucket.

John can't help but to warily smell the hair of the boy.

INT. FARMHOUSE / KITCHEN - DAWN

Laura stands at the kitchen window. She stares transfixed at the image of man and boy milking across the farmyard.

EXT. FARMYARD - DAY

Laura and Robert sit in front of the barn and husk corn.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

John and the boy hold buckets and sow seeds onto the mowed field. Poetry in motion.

INT. FARMHOUSE / ROBERT'S ROOM - NIGHT

Laura lies next to Robert in his bed and reads a bedtime story.

INT. CHICKEN HOUSE - MORNING

Laura and Robert collect eggs in the chicken house.

EXT. CORN FIELD / CREEK - DAY

Laura and Robert snap ears of corn from a field next to a creek.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

John steers the walking plow while the boy leads the horse. Josie, the dog, scampers along.

EXT. FARM / FARMYARD - DUSK

A screeching grindstone. John sharpens the blades of the mowing machine. Laura arrives with a pail of milk.

LAURA

Where is he?

John continues his work.

JOHN
He went to find you.

Laura lets the pail fall and SCREAMS.

LAURA
John! Where is he?!

Milk seeps into the earth.

EXT. CORN FIELD / CREEK - DUSK

Laura runs towards the creek. John follows behind.

LAURA
Robert! ...

The boy sits on the muddy creek bank and broods on the flowing water. Laura stops to kneel, turning the shivering child towards her. She checks him over, takes off her jacket, puts it around him.

She takes the boy in her arms and carries him away. John looks after them. He faces the creek.

The sound of rushing water.

INT. FARMHOUSE / LANDING - NIGHT

John comes up the stairs.

He stops on the landing and looks to Robert's door which is slightly ajar.

JOHN discreetly peers through the crack of the door. He sees Laura lying next to the boy in bed. They are both asleep. After a moment she stirs. She opens her eyes and looks at the child, dead to the world. She kisses him gently on the forehead and sneaks out of bed.

John steals away, opens the middle door on the landing and disappears inside.

INT. FARMHOUSE / LANDING - NIGHT

Laura pulls Robert's door to, leaving it open a notch. She walks towards her room at the end of the landing.

INT. FARMHOUSE / JOHN'S ROOM - NIGHT

John lies in bed. He hears Laura closing the door of her room. He blows out the kerosene lamp.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - NIGHT

The night sky.

A DOE is grazing on a clearing. Behind it among the trees a massive shadow rises. The head of the doe shoots up. Too late. The panic stricken eyes of the animal reflect the overpowering image of death: THE BEAST bearing down.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE / RIVER - NIGHT

Running water. A small river. Blood flows in.

THE BEAST cleans its snout of the remains of its prey.

ROBERT (V.O.)
Why did you kill it?

After a moment an answer.

BEAST (V.O.)
I must feed.

ROBERT (V.O.)
I want my bed.

The skull of the Beast jerks up. It sniffs the air.

BEAST (V.O.)
Hush now. ... Shhhhh...

CLOSE ON: the eyes of the creature.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - NIGHT

A series of SMASH CUTS: flying over the countryside finding...

EXT. RIVER / BRIDGE - NIGHT

...THREE TRAMPS crouched under an arched bridge in a littered camp, holding rags over their rancid bodies. The glowing ends of the cigarettes occasionally light up their gaunt faces. TOMMY, the youngest, with a narrow chicken face, shuffles nervously.

TOMMY
Soon we can earn some pickin'
strawberries. Pick some, eat
some...

RUSTY, dirty, red hair, wearing a torn suit, stands at the side, wavers back and forth and drinks from a bottle.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
Gimme some too, Rusty.

Rusty keeps on swallowing the liquor.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
(wails)
Rusty, c'mon! ...

GUS
Give the boy a drink, goddammit!

GUS, the third and oldest tramp, a big man with a larger head - Boris Karloff's lost brother - starts coughing heavily. Rusty empties the bottle, holds it up to the bright moon and then throws it deep into the far-off reeds.

TOMMY
Man. ...

GUS
Asshole! ...

Rusty unbuttons his pants. A stream of urine hits the moonlight. In a spur of inspiration he turns round and takes his leak towards the other two.

RUSTY
Here's your liquor, Tommy!

Gus and Tommy leap up out of the way.

TOMMY
Hey!

GUS
Shit! ...

He has another coughing fit.

EXT. REEDS - NIGHT

The Beast crouches in the reeds and observes the men in the distance. It sneaks up to the liquor bottle and sniffs it. The creature jolts away as if being stung.

INT. FARMHOUSE / KITCHEN - DAY

Robert sits at the table. A glass of milk in front of him. He watches Laura, while she prepares some dough. The boy takes in her every move. The grace of her shoulders, each wave of hair, her eyes scanning the worktop. Laura meets his gaze. A warm smile. Robert smiles back, as if waking from a dream.

John walks in carrying a self-made wooden fort.

JOHN
Look what I found.

ROBERT
Great! A fort!

Robert starts playing avidly with the little toy figures of Cowboys and Indians. The couple watch him for a moment. Their hands next to each other. Not touching.

LAURA
We should think about school.

John turns to her - in disbelief. Laura ignores his stare, watching her son in bliss.

LAURA (CONT'D)
You want to go to school, don't you, Robert?

The boy answers casually, absorbed in his game.

ROBERT
Yes, mum. ...

Laura is struck by lightning. Overwhelmed she leaves.

John looks after her and then to the boy who hasn't noticed anything. John follows Laura.

INT. FARMHOUSE / LANDING - DAY

Robert arrives on top of the landing, in his hand a broken Indian figure. He stops in front of his room from where he can hear John and Laura in mid fight.

LAURA (O.S.)
All I know, he's here!

JOHN (O.S.)
How, Laura?! Tell me! How?!

LAURA (O.S.)
I don't care!

JOHN (O.S.)
It's not possible. You must know that. ... We got to contact the sheriff!

LAURA (O.S.)
No! Don't you dare take him away from me! Not again! You hear! Don't you dare!

The door flies open and Laura storms out of the room. She sees the boy and stops in her tracks.

She grabs him and carries him downstairs. John steps out. He sees the broken Indian figure on the floor and picks it up.

EXT. FARM / FIELD - DAY

Laura and Robert sit in a field behind the farmhouse and pick strawberries. Laura finds a ripe one and hands it to the child who bites into it.

ROBERT
Do I have to go?

LAURA
You belong here! You understand?!

The boy nods softly.

INT. FARMHOUSE / LIVING ROOM - EVENING

John sits in the armchair, holding a leather bound folder in his hands, observing Robert playing with the fort on the floor.

JOHN
Hey...

The boy looks up. John indicates for him to sit on his lap. Robert climbs on the farmer's knees. John opens the album. Photographs, b&w, yellow at the edge. Robert stares at one picture:

Young John and Laura. Outside in the farmyard. Laughing. Between them they whirl around a boy. Maybe five years old.

SOUND: Faint laughter of past. ... Rushing water.

Robert on John's lap stares at the boy in the photograph. Both children look identical.

JOHN (CONT'D)
I was milking. Laura was in town. I thought he was still asleep. He got up and went to the creek.

John can't go on. He looks up to Laura, who stands in the frame of the kitchen door.

ROBERT
Where do you go, when you die?

John stares at the boy.

LAURA
Time for bed now...

Robert climbs off John's lap. The farmer looks after Laura who carries the boy upstairs.

JOHN
Night, Robert...

INT. FARMHOUSE / LANDING - NIGHT

Laura tucks Robert in.

ROBERT
How... ?

LAURA
You are here!

The boy nods, clearly dismayed.

LAURA (CONT'D)
More than my own life.
Never forget that.

The boy nods. Their eyes connect. A deep, knowing bond. However impossible. Laura gives him a kiss. Quietly she leaves the room and draws the door shut.

INT. FARMHOUSE / JOHN'S ROOM - NIGHT

The dark room. John lies awake in bed. He hears Laura outside on the landing. John exhales and turns on his side. After a moment the door handle moves. John turns round.

Laura comes in. Their eyes meet. She starts to unbutton her cotton blouse. John can't take his eyes off her.

INT. FARMHOUSE / ROBERT'S ROOM - NIGHT

The boy is asleep in his bed. A stormy wind howls outside the window. Robert's shadow on the wall starts to grow.

BEAST (V.O.)
Boy! Now!

Robert's eyes spring open. He sits up.

It happens: the SHIFT.

The boy's shadow spreads on the wall. Sparks appear around him.

Like fireworks in space. The birth of a micro milky way. Vivid, florid hues of spherical shapes. One minuscule planetary explosion spurning the next. Streams of cosmic fire latch at the boy. He falls on all fours.

A cascading, cataclysmic event soon engulfing all of the child. Another shape forming, taking hold: the BEAST.

The massive creature nearly fills the small room.

CLOSE ON: the eyes of the Beast.

INT. FARMHOUSE / LANDING / JOHN'S ROOM - NIGHT

SMASH CUTS: over the landing - into John's room - onto the embraced bodies - out through the window...

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - NIGHT

...flying over the country side, finding the BEAST.

The creature creeps along the edge of the forest.

ROBERT (V.O.)
Please! ... Take me back!

BEAST (V.O.)
This is my time, boy.

ROBERT (V.O.)
No! I must be there!

The Beast observes a clearing through the trees. A majestic STAG is grazing on it, unwary of the predator.

INT. FARMHOUSE / JOHN'S ROOM - NIGHT

/INTERCUT/

EXT. CLEARING - NIGHT

John and Laura. Skin on skin. Sweat. Soft moaning. Sighing sounds.

//

The stag on the clearing. Behind it a massive shape glides out from the trees.

//

The sex grows more passionate. Breaths interlock, move apart, interlock, panting faster.

//

The skull of the stag reels around. It perceives the predator. The animal leaps away. The Beast charges.

//

Hard breath. Pressure. Body parts. His mouth on her breast. Her hand on his behind. Rhythmic pelvic pelting.

//

The stag careers over the clearing trying to reach the trees. Behind it the Beast gains relentlessly. Its stampeding paws pelting the earth. Unstoppable.

//

The couple in unison. A furious, savage moment.

//

The stag sees the bolting Beast at its side. A great leap. An embrace of death. Both creatures collapse to the ground.

The Beast TEARS into the stag. Splattering blood.

//

Riddled by orgasm. Cries in agony.

//

The stag's skull hits the ground. Its eyes fade to death. A tear appears.

//

John collapses on Laura. A tear on her face. Deep breathing, calming down. - LIFE.

A NOISE from the house. Laura sits up. Alarmed.

LAURA

Robert! ...

EXT. FARMLAND - NIGHT

Faint thunder rumbles through the sky. The Beast approaches. The dark farmhouse lies in the distance. Gloomy storm clouds take foreboding shapes.

BEAST (V.O.)

Something is wrong.

ROBERT (V.O.)

Go back! Go! ...

The Beast tears towards the farm.

INT. FARMHOUSE / STAIRS - NIGHT

The living room lies dark and silent. Robert sneaks down the stairs towards the kitchen door where a faint light shimmers through the bottom gap. ... Somebody coughs.

INT. FARMHOUSE / KITCHEN - NIGHT

Robert pushes the door open and looks in. From his angle he can see Laura sitting at the table. A warning expression. Robert is pulled roughly into the room.

RUSTY
C'mon, little piggy!
(to Laura)
Nobody in the house?! - What?!

Rusty presses Robert hard in a chair.

RUSTY (CONT'D)
Don't move or I'll cut yer head
off!

Robert takes the scene in. Laura and John sit opposite each other. The farm dog lies dead in a pool of blood. The rain pounds steadily on the roof like heartbeats.

The three tramps are scattered in the room. Gus steadies himself on a slab of wood, coughing. Tommy points John's shotgun nervously about. Rusty holds a big kitchen knife, in his other hand a wad of money.

RUSTY (CONT'D)
Now! Where's the rest?!

JOHN
That's all we got.

Robert eyes Rusty, who starts pacing round the table.

Rolling thunder in the background. The storm outside gathers strength.

Rusty stops behind Laura. He begins to let the knife run up her arm. His free hand touching her shoulder, the side of her neck. Robert follows each tiny movement. The point of the knife reaches the blouse and touches her nipple. Rusty nods towards John.

RUSTY
He gets it up?

The knife flicks a button off the blouse which lands next to Robert's feet. John is barely able to hold back. Laura finds his eyes, pleading "No". Tommy laughs nervously.

GUS

They got no more! Let's split!

RUSTY

Shut the FUCK up!

Robert can see the spit working in the man's mouth, who starts massaging Laura's shoulders.

RUSTY (CONT'D)

They got plenty...

ROBERT

Stop it!

Rusty's head comes up. He smirks at the boy. He takes some of Laura's hair in his hand and smells it.

All of a sudden he twists Laura's arm behind her back and with a sudden move pulls her off the chair. Laura lets out a tight gasp. John comes up. Tommy points the gun at him.

TOMMY

Hey! Sit down! Sit down!

John ignores the gun and stares at Rusty who has Laura in an arm-lock, the knife near her face.

RUSTY

(whisper)

Sit down! ... Sit! ...

Laura nods to John. After a moment he sits down. Rusty pushes Laura forward.

RUSTY (CONT'D)

(to the others)

Watch 'em!

The other tramps exchange a nervous look. Robert can hardly contain himself. Blood rushing through his small body, burning up his face.

Lightning strikes and hits the generator outside. Everybody in the kitchen jumps. Frozen in a white second of time.

The kitchen falls dark with the CRACKBOOM of the thunderclap, followed by a growling rumble. Tommy brandishes the gun in the pitch black room.

TOMMY

Shit! Nobody move!

Rusty screams in agony.

RUSTY

Ahhh! Shit! FUCK! Fucking Bitch!

TOMMY
Rusty?! Rusty?!

Another flash of lightning reveals the following: Rusty pulling the knife out of his arm. John struggling with the big man Gus. Tommy waving the gun.

The kitchen falls dark again.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
Gus! Move! ... Dammit! Gus!

Thunder crashes in a rolling roar. Laura moves towards Robert who is still transfixed to his chair. Before she can reach the boy, Laura is grabbed by Rusty, flung around and thrown against the wall.

Robert sits paralysed. Shadows moving in front of him. Rusty has Laura pinned to the wall and strangles her. This is too much for the little boy. He jumps off his chair.

ROBERT
NOOOO!!!

As fiery sparks crisply illuminate the room, the voice of the child changes to a deafening ROAR. A huge shadow rises.

The BEAST charges forward, throwing the table to the side, which crashes on Tommy who loses the shotgun.

The Beast lands on Rusty, pushing Laura aside with a swipe. Razor-sharp claws cutting her shoulder. The creature bites down on the vagrant who screams, collapsing under the massive bulk.

Tormented cries - the ear-splitting roar of the Beast - darkness - scarce flashes of lightning.

Tommy crawls on the floor and finds the gun.

The huge shadow crouches over Rusty whose screams have become gurgles of death throes.

Tommy comes to his feet, brandishing the shotgun. Twin black holes searching for a target.

Laura on the floor comes to. Her shoulder is bleeding. She sees John struggling with Gus at the screen door.

The big mass now leaps towards the fighting men.

Tommy aims. The BLAST of the shotgun. Then a second SHOT. In the dark Tommy fumbles for ammunition while watching helplessly as the giant bulk tears away at Gus. Dying, coughing screams.

TOMMY
Shit ... shit ... shit ...

Laura crawls behind the overturned table.

A shell slips through Tommy's fingers. He goes down and gropes for it on the floor, shaking with mortal terror.

The shadow moves across the room. Tommy looks up. A mighty shape above him. With one swipe the creature rips out his throat. Tommy falls to the side, dark blood pumping out of his neck.

Silence. Only the steady drumming of rain. From behind the table, Laura tries to focus in the dark.

LAURA
(whisper)
Robert? ...

She sees the giant form move outside.

John lies on the porch, rain washing blood from the gunshot wound in his chest.

Laura, holding her bleeding shoulder, squints her eyes.

A flash of lightning lets her see.

Hovering over her husband on all fours stands a blood-smeared MONSTER.

John perceives something else. Instead of the creature he sees Robert. Father and son looking at each other.

John smiles. Then he dies.

Laura can't take her eyes off the Beast which turns and stares straight at her.

With a sudden move, the creature lunges off and disappears into the grey of rain.

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