

The Woman In White
an original screenplay by

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OPEN: INT: TOM'S HOUSE - MID MORNING

TOM DRAKHOV is sitting at a cluttered desk, filled with various scraps of paper and open novels, typing slowly into a computer. He sits with hunched over in a posture that will begin to pain him in a few years. TOM is a white man in his mid 40s, with a short, scruffy beard and short brown hair. He looks as if he used to exercise consistently, but has fallen off the wagon; a slight bulge where his stomach is hints at a break from exercise. The room is bright, well lit; through the large windows lining the room, we see a beautiful forest stretching around the house. The room is quiet, save the sound of Tom's typing and the sounds of a creek bubbling in the background. As Tom types, two children, ANNA and EDWARD run into the room giggling. They pounce upon Tom and nearly knock him from his chair.

ANNA:

Daddy! Daddy! Edwards a monster!

EDWARD:

(growling)

Rahhh! I'm Godzilla! Raaahhh!

With this, EDWARD, Age 7, Begins stomping around the room attempting to capture the still giggling ANNA, age 8. As he does, TOM swoops down from his chair and picks up EDWARD.

TOM:

Godzilla huh? You look awfully small
to be a Godzilla.

EDWARD:

(still growling)

Rahhh!

At this, EDWARD begins to furiously gnaw on TOM's arm, much to his amusement. Tom laughs loudly as EDWARD continues to growl and bite. While this is going on, ANNA runs around tugging on her father's arms.

ANNA:

Daddy! Look out! He's goin to eat
you!

While the three of them play, TOM's wife, MARIE, walks into the room. Marie is a hispanic woman in her late 30s, tall with long dark hair. She wears a pair of jeans with a white shirt and looks as if she has just finished working outside. She surveys the room before swooping down and picking up ANNA who yelps, leaving EDWARD with TOM.

MARIE:

Alright alright, what's going on in here? Are you giving your father trouble?

MARIE bounces a giggling ANNA around as she asks this, looking around the room with mock intensity.

TOM:

Well, honey, here I was, trying to work, when a terrible monster came in chasing Anna. Naturally, I had to step in, but he's proven a bit difficult to capture.

EDWARD looks up at this and roars at his mother. Anna surveys him from her mother's arms before turning to her father, and asking in her most dignified tones:

ANNA:

What are you working on Daddy?

TOM:

A story honey. Daddy's friend Jacob is working on a TV show and needs me to help him out.

ANNA:

What's the sto-

Before she can finish, EDWARD, tired of harassing his father, makes a leap out towards his sister. MARIE turns and easily avoids him, capturing him with her other arm.

MARIE:

Alright kids, let's go. Let's let Daddy get some work done okay?

MARIE leans down and kisses TOM before standing back up with the children tucked under her arms.

MARIE: (CONT'D)

I'll see you at dinner honey. Let's go see if you can terrorize the trees Godzilla.

MARIE and the children exit the room. TOM turns back to his computer and cracks his neck, looking around. We see a picture of a woman, dressed all in white, screaming in a book. TOM picks up the book and begins to read.

INT: TOM'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - EARLY EVENING

TOM and his family sit around a table in the dining room. A pan of fajitas sits in the middle of the table. TOM and MARIE help serve the children small bunches of the food before sitting back and helping themselves. A brief silence stretches over the table before MARIE turns to TOM.

MARIE: (CONT'D)

So, how's the research going? Find anything good for Jacob yet?

TOM swallows a large bite of food before turning to his wife.

TOM:

It's going. The story is all over the place, legends stretching back all over different countries. It's actually pretty fascinating.

MARIE:

Does Jacob have any one he wants you to focus on?

TOM:

Nah, he just wants general information for the show. I think they'll probably need more detailed stuff later on though, so I've started seeing if there's any local legend stuff.

We see ANNA staring with a minor look of revulsion at her brother, who is still continuing to pretend he is Godzilla as he loudly chews his food. She looks up at TOM.

ANNA:

What's the story about, Daddy?

TOM leans back in his chair before glancing at his wife. She looks at him and shrugs. TOM turns back to ANNA.

TOM:

Well, it's a scary story...

ANNA:

(excited)

Ooh! I love scary stories! Is it like the mean witch in Sleeping Beauty?

TOM:

Something like that. It's about a mean lady who was mean to her kids.

ANNA:

Ooooh! I wanna hear I wanna hear!

TOM PRETENDS TO THINK ABOUT THIS BEFORE LOOKING AT HIS DAUGHTER.

TOM:

Hmm I dunno. I'm not sure if you could handle it...

ANNA:

(offended)

I could! I could!

The room has gone quiet at this point. Even EDWARD has stopped mutilating his food and is looking up at his father with the wide eyed look that only children can truly accomplish. Marie is also looking at her husband expectantly. Tom begins to speak in the slow way one reserves for telling children stories.

TOM:

Well, it's the story of a ghost, called La Llorona. I mean, she wasn't always a ghost, but yeah. Anyway, La Llorona was once a woman. A very pretty woman. And she had two amazing kids...just like you two.

With this, the children give a little shiver of anticipation and draw in closer to one another.

TOM: (CONT'D)

La Llorona was married to a man. But he wasn't a nice man. He never paid any attention to her, and only focused on his two amazing kids. He spent time...talking...to other ladies. Now this made La Llorona very mad. And she blamed the kids for this...

The children look truly frightened now, looking up at their father with wide eyes. They're practically on each other's laps at this point.

TOM: (CONT'D)

So, one night, La Llorona went into their room. She came up to their beds and...

Suddenly, a loud shriek bursts from under the table. Everyone but TOM jumps up in alarm, as TOM rocks back on his chair laughing.

We see him pull up an Iphone with a "Scary Scream" app open on it.

MARIE:
That's not funny! You scared me to death!

TOM continues laughing at this point. Both the children are starting to recover and smile, but are still holding each other.

ANNA:
That was scary Daddy.

Edward nods in agreement.

ANNA: (CONT'D)
Daddy, when I get scared I have Edward. Did you have anyone when you got scared?

Tom stops laughing at this question. He looks at Anna carefully, who has an innocent look on her face that hides her precocious nature.

TOM:
(gently, small smile)
Yeah honey, I did. A sister, named Anna, just like you. She had to go away when I was very young though. But she looked out for me, just like you look out for Ed.

TOM stands up at this point and kisses Anna on the head.

TOM: (CONT'D)
Now, with that, I think it's time for you two to go do your homework. Go on, skedaddle.

Anna and Edward dutifully stand up. They run up to their parents and hug them before running out of the room. TOM and MARIE stare after them a moment.

MARIE:
So.

TOM:
So?

MARIE leans in towards TOM.

MARIE:
How'd it really end?

TOM looks at her a moment.

TOM:
She killed them. Took em' to the river, drowned em' in it. Wasn't until she got halfway home that she realized what she had done. Went and killed herself afterwards too. Lesson for husbands and wives.

MARIE:
Wow.

TOM:
The story is all over the place though. In some she's a nice lady who was betrayed, in some she's the evil one. Sometimes women can turn into La Llorona.

Tom shakes his head a bit.

TOM: (CONT'D)
Lesson for all ages I guess. Don't go out at night, or La Llorona will get you. Don't cheat on your wife, you don't know what it'll do to her. Don't marry the wrong guy, and treat your kids right.

TOM stands at this point.

TOM: (CONT'D)
I gotta get back to it. Thanks for dinner honey.

TOM kisses MARIE on the head and walks out of the room.

TOM'S HOUSE - STUDY - MIDNIGHT

We see the study once more. However, in night, it is transformed. The only light comes from the computer screen lit in front of TOM's tired face and the dim light from the moon. The shadows are long in the room; it no longer looks like the place you would play with children, but the room they would dare each other to enter to prove their courage. We see TOM scrolling through obituaries with the key word "drowning".

We see different threads of information before an old newspaper page, dated some 35 years back comes up. TOM pauses on this page and begins reading softly out loud to himself.

TOM: (CONT'D)

(softly)

This sunday, 6 year old Anna Drakhov was found dead...judging by the fact that she had not removed her clothes, it is assumed she had fallen into the river, where she drowned...

TOM looks sad as he reads about his sister's death. He was too young to truly remember her well, but still laments the loss. He briefly rubs his face with his hands, a gesture of tiredness and sadness, before continuing to read.

TOM: (CONT'D)

Witnesses who found the body reported seeing a woman, dressed in white walking away from the scene. They reportedly called out to her for help, but she disappeared into the trees. Officers are currently looking into questioning the woman.

TOM jerks his head back slightly at this. We see him mouthing the words "woman in white" to himself before he looks away from the computer with a troubled expression on his face. TOM begins scrolling through more obituaries, finding multiple stories of children drowning. These stories flash across the screen until he closes them all, leaving only the picture of his sister in the obituary on the screen. We close on this image.

EXT - TOWN SQUARE - MIDDAY

We see TOM and his family walking through the town on a brightly lit day. The family is strolling along a path that is parallel to the large river that goes through the town. While MARIE and the children look happy, TOM seems troubled, with no smile on his face.

MARIE:

So, how did those tests go Anna?

ANNA:

They were EASY mommy. Mrs. K said my spellings better than anyone else's in the class, and she put a star on my paper.

MARIE:

Well, good job honey. I'm sure you worked very hard at that. But don't get a big head now, your friends won't like it.

EDWARD:

I got a star too Mom! Ms. C gave me
one on my math test and-and-and she
said I'm smart too!

MARIE laughs at EDWARD's need to try and one up his sister.

MARIE:

I'm sure she did, you're very smart
too honey. How's show and tell?
Did they like Grandma's sculptures?

ANNA:

Yeah everyone thought they were sooo
cool! But next week I wanna use
Daddy's story and scare all my
friends!

ANNA looks up at her father at this, but he appears not to
have heard her, instead still staring off into the distance
while the family walks. MARIE nudges him.

MARIE:

Did you hear that, honey? Anna wants
to tell your little ghost story to
her friends. You're going to manage
to scare an entire class at once.

TOM starts at the nudge, shaking his head a little bit as if
to clear it.

TOM:

Hm? Oh, yeah. Try not to scare
them all too much honey, I don't
want the parents out for me.

As TOM speaks, looking down at his daughter, he sees a woman,
dressed in white along the riverfront. He becomes visibly
frightened, a look of shock appearing on his face, before he
sees the woman turn as a man steps down some steps and races
to her arms. The couple embraces as TOM tries to get himself
under control.

MARIE:

Honey? Honey, are you okay?

Marie puts her hand on TOM's arm.

MARIE: (CONT'D)

Honey, what's wrong?

TOM looks around for a second before fixing on MARIE's face
and attempting to fix a smile.

TOM:

It's nothing, just thought I saw a shark in the river. Real scary stuff y'know.

TOM directs this idea to his children, hoping to gain a little distraction. The children take the bait of course.

ANNA:

There's no sharks in the river!

EDWARD:

Can I ride it? He can be my pet!

ANNA:

You can't ride a shark...

EDWARD:

Can too!

ANNA:

Can not!

As EDWARD opens his mouth, Marie grabs both of their hands, hoping to forestall any more conflict.

MARIE:

Okay you too, that's enough, your father was just having a joke. Now, where do you two wanna go next? We need to head back soon.

EDWARD and ANNA both look excited, smiles breaking out on their faces.

EDWARD:

Can we go to the fishing spot by the river Mom?

ANNA:

Oooh yes! They have ice cream right near it and Mr. Jackson always catches the biggest fish there! It's always bigger than meeeee!

ANNA spreads her arms as wide as she can and spins in a circle to properly display the size of the monstrous fish.

EDWARD:

Yeah and we can go in the water and the fishies come up sometimes if you're really still!

TOM seems to once more jolt out of his reverie. He looks alarmed at this discussion, a cloud quickly settling over his face.

TOM:
No! No! No one is going by the
river!

The family looks up alarmed at TOM at this outburst. TOM continues to stare at them.

MARIE:
Umm, honey, we go by the river all
the time. I think it'll be fi-

TOM:
No! Not today!

TOM makes a conscious effort to seem calmer, as he realizes his family is staring at him with more than a little fear. The children look upset at the fact that they can't go to their favorite spot, and that a little afraid of the way their father is yelling.

TOM: (CONT'D)
I just, uh, don't want everyone
getting wet and stuff. Plus, I really
wanna go try that new burger place
that just opened up. Let's go there!

TOM leans down to the kids

TOM: (CONT'D)
I'll even buy you guys sundaes!
With extra fudge!

The children look at each other, considering the merits of this offer and the potential benefits of trying to force a trip to the river. After a moment, they turn back to TOM and nod.

ANNA:
I want a root beer too.

TOM gives a small laugh.

TOM:
Okay, you can have a root beer too.

TOM stands up and the family begins to move along the river front once more. As the kids begin talking amongst themselves, MARIE leans in close to TOM.

MARIE:

Okay, what was that about? I haven't seen you freak out like that in a long, long time. What's going on?

TOM:

Nothing, nothing. I just, I dunno got scared of them getting hurt in the water I guess.

MARIE:

Tom. We've been taking them there for 2 years now. You know they'd be fine.

TOM:

Look, I can't really explain it right now until I figure out more, I just don't think they should go by the water for a while, okay?

MARIE and TOM carry on in silence for a second, both mildly angry. After this pause stretches another moment, MARIE turns back to TOM.

MARIE:

...this isn't cuz of the story is it...?

TOM looks momentarily taken aback, but then tries to recover.

TOM:

What? No, no. I'm just worried about them getting hurt okay. It's not the story. It's fine.

MARIE:

Tom...if it's the story, that's fine, but just tell me. My mother had all sorts of superstitions about this kind of stuff, I'm used to it. But just tell me, okay?

TOM sighs and looks around for a second.

TOM:

Look, you're right. The story has just gotten me a bit freaked out, okay? I was looking into some stuff in the area, and there've been a lot of kids who have drowned around the river. I'm just wondering if it's a coincidence.

MARIE is staring at TOM. Her expression is difficult to read; it could be anger, amusement, or exasperation in her eyes.

MARIE:

Alright, if you're that concerned, that's fine. I don't really believe it, but if this will make you feel better, we'll keep them away from the river.

TOM looks relieved at this.

TOM:

Thanks honey. I know it's crazy, I'm just getting kind of sucked into the story I guess.

MARIE leans in and gives TOM a kiss.

MARIE:

It's fine. Just don't be jumping at the sheets if you see me putting them away.

TOM gives a small smile at this. His phone starts buzzing in his pocket. TOM pulls the phone from his pocket, then motions for MARIE to keep walking with the children. TOM stops and puts the phone to his ear.

TOM:

Hello?

JOHN:

Tom. It's me. You called.

TOM:

Oh, yeah, JOHN. Um, how are you?

JOHN:

(flat, expressionless
tone)

I'm fine TOM. But, why did you call?

TOM:

Look, I need to talk to you about some stuff. Is there any way I could swing by the place?

There is silence on the phone for a moment.

JOHN:

I'm a bit busy TOM. Maybe some other time.

TOM:
It's about Anna! Not my daughter
Anna, but, yknow...

TOM trails off here. Again, silence is on the other line.
TOM starts to pull the phone from his head when we hear:

JOHN:
Fine. For her. Come by my place
next tuesday, round 2 or so.

TOM:
I will, tha-

We hear the phone call end. TOM looks down at the phone,
sighs, and begins walking after his family.

EXT - MIDDAY - JOHN'S HOUSE

We see TOM's car pulling into the driveway of a modest house.
Like TOM's house, the house is framed by the forest. However,
it looks dilapidated. There is no sound of the river here.
We see TOM exit the car and begin walking towards the house.
He reaches the front door, and knocks before the door opens.
JOHN stands at the door. He is an older man, looking to be
in his late 60s, with a balding head. Like TOM, he has a
slight belly, but still looks to be in better shape than
most men his age. He says nothing, but just gestures TOM in
with his head. After TOM enters, JOHN looks out briefly
before closing the door.

INT - MIDDAY - JOHN'S HOUSE

The room is extremely dirty and crowded. Papers and books
line nearly all surfaces of the musty room. In between half
open books, we can see beer bottles sticking up like towers
in a desert. TOM surveys the room, just as JOHN surveys him
for a moment.

JOHN:
So, grab a seat. Let's talk.

JOHN gestures to a small stool that has an inch of dust on
it. As TOM sits, JOHN pulls up a comfortable looking armchair
and looks at TOM.

JOHN: (CONT'D)
Alright, now tell me what you're
doing here TOM. You know damn well
I don't want to be hanging around
the family anymore.

TOM:

Look, Uncle JOHN, I'm sorry for bothering you. I know you prefer your...space. But I needed to talk about some stuff, and you seemed the man to talk to about it, what with Dad and my mother being...yknow.

JOHN says nothing, only giving a small sniff that could indicate either approval or disapproval.

TOM: (CONT'D)

Right. Okay. So, to it then.

TOM takes a breath.

TOM: (CONT'D)

I'm here to talk about how Anna died.

JOHN remains silent for a moment, before asking one question.

JOHN:

Why?

TOM:

Because she's my sister, and I barely remember it, and because I want to know.

JOHN stares at TOM again before sighing.

JOHN:

Fine, fine. She drowned TOM, okay? She fell in the river, and her clothes dragged her down. It tore us all up. You were too young to remember it, but...it's part of the reason your father and I didn't get along so well. I thought he should've watched her better, and after it...I dunno, I blamed him. The point is, tha-

TOM:

What about the woman?

JOHN looks taken aback at this question.

JOHN:

Excuse me?

TOM:

I read the obituary. It said there was a woman there. A woman in white, who they wanted to question.

TOM reaches into a small briefcase and pulls out a number of files. He hands the top one, the obituary, to JOHN. JOHN does not look at it.

JOHN:
What about her?

TOM:
Well, who is she?

JOHN:
I don't know.

TOM:
Bullshit.

The two men stare at each other with the mess of a thousand books framing them.

TOM: (CONT'D)
My dad always called you a nut, JOHN.
Said you had your head in too many
stories, and that it made you a bit
weird. Well, now I need you tell me
who this is.

JOHN shifts in his chair.

JOHN:
Is that what he said huh? Always
knew that fucker was talking about
me. Half the reason I never came
around.

TOM:
I'm not here to talk about that.
I'm here to talk about this.

TOM gestures down at the story.

TOM: (CONT'D)
And why the hell in the past 40 years,
have there been over 12 kids who've
drowned in that river. Seems like a
mighty high amount to me. And my
sister was one of them. Now, I didn't
know her long, but I loved her, and
I want to know what the FUCK happened.

JOHN leans in towards TOM.

JOHN:
As long as you don't call me crazy
like your old fucking man.

JOHN leans back.

JOHN: (CONT'D)
Before we start, why the sudden
interest? Where did this all come
from?

TOM:
Research. I was researching a myth,
La Llorona for a friend. She kills
kids by drowning them. Anna's name
came up in local obituaries.

JOHN:
And you think this "La Llorona" killed
her. This myth, as you called it,
killed your sister.

TOM says nothing.

JOHN: (CONT'D)
You're on the right fuckin' track.

TOM looks shocked.

JOHN: (CONT'D)
How much have you looked into the
local legends around here? All that
small town bullshit that develops?

TOM:
Um, not much. I was more looking at
it in a broad sense before I found
the obituaries.

JOHN reaches into between the seat and pulls out a beer that
must be lukewarm. He pops the top and takes a swig from it.

JOHN:
Well, if you had, you'd know there's
our own version of your "La Llorona."
Cept round here they just call her
"The Woman in White."

JOHN takes another swig from the beer.

JOHN: (CONT'D)
Basic idea is, woman dressed in white,
I guess supposed to be a wedding
dress or something, lures kids in.
She cries to them and they feel bad
for her. Then she takes em to the
river, and drowns em. Course,
everyone thinks its a legend.

JOHN belches, but TOM doesn't blink.

JOHN: (CONT'D)
Not me. After Anna, I knew she was
real. I just needed proof.

JOHN stands up and begins rummaging through a massive pile of books and notes that looks as if it could engulf him at any moment. As he does, he talks over his shoulder to TOM.

JOHN: (CONT'D)
Have you heard of a woman named
Katherine Ruckinson?

TOM shifts in his stool.

TOM:
Can't say I have.

JOHN:
Well, it'd be pretty fucking hard to
have heard of her, since she died
200 years ago.

TOM:
Then why would yo-

JOHN:
Shut up. Anyway, this, Katherine,
was a fine lady.

JOHN extracts a tome from the stack and returns to the armchair, turning the pages slowly.

JOHN: (CONT'D)
She was beautiful, from all accounts.
Perfect skin, perfect teeth, perfect
hair, the talk of the town. Let it
get to her head from what the reports.

JOHN extracts the beer once more, taking another swig and then examining it for a moment before apparently deciding TOM has earned a sip and passing it to him. TOM takes a small swig and keeps his eyes on JOHN.

JOHN: (CONT'D)
She met a guy, big shot in the town.
Man by the name of William Ruckinson.
Dad was someone important, records
don't show much but I'm guessing
some type of business man. Anyway,
the two start getting together. But
ol' Katherine, she isn't too smart.
She gets herself pregnant.

JOHN takes the beer back from TOM.

JOHN: (CONT'D)
Obviously this is a big fuckin' scandal back then. So her and young, eligible William, are forced to get married. Now, this started off well enough, but everyone in the town knew the whole situation.

JOHN swigs from the beer.

JOHN: (CONT'D)
After a few months, she has the kids. Twins. And these kids are beautiful, just like her and William. And Katherine's super happy of course. She has the best husband, two beautiful children, people to look at her, isn't it all wonderful.

JOHN finishes the beer and casts about his eye for another.

JOHN: (CONT'D)
Problem is, people start talking. They start talking about how those kids weren't made when Will and Katherine were married. How they were close to being bastards. Now, this sullies Mrs. Ruckinson's new ego a little bit doesn't it?

TOM spies a beer, half drunk, and hands it to JOHN, who gratefully accepts.

JOHN: (CONT'D)
She starts resenting these kids a little bit, blaming any misfortune on them from all reports. The kids grow up well enough though. You know kids, they'll love you for a long time, even when you're not good to them...

At this, JOHN takes a massive swig of the beer.

JOHN: (CONT'D)
Then, the story becomes a bit more difficult to piece together. I have fragments from different diaries, but it goes something like this.

JOHN finishes this beer as well. His speech is starting to slur slightly, while TOM impatiently leans forward and stares at him.

JOHN: (CONT'D)

I guess old William was running around a bit. Had caught something from what I assume was a uh, less than reputable girl. So, of course Katherine finds out, once he comes home and tries to get at her goods. And she's pissed of course. Right angry.

JOHN flips another page and stops.

JOHN: (CONT'D)

And so she starts accusing the guy, asking when this all started, if this kids are hers, all this other shit. See, Katherine there was obsessed with bloodlines. Not some Darwin shit mind you, but she just thought the best families needed to be together to make better families. So, when she thought the kids might not be hers...

JOHN hands the page to TOM. On it is an extraordinarily old obituary. We see the title: Dead - Two Children. Ruckinson Twins. TOM glances up at JOHN.

TOM:

But...that's impossible. They had to be hers; it's not like William could have somehow gotten another woman pregnant then made Katherine have them...

JOHN:

Of course it's impossible. But Katherine wasn't in her right mind. From reports, she ran to the kids room. Went, pulled em' down to the river. Don't know what she told em to get em down there, but maybe they were just happy their Mother was actually paying attention to them. But once she got them down there, well...threw em in. Made sure they couldn't reach the shore, made sure they drowned.

TOM glances back down at the obituary.

JOHN: (CONT'D)

They found her there the next day. Wailing.

(MORE)

JOHN: (CONT'D)

It looked like she had been crying and screamin' all night, cuz her lungs were straight torn to pieces. Completely incoherent. When she saw the people comin' though, she just looked at em, and screamed even louder. Then she jumped in.

TOM looks up at this.

JOHN: (CONT'D)

Yup, jumped in, same spot where her children's bodies used to be, since they were at the bottom of the river by then. Tried pulling her out, but she wouldn't come, let herself drown.

TOM:

And so...you think she's still there. Going after other children.

JOHN:

She's there TOM. I'm sure of it. Like you said, too many kids along the river. I don't think she has any specific time, or place she gets em. Which makes it harder, cuz there's no real pattern, just kids disappearin'.

TOM:

Then Anna...?

JOHN:

Taken, I'm sure of it. Why else would she not have taken off her clothes before getting in the water? Why was there no damage like she fell? Something lured her in there TOM. Katherine fucking Ruckinson did.

TOM:

But why? I mean, assuming there is this ghost lady running around, why grab the kids?

JOHN:

How the fuck am I supposed to know what a ghost thinks? I think she's just crazy, and she's just thinks she'll get her children back if she grabs these ones by the river.

(MORE)

JOHN: (CONT'D)
But all she does is kill em'. Maybe
their spirits are there too, stuck
with her as her new children.

JOHN takes back the tome.

JOHN: (CONT'D)
I didn't believe in all this shit
till Anna. But now I don't really
have a choice.

TOM is silent for a moment.

TOM:
And there's no pattern?

JOHN:
Well, not a big one. Not in terms
of years, though she does come more
around the summer months. But the
weirder one is a bit harder to catch.

JOHN leans in closer.

JOHN: (CONT'D)
See, remember when I said Katherine
here was obsessed with families and
bloodlines and shit?

TOM:
Yeah...

JOHN:
Well, if she gets someone from one
family, she seems to target those
ones more...Half of the kids here
are doubles or triples from similar
families.

TOM looks pale at this.

TOM:
Does it go down the line too?

JOHN:
I have no idea. It's not a huge
pattern, so I have no idea if its
true, but it's something of note.

TOM:
So my son...my Anna...

JOHN:

If you haven't already, keep em away
from the river TOM. We don't know
if that woman, whatever she is, will
come for them, but better that than
what happened to Anna.

JOHN pulls a flask from his back pocket. He takes a long
pull from it, lasting at least five seconds.

JOHN: (CONT'D)

Better than that again.

EXT - JOHN'S HOUSE

We see TOM hurrying towards his car. He doesn't run, but
gets in quickly and begins driving home.

INT - TOM'S HOUSE - DAY - KID'S ROOM

We see ANNA and EDWARD playing together with various toys in
their room. MARIE can be heard in another room, discussing
TOM's erratic behavior. ANNA and EDWARD are glancing towards
their mother while playing.

MARIE:

I don't know, he's never a
superstitious guy. Always so
practical. It's like living with my
mother again...

ANNA turns to EDWARD.

ANNA:

I'm bored of the house.

EDWARD:

Yeahhh...but mom said we can't go
out for a while.

EDWARD continues to play with his toys. ANNA looks back at
the door, where we see MARIE still on the phone and looking
otherwise preoccupied.

ANNA:

Let's go play outside.

EDWARD looks up.

EDWARD:

But mom said...

ANNA:

She's busy!

(MORE)

ANNA: (CONT'D)
She won't even know, and I'm 8 now,
I can take care of myself! If you're
not gonna come, I'm going by myself.

ANNA slips on her shoes and starts creeping out of the door.

EDWARD:
Waitttt, I'm coming too!

We see the two of them slip past their mother and run into the trees, giggling as they do.

EXT - ROAD - DAY

We see TOM driving back. There is no music playing on the radio, just him gripping the steering wheel. He doesn't speed, but we see him hovering right around the speed limit.

EXT - FOREST - DAY

We see ANNA and EDWARD running through the forest. They approach the river, which they can see roughly 10 feet below them as they stand on a massive boulder.

EXT - TOM'S HOUSE - DAY

We see TOM pull up in his car. He turns it off and walks inside the house.

INT - TOM'S HOUSE - DAY

MARIE sees TOM enter and waves to him. She says goodbye to whoever is on the phone and kisses him.

MARIE:
How was JOHN's? He didn't try to
kill you or anything did he?

TOM:
What? No, he was fine. Just gave
me some tips on the story, some local
legend stuff.

MARIE:
That's great honey. New stuff to
send to Jacob?

TOM:
Yeah, yeah, some good stuff.

TOM pauses. The house is silent aside from his and Marie's breathing.

TOM: (CONT'D)
So, are the kids in their room?

MARIE turns towards their room.

MARIE:
They should be...

She sees the open door. Both MARIE and TOM quickly move towards the door and see the kids are gone. TOM wastes no time, but immediately looks outside.

TOM:
Fuck, fuck, fuck, fuck.

TOM starts running down the slope and towards the forest. MARIE follows him, confused and not sprinting like TOM.

MARIE:
TOM? What's going on? TOM?

EXT - FOREST (RIVER) - DAY

We see EDWARD and ANNA still playing on the rock. As the camera shifts, we see a woman in white looking up at them. She is beautiful, with long, brown hair and perfect alabaster skin. She smiles, and we see the pools of blood forming on her lips.

EXT - FOREST (TREELINE) - DAY

We see TOM crashing through the forest, calling out to ANNA and EDWARD. He looks frantically around for them, but keeps heading in the direction of the river. MARIE catches up to him and grabs his arm.

MARIE: (CONT'D)
Honey, what the hell is going on?
You can't just bug out like this. I
need to know what this is.

TOM looks antsy but turns quickly to MARIE.

TOM:
The kids are possibly in danger.
I'm not sure. But I put some things
together, and something killed my
sister at the river. And it could
be targeting families.

MARIE:
You're...you're serious?

TOM:
Do I look like I'm joking?

Marie looks at him and then sighs loudly.

MARIE:
No, but I swear if this isn't real,
I'm getting a divorce.

The two of them take off moving once more at this, both calling for their children.

EXT - FOREST (RIVER) - DAY

The children catch sight of Katherine, the woman in white. They look scared at first, but she beckons them closer, and they obediently start down the slope. We see them reach Katherine, who embraces them as a mother. The three of them slowly start moving towards the water.

EXT - FOREST (RIVER) - DAY

We shift perspective and see, from over their shoulders, TOM and MARIE break through the tree line. They look about, yelling for their children, before they spot EDWARD and ANNA, along with La Llorona.

TOM:
Ed! ED! ANNA!

MARIE:
EDWARD! ANNA! COME HERE NOW!

The two children don't respond, still walking hand in hand with the woman in white. Neither TOM or MARIE is close enough to the water to stop them.

TOM:
KATHERINE!

La Llorona turns at the sound of her name. She surveys TOM, saying nothing, never opening her blood stained mouth. TOM approaches her slowly, as if approaching a dangerous animal.

TOM: (CONT'D)
I know what happened, Katherine.
With your husband, and your children.
But this won't help you.

TOM continues to creep closer.

TOM: (CONT'D)
This isn't right, and you know that.
This won't bring your children back.
But you can bring mine back.

TOM is within arms distance of his children and the woman. His knees are bent, ready to spring.

The children have blank looks on their faces.

TOM: (CONT'D)
Please, Katherine. Give me my
children back.

Katherine stares at TOM. The moment stretches, too long for a parent. Katherine stares, and then turns away, still guiding the children to the water.

TOM: (CONT'D)
NO!

Tom leaps forward. He manages to wrestle Anna from the grip of Katherine, who turns on him and begins wailing. As she does, blood flies from her lips, showering him and his daughter. TOM falls back, and Katherine scoops up EDWARD and begins to rush back towards the water. MARIE runs up, and TOM throws the semi-unconscious ANNA to her. He then dives after his son.

We see TOM dive into the water, casting about for his son. Ahead of him in the murky depths, we can see EDWARD. Katherine has him down, cradling him to her breast. TOM rushes forward in the water with the speed and strength of a much younger man. He begins pounding away at the woman. She does not fight back, but continues only her horrible wail, with flecks of blood mingling with the thrashing water and limbs. Eventually, TOM manages to free EDWARD, and begins a furious backpedal in the water. Katherine keeps reaching for EDWARD, but does not pursue. We see TOM staring at her as he backs up onto the beach. Katherine is still in the water, crying and screaming with a destroyed voice. Saying nothing, both MARIE and TOM grab their children and run.

EXT - TOM'S HOUSE - DAY

We see TOM packing up a U-Haul truck. The house above him looks empty; no lights are on, nothing is hanging in the windows. TOM is twitching slightly, his left shoulder rising and dropping in a strange rhythm. As he packs the last of the boxes into the truck, he stretches and looks out at his home. We see MARIE step out of the house.

MARIE:
Well, everything's packed, kids are
in the car, got snacks, we should be
good.

TOM:
Good. I can't wait to be out of
this place.

The twitch continues. If MARIE notices, she says nothing.

MARIE:

I know honey, but it's okay. We'll
be home, to a new home, soon. A
nice trip to Arizona, it'll be great.

TOM nods and kisses MARIE on the head before they both enter
the car. The car starts up, and the family departs.

EXT - FOREST (RIVER) - DAY

We see nothing but the forest. It looks cool, calm. We
slowly move in towards the river. Beneath the surface, we
can see Katherine, still waiting, her mouth open with her
wailing echoing beneath the surface. We close.