

Delilah  
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FADE IN:

EXT. STREET - HOUSE -- DAY

An oldish house, almost Gothic, faded paint and chipped trim around the dusty windows, set at the very end of a suburban cul-de-sac, surrounded by houses immeasurably newer and cleaner than it.

The other houses are all festooned with Halloween decorations. Jack-o'-lanterns sit on stoops. Paper skeletons hang in windows. Nylon cobwebs with rubber spiders hang from awnings.

This house is unadorned, porch and windows empty. It is its own Halloween decoration, but it's doubtful many kids will be stopping here tonight. The yard is overgrown, overtaken by weeds and crab grass. The drive is cracked. The porch is splintered, sagging. The windows are cold and dark.

An old station wagon with a shattered rear window and no front wheels sits up on blocks on the far end of the drive. Clearly, it hasn't run for years.

The sky above churns with dark, threatening clouds. A brisk fall breeze plays with the fallen leaves in the drive and on the sidewalk.

A small, dark sedan takes the turn at the end of the street and approaches the house. It pulls into the driveway next to the old station wagon.

The door opens and DELILAH, 17, steps out. She is pretty but plain, with a baggy white blouse and a long, severe skirt. Her hair is black, flowing like tar across her thin shoulders.

She goes to the back, opens the trunk, takes two large grocery bags. She slams the trunk shut and heads for the house.

INT. HOUSE - FRONT HALLWAY -- CONTINUOUS

The phone is ringing.

A key rattles in the front door. After a second it swings open and Delilah comes in, trying to take her keys and not to drop her groceries.

*Ring.*

*Ring.*

CYNTHIA (O.S.)  
(from upstairs)  
*Delilah!*

Delilah sets the groceries on a little oak table in the hall and rushes for the kitchen.

*Ring.*

*Ring.*

INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN -- CONTINUOUS

An ancient rotary-style phone hangs on the wall next to the door. An answering machine rests on the stained formica counter.

*Ring.*

*Ring.*

The machine picks up.

KAREN (O.S.)

(on machine)

Hey, Delilah, it's Karen. I hate to call at such short notice-

Delilah bursts into the kitchen.

CYNTHIA (O.S.)

*Delilah!*

KAREN (O.S.)

-But Jordan just called in and said she can't-

Delilah grabs the receiver.

DELILAH

Karen. Hi. Sorry, I just got in.

(pause)

Oh no! Oh, I hope she's all right-

CYNTHIA (O.S.)

(muffled by the door)

*Delilah! Goddamnit!*

DELILAH

(ignoring her)

No, that's okay. I was coming in anyway to bring a couple jack-o'-lanterns. What time?

(beat)

Okay. See you then.

She hangs up.

CYNTHIA (O.S.)

*Delilah!*

Delilah closes her eyes, takes a deep breath.

CYNTHIA (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
*Delilah! Where are you?*

Opens her eyes.

INT. HOUSE - CYNTHIA'S BEDROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

The door opens onto darkness. Inside, battered antique furniture and a huge four-poster bed. The curtains are drawn.

Delilah stands at the threshold, looking in.

DELILAH  
 Mom?

A *rustle* in the bed.

CYNTHIA  
 (voice cracked)  
 Where were you?

DELILAH  
 I had to run to the store. I *told*  
 you.

She comes in and sits in a chair next to the bed.

CYNTHIA rolls over. She's middle-aged, with long, stringy black hair and deep-set, hollow eyes. Her sallow skin is beaded with sweat.

DELILAH (CONT'D)  
 How are you feeling?

Cynthia smiles at her, weak.

CYNTHIA  
 My head....

DELILAH  
 I'll get you some aspirin.

CYNTHIA  
 Delilah.

DELILAH  
 What?

CYNTHIA  
 I love you.

DELILAH  
 I know, Mom. I love you, too.

CYNTHIA  
 Delilah.

DELILAH

Yeah, Mom.

CYNTHIA

What time is it?

DELILAH

About ten thirty in the morning.  
It's early. Go back to sleep.

CYNTHIA

Who was on the phone?

DELILAH

Karen, from the Children's Center.  
They wanted to know if I could come  
in tonight. Jordan ate some bad  
meat and-

CYNTHIA

You're not going.

DELILAH

Mom, I have-

Cynthia grabs at her arm. Delilah jerks.

CYNTHIA

Goddamnit, I *told* you to tell them-

Delilah slowly works her way out from her mother's grip.

DELILAH

Mom, I'm not having this argument-

CYNTHIA

(growing desperation)  
What am I supposed to do while you're  
gone? Huh? *Huh?* What-?

DELILAH

Mom. It's my *job*. I have to go.  
It'll only be for a couple hours.

She stands.

Cynthia rolls over.

CYNTHIA

(muttered)  
Little bitch.

DELILAH

(unfazed)  
That's right. I'll bring you your  
pill.

She goes toward the door.

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM -- DAY

Above the fireplace, surrounded by other framed photos: an ornate, oval frame.

In it, Cynthia -- much younger and almost pretty, sits at the beach next to her husband, DAVID. He's a large man, with a strong, handsome face and kind eyes and a shock of sandy brown hair. They both smile into the camera, shield their eyes from the sun. Their skin is deeply tanned, ruddy.

Between them, Delilah, seven-years-old, smiling through gapped teeth.

EXT. BEACH -- DAY - FLASHBACK

Seven-year-old Delilah *screams*, excited as David tosses her into the water. She surfaces a second later, laughing.

David lunges and dunks her beneath a wave. She squeals with delight.

INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN -- DAY - BACK TO PRESENT

Delilah finishes putting the groceries away.

Upstairs, a *thump*. Her eyes flicker up once, then back to the task at hand.

She throws the paper bags into the trash, opens a drawer and takes two heavy work gloves. She slides them onto her hands and goes for the back door.

EXT. BACK YARD -- MOMENTS LATER

Delilah strides across the large, unkempt back yard toward a greenhouse at the far end. The wind whistles through the tall trees beyond.

INT. GREENHOUSE -- MOMENTS LATER

This is clearly Delilah's pride and joy. The inside is maintained with a sense of purpose, a sense of love and care, that is absent from the rest of the house.

Rows upon rows of vegetables line the soil ground. There are tomatoes, radishes, cucumbers, avocados, heads of cabbage, onions, all sorts of squash.

Toward the back, isolated from the rest of the plants, is one huge pumpkin vine. Five pumpkins -- each almost perfectly round, completely unblemished -- hang from it.

Delilah, shears in hand, stands there looking at the pumpkins, thinking.

Her eyes fall on one in the center, a little smaller than the others but just as perfect and symmetrical. She kneels beside it, takes her shears and cuts the stem.

INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN -- DAY

Delilah sets the pumpkin on the counter. She stands there for a second staring at it. Thinking. Deciding. Finally she opens a drawer and grabs a Sharpie.

She draws a little goblin face on the pumpkin: slanted eyes, jagged teeth, a hook nose. Steps back. Looks. Thinks.

She adjusts the corners of the mouth, making it more of a smile, less of a grimace. Now it's a happy goblin.

Satisfied, she puts the Sharpie away and grabs a serrated bread knife from the drainer by the sink. She turns to the pumpkin, lowers the knife.

The pumpkin starts to glow.

She stops. Pulls the knife back.

The glow is gone.

She stares at the pumpkin. The happy goblin face stares back at her, waiting.

She lowers the knife again.

The glow builds slowly, flickering a bit like a candle. It emits a little electric hum.

She pulls the knife back quickly. Her eyes are wide, unbelieving.

The glow is gone.

She lowers the knife for a third time. It glows. Determined, she brings the knife down slowly, with a shaking hand, toward the stem. It grows brighter. The hum ramps up to a soft, desperate *whine*.

She touches the skin with the tip of the blade.

The light around the pumpkin *pops* like a light bulb, shooting an electric charge up the knife blade and into her hand. She shrieks and jumps back, dropping the knife. It hits the linoleum with a *clatter*.

She stands there, panting, and looks down at her hand. There is a deep, burned, pussy groove across her palm.

She looks down at the knife. The blade is twisted, the plastic handle melted, bubbling.

She turns to the sink, bumps on the faucet, shoves her hand under the cold water. She hisses as the water hits the burn, but holds it there.

She looks over her shoulder at the pumpkin.

The glow is gone. The goblin face grins up at her, teeth bared.

INT. HOUSE - DELILAH'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Delilah, seven, sits on her bed, covers drawn up to her chin. She stares, frightened, at the bedroom door.

It is open a crack. A slim wedge of light falls from the hallway into the room.

Outside, a *thump*. Another.

Heavy boot steps.

Murmured voices, tense and angry.

Silence.

The *slam* of wood against wood.

An angry, masculine shout.

Delilah shivers.

Boot steps in the hall, followed by whispery little footsteps.

Angry murmurs, one male, one female.

Shadows drift beyond the door. The footsteps recede down the stairs.

Delilah stares.

The murmurs rise to unintelligible shouts. Finally, the front door opens and *slams* closed.

Silence.

Delilah stares.

INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN -- DAY - BACK TO PRESENT

Delilah sits in a kitchen chair, clutching her injured hand. It's wrapped in a towel.

She stares at the pumpkin.

Moments.

She stands, goes to the drawer, pulls out another knife.  
She turns to the pumpkin, stops.

It smiles at her, buried threat hiding just under the goofily jovial face.

She takes a tentative step forward, raises the knife. Ever so slowly, she extends it toward the pumpkin.

Nothing.

CYNTHIA (O.S.)

*Delilah!*

The knife blade wavers.

Still nothing.

She closes her eyes, turns her head away, touches the pumpkin with the tip of the knife.

It rocks a little on the counter, nothing more.

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

*Delilah!*

She opens her eyes, looks at the pumpkin, thinks.

She touches it again.

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

*Delilah! Where are you?*

Delilah takes a deep breath. She looks at the pumpkin.

Beat.

She steps forward with sudden determination, grabs the stem, jabs the knife into the top. Panting with exertion, she makes a circle around the stem and pulls the top off. A string of gristle and pumpkin seeds follows. She tosses the top into the sink, shoves her hand down into the muck with a squelch.

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

*Delilah!*

She pulls out more ropy tendrils and tosses them into the sink, shoves her hand back, grabs more, tosses them into the sink.

Again.

Again.

Again....

She stops.

Beat.

She looks down at her hand, buried deep in the pumpkins innards.

She draws her fist out slowly, opens it.

She looks, incredulous, at the thing in her palm. She holds it up to the light.

A gold wedding ring.

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

*Delilah!*

She sets the ring on the counter, stares at it for another second, goes back to the pumpkin.

She looks inside.

More ropy tendrils, seeds. And *something*, buried in the mess, deep down at the bottom.

She reaches in and pulls it out. Holds it up to the light.

A human finger bone.

She *screams* and throws it into the sink.

INT. HOUSE - CYNTHIA'S BEDROOM -- DAY

Cynthia rolls over in bed. She is panting, sweaty, in pain.

CYNTHIA

(weak)

*Delilah!*

The door opens and Delilah comes in.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)

Oh, oh honey, oh Delilah....

Delilah sits. Her face is strangely blank, far away.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)

Oh, Delilah, my head, I need-

DELILAH

Do you want a drink?

Cynthia stares at her, thankful.

CYNTHIA

Can I?

DELILAH  
Okay. How about some Scotch?

CYNTHIA  
(desperate)  
Yes. Please.

DELILAH  
Where's the bottle?

Cynthia stares at her.

CYNTHIA  
Wha...?

DELILAH  
Where's the bottle, Mom? I can't  
get you a drink if you don't tell me  
where you hid it.

Beat.

CYNTHIA  
You won't be mad?

Delilah smiles.

DELILAH  
No, Mom, I won't be mad.

CYNTHIA  
It's in the spare bedroom closet.  
Under daddy's old sleeping bag.

DELILAH  
Okay.

Cynthia reaches out for Delilah, takes her hand.

CYNTHIA  
Oh, Delilah, thank you....

Delilah looks down at the withered, cronish hand clutching  
her own.

On the ring finger, a twinkling gold band. The twin of the  
one below.

DELILAH  
(soft)  
I'll be right back.

She jerks her hand away and stands.

INT. HOUSE - SPARE BEDROOM CLOSET -- DAY

The closet is piled with debris, remnants of a past life. A man's shoes. An old suit. A fishing pole and tackle box. Much more.

A heavy, moth-eaten Army-issue sleeping bag sits on the floor.

Delilah lifts it away. Under it, twinkling in the dim light, a half-empty bottle of Scotch.

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM -- DAY - FLASHBACK

Cynthia sits in a chair across from seven-year-old Delilah. Ice *clinks* in the Scotch glass in her hand.

CYNTHIA  
(slightly slurred)  
Daddy's gone, Delilah. He's not  
coming back.

Delilah stares at her, speechless.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)  
He ... I'm sorry, baby, but he doesn't  
love us anymore.

She reaches out, clumsily strokes Delilah's hair.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)  
We're better off without him.  
(beat)  
I promise ... I'll always take care  
of you.

Smiles.

INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN -- DAY - BACK TO PRESENT

All five pumpkins sit on the counter, tops removed, innards demolished.

Delilah sits at the table, staring down.

In front of her: a skeletal hand, pieced together like a jigsaw puzzle.

Delilah stares.

EXT. BACK YARD -- AFTERNOON

Delilah tromps across the yard toward the greenhouse, shovel in hand.

INT. GREENHOUSE -- MOMENTS LATER

Delilah is knee deep in the hole. She digs feverishly, favoring her good hand, chips her way past the pumpkin vine's roots. The soil is soft.

She pants, tosses a shovel-full of dirt off to the side, stabs again at the ground.

Hits something.

She stops. Kneels.

Something hard and gray, tangled deep in the roots. She brushes dirt away.

A grinning skull. A deep, vicious crack above the left eye.

She pulls more dirt away, finds vertebrae, shoulder blades, a rib cage.

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM -- DAY

The photo above the mantle.

CLOSE ON: David's hand on Delilah's shoulder.

The shiny gold wedding ring.

INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN -- DAY

Delilah trudges in, exhausted, drops her weight into the chair.

She's filthy, streaked with soil. Her hair lies limp and stringy on her shoulders.

She looks at the pumpkins.

Beat.

She gags suddenly, lurches to her feet and stumbles over toward the sink. She *heaves*, but nothing comes out.

CYNTHIA (O.S.)

*Delilah!*

She *heaves*.

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

*Delilah!*

She squeezes her eyes shut.

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

*DELILAH!*



Another footstep.

Another.

Another.

A shadow falls in the hall.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)

Delilah?

A large FIGURE steps into the doorway, silhouetted in the light.

Cynthia gasps.

The figure steps into the room.

It's David. He wears Delilah's skirt and blouse, now ripped and bulging around his massive shoulders. A ragged towel hangs from one hand.

In the other: a carving knife.

His hair is long, stringy, black. Delilah's hair.

DAVID

Hi, Cynthia.

She whimpers.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Been a long time.

He grins, showing rows upon rows of impossible white teeth.

DAVID (CONT'D)

I woulda dropped by sooner, but I've had a bit of a *headache*.

(touches the spot  
above his left eye)

You understand.

She opens her mouth, tries to say something. All that she can produce are a few dry clicks deep in her throat.

DAVID (CONT'D)

I'm curious ... what did you do with the hammer?

She stares.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Did you keep it? Or did you bury it, too?

He takes another step.

CYNTHIA  
 (strangled)  
 Where's Delilah?

David smiles. Teeth flash.

DAVID  
 Don't you worry about her, Cynthia.  
 Delilah's just taking a little nap  
 right now.  
 (beat)  
 We have plenty of time to catch up.

He raises the knife.

DAVID (CONT'D)  
 We have all the time in the world.

He looms over her.

She *screams*.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

EXT. STREET - HOUSE -- NIGHT

The house is dark.

Two KIDS, one wearing a Darth Vader costume, the other a cowboy outfit, stand at the end of the drive, staring up at it.

DARTH VADER  
 Go on.

COWBOY  
 No.

DARTH VADER  
 Go *on*, you pussy. Ring the doorbell.

COWBOY  
 No!  
 (beat)  
 There's no one home, anyway.  
 (beat)  
 They don't even have a jack-o'-  
 lantern.

DARTH VADER  
 Whatever. Pussy.

The cowboy looks at him, annoyed.

COWBOY

*Fine!* This is stupid.

He turns, goes up the drive. As he approaches the porch, he slows. Stops. Turns around.

Darth Vader stands down on the sidewalk. He gestures for the cowboy to continue.

The cowboy turns back. His breathing is ragged, frightened.

Inside the house, a phone is *ringing*.

He takes another step.

*Ring.*

Step.

*Ring.*

Step.

*Ring.*

The porch light comes on. The cowboy stops. He's at the foot of the stairs now.

Darth Vader giggles.

The front door opens and Delilah steps out, smiling. She's all cleaned up, wearing a pretty blue blouse and a black skirt.

DELILAH

Oh!

(beat)

Hi.

The cowboy stands there, speechless.

DELILAH (CONT'D)

Nice costume.

COWBOY

(nervous)

Tr...trick or treat.

She smiles at him, sweet as can be.

DELILAH

Come on up here and I'll give you some candy.

The cowboy opens his mouth, doesn't say anything.

DELILAH (CONT'D)

Come on.

She disappears back into the house.

The cowboy throws one furtive glance over his shoulder at Darth, then goes up the steps.

Delilah reappears, candy bowl in hand.

DELILAH (CONT'D)

Here you go.

He reaches into the bowl, grabs a handful of candy, then *runs*.

She stands there, smiling, watching him go. Their pounding footsteps and Darth's giggles drift up to her.

She sets the candy bowl down, then reaches down and grabs something else:

Cynthia's head, carved out, eyes missing, still dripping blood from the ragged stump of the neck.

She kneels, sets it on the porch, takes a candle from her pocket, lights it, sets it down in the head.

The flame flickers in the hollow sockets of Cynthia's eyes.

Delilah, still smiling, stands and goes back inside, shutting the door gently behind her.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END