

DOWN IN THE DARK

Written by

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EXT. FRONT YARD - EVENING

A YOUNG GIRL (7), long curly locks, dribbles a basketball around the front porch.

She moves rigidly, handling the ball with awkward confidence.

MAN (O.S.)

Honey, its time for dinner!

JENNA

Five more minutes daddy!

She sets her sights on a more challenging obstacle beyond the front gate: the SIDEWALK.

Catching a glimpse of her father pre-occupied through window, she sneaks off with the ball, hurrying to the gate.

She opens it and slips past.

The gate LATCHES ITSELF SHUT BEHIND HER.

EXT. SIDEWALK - CONTINUOUS

The thud of ball-to-pavement echoes through the quiet neighborhood.

Appearing around the corner, the girl moves with the ball, her eyes focused downward -- STEP, BOUNCE, STEP, BOUNCE.

She's doing it, traveling farther and farther down the sidewalk with full control, too fixated to notice the --

TWO LARGE CANE CORSOS appearing on the sidewalk in front of her, sniffing out the disturbance.

The dogs release a low, bone-chilling growl, ears perked, baring their teeth.

A final bounce misses the pavement and the ball ricochets off her toes, rolling forward, drawing her eyes toward the danger ahead.

Startled, she freezes.

One dog snaps its jaws. A warning.

The girl back-pedals slowly. With every step, the dogs move closer.

Suddenly, she turns, bursting into a full sprint, prompting a frenzy as both dogs lunge toward her.

EXT. FRONT YARD - CONTINUOUS

The girl sprints home at full speed, dogs approaching fast behind her.

She reaches the front yard, pulls at the gate but its LATCHED SHUT.

GIRL
Daddy! Help!--

She fumbles with the latch, clicks it open but its too late--

The dogs are on her.

INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN

A barrage of screams and vicious growls erupt outside.

Hearing the ensuing chaos, the man bolts out the door.

MAN (O.S.)
Jenna!

INT. HOUSE - BATHROOM - 20 YEARS LATER

JENNA LANFEAR, now 27, same curly brown locks from her childhood, sits in a bathtub, her bare back revealing deep welts and scars.

She hugs her knees tight, her eyes squeezed shut.

A KNOCK ON THE DOOR.

MAN (O.S.)
Honey? Everything okay? You've been
in there awhile.

JENNA
Yeah. I'm fine.

She lays back, submerges herself in the water.

INT. HOUSE - BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Clad in sports bra and underwear, Jenna examines her figure with dread in front of a long mirror.

A trail of more scars tear down her body, covering her arms, belly and legs. It's a stark contrast to her soft, stunning face.

She pulls on a black long sleeve and jeans, sighing an air of instant relief.

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jenna hurries to the front door, a bag over her shoulder--

Doesn't notice her father RUSS LANFEAR (50), the voice from earlier, seated behind an open newspaper.

RUSS

Where you off to?

Jenna stops midway.

JENNA

Just running some errands.

RUSS

Your boss called. Wanted to know why you didn't show. Again.

JENNA

Oh ok, thanks.

Russ sighs, chucks down his paper.

RUSS

Alright, I'll just come out and say it. I'm worried about you, honey.

JENNA

Dad, I'm fine, really. I'm not a child anymore.

RUSS

It's just, ever since Noah left you--

-

Jenna grimaces.

JENNA

Don't...say it like that please.

RUSS

I'm sorry. It's just you've been different these past few months and I want you to be ok --

RUSS (CONT'D)

I am--

She heads over and gives him a quick kiss on the cheeks.

JENNA

I just need some time. I'll see you
later ok?

Russ watches her leave, his face riddled with a father's concern.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - EVENING

Upper middle class homes line the quiet residential street.

A 99 MUSTANG creeps down the dim road, headlights off. It swings to a quick stop against the curb.

The FIGURE inside rolls down the window--

It's Jenna, concealed behind sunglasses and an oversized hood.

She has her sights on the last house on the right, a newly built home seemingly occupied from its lit windows.

She pulls up a pair of binoculars.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Jenna's POV:

Zooming in, she notices a BLUE SEDAN in the driveway.

She moves to the upstairs window, large and curtain-less. Zero privacy. Some sort of rec room.

A shadow moves from the area to the next window over, also large and curtain-less.

Jenna zooms in even closer, this time to see NOAH VOLKOV (30's) chiseled and shirtless as he dresses himself fresh out the shower.

JENNA

There you are Noah.

