

THE JAWN

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**EXT. PHILADELPHIA - NIGHT**

The sky is pitch black. We see the TOP OF THE DRAKE HOTEL -- upside down. We move past it, towards --

**EXT. RITTENHOUSE SQUARE - CONTINUOUS**

A cool March night. It is almost midnight. A GROUP OF TEENAGERS occupies a space along the wall. They have a speaker with MUSIC playing. They pass a joint around. A GIRL hands it to a BOY (17).

BOY

Thanks.

He takes a hit, smiles, and passes it to the next person. His phone BUZZES. He strolls away and answers it. He sticks his free hand into his hoody pocket.

BOY (CONT'D)

Yo, ma.

Then -- a DARK FIGURE on the other side of the park scurries behind a tree. The boy does not notice.

BOY (CONT'D)

Yeah, no, I'm sorry, I'm on my way.  
No, ma, I'm not smoking. I know  
it's bad for my asthma, ma. I'm  
not! I'm runnin', okay?

He hangs up. He turns and looks at the girl for a moment, then frowns and returns to the group.

BOY (CONT'D)

Yo, I gotta peace.

A chorus of "Aw's." The boy slaps hands with someone.

GIRL

You coming back tomorrow?

BOY

You know it.

She smiles. He turns and WALKS OFF.

**EXT. EMPTY STREET - MOMENTS LATER**

All of the shops are closed. The streetlights HUM as the boy hurries beneath them.

He rubs his eyes. He tucks his arms into himself to warm up.  
Behind him, the DARK FIGURE walks into an alley.

The boy stops.

He turns around. He wears fear on his face.

But he doesn't see anything.

He turns around and walks faster. He's WHISPERING to himself--

BOY  
Shouldn't have fucking smoked,  
shouldn't have fucking smoked,  
shouldn't have fucking smoked.

He hears a trash can TOPPLE behind him. The boy stops again.  
He does a 180.

The trash can rolls underneath a streetlight.

BOY (CONT'D)  
(shouting)  
Hello?

No answer. Then--

The streetlight GOES OUT.

BOY (CONT'D)  
Fuck this.

He turns around and puts in a pair of AirPods. He puts on a  
CARDI B SONG. Then he starts walking, quicker than before. He  
passes rowhome after rowhome. He passes by an alley and  
GLANCES at it. Nothing inside. THEN--

He stammers at SOMETHING IN FRONT OF HIM and FALLS to the  
ground. We hear him WHIMPER--

FIVE NEEDLES PUSH THROUGH THE SKIN OF HIS ARM.

#### **INT. MAY'S BOUQUETS - TWO MONTHS LATER**

A large BOTANICAL POSTER of a POPPY PLANT hangs on the wall.  
MAY ELLIS (43) stands at the register. She is long and  
sinewy. Her face is strong.

This is her FLOWER SHOP in West Philadelphia. Its tight floor  
space is teeming to the brim with brightly-bloomed spring  
flowers. There are other botanical posters on the wall, large  
windows in the front, a blue door with a tinkly bell.

May folds a bunch of BRIGHT FLOWERS into form. She leans in and smells them, smiles. She wrests them neatly into a FLOWER CROWN.

She holds it in her hands and admires it.

A FEMALE CUSTOMER enters, looking at the selection.

May looks up.

MAY

Welcome.

FEMALE CUSTOMER

Hi -- I have a question.

MAY

Yes.

FEMALE CUSTOMER

Do you do funeral bouquets?

MAY

Oh -- well.

(beat)

I can make one up, how's that?

FEMALE CUSTOMER

Sure.

May walks over to the flower rack.

MAY

(thinking)

For a funeral -- carnations and gladioli should be right. Does that sound good?

FEMALE CUSTOMER

Thank you.

May moves to a BUNCH OF CARNATIONS. She takes up a trimmer and SNIPS them.

MAY

Who passed?

FEMALE CUSTOMER

Rhonda Glenn. She lived a little ways from here. Young.

MAY

Oh, that's terrible.

May moves to the counter. She bundles the flowers.

MAY (CONT'D)  
Well I hope these flowers do.

**INT. MAY'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - EVENING**

May's home is decorated with FAMILY PHOTOS -- first her, her husband, and her daughter -- then her and her daughter alone.

In the corner of the room is an URN and a small PHOTOGRAPH of her late husband, CHARLES ELLIS. There is a well-kept VASE OF FLOWERS before it.

A CRUCIFIX hangs above the doorframe as May walks into her home with a large bag under her arm. She LOCKS the door behind her.

MAY  
Hannah girlie, you home?

She puts down her bag.

MAY (CONT'D)  
Hannah?

She walks to the HANNAH'S DOOR.

MAY (CONT'D)  
Girlie?

She cracks open the door--

**INT. HANNAH'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS**

HANNAH ELLIS (13) lies on her bed, watching a video on her phone. She is a quiet, dreary-eyed young teenager. She has a large pair of headphones over her ears.

Her bed is placed before a WINDOW, which is SLIGHTLY AJAR.

MAY  
Hannah.

Hannah budes -- she takes off one headphone.

HANNAH  
What?

MAY  
You have a good day at school?

HANNAH

Yes.

MAY

I got something for you.

May walks to Hannah's bed and sits. She holds out the FLOWER CROWN. Hannah accepts it shyly.

HANNAH

(disinterested)

Thanks.

MAY

You wanna come to Church choir?

HANNAH

No, I'm okay.

MAY

You liked it when you came last time.

HANNAH

That was last year.

MAY

Alright.

(beat)

You wanna go stay with your Aunt Trish?

HANNAH

No mom. I can take care of myself.

May strokes her daughter's leg. Beat.

MAY

(masking disappointment)

Alright. Close your window.

HANNAH

I will.

May stands up and walks to the door.

MAY

I'll be home late tonight. I have the group to lead after rehearsal. Alright?

Hannah doesn't respond. She has already discarded the flower crown to the WINDOW SILL.

May CLOSES the door.

**INT. CHURCH - LATER**

Inside of Our Mother of Sorrows at 48th & Lancaster.

May stands among a large CHOIR of adult women and men. They are in the midst of song--

CHOIR  
(singing)  
"And when we sing / Thy holy name,  
/ Thy holy name, / Thy holy name."

May is singing from her soul. She beams as the song concludes.

**INT. CHURCH - LATER**

After rehearsal. The choir members talk as they walk towards the CHURCH DOORS. We overhear--

CHOIR MEMBER #1  
You heard about Rhonda?

CHOIR MEMBER #2  
I didn't know the funeral was  
today. I feel terrible.

CHOIR MEMBER #1  
Can't begin to imagine.

May is listening to them. She packs her music folder into her bag and walks towards another door -- DOWNSTAIRS.

**INT. CHURCH BASEMENT - LATER**

May sits with a group of twelve or so GROUP THERAPY MEMBERS. She leads the Church's group grief counseling.

MAY  
I have been thinking of him a lot  
recently. I can't lie. It doesn't  
get easier. It's been... five years  
now. Five years this July  
(beat)  
I still look at his photo and it's  
like -- those memories of him, of  
my Charles, they get stronger every  
day.

(MORE)

MAY (CONT'D)

I remember him cradling Hannah like it was -- like it was this morning.

(beat)

God gives and takes. And He asks us to be strong. I try to be strong, and I come here, and I see all the strength we've built together, and I get through. I'm so thankful.

(beat)

I'm so thankful.

**INT. CHURCH VESTIBULE - LATER**

May gives goodbyes to the support group members -- handshakes and hugs. One of them says --

GRIEVER #1

Wonderful meeting tonight, May.  
Wonderful.

MAY

Thank you. Thank you, Elise.

**INT. CHURCH VESTIBULE - MOMENTS LATER**

Alone, May leans against the wall and SOBS.

Her cries ECHO in the small stone lobby.

**INT. MAY'S HOME - LATER**

May enters and LOCKS the door behind her. She puts her bag down.

She walks over to HANNAH'S DOOR. There's light coming from underneath. May pushes it open gently.

**INT. HANNAH'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Hannah is lying on her bed with her phone, in the same position as that evening. Hannah looks to her mother.

MAY

Hey baby. You gonna head to bed soon?

HANNAH

Yeah.



MAY

Alright.

May moves to shut the door -- but stops.

MAY (CONT'D)

You know you're my whole world.

HANNAH

I know, mom.

MAY

I love you.

HANNAH

(uncaring)

Love you too.

May walks closer to the bed.

MAY

I told you to shut this window.

She SHUTS IT.

HANNAH

I like the air.

MAY

It lets the heat in.

HANNAH

Fine.

May walks out of the room and shuts the door behind her.

Hannah locks her phone. She opens the window slightly. She walks over to her desk and plugs in her phone. She sets an alarm on it.

She returns to her bed. She lowers the blinds halfway, then climbs under the covers.

She reaches for the bedside lamp and turns it off.

THEN WE SEE--

There is a PALE WHITE TORSO outside. We see the figure from the NECK DOWN.

This is THE JAWN.

He has been watching.

Slowly, he LEVITATES UPWARDS.

We see that his whole body is WHITE. We see his long arms -- his FINGERS have METALLIC NEEDLES EXTENDING FROM UNDERNEATH THE NAILS.

We see his waist, penis, thighs, knees, ankles, and feet before he FLOATS AWAY entirely.

**EXT. HANNAH'S SCHOOL - THE NEXT DAY**

May walks Hannah to the front of her school. Hannah does not glance at her mother as hurries towards the steps to the entrance.

MAY

You want me to pick you up after?

Hannah stops. Turns around.

HANNAH

No.

MAY

I can wait as long as you want.

HANNAH

It's okay mom.

MAY

You feeling alright, girlie?

HANNAH

Yes mom.

MAY

Okay.

Hannah turns and hurries up the steps to her school. She enters.

May looks on. She's worried.

The door closes behind Hannah.

May shakes herself out of it and keeps walking.

**INT. TRISH'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - THE NEXT DAY**

May sits at a table in a small kitchen. Her sister, TRISH (51) stands at the counter. Trish is a little older, alone, and kind.

A tea kettle heats on the stove. The kitchen is decorated neatly with knickknacks. There is a VASE OF FLOWERS on the table.

TRISH  
How's the shop?

MAY  
It's good. Business is -- fine.

TRISH  
And Hannah?

MAY  
(beat)  
She's -- I don't know. Maybe she's just growing up, but she seems -- sad. Very sad.

TRISH  
She's thirteen now.

MAY  
Yes she is. She doesn't want anything with me anymore. Just on her phone all the time.  
(beat)  
I don't know.

The kettle WHISTLES. Trish takes it off the stove. She pours two cups.

TRISH  
She's at that age.

MAY  
I know. But I miss her. It's hard enough without Charles, you know?

Trish places a cup before May.

TRISH  
I know, May.

MAY  
I wish he was here. Every day.

TRISH  
I know.

MAY  
And I still don't know why he did it.

TRISH

Hey. You can't worry yourself like that, May.

MAY

And sometimes -- I think I see him. Out of the corner of my eye, I think I see him.

TRISH

You're learning how to live without, May. Life gives and gives and gives and then one day, it changes. Life starts taking away. You're strong.

MAY

(feeling the words)  
I'm strong.

**INT. MAY'S HOME - NIGHT**

May stands at the sink, washing dishes. It is late.

A sudden CREAK erupts. Behind her, we see the BATHROOM DOOR SWING OPEN SLOWLY.

May turns. Looks.

She turns the sink off. She walks to the bathroom door and CLOSES IT FIRMLY.

Beat.

It CREAKS open again.

She closes it and keeps her hands on it for another moment. THEN--

HANNAH

(O.S.)  
Mom?

May jumps, frightened.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

Sorry. I just wanted to go to the bathroom.

MAY

(calming herself)  
Sorry, baby.

She steps to the side. Hannah enters the bathroom and closes the door behind her.

May leans against the wall to catch her breath. Behind her, we can see the KITCHEN--

From behind the kitchen table, the Jawn stands up, partially obscured by the darkness.

May senses him.

She holds her breath for a moment, then works up the courage to TURN AROUND--

He is GONE.

May EXHALES.

We hear SINK RUNNING inside the bathroom. Then it TURNS OFF. Hannah comes out.

MAY (CONT'D)  
Heading to bed?

HANNAH  
Yeah.

MAY  
Window shut?

May steps after her daughter.

HANNAH  
Yeah.

MAY  
Locked?

HANNAH  
Yes, mom.

MAY  
Okay.

**INT. MAY'S BEDROOM - LATER**

May lies awake in bed.

She rolls over onto her side. She stares at the wall.

**INT. HANNAH'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Hannah SLEEPS in her bed.

Her window creaks OPENS by itself.

We see NEEDLES DRAGGING AGAINST THE WINDOWPANE.

A DARK SHADOW LOOMS OVER HANNAH.

**INT. HANNAH'S BEDROOM - MORNING**

Hannah's bed is EMPTY.

A long SILENCE.

We hear the DOOR OPEN.

May stands in the doorway, CONFUSED for a moment. She TURNS.

MAY

Hannah?

**INT. MAY'S HOME - CONTINUOUS**

She speeds to the BATHROOM DOOR and opens it.

MAY

Hannah?

EMPTY.

Panic sets in.

She rushes to the CLOSET, opening it--

EMPTY.

She rushes back to her room.

MAY (CONT'D)

Hannah!

EMPTY.

May returns to HANNAH'S ROOM --

**INT. HANNAH'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS**

She checks HANNAH'S CLOSET--

EMPTY.

She turns to the OPENED WINDOW.

Her jaw quivers in fear.

She puts her head out the window and looks DOWN at the alley.

NOTHING.

She starts searching the room. She pores over Hannah's DESK --  
piled with PAPERS and NOTEBOOKS filled with DOODLES.

May drops to her knees.

She notices something under Hannah's BED --

THE FLOWER CROWN.

She crawls over and picks it up.

She holds it in her hands tenderly.

All the flowers have WILTED.