

"The Santa Clarita Diet"

Written by

Victor Fresco

Writers' draft  
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COLD OPEN

EXT. DESERT OUTSIDE SANTA CLARITA, CALIFORNIA - NIGHT

Vast and barren under a starry midnight sky. A place one might go to bury a body. Which it turns out is exactly why we're here.

A 2006 Subaru, perfectly maintained and out-of-place, sits twenty feet from a rutted dirt road. Its headlights pierce the darkness, illuminating:

SHEILA SANDERS. Until a few days ago, forty-year-old Sheila was a timid, vaguely discontented, suburban realtor, wife and mom. Recent events, however, have turned her life upside down, invigorating her in a way she never thought possible.

She speaks with enthusiasm as she watches her husband and fellow realtor:

JOEL SANDERS, same age, in a two-foot hole with a shovel, digging. Joel had long ago made peace with the self-imposed sentence of a cautious, unfulfilled life. Now that plan has turned to shit and, unlike Sheila, he's not happy about it.

SHEILA

Guess what Kelly told me last night? She and Ben are selling their home.

Joel doesn't respond. Keeps digging.

SHEILA (CONT'D)

It's a beautiful property. Great location, new kitchen, marble countertops, detached bonus room. I think they'll give us the listing.

(no response)

Joel?

JOEL

The listing. That'd be great, honey. Can't be realtors if we don't have listings. It's so basic. So fucking basic.

CLOSE ON a clear, PLASTIC STORAGE CONTAINER. Inside is the DISMEMBERED GOO of a human body. A horrible stew of blood, entrails, bone and flesh. Lacking a lid, SARAN WRAP has been stretched across its top.

JOEL AND SHEILA STEP INTO FRAME, grab the container and drag it toward the hole.

As it slides, its gruesome contents slosh back and forth, some spilling over the sides.

JOEL (CONT'D)  
Would've been nice to have the lid.

A sore point.

SHEILA  
I couldn't find it.

JOEL  
Right.  
(then)  
You'd think it would've been stored with the container, is all.

SHEILA  
I'll look for it again when we get home.

Joel stops. Finally pushed over the edge.

JOEL  
When we get home?! What good will the lid be when our container -- with half a fucking body -- is buried in the fucking desert?!

He kicks the container. Sheila stays calm.

SHEILA  
You're swearing a lot lately.

JOEL  
That's not answering... anything!

SHEILA  
Well, obviously, I didn't know we'd be burying the container, Joel.

JOEL  
What'd you think?! We'd take it home with us? Clean it out and use it to store our taxes... which we can't do because it doesn't have a fucking lid!

SHEILA  
Do you see how much you're swearing?

Suddenly, Joel sees something in the distance. A CAR, headlights cutting through the darkness, coming toward them.

JOEL  
Shit. Shit. Someone's coming.

Sheila turns, sees it.

SHEILA  
Oh, God. Who could be out here?

JOEL  
I don't know. Teenagers? The police? Someone else burying a body? Hurry, let's get this in the ground!

Panicked, they grab the container and pull hard toward the hole. Too hard. IT TIPS OVER, spilling its incriminating and sickly contents onto the ground. Sheila looks at it, then turns to Joel.

SHEILA  
Do not bring up the lid.

JOEL  
Quick, scoop it up, throw it in the hole.

They drop to their knees and desperately begin pushing, throwing, scooping body parts into the grave. Not exactly a precise method of body disposal. In fact, it's a huge, ugly mess. As they work:

SHEILA  
We can't get caught.

JOEL  
I know.

SHEILA  
Who will take care of Abby? We can't leave Abby!

JOEL  
I know!

Handfuls of flesh, a string of guts, pieces of brain, everything's flying through the air. A lot of activity accomplishing little.

Joel grabs the shovel and starts heaving dirt in the hole.

Too late. A CROWN VIC -- America's unmarked police car of choice -- pulls up, headlights big and threatening in the frame. The throaty V8 shuts off.

ON JOEL AND SHEILA bright in the headlights. Frozen. Caught. Covered in blood, looking guilty as hell.

JOEL (CONT'D)

Act casual.

Joel leans against the shovel and waves, attempting a friendly smile, like a farmer welcoming a neighbor. Sheila rises from the dirt, also forces a smile.

SHEILA

Really? This is what we're doing?

CAR'S POV. The scene is absolutely macabre. Two people covered in filth and blood, surrounded by body parts, stand in front of a shallow grave, smiling creepily.

CLOSE ON JOEL AND SHEILA.

JOEL

Okay, we say we came across this murder site and we were just cleaning it up.

SHEILA

Who cleans up a murder site?

JOEL

I don't know. We're Mormons.

SHEILA

Mormons don't clean up murder sites.

JOEL

We're Mormons cleaning up a murder site! That's what's happening!

The driver and passenger doors open.

LOW ANGLE. Feet hit the ground. Joel and Sheila, blinded by the headlights, can't see who it is.

SHEILA

Not to shit on your Mormon idea but--

JOEL

Fine. We chased off coyotes that killed someone.

SHEILA  
Coyotes. Who dug a grave. With  
this shovel they brought.

JOEL  
We can't go to jail.

Joel suddenly raises the shovel and charges the car to  
attack.

JOEL (CONT'D)  
Ahhhhhh!!

SHEILA  
Joel, no!  
(then)  
Don't shoot! We're Mormons!

CUT TO BLACK.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

EXT. SANTA CLARITA NEIGHBORHOOD - MORNING

CHYRON: TWO DAYS EARLIER

A quiet suburban tract twenty minutes north of the Valley. A neighborhood made up of firefighters, police; middle-class folks who have been priced out of L.A. where they work.

INT. JOEL AND SHEILA'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Joel is in bed, awake, looking at his beautiful wife sleeping next to him. He glances at the clock. 6:50. He considers a beat, decides to go for it.

He snuggles up to her. She stirs.

JOEL

We have a few minutes.

SHEILA

Exactly. Only a few minutes.

Joel, not so suavely, slides on top of her, starts getting amorous. Sheila's not into it. After a moment, she sits up. Joel rolls off.

SHEILA (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, I'm just not a "pound one out," kinda gal.

JOEL

I know, and that's great. You like romance and candles and music and soft lighting and a wonderful meal and a bath...

SHEILA

Are you making fun of me?

JOEL

No. I'm only saying that some time, maybe even now, we might try--

SHEILA

Humping? Like that rescue dog did to that poor little girl at the Rite Aid?

The alarm goes off. Sheila slaps it quiet and hops out of bed ready to meet the day.

SHEILA (CONT'D)

Don't forget we're showing the Peterson house this afternoon. It's the third time for these buyers and they're very qualified. We need to get an offer.

JOEL

We will.

SHEILA

You sure you'll be able to leave work and meet me?

JOEL

It's a part-time job. I can do whatever I want.

(then)

I'll ask. It'll probably be okay.

SHEILA

Seriously, we need an offer.

She disappears into the bathroom. He calls after her.

JOEL

We'll get one.

(to himself)

Then maybe we can celebrate with nine hours of foreplay.

SHEILA (O.S.)

I hear you.

JOEL

(calling to her)

I love our foreplay.

INT. SANDERS KITCHEN - THAT MORNING

Morning breakfast rush. Sheila, realtor-ready in a flattering blazer and skirt, makes a smoothie as she flips through a fashion magazine.

SHEILA

(off the magazine)

Jennifer Lawrence chopped off her hair again. Everyone hates it like that, but she doesn't care. She's so bold. I wish I was bold. Am I bold? I'm not.

Joel - shirt, tie, no jacket - is distracted, fiddling with an appliance.



JOEL

I am really upset about this new toaster oven. Look at all the slack in these knobs. You can't set an accurate temperature.

SHEILA

(off the magazine)

I'd like to be, like, twenty percent bolder. No, more. I'm not even bold about how bold I want to be. Eighty percent. No, that's too much.

Sixteen-year-old daughter, ABBY, cute, constantly annoyed, ENTERS. She crosses to the fridge for a yogurt.

ABBY

I need a car. I can't live here anymore without a car. We're in the middle of frigging nowhere.

JOEL

We're not buying you a car.

ABBY

You don't need to buy me a car. Buy Mom a new car and I'll take hers. Like a normal family.

SHEILA

Oooo, I like this Range Rover.

ON THE MAGAZINE, an ad for a sleek new Range Rover, sexy in Santorini Black Metallic.

ABBY

Yeah, you'd look good in that.

(to Joel)

Why don't you love Mom enough to buy her a Range Rover? What's missing in you?

JOEL

We just got out of debt. So debt is missing in me. Which I like about me. If your school taught you financial literacy-

ABBY

I'm sorry, I just fell asleep, when are we getting another car?

Sheila, drinking her smoothie, suddenly GRIMACES, clutching her stomach.

SHEILA

Aaaaaah.

JOEL

What-- what is it? Are you all right?

SHEILA

I just got this sharp--  
(again)  
Aaaaaah.

JOEL

Here, sit down.

Joel guides her to a counter stool. Abby follows.

ABBY

Is Mom dying?

JOEL

Stop it.

ABBY

I don't know. Parents die.

SHEILA

I'm not dying. I probably just ate something.

As quickly as it came, the pain now fades.

SHEILA (CONT'D)

It's okay. I'm all right.

JOEL

Are you sure? You scared me.

ABBY

Me too. Makes you think. Life is short.

JOEL

You're not getting a car.

EXT. SANDERS' HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Joel, Sheila and Abby - now with a book bag - head out the front door. Sheila talks to her daughter.

SHEILA

Maybe after school we can spend time together.

ABBY

Why.

SHEILA

Why? Really? You need a reason? That's sad. How about because I love you and don't see you very much.

Abby answers, not cruelly, just honestly.

ABBY

I think this is working.

They reach their driveway where the Subaru we saw in the desert is parked alongside an equally sensible Hyundai.

Next door to the Sanders' their neighbors LISA and DAN walk to their cars. Lisa, a thirty-eight-year-old, outgoing, party mom, is taking their sixteen-year-old son, ERIC, to school. Dan, a law enforcement officer who loves his work, heads to a Mustang.

The Sanders aren't particularly close to their neighbors -- Lisa's a little wild for Sheila, and Joel finds cop Dan intimidating -- still, they're neighbors so everyone's friendly.

JOEL

Morning, Dan.

DAN

Joel. Noticed a light on in your den all night.

JOEL

Oh. Okay.  
(awkwardly playful)  
Someone's gonna get in trouble.  
(off Dan's blank stare)  
I'm kidding. No one's in trouble.

DAN

Unusual, that's all.

LISA

(warning him off)  
Dan.

SHEILA

I had trouble sleeping, so I was up.

JOEL

(to Sheila)

You had trouble sleeping?

DAN

(to Sheila)

Problem?

LISA

Dan! Leave people alone!

(re: Dan)

Cop brain. I'm sorry.

DAN

Not a cop, baby. L.A. Sheriff's Department all the way.

(gesturing)

Dickless over there's the cop.

Dan is nodding to the neighbors who live on the other side of the Sanders. Yes, Joel and Sheila are sandwiched between two law enforcement families. (It's Santa Clarita, that's how they roll!)

The Sanders' other neighbors, ALONDRA and RICK, mid-thirties, Latin, are in their driveway, also heading to their cars. Dan calls over to Rick, giving him shit.

DAN (CONT'D)

Morning, puss. Another day in pretend law enforcement?

Rick doesn't take the bait.

RICK

Have a good day, Dan. Be safe.

DAN

(to Joel, re: Rick)

Santa Monica P.D. Shitbirds.

(calling to Rick)

Careful chasing bad guys. Oh, that's right, they don't allow pursuits in Santa Monica. Worried it might hurt somebody's feelings.

Dan snickers. Rick's wife, Alondra, shakes her head.

ALONDRA

Guys, maybe you don't do this today.

RICK

(calling back)

Just trying not to kill civilians, Dan. We protect and serve, not frame and maim like the Sheriff's Department.

DAN

Screw you, Rick.

Dan gets in his Mustang, fires it up and peels out, flipping off Rick as he speeds by.

JOEL

(to Sheila)

I thought I'd feel safer sandwiched between two cops. See you at one.

Joel kisses Sheila good-bye, gets in the Subaru and carefully backs into the street. Meanwhile, Lisa eyes Abby.

LISA

Look how pretty you are today.

She gestures to her nerdy, awkward son, Eric, waiting in the passenger seat with the window rolled up.

LISA (CONT'D)

Eric worships you. You're the queen of his spank bank.

Sheila is appalled... and a little amused.

SHEILA

Lisa!

LISA

It's human behavior. Kid whacks it more than a zoo monkey. Eric!

ERIC

What?! Let's go.

LISA

(re: Abby)

She's standing here. Talk to her!

Poor Eric. How his mom torments him.

ERIC  
Hi, Abby.

ABBY  
Hi, Eric.

LISA  
(yelling to her son)  
That's good, keep the window up.  
You're never gonna get laid.

ERIC  
Mom!

Abby smiles, makes eye contact with Eric, who, embarrassed, looks away.

LISA  
(to Sheila)  
Hey, bunch of us girls are going  
out tonight. Drinking, dancing,  
etcetera. Wanna come?

SHEILA  
Oh, no, thank you. I, I can't  
tonight, but thanks.

LISA  
You're so flustered. We're not  
getting laid. At least that's what  
we tell our husbands.

SHEILA  
Heh-heh, that's funny, well, bye.

Sheila hurries to her car.

INT. JOEL'S OFFICE CUBICLE - THAT MORNING

Joel works part-time for a health insurance company doing  
something mind-numbingly boring at a computer.

JOEL'S SUPERVISOR, HOWARD, a gangly twenty-six-year-old who  
thinks he's a good manager but is really just a putz, ENTERS.  
He carries a hand filled-in form.

HOWARD  
Hey, favorite office dude.

JOEL  
Howard.

Howard shows Joel the form.

HOWARD  
I believe this word is  
"thrombosis," which would be a 5-  
42.

Joel glances at the form as he continues typing.

JOEL  
I agree.

HOWARD  
Good, good. Because you entered it  
as a 6-51, which would be an  
"embolus." Which it's not. It  
might become one...

Howard chuckles at his joke, then sobers.

HOWARD (CONT'D)  
But it's not. Same co-pay, but  
still...

Howard trails off, hoping Joel will finish his sentence.

HOWARD (CONT'D)  
Maybe... You... Should...

JOEL  
Be more careful. Got it.

HOWARD  
Good, good. You are the best Napra-  
Data entry and evaluation  
specialist on this entire floor.  
But that doesn't mean you can't  
even be better.

JOEL  
That's my goal, Howard. To be  
better than everyone else. Then  
better again.

HOWARD  
Sweet.

INT. COBY REAL ESTATE OFFICE - SAME

Sheila makes her way through the open bullpen area of the small real estate office. Her boss, RON, fifties, an asshole, flags her. He's with another man, GARY, forty, handsome, very charming.

RON  
Sheila Sanders say hello to Gary West. Gary was rockin' it in Sacramento, but now he's all ours.

SHEILA  
Hi, Gary. Welcome aboard.

GARY  
Thank you, Sheila. Excited to be here.

RON  
Sheila works with her husband. She's the pretty one. You two gonna sell the Peterson house today, right?

SHEILA  
Gonna try, Ron.

Ron suddenly turns on her.

RON  
None of this "try" bullshit. Do it!

SHEILA  
(startled)  
Oh, you're yelling at me.

RON  
The Petersons are nervous. We cannot lose that goddamn listing.

SHEILA  
Well, this is the third time these buyers are--

RON  
Get an offer! Get an offer!  
That's what realtors do!  
(to Gary)  
Come on, I'll show you your office.  
It's small.

Ron heads off. Gary extends his hand to Sheila.

GARY  
It was nice meeting you. Sorry you got yelled at.



SHEILA

Same here. I mean, I enjoyed meeting you, too. Not "I'm also sorry I got yelled at." Okay, both.

Gary smiles. Sheila returns it. He's very handsome.

EXT. PETERSON HOME - LATER THAT DAY

A pretty Colonial, freshly painted and landscaped, on a bright, friendly cul-de-sac. A nicer tract than where the Sanders live. A real estate sign hangs in the front yard, with a photo of Sheila and Joel's smiling faces.

INT. PETERSON HOME - MASTER BEDROOM - SAME

The Sanders are showing the house to a YOUNG HUSBAND and WIFE and their eager FEMALE REALTOR. The perfectly furnished master is spacious, with wall-to-wall... well, let's let Sheila tell us about it.

SHEILA

The master has been completely remodeled. Brand new texture-plush carpeting, built-in bookcases--

JOEL

I love these bookcases. So much space.

SHEILA

And the windows are south facing so there's plenty of light.

JOEL

Almost too much light. Is that possible?

The client's realtor speaks up, also eager to close a deal.

REALTOR

It's just lovely. The sellers have such nice taste.

The wife looks at her husband, hopefully.

WIFE

It is a beautiful home.

HUSBAND

It is. Just a little out of our price range.

SHEILA

Well, we won't know what the seller's willing to do until you make an offer.

JOEL

And you're very attractive buyers. Not just physically, of course. Although that, too.

Everyone laughs politely. Suddenly, Sheila grimaces, grabs her stomach.

JOEL (CONT'D)

She--? You okay? She's been having a little stomach thing.

SHEILA

I'm fine.

JOEL

Why don't you sit a minute and I'll show the rest of the upstairs?

SHEILA

I'm okay.

Fully recovered. She turns to the clients.

SHEILA (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. I didn't mean to scare you. You know my favorite thing about the upstairs? The laundry chute. It was so smart of them to-- rrrraahhhhhh...

Sheila throws up. And not some small, suburban realtor lady gack. No, this is epic and impressive and lands all over the lovely white carpet as everyone scrambles out of the way.

REALTOR

Oh, my God.

JOEL

Wow. Wow.

Sheila immediately feels better.

SHEILA

I'm so sorry. We will get a crew out here immediately and get this cleaned up.

JOEL  
 Maybe we should reschedule.

REALTOR  
 Good idea.  
 (to couple)  
 I could run you over to that Cape  
 Cod on Sunnyslope.

SHEILA  
 No, please. I don't want to make  
 everyone come back. I'm fine. I'm  
 just going to use the restroom and  
 call the cleaning crew. I'm so  
 sorry. Excuse me.

Sheila quickly runs out. Joel forces a smile.

JOEL  
 Okay, other bedrooms...

SHEILA (O.S.)  
 Rrraaahhhhhh...

INT. PETERSON HOME - SECOND BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Joel and the group look around a children's room. After a  
 beat.

JOEL  
 The new skylights really open it  
 up, don't you think?

We hear Sheila far off in the master bath.

SHEILA (O.S.)  
 Rrraaahhhhhh...

INT. PETERSON HOME - THIRD BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Joel is again with the group.

JOEL  
 I love the molding in this room.

SHEILA (O.S.)  
 Rrraaahhhhhh...

JOEL  
 Just beautiful.

SHEILA (O.S.)  
 Rrrrrr-rrrrr-rrrrr-rrrrr.

WIFE  
I want to leave.

INT. PETERSON HOME - MASTER BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Everyone's gone. Joel crosses through the master bedroom to the bath. He slowly opens the door.

JOEL  
Sheila? Honey?

INT. PETERSON HOME - MASTER BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Joel enters. He's stunned, horrified, by what he sees.

There's vomit everywhere. The toilet is full of it. It's all over the floors, the towels, the counters, even the mirrors. There's so much vomit, it couldn't possibly have come from one tiny realtor. And yet it has.

Sheila sits on the floor, back against a wall, which is also covered in-- well, you get the picture. She's slouched over, motionless, her legs sprawled out unnaturally in front of her.

JOEL  
Sheila? Sheila!

Joel runs to her and grabs her shoulders. Her lifeless body slumps over.

JOEL (CONT'D)  
Oh, my God. Sheila! Sheila!

No response. Panicking, he listens for her breathing. Doesn't hear anything. Is she dead?

JOEL (CONT'D)  
Oh, God, oh, God, oh, God.

He's crying now, rocking her limp body in his arms.

JOEL (CONT'D)  
Please no. No, no, no, no...

Sheila's eyes pop open. Joel, holding her close, doesn't notice. The rest of her body remains lifeless as her eyes look around the room.

JOEL (CONT'D)  
My Sheila, my beautiful Sheila...

SHEILA  
Did they make an offer?

JOEL

Ahhh! What the hell?

He looks at her. Miraculously, she seems fine.

SHEILA

I'm okay. I just threw up, like, a fair amount.

She points to what appears to be a small rubbery ball.

SHEILA (CONT'D)

That came out of me. I don't know what it is. Do you think it's an organ?

JOEL

We have to get you to a doctor.

CUT TO BLACK.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - HOURS LATER - DAY

Sheila and Joel sit in a crowded E.R. waiting room. After a beat:

SHEILA

I really am feeling better, honey.

JOEL

I want to get you looked at.

SHEILA

We've been here over three hours.  
I just want to go home, get out of  
these clothes and take a bath.

Joel sighs. He gets up, crosses to the intake NURSE behind a sliding glass window, knocks.

JOEL

Excuse me.

She slides it open.

INTAKE NURSE

Do NOT ask me again how long it's  
going to be. This is NOT first-  
come-first-serve. The most life-  
threaten conditions are seen first.  
Your wife threw up-

JOEL

--A lot.

INTAKE NURSE

(starting over)  
Your wife threw up--

JOEL

--A lot.

INTAKE NURSE

Okay, we're not doing this.

She slides the window shut.

EXT. SANDER'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Joel pulls into the driveway, jumps out of the car and runs around to help Sheila, who gets out on her own. She seems fine. Happy even.

JOEL  
I'll call your doctor. And make  
you some soup. You've lost a lot  
of fluids, it'd be good--

Sheila's looking around, as if seeing something for the first  
time.

SHEILA  
We have a nice house.

JOEL  
You're probably dehydrated.

SHEILA  
Why? You disagree? You don't like  
our house?

JOEL  
No. I'm just saying--

VOICE (O.S.)  
Sheila.

It's realtor Gary, approaching from his car. He holds a  
small bouquet of flowers.

SHEILA  
Gary?

Gary steps up. Sheila's happy to see him.

SHEILA (CONT'D)  
This is Gary, the new realtor I  
told you about. Gary, my husband,  
Joel.

Joel eyes this handsome man with flowers for his wife.

JOEL  
Hey, Gary.

GARY  
Hi.  
(to Sheila)  
So, how are you feeling? I heard  
about your afternoon.

SHEILA  
I'm much better, thanks.

He hands her the flowers.

GARY

Oh, these are for you. And I made sure the cleaning crew got in okay. They took care everything, so don't worry about that.

SHEILA

Thank you, Gary. That's so sweet.

JOEL

So sweet. Well, we'd invite you in, but--

GARY

Don't even think about it. Listen, Joel, can I talk to you a minute?

SHEILA

I'm going to get cleaned up. Thanks again for the flowers, Gary. And all your help.

Sheila smiles at him, then turns and walks toward the house. He calls after her.

GARY

No problem. Feel better.  
(then, to Joel)  
That was a crazy amount of vomit.

JOEL

Well, I'm not a medical expert, so I can't say what the proper amount of vomit is.

GARY

It was a huge amount--

JOEL

--Are you a doctor, Gary?

GARY

No--

JOEL

--Neither am I. So, let's not dishonor that profession -- which takes eight years of intense training -- by thinking we can give medical opinions. Okay?

GARY

Fine. Let's stick to facts then. The homeowners showed up.

(MORE)



GARY (CONT'D)

They didn't like what they saw.  
They don't want to work with you  
anymore. They're going to be  
working with me now.

JOEL

You're stealing our listing?!

GARY

No. The facts are, they fired you,  
then hired me. Oh, and one more  
fact: it was huge amount of vomit!

Gary turns and heads back to his car. Joel seethes.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - LATER

CLOSE ON a bowl of soup on a nicely made-up tray. Joel, carrying it, reaches his bedroom door and takes a breath. He doesn't want to burden Sheila with their failure. Not now. He opens the door and enters with a smile.

JOEL

Everything's good. Gary just  
needed some advice. I helped him  
out.

Sheila's lying on the bed, freshly bathed, wearing a bathrobe. She's moving her hand around her chest. Not panicking, just noticing something odd.

SHEILA

I can't feel my heartbeat.

JOEL

What?

SHEILA

My heart. I can't feel it.

Joel sets the tray down and crosses to her. He leans down, pressing his ear to her chest, (his face pointing toward her feet).

CLOSE ON JOEL, listening. Suddenly, he's startled.

Sheila is running her hands through his scalp, seductively.

SHEILA (CONT'D)

I love your hair.

She slowly pushes Joel's head down, down, down, until its between her legs. Bingo. She moans as she holds it where it needs to go.

SHEILA (CONT'D)

Yeah. Like that. Get in there.

INT. RITE AID - LATER

Muzak and florescent lights. Joel, shell-shocked, stands in an aisle dumbly staring at a display of stethoscopes. A homely twenty-year-old female CLERK approaches.

CLERK

Can I help you?

JOEL

What?

CLERK

My manager noticed you've been staring at the stethoscopes for, like, a really long time.

JOEL

There's something going on with my wife.

CLERK

Oh. Well, I'm only twenty so...

JOEL

Right. Sorry. Do you know the difference between the dual-headed stethoscopes and the single-headed ones?

CLERK

Well... dual would be two.

JOEL

I see. So, twice as many then.

(then)

It's not just a physical thing, she's acting different.

(off her blank look)

This one's fine.

He grabs a stethoscope and heads off.

INT. SANDERS BEDROOM - LATER

Joel, single-headed stethoscope in his ears, listens for Sheila's heartbeat. He moves the chestpiece around, not hearing anything.

JOEL

It doesn't make sense.

Sheila takes his hand and suggestively glides it onto her breast. Joel looks at her.

JOEL (CONT'D)  
My jaw still kind of hurts.

SHEILA  
Then stop talking.

INT. SANDERS KITCHEN - LATER

Joel, a bit of a wreck, stares blankly, this time at a baby pizza on the counter. Abby enters, notices.

ABBY  
Dad?

He snaps out of it, throws the pizza in the toaster oven, goes to set it.

JOEL  
Just making a snack.  
(off the toaster oven)  
Look at this knob. How could they think this is okay?

ABBY  
Where's mom?

JOEL  
(calmly)  
She's not feeling well. I left word with her doctor, twice, but he hasn't returned my calls because he's a bastard. Like the new realtor. And this toaster oven. All cut from the same cloth.

ABBY  
Are you okay? You're not.

JOEL  
Come here a minute.

INT. SANDERS BEDROOM - FIVE MINUTES LATER

Abby, stethoscope in her ears, listens for her mother's heartbeat.

ABBY  
I don't hear anything.

SHEILA  
I'm telling you, I don't have a  
heartbeat.

JOEL  
How can this be?

SHEILA  
Also -- and don't freak out because  
I feel fine -- in fact, I feel  
really good. But look what else.

Sheila picks up a nail scissors and runs the tip of the blade against her palm. It opens up a nasty one-inch cut. Only there's NO BLOOD. She looks at her stunned husband and daughter.

SHEILA (CONT'D)  
Still don't freak out.

She squeezes the wound. A THICK, TAR-LIKE GOO oozes from it. Joel passes out. Abby continues to stare at her mom, then also passes out.

CUT TO BLACK.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. SANDERS KITCHEN - A LITTLE LATER

Joel and an agitated Abby stand at the kitchen island.

ABBY

So, this morning when I asked if Mom was dying you jumped down my throat, when in fact the answer was "yes." And now, she's -- no nice way to say it -- undead.

JOEL

We don't know what's happening.

ABBY

She doesn't have a heartbeat. Or blood. Oh, and there's something else. What is it again?

REVEAL SHEILA, also at the counter, and eating raw ground beef with her hands, straight out of the package.

SHEILA

What? I'm hungry.

JOEL

We need to get you to a doctor.

SHEILA

(yells)

No!

(then)

Sorry. Look, I feel really... good. I have all this energy, and, like, a focus. I can't go to a hospital where they'll prick me and poke me and... what if they don't like what they find?

(pointedly)

They might never let me leave.

ON JOEL. This last sinks in.

SHEILA (CONT'D)

Bad for you, right, because we're having great sex.

ABBY

Ew.

SHEILA  
It's human behavior. Or dead  
person behavior. There was not a  
lot of lubrication. Another clue.

ABBY  
Mom!

JOEL  
It is a little inappropriate,  
honey.

SHEILA  
You didn't say that when I was  
licking your--

JOEL  
Whoa, okay, well, whatever this is,  
we need to talk to someone because  
we are not experts, and this is  
just the sort of thing the Internet  
will have a lot of misinformation  
about.

ABBY  
I know someone.

JOEL  
Who?

ABBY  
He's a creeper.

SHEILA  
What's a creeper?

ABBY  
Kind of a nerd who specializes in  
disturbing, terrifying, or gruesome  
shit.

JOEL  
(language)  
Abby.

ABBY  
Mom's talking about sex and  
lubrication, and I can't say the  
word "shit?"

Sheila laughs.

JOEL

So there are no rules now, is that it?

SHEILA

Of course there are rules. We just don't know them yet.

(to Abby)

Let's go see your creeper.

INT. LISA AND DAN'S HOUSE NEXT DOOR - ERIC'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Posters of fantasy and fantastical creatures adorn the walls. Trolls, super-heroes, horrifying monsters, the room proudly announces it's inhabited by a sixteen-year-old, non-reality obsessed nerd.

Joel and Abby hover next to their awkward neighbor, Eric, as he examines Sheila with a small flashlight in the darkened room. He moves the beam back-and-forth across her eyes.

ERIC

No pupillary response. Hmm.

Eric jots it on a pad, turns back to her.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Have you noticed any deteriorating flesh--

SHEILA

No.

ERIC

--Blackening of the skin? Digits or other pieces falling off?

SHEILA

No.

ERIC

Eaten anyone?

SHEILA

No! Nothing like that.

(then)

I may have thrown-up an organ.

ERIC

No worries.

He turns to write it down, this time making eye contact with Abby.

ERIC (CONT'D)  
 (nervously, to Abby)  
 Hello.

ABBY  
 We already said "hello".

ERIC  
 Right. "Hello." Did that. I  
 haven't had this many people in my  
 room before.

ABBY  
 You're doing fine.

ERIC  
 Thank you.  
 (then)  
 Do you guys want chairs?

Joel's losing patience.

JOEL  
 We just want to know what the  
 hell's going on?!

ERIC  
 Right. Okay. No chairs.

Eric turns back to Sheila, pulls back her upper lip to look  
 at her teeth.

JOEL  
 You're just winging this, aren't  
 you.

ERIC  
 Mr. Sanders, I have intensively  
 studied zombies, aliens, dark  
 elves, humaniods, beast-humaniods,  
 land monsters, and the five major  
 species of lizard people. And I  
 have never met any of them. So,  
 yes, there's going to be some  
 winging it.

ABBY  
 Eric, just tell us what you think.

Eric takes a breath, speaks professionally.

ERIC  
 Your mother is what I would call an  
 asymptomatic zombie.

(MORE)



ERIC (CONT'D)

She shows some traits-- like, craving raw meat, and she's dead -- but isn't exhibiting others; eating humans, drooling, mumble shuffling--

SHEILA

But I don't feel dead. I feel the opposite. Totally alive.

JOEL

She has been... exuberant.

ERIC

Exuberant?

ABBY

They're doing it a lot.

ERIC

Ohhhh. Nice. Well, one thing we know about the undead: they're completely driven by their id.

(to Abby)

The id is the part of the brain that demands we satisfy our desires.

ABBY

I know what the id is.

He continues looking at Abby. God, she's cute.

ERIC

It just wants whatever it wants.

ABBY

I know.

ERIC

Freud called it "a cauldron full of seething excitations."

ABBY

I sit behind you in psych.

ERIC

Your basic zombie only wants one thing: to consume. They are, in fact, the ultimate consumers.

(to Sheila)

Since you're not completely zombified, food's not your only interest. Still, when you want something...

(MORE)

ERIC (CONT'D)  
 (chuckles)  
 you are not going to have a lot of  
 impulse control.

Joel feels his life caving in on him.

JOEL  
 I don't understand! We're  
 realtors! How does this happen?

ERIC  
 Well, many new viruses come from  
 animals, like bats. As humans  
 destroy their habitats we're  
 exposed to all kinds of unfamiliar  
 diseases. We're the real zombies,  
 aren't we. Consuming everything  
 without regard for consequences.  
 As we destroy the Earth, we destroy  
 ourselves.

They look at him a moment. That was deep.

JOEL  
 So then a bat.

ERIC  
 Maybe?

ABBY  
 Okay, pointless to speculate,  
 that's what I'm getting. Anything  
 else we should know?

ERIC  
 Just... she seems fine now. But if  
 she starts to show symptoms of  
 going full-zom, like flesh  
 deterioration or aggression, you  
 may have to, you know -- how do I  
 say this -- bash her brains in.

JOEL  
 (quietly overwhelmed)  
 We're realtors.

ERIC  
 Oh, and always, always keep her  
 fed. That's going to be important.

EXT. LISA AND DAN'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER - NIGHT

Joel bolts from the front door heading for home. Sheila and  
 Abby follow.

JOEL

Until we know more, we cannot tell anyone about this.

(to Sheila)

Especially, your mother. Can you imagine?

SHEILA

What a beautiful night. We should do something. Let's buy a Range Rover!

ABBY

Fuck yeah!

(off Joel, to Sheila)

I mean, okay, if you think we should.

JOEL

No. We're going home and coming up with a plan. We need answers. How did this happen? Has it affected anyone else? Is there a cure? Do we buy a goddamn meat freezer?

Sheila stops, bends down to grab something off the lawn.

SHEILA

Oooo, look what I found.

She holds it up. Joel and Abby peer in for a look.

JOEL

Don't eat a snail.

Sheila pops it in her mouth and chews. Yum.

SHEILA

Crunchy.

JOEL

Okay.

He turns and starts off again. Suddenly, headlights flash across them as a car pulls into the driveway. It's Dan, in his sheriff's uniform, home from work.

JOEL (CONT'D)

Crap.

Dan steps out and comes over, suspicious why the Sanders are in his driveway.

JOEL (CONT'D)

Hi, Dan. How was work? You're a hero.

DAN

Is Lisa home?

JOEL

No, no. Should be soon, I'm guessing... Yeah, I don't know her schedule.

DAN

What are you all doing here?

Good question. Sheila jumps in, slightly aggressive.

SHEILA

What are you all doing here?

Joel laughs to cover.

JOEL

Heh, heh. We were just talking to Eric.

DAN

Eric? Why?

JOEL

Because... we found a football in our backyard and thought it might be his.

ABBY

So we brought it over to ask him.

DAN

All of you?

JOEL

Looks that way.

DAN

Eric doesn't own a football. Or anything that might make him go outside.

JOEL

That's exactly what he said, only with less implied criticism. So, mystery not solved.

They start off.

DAN

Then where's the football?

ON THE SANDERS, with Dan in the background. They freeze, panic in Joel's eyes. Sheila mischievously turns to Abby.

SHEILA

Run!

She and Abby take off to the house, laughing as they go; two teenage girls caught doing something stupid.

SHEILA (CONT'D)

Don't shoot us, don't shoot us.

ABBY

Not my fault. Shoot her, shoot her.

Joel turns to Dan.

JOEL

We threw it back over the fence.

INT. SANDERS KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Sheila and Abby are reliving their idiocy, enjoying themselves -- something we haven't seen between these two.

SHEILA

"Shoot her?" Really? You'd be a terrible partner in a crime spree.

ABBY

I'm sorry. It just came out.

Joel enters, not amused.

JOEL

Nice work. This is exactly what we didn't want. Now Dan's suspicious. What if he asks Eric about it?

ABBY

Eric won't say anything.

JOEL

How do you know?

ABBY

Because Eric hates his dad.

Silence. Sheila and Joel take this in.

SHEILA

That's sad. I feel bad for Eric. Maybe we should adopt Eric.

JOEL

Out of the question. Look, you're going to have to fight this a little. Be a bit more in control, less impulsive.

SHEILA

(ignoring him)

I'm hungry. And there's no more hamburger.

Her eyes widen.

JOEL

Fine. I'll go get you some food. But then we're coming up with a plan.

(to Abby)

Keep her here.

ABBY

All right.

JOEL

I'm serious. Don't go anywhere.

ABBY

(annoyed)

All right.

Joel grabs his keys and heads out. Sheila turns to Abby.  
SMASH CUT:

INT./EXT. RANGE ROVER - NIGHT

Sheila is test driving a new Range Rover super fast on an empty city street. A SALESMAN in the passenger seat clutches the pull-down bar. Abby's in the back with her head out the window, screaming.

SALESMAN

Okay, you can slow down.  
Please slow down. I'd like  
you to slow down.

ABBY

Woooooooooooo! Faster, faster,  
faster...

Sheila takes a corner, hard. The car fishtails and keeps going.

INT. SANDER'S HOUSE KITCHEN - LATER - NIGHT

Joel returns, carrying several shopping bags of chicken and meat. He sets them down, starts unloading. Abby enters behind him, hair blown back from the car ride. Joel doesn't look, assumes it's Sheila.

JOEL

I got organic. I don't know if that's still important. Probably not.

He turns to see it's Abby.

JOEL (CONT'D)

Oh. Where's your mom? What happened to your hair?

EXT. MABEL'S ROADHOUSE BAR - NIGHT

A working class bar in Santa Clarita. The Range Rover Sheila was driving is parked out front.

INT. MABEL'S ROADHOUSE - SAME

Sawdust on the floor. Wood paneled walls. Not fancy, but comfortable. A local band plays on a small stage. People are dancing, having a good time.

Sheila, a few drinks in, parties at a table of women, including her neighbors, Lisa and Alondra, along with CASEY, (late thirties, heavysset, sad) and KELLY, (same age, peppy and pretty). They yell over the music.

LISA

(to Sheila)

I'm glad you finally decided to join us.

SHEILA

This is fantastic! From now on, always include me.

ALONDRA

I can't believe you just went out and bought yourself a Range Rover.

SHEILA

I've been wanting one ever since this morning.

LISA

I think it's great. You're my new role model.

KELLY

Me too. If we want something we should have it, damn it. End of story.

LISA

I'm gonna get those Christian Louboutins. They're fucking expensive, but fuck it.

CASEY

I worry about spending money I don't have on something I don't need and ending up less happy because now I'm even poorer and the thing that was supposed to make me happy is just a thing so it can't. Also Consumer Reports doesn't rank the Rover very high.

KELLY

You're a fart.

CASEY

That could be part of it.

Alondra turns to Sheila.

ALONDRA

There's a cute guy at the bar looking at you.

Sheila turns. It's realtor Gary. He nods to her with a smile. Sheila returns the smile.

LISA

He is cute. Do you know him?

SHEILA

His name's Gary. He just moved here.

LISA

You like him. Are you two going to have sex?

ALONDRA

Lisa!

LISA

What? We decided we shouldn't deny ourselves things.

EXT. MABEL'S ROADHOUSE BAR - SAME

Joel pulls up in the Subaru, gets out, sees the shiny new Range Rover with dealer plates.



JOEL

Shit.

INT. MABEL'S ROADHOUSE BAR - NIGHT

The women are on the dance floor, grinding to the beat in a way that makes men think women are gay when they're just having fun... and maybe flirting with being gay.

Sheila has paired off with pretty Kelly, who has her hands on Sheila's hips as Sheila shimmies up to her. Very sexy.

At the bar, Gary watches, enjoying it.

Joel storms in, spots Sheila, heads to her.

JOEL

Come on, let's go home.

SHEILA

I don't want to.

JOEL

You bought a car! A goddamn car!  
And now you're drunk and... this is  
not who you are.

SHEILA

Maybe it is, Joel. Maybe it's who  
I've always wanted to be. Maybe  
it's just not who you are.

JOEL

Damn it, Sheila.

Gary comes over.

GARY

Is there a problem?

JOEL

Oh, God, not you.

GARY

Obviously, you're upset. But if  
Sheila doesn't want to go with you--

JOEL

Shut up, Gary.  
(then)  
Sheila...

SHEILA

Life should be fun, Joel. And who cares what Consumer Reports says, that car is hot.

GARY

She wants to have fun, Joel.

JOEL

--And doesn't care about Consumer Reports, I heard her, Gary.

Gary steps up close to Joel, intimidating.

GARY

Then maybe you should go.

Joel's never been in a fight. He stares at well-toned Gary. What if Joel hit him? Just punched him right in the face?

JOEL

Fine.

Or not. He turns and walks away.

GARY

(to Sheila)

Sorry. I just don't like seeing women treated that way.

Sheila laughs at this attempt to impress her.

SHEILA

That's not gonna work.

GARY

No?

He slips his arm around the small of her back and confidently pulls her into him to dance, guiding his thigh between her legs.

GARY (CONT'D)

What about this?

SHEILA

Oh, my.

CUT TO BLACK.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

INT. SANDERS' BEDROOM - THE NEXT MORNING

Joel is on top of the bed, sleeping, still dressed from the night before. He opens his eyes, looks over. Sheila's not there. She didn't come home. He shakes his head, dejected.

INT. KITCHEN - THAT MORNING

Joel puts a slice of bread in the toaster oven, adjusts the temperature. The knob comes off in his hand.

EXT. SANDERS BACKYARD - MOMENTS LATER

Stepping from the house, Joel hoists the toaster oven above his head and throws it down on the cement patio, smashing it like he wanted to do to Gary.

JOEL  
(to the appliance)  
Huh? You happy now, big man?

INT. JOEL'S OFFICE CUBICLE - THAT MORNING

Joel plugs away at his computer, entering data off a hand-written form. His boss, Howard, ENTERS.

HOWARD  
Hey, Favorite Office Dude.  
Noticed you were fifteen minutes  
late this morning.

Joel keeps working.

HOWARD (CONT'D)  
No problem.  
(then)  
Lying. Little problem. Don't make  
it a habit, or you won't be my fod.  
(explaining)  
F-O-D. Favorite--

JOEL  
I get it.

HOWARD  
Okay, also, reminding you we  
changed the coding for all bowel  
diversions. You're still using 9-  
24.

Joel stands.

JOEL  
You know what--?

HOWARD  
No, what?

JOEL  
Why should I be the only one in my family who gives a shit?! The responsible one. The one who knows the code for bowel diversions.

HOWARD  
You didn't know it.

Heads pop up from other cubicles to see what's happening.

JOEL  
I don't care, Howard. Maybe I want to do stuff. Drive a fancy car. Dance like a sex lunatic.

Joel exaggerates a sexy dance move, bumping up against Howard, like Sheila and Kelly last night. It's weird. A female office worker, BRENDA, calls over.

BRENDA  
Work it, Joel!

JOEL  
You're missing the point, Brenda! I don't want to dance. I don't know what I want, but it's not this! I quit.

Joel storms out. As he passes her:

JOEL (CONT'D)  
Sorry I yelled at you, Brenda.

BRENDA  
It's okay. Sorry I didn't get your sarcasm.

EXT. SANDERS BACKYARD - SAME DAY

Sheila is gardening, repotting a plant. Gary approaches, having entered the yard from the side gate.

GARY  
Hi.

Sheila turns, surprised to see him.

SHEILA

Gary.

GARY

I rang the bell. Then I saw your car in the driveway so...

SHEILA

I'm gardening. It relaxes me. What's up?

GARY

Just wanted to make sure you're all right.

SHEILA

Because I didn't want to have sex with you last night? I'm fine.

GARY

You were all over me dancing, then we take a break and you just stroll off.

SHEILA

I had a lot on my mind. Ended up walking around all night, thinking. Checked out the dumpster behind a Chili's. They throw away a lot--

Gary suddenly pulls her close, sliding his thigh between her legs. Like last night, only not as friendly. Sheila's startled but not scared.

SHEILA (CONT'D)

Whoa, okay, the patented thigh move.

GARY

Why don't we start over.

SHEILA

I don't think so.

He presses his thigh harder.

GARY

Are you sure?

SHEILA

I am.

Harder.

GARY

Really?

SHEILA

I feel like whatever I say is just going to mean you push harder against my vagina.

(reacting)

Oh, I was right.

(then)

Gary, my husband and I are going through a thing, but--

Still holding her close, Gary puts his hand over her mouth.

GARY

Shhh. How about this? We have some fun -- you said you're all about fun -- and I don't say anything to your dork husband. Or we don't, and I tell him we screwed four times last night in my Beamer.

She calmly moves his hand from her mouth.

SHEILA

Your unwillingness to take "no" for an answer has made me feel sexy and desirable. So let's do it.

Gary's confused. He suspects sarcasm. But now Sheila's seductively running his index finger around her lips... and he likes that.

She licks his finger. Puts two in her mouth. Sucks on them, slow and sexy. He likes that, too.

CRUNCH! She bites them off. The index and middle fingers. Clean to the base knuckles.

Gary freezes. Stares in shock at his three-fingered hand.

SHEILA (CONT'D)

I know. Weirdest foreplay ever.

GARY

Ahhhh! Wha....

SHEILA

You're good, Gary. And by "good" I mean better than chicken.

Finished chewing, Sheila swallows. Gary looks at her in stunned disbelief.

GARY  
You ate my fingers...

SHEILA  
I do not hate your fingers.

GARY  
Ate... ate! Police... I'm  
calling...

Woozy, Gary reaches for his cell with his good hand. Sheila takes his injured hand, puts her lips around the wound and sucks hard. Like on a straw in a milkshake.

He tries to pull away but she holds on tight and he's weak, close to passing out. He drops to his knees.

EXT. SANDERS DRIVEWAY - SAME

Joel pulls up, sees the Rover in the driveway. He gets out, heads for the house, purposefully.

INT. SANDERS HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - MOMENTS LATER

Joel storms through the front door, calling.

JOEL  
Sheila?

He heads deeper in.

JOEL (CONT'D)  
Sheila, we need to talk. Last  
night was bullshit!

EXT. SANDERS BACKYARD - MOMENTS LATER

Joel comes into the yard.

JOEL  
She--

He sees something. His face drops.

ON SHEILA. She sits on the ground, now gorging on Gary's half-eaten body. She looks up at Joel, speaks from the heart.

SHEILA  
Oh, Joel. I really want to make  
this work.

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT (REPEATED FOOTAGE)

Quick cuts from the teaser:

- Joel digs the hole.
- CLOSE ON the clear, plastic storage container of dismembered human goo, (now known as Gary). Joel and Sheila step into frame, grab it.
- The container tips over, spilling its fetid contents onto the desert floor.
- Sheila and Joel, on the ground, pushing, throwing, scooping body parts into the grave.
- CLOSE ON HEADLIGHTS. The Crown Vic pulls up.
- Joel and Sheila nervously eye the car.
- The driver and passenger doors open.
- Joel raises his shovel and charges to attack.

JOEL

Ahhhhh!

SHEILA

Joel, no! Don't shoot! We're  
Mormons!

We're back at the end of the teaser. As Joel runs toward the car, we finally get a look at the driver -- Joel's intended target.

It's their neighbor Eric, who feebly puts his hands up to ward off the blow.

ERIC

Ahhhhh!

ABBY (O.S.)

Dad, stop!

And now we see the passenger. Abby. Joel pulls up just before disaster, looks at them dumbfounded. Sheila speaks.

SHEILA

Abby? What are you doing here?



ABBY

I saw the broken toaster in the yard, and there was blood on the lawn and no one was home and I didn't know what was happening.

ERIC

(proudly)

So she came to me for help. I'm pretty good in a crisis.

ABBY

Eric borrowed his dad's car.

ERIC

(to Joel, panicked)

Don't tell my dad! He loves this car. Keeps it covered with a blanket in the garage, which is how I'll end up if he knows I took it.

SHEILA

How'd you find us?

ABBY

You put that tracker app on our phones.

JOEL

Right. That thing's great. Well, see you at home.

Abby ignores this, stares at the grave site.

ABBY

(to Sheila)

Did you kill someone?

JOEL

No! Jesus. We were out for a drive and--

SHEILA

(to Abby)

--Yes. I did.

JOEL

(to Sheila)

Okay, we're not going to lie, would've been good to know...

SHEILA

(re: body)

He was not a good man, Abby.

(MORE)

SHEILA (CONT'D)

And in my defense... I was hungry. Still, it was wrong. Of course animals kill for food all the time, and so do people, and is that wrong? I don't know. Maybe. I'm going to just say it is. Or isn't.

She burps.

Eric is crouched by the remains, fascinated.

ERIC

But you only ate some of him?

SHEILA

He weighed 180 pounds.

ERIC

Ah, the zombie equivalent of over-ordering.

SHEILA

(to Abby)

Honey, I didn't want you-- or your dad-- to be involved in this. Everything's happening so fast and I have no idea what to do and it's horrible. Your mom's a monster. And not  
(mimicking sixteen-year-old)  
"my mom's a monster", like, I come into your room without knocking, but a real monster who eats people, and if you guys want me to just go away I'll do that, and I won't even be upset. I will be upset but I'll go anyway and damn it all...

She breaks. Joel's moved. He loves his wife; "for better or for worse", right? He comes to her.

JOEL

No one's going away.

He wraps a comforting arm around her shoulder. After a beat, they both look to Abby, apprehensively. Her expression is unreadable. Then:

ABBY

Well, I think it's great. Finally, this family is interesting.

(MORE)

ABBY (CONT'D)

I live in the most boring place on Earth, with the most boring people-- no offense-- and now shit's gonna get weird.

SHEILA

Yes. Shit is definitely going to get weird.

The sound of a shovel against hardened dirt pulls their attention to Eric, who's scrapping Gary's remains into the hole.

ERIC

Sorry. The less time spent at a crime scene the better.

JOEL

What do you know?

ERIC

My dad's a cop and I enjoy the Internet. So a lot. And the first thing about crime is you don't want to get caught. Did this guy have a family?

SHEILA

No. He only moved here a week ago.

ERIC

Nice. You have his keys?

EXT./INT. GARY'S CONDO - NIGHT

UNDER MUSIC. A series of quick cuts.

- A key goes into a door lock.

- Sheila and Joel, wearing gloves, enter Gary's dark, sparsely furnished condo.

- Now in the bedroom, Joel tears open drawers. Sheila finds a suitcase in the closet. They throw clothes in it. Make it look like Gary packed in a hurry.

- Back in the living room, Joel tips over a chair. Gestures to a questioning Sheila, "why not?"

- They're out the door.

EXT. VAN NUYS AIRPORT PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Joel, driving Gary's BMW, rolls into the sprawling parking lot. Sheila, behind the wheel of the Subaru, pulls up next to him. Joel gets out of Gary's car and jumps in with Sheila, who peels away, leaving Gary's car behind.

INT. SUBARU - NIGHT

They drive in quiet tension. Joel finally speaks.

JOEL

If this is going to work, I need you to meet me half-way.

SHEILA

I can't promise I'll never eat another person. In fact, Gary was super delicious, so--

JOEL

Screw Gary. I can live in a world with less Garys. We'll figure that part out. But I'd like you to try to control some of your impulses.

SHEILA

Some of them.

JOEL

Yes.

SHEILA

(suggestively)  
Because one of them...

JOEL

Yeah, that one's cool.

She smiles.

SHEILA

I'll return the Range Rover.

JOEL

Thank you.

SHEILA

And I swear, I didn't have sex with Gary.

JOEL

I believe you.

SHEILA

But I did eat his balls. Well, one of them. Does that count as meeting you half-way?

EXT. DESERTED SUPERMARKET PARKING LOT - NIGHT

The Subaru screeches into the empty lot. Joel jumps out with Gary's hastily packed suitcase, throws it in a dumpster.

Meanwhile, in quick cuts:

- A hand pulls the lever on a garage door motor, switching it to manual.
- The door silently swings open.
- Eric and Abby push the Crown Vic quietly back into the garage.
- A car cover billows over it.

Abby and Eric stand in front of Eric's now closed garage. He hands her a jug, half-filled with an amber liquid. Abby's stoked.

ERIC

Here. This will mask any traces of blood. But tell your dad to dilute it three-to-one or he'll kill his grass.

ABBY

Three-to-one. Got it. Exciting night, huh?

She smiles. Eric's always wanted Abby to smile at him like this. Now he doesn't want the night to end.

ERIC

If you guys want, I can help you. Maybe we can figure out how it happened, what's going on...

ABBY

Definitely. Thank you, Eric.

Abby taps him on the nose affectionately, then grabs the jug and heads for home.

Eric's thrilled. As he walks toward his house, he taps his own nose just to repeat the experience.

ERIC

"Thank you, Eric." (tap)

"Thank you, Eric." (tap)

"Thank you, Eric." (tap)

ON ABBY walking away with Eric tapping in the background. Sure he's a nerd, but she can't help but be flattered.

THEN:

CLOSE ON A CLOCK RADIO. 2:45AM.

We hear a strange sound: PUMP, PUMP, SHHHHHHHH. PUMP, PUMP, SHHHHHHHH.

ON DAN, Joel's cop neighbor, in bed asleep with wife Lisa. He opens his eyes, hearing this odd noise cutting through the night.

Dan crosses to his window, looks down from the second floor.

Below in the Sanders' yard, Joel works a Hudson sprayer. Pump, pump, shhhhhhhh, he sprays his grass where Gary was killed.

ON DAN, suspicious of this middle-of-the-night behavior.

DAN'S POV. Sheila comes out from the house. On her way to Joel, she stops, picks something up off the lawn, then puts it in her mouth and eats it.

ON DAN, taken aback.

Sheila continues to Joel. Coming up behind him as he waters, she wraps her arms affectionately around his waist.

INT. JOEL AND SHEILA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Joel is on top of Sheila as they have intense, passionate sex on wrecked blankets and sheets. As they go at it, we hear ERIC'S VOICE from earlier.

ERIC (V.O.)

One thing we know about the undead, they're completely driven by their id.

SHEILA

I love you so much, Joel.

JOEL

I love you, too, Sheila.

We PAN off their faces and down their bodies; past their shoulders; the sides of their chests...

ERIC (V.O.)  
They want what they want, whenever  
they want it.

The PAN continues down their moving thighs, knees...

ERIC (V.O.)  
She seems okay now, but if she  
starts to show symptoms that point  
to her going full-zom...

The PAN reaches their feet, revealing Sheila's little toe is mottled, deteriorated.

ERIC (V.O.)  
...you may have to -- how do I say  
this -- bash her brains in.

As Joel's foot rhythmically rubs against Sheila's blackened toe, the toe falls off.

THE END.