

SNOW DAY

Written by

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Based on the novella by

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**2015 AUSTIN FILM FESTIVAL
THREE PAGE CHALLENGE SUBMISSION**

PLEASE NOTE THAT I WILL BE ATTENDING AFF

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August 31, 2015

FADE IN.

INT. CELLAR - NIGHT

A battered and rusted kerosene lantern rests on a dirt floor. The light fades and sputters as it struggles to hold back the darkness. Under this, a metallic sound -- soft, distant, intermittent.

TAP... TAP, CLANG...

Somewhere a door CREAKS OPEN, a WHISTLING WIND carries in the distant wail of a POLICE SIREN, and then the door SLAMS SHUT.

FOOTSTEPS hurry down CREAKING wooden stairs, growing closer.

TAP... TAP, CLANG...

Now two young feet, clad in snow boots, step into the lantern's dying light.

BILLY (O.S.)
(anxious, whispered)
Hello?

The shadowy figure kneels beside the lantern and works the pump. The mantle glows. The darkness recedes.

REVEAL BILLY STONE, 12, fair-haired, open-faced. A young boy eager to leave childhood behind, if only he knew how. Billy is well-dressed for the snow, but wears only one knit glove.

He examines his bare left hand in the light and grimaces at the bleeding gash across his palm.

SHUFF.

He cocks an ear. *Was that a footstep?*

Billy grabs the lantern, stands, and holds out the light. Exposed beams, pipes and dusty floorboards hover over head.

SUPER: "January, 1975"

TAP... TAP, CLANG...

He swings the lantern toward the sound and sees a broken window. Outside, the wind rattles an old metal trash can.

TAP... TAP, CLANG...

Billy looks around, his lantern pushing back the darkness only a small dim circle at a time.

He sees a shovel, sledgehammer, and pickax. Shards of broken concrete. Mounds of freshly turned earth.

And finally, a dark gaping hole in the cellar floor that reaches beneath the foundation of the house. It leads to a place where the lantern's light cannot touch.

He steps toward the hole, trips over something, staggers. The lantern swings about wildly.

We glimpse a balled-up gym sock. Tattered underwear. Wadded-up jeans. A child's bare foot. Young dead fingers reaching from beneath loose soil.

Billy panics, steps back and trips over a shard of concrete. He drops the lantern and goes down hard.

The light hits the ground, revealing the bloodied and disfigured face of a DEAD BOY.

BILLY (cont'd)

Oh, God!

Billy scurries backward, crab-like, pressing against the wall, nearly hyperventilating.

TAP... TAP, CLANG...

The lantern begins to fade again, the Dead Boy receding into darkness once more.

TAP... TAP, CLANG...

Billy trembles, eyes wide with terror. The lantern sputters. BLACKNESS encroaches.

Then a VOICE out of the darkness, young and distressed.

TOMMY (O.S.)

(whisper)

Bi-Bi-Billy?

Billy freezes, almost too scared to breathe.

BILLY

(whispers)

Who's there?

TOMMY (O.S.)

(whisper)

I di-didn't do nothin' wr-wrong, Billy.

Recognition creeps into Billy's face -- *that stutter.*

He scrambles for the lantern and frantically works the pump to rejuvenate the light. He stands, holding it out toward the voice.

TAP... TAP, CLANG...

BILLY
(sotto voce)
Holy shit.

The light reveals a filthy, shivering YOUNG BOY. He flinches when the light touches him, as if anticipating a blow. Tears have drawn lines in the dirt on his face.

BILLY (cont'd)
Tommy?

This is TOMMY SCHNEIDER, 12. He's fragile; damaged goods. Stringy red hair, blotchy freckles, and an oddly shrunken ear complete the picture of a kid no mother could love.

He's underdressed for the weather -- thread-bare jeans and a filthy Blackwater P.A.L. t-shirt pulled over a red sweatshirt. Over-sized and unlaced work boots.

TOMMY
(whines, mutters)
It wa-wasn't my fault, Billy. I
ju-just wanted to play.

TAP... TAP, CLANG...

BILLY
How did you... Wha...

He looks at the body, then to Tommy, and it hits him like a Tyson haymaker to the brain.

He slowly steps away from Tommy, his expression morphing from confusion to horror.

BILLY (cont'd)
Jeez-us... What did you...

His throat closes, his mind swims.

TOMMY
Nooo...

CLANG, CLANG... CLANG, CLANG...

DEAD BOY'S POV. Billy lowers himself to one knee and holds out the lantern for a closer look at the corpse.

His eyes flit from us to Tommy, back to us. He can hardly believe what he sees.