

FADE IN:

EXT. HAMMOCK AREA - NIGHT

Early stages of sunset illuminate the broad, pastoral expanse. A mid-seventies estate and a farm stand above an orchard stretching into the horizon.

Near the farm, there is a tall sycamore, a hammock strung from it. Near the hammock, we find two beautiful girls, LARA (11) and JENNY (9), playing on the grass. *

Lara dangles a CHEAP POCKETWATCH in front of Jenny.

LARA
You're cold, very cold... it's dark, you can barely see... but you see an anthill, and it's bright and warm, and you just want to stand on it...

Jenny slowly stands up, starts walking towards the anthill.

LARA (CONT'D)
It's warm there, it's your home...

Jenny walks to the anthill, is about to step onto it--then GIGGLES.

JEN
Ooohh, I'm sooo hypnotized!

LARA
Jenny! That should've worked...

Jenny extends her arms out and goose-steps, zombie-like.

JEN
Soooo hypnotiized... must eat brains.

LARA
Stop it! Why didn't that work?!

JEN
Yummm... brains...

Jen goes in to bite Lara's skull.

LARA
STOP IT!

Jen pauses. Some venom in that yell.

LARA (CONT'D)
 Just quit it! It's not funny.
 That should've worked.

Lara slumps down, crestfallen. Jenny leans in, grinning, little sis cheering up big one.

JEN
 I still wanna eat your brains.

LARA
 You know you can't do anything under hypnosis that goes against your morals. So you're saying you want to eat my brains normally.

Jen shrugs.

JEN
 Yeah. Can we draw now? I'm tired of playing hypnotize.

LARA
 One more time.

JEN
 Nooo, I wanna draw now.

LARA
 Come on Jenny, no one else wants to do it with me.

A heavy sigh.

JEN
 One more.

LARA
 Thank you thank you!

Lara picks up the watch, begins its sway.

LARA (CONT'D)
 Stare deeply into the watch...
 you're getting sleepy...

DAD (O.S.)
 Jesus Christ!

The girls freeze, look at each other. Jen looks worried, but Lara giggles conspiratorially.

DAD (30's, worn in an oil-streaked wifebeater), approaches the girls.

He holds a MANGLED, DEAD CAT by the scruff of its neck. The cat has been ruthlessly tortured--its intestines hang out, its whiskers are plucked, its paws broken.

Dad looks at the girls with a mixture of fury and disbelief.

Jen looks sad, scared to have been caught. Lara looks up at her father blankly. Then to the cat.

LARA
Hi Chester.

EXT. FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

Lara stands near a rusty old truck, hands sullenly jammed into her pockets. Just out of earshot, Dad kneels in front of Jen, who sits on the front steps.

DAD
Did you like doing what you did to Chester?

Jen looks down, face tear-streaked, and shakes her head.

JEN
No.

DAD
Baby I... I know you get those thoughts sometimes, like your sister does, where you want to hurt things, to do bad things. It's okay if you get those thoughts. You can't control that. But you know those things are bad, don't you?

Jen silently nods.

DAD (CONT'D)
You don't have to be a bad girl, baby. You can be a good girl. Do you want to be a good girl?

Jen finally looks up, blubbering, and nods furiously, throws her head into her father's shoulder.

JEN
Yes I do! I'm sorry. I didn't like it. I'm sorry.

Dad kisses the top of her head, hugs her reassuringly.