

DARKNESS

Written by
Brandon Matthis

bsmatthis@icloud.com

FADE IN

EXT. SURBURBAN HOUSE - NIGHT

A modest two-story house. A light switches on upstairs.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

A pink, youthful room illuminated by a swirling night-light.

A small figure lies in bed, back to the headboard. A young girl, no more than 6. Curly hair, innocent face.

This is TESSA. She clutches a worn, one-eyed teddy bear against her chest.

A KNOCK on the door. The door opens, in steps KARA. Mid 30s, blond, natural beauty. She looks tired.

KARA

It's time for bed, kiddo.

TESSA

Why can't I stay up a little longer?

KARA

Because little girls like you need their sleep.

Kara bends down, plants a kiss on Tessa's cheek.

KARA (CONT'D)

I love you.

The night-light flickers. Tessa jumps, holds her bear even tighter.

Kara notices, chuckles.

KARA (CONT'D)

I can't believe you still have that thing.

TESSA

He keeps me safe.

KARA

So does Mommy.

Kara adjusts the light, flashes a smile at Tessa.

KARA (CONT'D)
Get some sleep. I'm thinking
chocolate pancakes in the morning?

Tessa lights up.

TESSA
(excited)
Yes!

Kara watches her for a moment. Her eyes glance up, sees --
AN OPEN WINDOW.

Kara furrows her brow, peers out --

BEHIND HER. The door closes. Kara turns just as --

THE WINDOW SLAMS SHUT. Narrowly misses her fingers. She jumps
back, startled.

KARA
(under her breath)
Shit.

A moment passes. She throws Tessa an embarrassed look,
chuckles nervously.

KARA (CONT'D)
That was a close call.

TESSA
(flat)
Uh-huh.

Kara heads back to the bedroom door, turns.

KARA
See you in the morning.

Kara switches off the light, reveals --

A LARGE SHADOW behind her. It looks like a human shadow.

Tessa glances around the room. SHADOWS play amongst the wall.
Suddenly --

MOVEMENT in the corner of the room.

Tessa lets out whimper, hides under her blanket.

INT. KARA'S BEDROOM

Moonlight filters in through the blinds.

Kara lays in her bed, fast asleep.

A SHADOW passes over her.

CLANG! As if metal hitting the floor.

Kara's eyes pop open. She sits up, yawns.

KARA

Tessa? What are you doing?

INT. TESSA'S BEDROOM

The door creaks open, Kara peers inside.

It's pitch black. The night-light's off.

KARA

Tessa?

Tessa peeks out from under her blanket.

TESSA

Y-yeah?

KARA

Why did you turn your night-light
off?

Kara crosses the room, bends down, fixes the light.

TESSA

I didn't.

KARA

Then who did?

Tessa points a shaky finger towards her closet. Kara turns.

TESSA

(low)
There's someone inside my closet.

KARA

Who?

Tessa shrugs.

KARA (CONT'D)
I thought we were past this.

Kara heads toward the closet door. She stops, looks back, sees Tessa's scared expression.

She hesitates, reaches for the door, quickly pulls it open. Finds --

Nothing. Clothes. Toys. That's it.

She flashes Tessa an assuring smile.

KARA (CONT'D)
See? No one's in your closet.

Tessa's not convinced.

TESSA
Can I keep the light on?

KARA
Tess --

TESSA
Please? Pretty please?

Kara relents, nods.

KARA
Just until you fall asleep.

Kara goes back to the bedroom door, switches on the light.

KARA (CONT'D)
Get some sleep. I love you.

She disappears from the doorway.

Tessa looks back towards the closet door. She watches as --

The door creaks as it closes.

INT. KARA'S BEDROOM

Kara sits on the edge of the bed. She turns, grabs her phone off of the bedside table.

PHONE -- 9:30 P.M.

TAP.

Kara looks towards her bedroom window. She listens for the sound again. As if on cue --

TAP. TAP.

Kara creeps toward the window. She looks out. Her eyes fall upon the streetlight. It flickers.

TAP. TAP. TAP.

This time right behind her. She whirls, finds --

THE OUTLINE OF A WOMAN. Standing in the doorway. Her face isn't visible.

Kara screams. Jumps back, knocks her bedroom lamp to the floor.

She looks again.

The woman is gone. Then --

Tessa's screams resonate from the next room.

KARA
TESSA?!

Kara springs into action --

INT. HALLWAY

She races down the hall, bursts into --

INT. TESSA'S BEDROOM

The bedroom light is off. The night-light however is gone. Illuminating the room with a reddish glow.

Kara spots Tessa on the bed. She looks around the room, half-crazed. Sees no one but Tessa in the room.

KARA
What's wrong?

Tessa stares past her, right into the hallway.

KARA (CONT'D)
Answer me, Tessa.

Tessa points at something behind Kara.

TESSA

(low)
Mommy...

Kara can feel a presence. She slowly turns, comes face to face with --

THE WOMAN. Her doppelgänger. An absolute perfect imitation of Kara. The doppelgänger smiles.

DOPPLEGANGER

Hi.

The color drains from Kara's face. Suddenly --

She's thrown to the floor with face. Kara bangs her head against the bed post.

TESSA

Mommy!

Kara screams as she's --

Dragged out of the room. The door slams closed.

Tessa curls up, losing it. She cries. Screams.

On the other end of the door-

The sounds of CRASHING. SMASHING. Glass breaks. Kara's terrifying screams. Chaos.

Books fall from the shelves. Pictures on the wall hit the floor.

Tessa's bed begins to shake.

TESSA (CONT'D)

Stop it!

The closet door opens, slams shut. Opens. Slams shut.

TESSA (CONT'D)

Stop it please!

Tessa holds her hands to her ears, tries hard to drown out the noise.

TESSA (CONT'D)

Stop!

Then...silence.

Tessa goes still. What seems to be like an eternity --

TESSA (CONT'D)
(shaky)
M-mommy?

Quiet. Nothing.

TESSA (CONT'D)
Mommy?

The door opens. CRRRREEEAKKK...it's unnerving.

The doorway is empty. No Kara in sight.

Footsteps approach. In steps --

A young girl. TESSA'S DOPPLEGANGER. A wide smile plastered on her face. She holds a one-eyed teddybear. Tessa's bear.

Tessa's eyes widen. She looks to her side --

Her bear is gone.

TESSA'S DOPPLEGANGER
Wanna play with me?

As Tessa screams --

HER NIGHT-LIGHT GOES OUT.

BLACK.