

WHITE draft 5.31.22

I Saw the TV Glow

by

Jane Schoenbrun

Various pastel hues of PINK and PURPLE blink rapidly across the screen as WE HEAR...

TUMBLING, GASPING, and FALLING. Like a body rolled down a steep cliff against its will. And accompanied by:

GYM CLASS KIDS
(counting in unison)
6! 5! 4! 3! 2! 1!

1 INT. GYMNASIUM - DAY

1

This GYM CLASS of elementary school kids all move together in a big circle, each holding onto their share of a big plastic PARACHUTE, colored vibrantly with those same pastel shades of pink and purple.

In unison, they WHIP the parachute high up into the air, creating a massive and temporary DOME in the center of the gymnasium.

And at that exact moment of creation, they all DUCK underneath the parachute, sneaking inside its innards.

We duck inside too, following just behind them, the parachute now towering over us like a giant pink pillow fort.

We follow one YOUNG BOY, 10, lost and dazed, his face blank. He wanders through the bubblegum-tinted chaos like an amnesia victim.

All around him his classmates SCREAM and DANCE and PLAY. All the while the paper-thin roof of the parachute slowly deflates downwards, a celebration in the process of self-immolation.

We keep following close to this one confused boy. His name is OWEN.

There's something dawning in Owen's eyes. Something akin to fear. Like he's just realized that he's alive, and that's a kind of horrifying realization.

The parachute descends over Young Owen, muffling the cheers and hysterics of his classmates.

2 EXT. SNOWY BACKYARDS - DAY

2

Now Owen plays alone in the fresh aftermath of a winter blizzard, stumbling across conjoining backyards. He's a little puff ball in his bulky snow gear.

He crawls inside a small HOMEMADE CAVE that someone has packed together out of snow in one backyard.

He stares up at the wintry cavern just above him, alone, lost in dreams.

3 INT. OWEN'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

3

Owen now sits on the couch in his living room flipping channels on a television from the 1990s. The kind of bulky CRT model now rendered extinct by flat screens.

There's not much on television tonight for him to watch. News. Sports. Informercials. He keeps flipping.

We can't see the screen itself. But we can hear the sounds of each new channel as he flips past. And we can see the flickering glow that the screen casts against the couch and against his face.

Eventually, Owen lands on a channel that somehow seems louder than all of the others --

TV ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
(serious voice)
Next week on The "Pink Opaque..."

Owen watches an unseen commercial for what sounds like a children's horror TV show. Pink and red light flickers across his face as he slowly sits up on the couch.

From the screen -- we can hear ISABEL and TARA, two teenagers arguing in panic.

ISABEL (V.O.)
(from the screen)
"Drain lords!" Hundreds of them,
Tara... coming out of the drains!

TARA (V.O.)
(from the screen)
It's Mr. Melancholy! It's just a
trick.

Owen stares mystified at the screen. He's finally found something worthy of his attention.

ISABEL (V.O.)
(from the screen)
How am I ever going to shower
again?!

TARA (V.O.)
 (from the screen)
 --They can't hurt you if you don't
 think about them. They can't hurt
 you if you don't think about them!

TV ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
 Saturday at 10:30pm, only on--

OWEN'S MOM (O.S.)
 (calling from upstairs)
 It's past bedtime, Owen!

Owen fumbles for the remote. He very quickly CHANGES THE CHANNEL back to the nightly news.

He looks guilty, like he was just caught in the act of something forbidden.

He takes a moment before responding.

YOUNG OWEN
 Sorry! Coming!

Owen hops up from the couch and heads up the staircase.

But we remain downstairs, in this room that's now empty save the glow of the screen.

ADULT OWEN (V.O.)
 It was raining last night, and I
 couldn't sleep. So I started my
 favorite TV show again. 'The Pink
 Opaque...'

4 EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - EARLY EVENING

4

It's summertime now, and all is calm on this quiet suburban street.

It's not yet dusk, but it's late enough that the streetlights have turned on. There are lights on in some of the houses too, but no one is out on the street anymore.

As the CREDITS begin, we drift slowly, traveling like a ghost over:

A child's CHALK SCRIBBLINGS on the pavement, an epic pink and purple neon collage, all overlapped and blended lines interweaving manically with little half-realized monsters scribbled into the folds. It looks like something a 5-year old Jackson Pollack would draw.

ADULT OWEN (V.O.)
 It'd been a few years since I'd
 watched it all the way through...

Out in the distance, way down the street, spinning in a
 rickety, endless circle--

The top of a lone ICE CREAM TRUCK, parked across the road as
 if to block traffic. A smiling, animatronic SOFT-SERVE HEAD
 creaks and rotates in a circle, accompanied by an endless
 loop of anemic music box melody.

ADULT OWEN (V.O.)
 And I told myself I'd watch it in
 order this time. From the
 beginning.

5 INT. ISABEL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 5

ISABEL, 16, glares defiantly into her reflection in her
 bedroom mirror as she finishes applying black mascara.

She's wearing a PROM DRESS, but her expression looks like
 she's getting ready for war, not a high school dance.

Out her open bedroom window, we can hear the faint repetition
 of the Ice Cream Truck's song.

Isabel caps her mascara pen and glares once more at her
 reflection.

Then, without even a flicker hesitation, she GRABS A BATTLE
 AXE OFF THE NIGHT STAND and JUMPS OUT THE WINDOW.

6 EXT. ANOTHER STREET - EARLY EVENING 6

A darker, more secluded street, canopied under looming trees.

Isabel marches down the road in her prom dress, eyes straight
 ahead.

WE REVERSE CLOSE ON:

THE BACK OF HER HEAD.

We bump up and down with her steps, focused on a small PINK
 TATTOO on the nape of her neck.

It's an ancient symbol - Greek or something... It looks like
 the left-half of the letter 'Y'

ADULT OWEN (V.O.)
But I couldn't help myself...

7 EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - NIGHT

7

It's pretty dark, but we can still make out the yard lines painted on this freshly-sprinklered high school football field. And the yellow GOAL POST looming out in the distance, like a giant palm opened up towards the night sky.

Isabel marches across the field, headed towards the end zone.

ADULT OWEN (V.O.)
I started with episode 204, "The Curse of Mr. Swirly." The ice cream man who couldn't stop turning kids into soft serve...

She stops in the middle of the field, as if she's just noticed something ahead of her. She raises her open palm into the air to WAVE.

ADULT OWEN (V.O.)
That first one I watched. That first night in Maddy's basement.

REVERSE TOWARDS:

The end zone.

TARA, also 16, short-haired and androgynous in a button-down shirt, leans against the goal post, a SHOVEL in hand.

She doesn't wave back.

She looks more somber than Isabel. She just stares out at her friend from across the field

A LIGHT FLICKERS BEHIND HER, beyond the end zone. A glowing spotlight pointed up towards heaven, flickering like a TV signal.

WE TRAVEL TOWARDS IT..

8 EXT. UNDER THE FOOTBALL FIELD - NIGHT

8

A SMALLER, DARKER FIELD. This one overgrown and unkempt, all grass, dirt, and weeds, like the evil twin of the perfectly manicured football field above.

We crane down, towards:

A HOLE dug deep into the ground.

And that BRILLIANT, UNNATURAL LIGHT FLICKERING up from its depths.

Its colors blink between grey, white, and blue, as if broadcasting a television signal from deep below the Earth.

We descend further towards this brilliant television light.

But before we can get too close...

HARD CUT TO:

9

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

9

It's like someone just changed the channel on us without warning.

Now we're in a high school hallway, after school.

ISABEL has cornered a JOCK, 16, up against a locker. She's interrogating him.

ISABEL

What did you do? I need you to tell me what you did.

The Jock laughs uncomfortably, trying to mask how intimidated he is by this girl half his size.

JOCK

I just made a wish. I was bummed that the ice cream man had to leave at the end of the summer. So I made a wish.

On Isabel's expression: that is exactly what she didn't want to hear.

ISABEL

(like he's an idiot)
You made a wish. On the night of the full moon?

The Jock's eyes dart back and forth. He's shaken.

JOCK

I--I'm not sure. I don't keep track of the moon calendar like some sort of... moon freak.

ISABEL
Listen to me. This is very
important...

CLOSE ON ISABEL'S TERRIFIED EXPRESSION:

ISABEL (CONT'D)
You need to tell me what you wished
for.

CUT TO:

10 INT. A CHILD'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

10

An ice cream cone nightlight is plugged into the wall. It looks just like the soft-serve head on the ice cream truck we just saw spinning earlier. It's head is spinning a rickety music box pattern as well.

A little KID, 9, is tucked under Mr. Swirly branded covers, but still wide awake in bed.

That's because he knows SOMETHING ELSE is in the room with him. He stares at a light left on in his CLOSET, the door creaking open just a sliver.

The kid sits up slowly in bed, squinting into the blackness of the room in front of him.

And then, from just inches away from his bed, SOMETHING EMERGES SUDDENLY:

AN ICE CREAM MAN. A literal, dripping ICE CREAM MAN, like the top of that ice cream truck from earlier come to horrifying life.

The cone head now gruesomely realistic, sprinkles flaking out onto the bedsheets below.

MR. SWIRLY'S eyes are caverns. His grin is pure malevolence. His teeth are very, very sharp.

He stares at us for a few seconds, then holds something out for the terrified kid in bed:

A MELTING BLUE ICE POP.

ICE CREAM MONSTER
Here's your Swirly Stick...

A moment of silence. And then...

Mr. Swirly POUNCES towards the bed, and just as he attacks:

We CUT TO BLACK.

TITLE ON SCREEN:

I Saw the TV Glow

CUT TO:

11 EXT. WOODS - NIGHT 11

Years later, now.

ADULT OWEN, looking somewhere between his twenties and the onset of middle-age, walks alone through the forest at night.

Leaves and sticks crackle under his footsteps, eventually giving way to:

12 EXT. FIRE PIT - NIGHT 12

The similar crackle of a fledgling FIRE, the flames just starting to rise up from the innards of a fire pit.

Owen tends to the fire, all alone at what appears to be a long abandoned campsite.

He takes out a small fabric pouch and tosses some DUST into the fire. The flames JUMP momentarily.

CUT TO:

LATER.

The fire is really burning now, bathing Owen in a sickly orange glow. Owen sits on a log next to the fire pit.

He's lost in thought: here, but also clearly somewhere else far away.

We hold on Owen's expression for awhile as the glow of the flames dance across his face.

And then, eventually, we drift back...

13 INT. HIGH SCHOOL COMMONS - NIGHT, 1996 13

To YOUNG OWEN, around 13 now - that anxious in-between time just before puberty really kicks in.

He's walking, zig-zagging in no particular direction through a sea of adult torsos, just as lost as he was back in the chaos of the parachute.

TITLE ON SCREEN:

1996

It's ELECTION NIGHT at the local high school. One of the school's common areas has been transformed into a VOTING SITE.

Parents wait in line at various registration tables, gossiping with each other, eating snacks from a bake sale put on by the school's jazz band.

Owen weaves past the lines of adults. Someone has caught his eye in the corner of the room --

MADDY, 15, gothy and nerdy yet confident, sitting on the linoleum floor reading an oversized book.

Owen's close enough to see the cover of Maddy's book:

It's an EPISODE GUIDE for THE PINK OPAQUE. That TV show Owen heard a preview for earlier.

Maddy feels eyes on her. She glances up at Owen.

BRENDA (O.S.)

Owen, honey!

BRENDA, 45, Owen's mom, is calling to him from a conversation with another local PARENT.

BRENDA (CONT'D)

Come on: we're ready to go in.

Owen glances back at Maddy just in time to see that she's gotten up and is now exiting the room, heading deeper into the school.

Owen hustles over towards his mom. She nods to the woman next to her.

BRENDA (CONT'D)

I'll find you after. I want to hear about the renovations.

Brenda ushers Owen towards a VOTING BOOTH.

14 INT. VOTING BOOTH - MOMENTS LATER 14

We're behind the cloth curtain now.

Brenda lifts her son up to pull the levers for her.

BRENDA

I know you're not too old for this.

He is, and he looks vaguely embarrassed.

BRENDA (CONT'D)

It's been four years - aren't you excited to vote for the saxophone man again?

OWEN

Mom...

Owen brushes his fingers across the various levers, uncomfortable.

15 INT. SCHOOL COMMONS - LATER 15

Brenda has joined a gaggle of parents by the bake sale table, her civic duty now complete.

But Owen's somewhere else now:

16 INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS 16

A hallway, dark and all shut down for the night.

Owen walks slowly down the hall. It's eerily quiet, a world away from the carnival of election night we just passed through.

17 INT. SCHOOL CAFETERIA - CONTINUOUS 17

All of the lunch room tables have been broken down and turned over for the night. Their legs point up into the air like turtles stuck on their shells.

Owen wanders past a glowing vending machine, towards MADDY.

YOUNG OWEN

Hey.

Maddy sits on one of those turned-over lunch tables reading her Pink Opaque episode guide.

She stares up at Owen, unsure of who this younger kid is speaking to her.

MADDY

...Hey.

YOUNG OWEN

Are your parents voting too?

Maddy hesitates a moment, then she shakes her head with a disaffected shrug.

MADDY

No.

A short beat.

MADDY (CONT'D)

Ms. Driscoll lets me use the dark room after school. I'm waiting for my pictures to dry out.

Owen's got his eyes on the book in her lap.

YOUNG OWEN

Is that "The Pink Opaque?"

Maddy glances down at her book.

MADDY

Oh. Yeah. It's the official episode guide.

Owen stands there in front of her, gawking.

MADDY (CONT'D)

Do you watch?

Owen shakes his head bashfully.

YOUNG OWEN

Nah.

MADDY

Oh.

A long silence between them. Conversation over?

Owen walks across the room, searching for a casual spot to sit. He doesn't want to let on that he's just followed Maddy here to talk to her.

Maddy looks back down at her book to keep reading. Owen settles into a spot in the corner wedged between two vending machines.

YOUNG OWEN
What grade are you in?

MADDY
(while reading)
...Ninth.

She finishes the sentence she's reading, then glances over briefly at Owen from across the lunch room, as if assessing him.

MADDY (CONT'D)
What about you?

YOUNG OWEN
Seventh.

She snorts in quick laughter.

MADDY
Oh my gosh. You're a baby.

Owen looks down at the linoleum, ashamed.

Maddy notices and feels bad. So she tries to change the subject.

MADDY (CONT'D)
--Election night is cool, right?
It's like Colonial Day, or when
they bring in the inflatable
planetarium to the gymnasium.

Owen nods, not really following her train of thought but pretending like he is.

MADDY (CONT'D)
It's like the school gets
transformed into something else,
you know? It's special.

YOUNG OWEN
It's a kid's show, right?

He motions towards her episode guide.

YOUNG OWEN (CONT'D)
"The Pink Opaque."

MADDY

No. No way.

Maddy says it like she's almost offended by the question.

MADDY (CONT'D)

I mean, technically, yeah, it's on the young adult network. But it's way too scary and the mythology is way too complicated for most kids.

YOUNG OWEN

I see commercials for it all the time. It looks amazing.

Maddy hesitates a moment. Then she gets up and walks over to Owen.

She offers him the book.

MADDY

You can read about the episodes in here, if you want.

He takes it from her and looks down at the cover. It features a promotional still of ISABEL and TARA (the two girls we saw in the opening sequence) looking all heroic and superhero-y.

Maddy settles into a spot across from him, nestled against the parallel vending machine. Closer to him now.

MADDY (CONT'D)

It's got quotes and pictures. And info about the "musical guests" that play each week at The Embargo.

Owen thumbs through the pages.

YOUNG OWEN

It's on at 10:30pm, right?

MADDY

Yeah. Every Saturday night. The last show in the block before they switch to black-and-white reruns for old people. My friends Christine, Amanda, and I watch it together every week.

Owen finishes thumbing through the book. He closes it and hands it back to her, the two of them now bathed in the glow of twin vending machines.

YOUNG OWEN
My dad doesn't let me stay up that
late. 10pm's my bedtime.

MADDY
Damn. That absolutely sucks.

He looks down at the ground, embarrassed again.

MADDY (CONT'D)
My mom basically doesn't give a
shit when I go to bed.

Maddy looks at Owen as Owen sulks. A bad idea starts to form
in her head. She grins.

MADDY (CONT'D)
Hey: you know what you should do?

Owen looks up, on pins and needles for what Maddy might say
next...

18 INT. BRENDA'S CAR - NIGHT

18

Owen lays in the backseat of his mom's car, driving home from
election night. Streetlights reflect through the window and
dance across his face.

YOUNG OWEN
...Mom?

Owen tries to catch his mom's eyes in the rear view.

YOUNG OWEN (CONT'D)
Can I sleepover at Johnny Link's
house Saturday night?

BRENDA
Johnny Link? I didn't know you guys
were friends anymore.

Owen doesn't respond. He just waits for an answer.

Brenda considers the request...

BRENDA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
You'll need to ask your father.

Beat. Silence.

YOUNG OWEN
Can you ask him for me?

More silence from the front seat.

Streetlights continue to dance in shadows across Owen's face.

19 INT. OWEN'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 19

Brenda lets the two of them back into the house through the front door.

Owen scurries quickly up the stairs towards the second floor while Brenda heads towards the living room.

A TV LIGHT blinks From inside. Owen's unseen father is in there watching the screen...

20 INT. OWEN'S HOUSE, SECOND FLOOR - CONTINUOUS 20

Owen hides at the top of the stairs, eavesdropping on his parents' conversation below. The sound of their voices is muffled by the TV drone, but Owen can hear certain words as his mother negotiates on his behalf:

"Sleepover," "old enough," "he's a good kid, Frank..."

Owen doesn't move a muscle as he listens...

SLOW DISSOLVE TO:

21 EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - NIGHT 21

We drift back out into the suburban night, across front lawns and power lines.

The streetlight's yellow glow tints and warms the gravel of the road, as if this whole town is one big electric-powered incubator.

SLOW DISSOLVE TO:

22 EXT. JOHNNY LINK'S HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON 22

Another day. Another side of town. The houses here are more spread out, surrounded by woods.

Brenda is parked by the curb.

Owen walks from the car across Johnny Link's front yard, sleeping bag still clutched under his armpit.

He's almost tiptoeing, as if on a stealth mission.

BRENDA (O.S.)

Honey?!

Owen winces at his mom's loud voice. She's rolled down the window, and is calling out to him from the car.

He glances back towards her.

BRENDA (CONT'D)

You remembered your inhaler, right?

Owen nods, answering tersely and quietly:

YOUNG OWEN

Yeah.

Satisfied, his mom rolls her window back up.

Owen continues walking lightly across the grass. He heads up the driveway and onto the porch.

Now at the front door, he reaches his hand out to ring the doorbell.

But instead of actually ringing it, he just BRUSHES HIS FINGERS OVER THE BUTTON.

He waits a few seconds, then glances back towards his mom, still parked at the curb, waiting to make sure he gets safely inside.

He waves to her, like, "I'm fine."

She doesn't move. Owen waits a few seconds more, then waves at her again.

Finally, she takes the hint. She leisurely shifts the car out of park and DRIVES AWAY.

Owen sighs with relief and waits a little longer by the door.

Then, when he's sure the coast is clear, he hops off the porch and rushes across Johnny Link's yard.

23

EXT. SUBURBAN BACKYARDS - MOMENTS LATER

23

Owen speedwalks down a row of nearly identical backyards, his sleeping bag still tucked snug under his arm.

He walks past empty patios and drained swimming pools.

The sun sets over suburbia as a LIGHT RAIN begins to fall.

24 EXT. MADDY'S BACKYARD - EARLY EVENING 24

Owen ducks under a patio, shielding himself from the rain.

He can hear the faint sound of a television from the other end of the basement door, but the glass is all fogged up so it's impossible to see inside.

Owen KNOCKS and waits. No answer.

He glances from side-to-side, like he's suspicious this is all some prank.

He thinks for a moment longer, then, he slides open the glass door. He's clearly terrified, but trying his hardest to act nonchalant.

25 INT. MADDY'S BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS 25

AMANDA and CHRISTINE, both 15, sit on a couch painting each other's toenails with pink nail polish.

They've both got a vaguely mall goth style, but in a kind of flakey way, as if they could revert to their natural 'cheerleader' status at the drop of a hat.

They half watch the end credits of a cartoon on the television screen at the front of the room, and hardly acknowledge Owen's presence as he steps into the room.

He lingers near the doorway. It's like he's just intruded on some intimate scene he has no right witnessing.

YOUNG OWEN

Is uh... is this Maddy's house?

The girls on the couch finally look over at him. Then they turn back to each other and laugh, as if sharing some inscrutable inside joke where Owen is the punchline.

Owen continues to linger in the doorway, dripping wet from the rain outside, unsure what to do.

Slowly, he moves to take off his sneakers.

ON THE TV -- COMMERCIALS blink out across the room. Right now, an ad for a kid's magazine that comes with a free decoder ring.

A door opens near the top of the stairs. Owen glances up as Maddy steps into the room.

FROM THE UNSEEN TELEVISION SCREEN we can hear the show starting. The Pink Opaque's eerie synth theme song begins to bellow out across the room.

ISABEL (V.O.)
(from the screen)
Tara is my imaginary best friend.
And I'm hers.

Maddy closes the door behind her, and carries a bowl of colored popcorn with her into the basement. Amanda and Christine grin at her from the couch.

AMANDA
(calling to her)
Your suitor has arrived.

Maddy glances for half a second at Owen, and then focuses back on the TV screen.

MADDY
Shut up. It's starting.

ISABEL (V.O.)
(from the screen)
We met at sleepaway camp and
discovered we had an ancient
psychic connection.

Maddy flips off the light-switch, and suddenly, the room is lit entirely by television light.

Owen continues to linger by the door, like everyone else in the room his eyes are squarely on the unseen TV screen.

ISABEL (V.O.)
(from the screen)
Now, even though we live on
opposite sides of the county, we
help each other fight the forces of
evil.

Maddy hands Christine her bowl of popcorn and then hops over the back of the couch to sit with her friends.

Owen finishes taking off his shoes and then walks deeper into the room, as if the show is an invitation to join them near the couch.

ISABEL (O.S.)
(from the screen)
We are... The Pink Opaque.

The show's intro crescendos, And suddenly, we CUT INTO THE SHOW, full screen.

26 INT. PINK OPAQUE INTRO CARD 26

Just in time for the end of the credit sequence.

A TITLE APPEARS ON SCREEN:

The Pink Opaque

The show's LOGO floats towards us. Big, brilliant, and very Nickelodeon.

The theme song plays.

CUT TO:

27 INT. MADDY'S BASEMENT - LATER 27

Maddy shares the couch with Amanda and Christine, their legs all splayed out over each other's laps.

Owen sits alone on the floor, back against the wall, staring ahead at the unseen television. Even though his spot down there looks uncomfortable, he couldn't care less. He's utterly transfixed by what he sees on the screen.

FROM THE TELEVISION WE CAN HEAR: the familiar sounds of Mr. Swirly's ice-cream truck.

WE CUT INTO THE SHOW ONCE AGAIN.

NOTE: When we watch The Pink Opaque, we are always watching it full-screen, as if there is no distinction between the show and the rest of the film we're watching. Though there are subtle hints of the pastiche of early 90s television in The Pink Opaque, it is shot in the same cinematic style as the rest of the film.

CUT TO:

28 EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DAY FOR NIGHT 28

The JOCK who Isabel confronted in an earlier scene now sits on a curb with his JOCK BUDDY, 13. They both eat blue SWIRLY STICK ICE POPS.

JOCK
The last Swirly Stick of the
summer. What a bummer.

JOCK 2
Definition of.

Jock 2 chucks his popsicle stick down on the pavement,
littering to express his angst.

JOCK 2 (CONT'D)
It's not fair. Why does the winter
have to be so cold you can't even
eat ice cream during it?

They look at each other. Jock #1 has got an idea...

JOCK
You know what I wish?

Uh oh. On the soundtrack: we can hear the show's OMINOUS
SYNTH SCORE building.

JOCK (CONT'D)
I wish the Ice Cream Man didn't
have to go away when the weather
got cold. I wish he never went
away.

We crane up from their spot on the pavement, high into the
evening sky.

We DISSOLVE, journeying higher and higher into the bright,
romantic, eerie cosmos, until finally we've arrived at:

THE MOON. Full and brilliant tonight.

But there's something WRONG with the moon:

It has a GRINNING FACE. Like from the old silent film 'A Trip
to the Moon.'

The Man in the Moon LAUGHS wickedly at us, eager to grant
this wish he's overheard.

CUT TO:

An ICE CREAM TRUCK (the same one we saw at the beginning of
the film) is parked in the middle of the road, in the middle
of the night.

It's GLOWING unnaturally, as if in the midst of some awful transformation..

Neon PINK and PURPLE fluorescents spark from inside. COLORED SMOKE pours out from the windows.

The synth score goes WILD.

And CLOSER TO THE TRUCK NOW, through the window kids order their ice cream through...

A HAND WRITHES UPWARDS, gripping the counter.

It's not quite human anymore. It drips with mushy sprinkles as it continues to TRANSFORM INTO SOFT SERVE.

CUT TO:

30

INT. MADDY'S BASEMENT - LATER

30

We're back in Maddy's basement now, shortly after the show has ended.

THROUGH THE WINDOW -- the reflection of the television, now turned off.

And Amanda and Christine, hanging together under the porch light, sharing a single Black & Mild cigarette. They pass it back and forth like a holy object.

Owen stares out at them while he sets up his sleeping bag on the carpet of Maddy's basement. Maddy leans against the back of her couch, watching him.

MADDY

You can go out and join them if you want.

It takes Owen a second to respond. He seems dazed, like he's still living inside that show he just watched.

YOUNG OWEN

Oh. No. I don't smoke cigarettes.

MADDY

It's not a cigarette. It's a Black and Mild.

Owen shrugs, pretending like he knows the difference.

THROUGH THE WINDOW -- a car pulls up to the curb past Maddy's lawn, headlights beaming out into the night.

Amanda and Christine stomp out their Black and Mild and run across the grass.

MADDY (CONT'D)

You sure you don't want a ride home with Amanda's mom?

OWEN

...I told my parents it was a sleepover.

Maddy nods, studying this kid in her basement.

Owen watches Maddy's best friends get into the backseat of the car and disappear into the night.

Now they're all alone down here.

Suddenly the space feels very intimate. Owen's nervous. Maddy's not.

MADDY

Did you like it? The show I mean?

OWEN

(playing it cool)

Oh yeah. It was... really interesting.

Maddy wanders through the space, cleaning up. As she works, she starts to ramble on about The Pink Opaque. This is clearly her favorite topic.

MADDY

Isabel's a scaredy-cat. She's kind of the main character, but she's also kind of a drip.

Owen glances back to look at her, clearly interested.

MADDY (CONT'D)

Tara's my favorite. She's super hot, and she doesn't take shit from anybody. Plus - she's an expert on demonology.

YOUNG OWEN

And they never meet up in person?

MADDY

Nah. Just in the very first episode, back at sleepaway camp.

(MORE)

MADDY (CONT'D)

But they can communicate via "the psychic plane." Each episode they help each other fight a new monster from across the county.

YOUNG OWEN

Okay.

He's hanging on every word, trying to soak up as much info about the show as Maddy is willing to give him.

YOUNG OWEN (CONT'D)

Is the ice cream man in every episode?

Maddy snorts like this is an idiotic question as she settles once again against the back of the couch above Owen.

MADDY

Ha. No. He's just a Monster of the Week. Mr. Melancholy is the big bad.

YOUNG OWEN

Mr. Melancholy?

MADDY

(duh)
The Man in the Moon.

OWEN

Oh... Right.

Owen unzips his sleeping bag.

MADDY

He's always messing with time and reality. He wants to rule the world, to trap Isabel and Tara in The Midnight Realm. So each week he sends a new supernatural foe their way.

YOUNG OWEN

Because they're part of "The Pink Opaque."

MADDY

No. Because they are The Pink Opaque.

YOUNG OWEN

Oh. Right. Sorry.

MADDY
Don't apologize.

Maddy side eyes him, like she's annoyed by his apology.

Owen glances down at the carpet.

Silence. Then --

Maddy gets up from the top of the couch and walks across the room.

For a moment it seems like she's heading over towards Owen on the floor. But then she keeps walking past him towards the staircase.

MADDY (CONT'D)
All right. Well I'm passing out.

He calls after her:

YOUNG OWEN
Are you really sure it's okay that
I sleep down here?

MADDY
Just be out by dawn. If my stepdad
catches you he'll break my nose
again.

Maddy says this nonchalantly. Owen's not really sure how to respond to this.

So he just starts to get inside his sleeping bag as Maddy reaches the top of the stairs.

YOUNG OWEN
(calling up to her,
insecure)
And where are you going to sleep?

MADDY
In my bed. Creep.

Maddy abruptly flips off the lightswitch, draping the room in darkness.

Owen settles into place on the floor, getting ready for sleep.

But he notices:

Maddy, still lingering at the top of the stairs, like she's not quite ready to leave yet.

It's silent for a long time, and then Maddy speaks again.

Her tone of voice has changed. It's hushed, less confident, as if she's speaking aloud her darkest, most vulnerable secret.

MADDY (CONT'D)

Sometimes I think The Pink Opaque
feels more real than real life. You
know?

Owen lies there on the floor, unsure how to respond.

And then --

Maddy opens the basement door. She leaves the room, shutting the door behind her.

Owen lies there in the darkness, now alone, Maddy's words echoing in his mind amidst the silence of the basement.

31 INT. MADDY'S BASEMENT - MORNING

31

Light peaks into the room.

Owen stirs awake in the dawn light.

CUT TO:

Owen crouching over his sleeping bag, rolling it back up into a ball.

He's getting ready to leave. He's up early, before the rest of the town.

After a few seconds of silent work, he glances up... and LOOKS INTO THE CAMERA.

He speaks to us directly, suddenly transforming into the film's narrator.

When he speaks directly to camera, his tone is DIFFERENT. As if Adult Owen is channeling through his younger self.

YOUNG OWEN

(to camera)

Two summers later, Maddy Wilson
disappeared without a trace.

32 EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - MORNING

32

Young Owen walks across the backyards of the suburbs once again, this time in the opposite direction back towards Johnny Link's house. He's got his sleeping bag tucked under his arm.

The grass is wet with rain from the night before.

He narrates directly to the camera once again:

YOUNG OWEN

No one had any idea where she went.
Not her mother, not her stepdad,
not anybody.

The day is bright and peaceful. A perfect Sunday morning.

But we slowly DISSOLVE to:

33 EXT. MADDIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

33

HEAVY RAIN.

POLICE LIGHTS strobing across the suburban night.

A number of COP CARS are parked on the curb outside Maddy's house, which is now sectioned off with YELLOW POLICE TAPE.

YOUNG OWEN (V.O.)

She didn't leave a note, and they
never found a body.

A small crowd has gathered in the street. Among them:

TEENAGED OWEN, now 15. He lingers near the back of the crowd, letting the shadows and the rain keep him anonymous.

He finishes his own thought that we just heard in voice-over, direct to camera:

TEEN OWEN

All they found was her TV set
burning in the backyard.

34 EXT. MADDY'S BACKYARD - EARLY EVENING

34

FLAMES ENGULF MADDY'S CRT TELEVISION out on the grass near her back patio.

It burns orange and brilliant, an inferno of melting electricity.

We push closer and closer towards the set, until we can almost feel the heat.

TEEN OWEN (V.O.)

And the strangest part of it all was: that exact same month that Maddy disappeared, The Pink Opaque got canceled.

We draw closer to the flames, until SUDDENLY:

A34 EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

A34

We're back with Adult Owen alone at that burning fire he's started in the woods.

He sits there silently, communing with the past, mournfully remembering...

35 EXT. JOHNNY LINK'S HOUSE - MORNING

35

And now we're back decades earlier with Young Owen, on that calm morning after that first sleepover at Maddy's.

He waits on the porch outside Johnny Link's house, as if he spent the night there.

His mom pulls up to the curb to pick him up.

Owen hustles across the lawn and lets himself into the backseat.

BRENDA

You have a fun time?

YOUNG OWEN

It was cool.

We watch from across the yard as:

He shuts the car door behind him and buckles up.

Brenda starts the car. A mattress commercial plays from the car radio.

His mom pulls away, but we don't follow the car. Instead, we linger here on Johnny Link's lawn, looking out at the peaceful, empty cul de sac across the street.

The pavement is covered with more Pollack-esque chalk scribblings in pink and purple.

We hold on this Sunday morning still life.

Even though Brenda's car is gone, we can still hear the MATTRESS COMMERCIAL that was playing on her car radio.

It grows louder. Uncomfortably so, even.

It's deafening now, distorted, Satanic, draped by awful radio static...

SUDDENLY --

The camera DROPS OUT, as if someone has kicked away the tripod.

As we topple towards the pavement, we very quickly:

CUT TO:

36 INT. OWEN'S CAR - NIGHT, 2006

36

Another time entirely.

We're now riding in Brenda's old car with ADULT OWEN, 24, as he pulls into a parking lot and up towards a fast food drive-thru window.

He's wearing a uniform and a nametag. It's hard to get too good a look at his face in the darkness of his car.

DRIVE-THRU KID (V.O.)
(muffled)
Welcome to Burger Express.

ADULT OWEN
Hello?

DRIVE-THRU KID (V.O.)
...Hi.

A pause.

ADULT OWEN	DRIVE-THRU KID
Are you ready to take my order--	What would you like, sir?

Owen winces to himself. He waits too long before trying again:

DRIVE-THRU KID (CONT'D)	ADULT OWEN (CONT'D)
Are you there?	Yeah let me get--

Ugh. Owen waits again.

ADULT OWEN (CONT'D)
Sorry. I just want... let me get
 two double cheeseburgers and a
 small fries.

A long pause. Owen stares into the anonymous speaker system
 in front of him, waiting for a response.

DRIVE-THRU KID
 ...\$4.14. Drive around.

ADULT OWEN
 Okay. Okay -- thanks.

We travel with Owen inside the car for the entire loop around
 the back of the drive-thru.

As he pulls under the light of the pickup window, we get a
 good look at him:

He looks frail and a little bit unwell. He's the same
 anxious, introverted kid from earlier, just older now, and
 more tired.

He slows down at the drive-thru window to grab his paper-bag
 dinner from the kid inside.

ADULT OWEN (CONT'D)
 Sorry about earlier.

The kid looks confused, unsure of what Owen is apologizing
 for.

ADULT OWEN (CONT'D)
 (trying to remind him)
 We kept speaking at the same time.

The kid just stares at him, dead-eyed.

37

EXT. MOVIE THEATER PARKING LOT - NIGHT

37

A small, sorta rundown single-screen movie theater in a huge,
 mostly empty parking lot.

TITLE ON SCREEN:

2006

Owen parks his car, locks it behind him, and carries his fast
 food bag through the parking lot, past abandoned shopping
 carts.

UP AHEAD, BY THE MOVIE THEATER BOX OFFICE --

A gaggle of SENIOR CITIZENS have congregated. They look confused and angry.

As Owen approaches them, they pounce.

SENIOR CITIZEN MOVIEGOER
You're late!

SENIOR CITIZEN MOVIEGOER 2
It starts in five minutes.

ADULT OWEN
The manager's not in there?

SENIOR CITIZEN MOVIEGOER
It's locked!

Owen looks tired and annoyed as he gets out his keys.

SENIOR CITIZEN MOVIEGOER 2
We're going to miss our movie!

ADULT OWEN
I start the movie. You're not going
to miss your movie.

He unlocks the door.

SENIOR CITIZEN MOVIEGOER 2
(to her friend)
We should have gone to the Fun
Center instead.

38 INT. MOVIE THEATER BACK ROOM

38

Owen is on his flip phone. He walks through a hallway in the theater's cluttered, staff-only, back area.

ADULT OWEN
(leaving a message)
--Got here and the doors were
locked. I tried Dave on his cell
phone and he's not answering. And
you know I can't start the
projector without a key to...

Owen opens the door to an office to find:

DAVE, 40, his manager, sitting in a chair getting a BLOWJOB
from a half-naked WOMAN, 35, knelt on the ground.

Owen gawks, stunned. Dave BURSTS OUT LAUGHING at the
unexpected intrusion.

Owen quickly slams the door shut as the woman on the floor scrambles to cover herself up.

Owen hangs up his cell phone.

DAVE (O.S.)
Oh my God!

ADULT OWEN
Sorry. Sorry.

DAVE
(still laughing)
What the hell?!

Owen paces outside the office, his cheeks red.

39 OMMITTED 39

40 OMITTED 40

41 INT. MOVIE THEATER BACKROOM - NIGHT 41

Owen eats his lukewarm fast food in a backroom near the projection booth. We can hear the projector rattling up here.

Dave, his boss, sits near him along with a TEENAGE MOVIE THEATER EMPLOYEE. They're both eating their own fast food takeout.

DAVE
Owen, you uh, liked what you saw earlier? Me and Erica?

The teenage employee snorts quietly, trying to hold in his laughter.

Owen takes another bite of his cheeseburger and ignores the question.

DAVE (CONT'D)
If you want I could put in a good word for you with Erica. I think you've got a chance.

The teenage employee is giggling now. And Dave is holding in laughter too --

DAVE (CONT'D)
She can't stop asking about you.

They both crack up.

42 INT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT 42

Owen walks with a flashlight through a dark theater, making the rounds.

He's a silhouette against the screen, which is playing a BRASH and CHAOTIC CGI SCENE of two GIANT ROBOTS flying around the sky and bashing the shit out of each other.

The CGI looks kind of dated, in that way that movies from the recent past sometimes do.

Owen reaches the front of the theater, then turns around and heads back up the aisle, a shadow against the ballet of destruction up on screen.

43 OMITTED 43

44 INT. OWEN'S CAR - NIGHT 44

Now Owen drives home down a secluded local road. The sound of commercials low on the radio once again.

Something on the road ahead catches his eye:

A WHITE ELECTRIC SPARK flickering off the pavement.

Owen squints, unsure what he's looking at.

It almost looks like static from a television. Or like that light we saw coming out from the hole in the ground in the opening sequence of the film.

As Owen gets closer to the light, he slows to a stop.

45 EXT. SECLUDED ROAD - CONTINUOUS 45

Owen gets out of the car, not bothering to shut the driver's door behind him. There's no one else out on the road at this hour.

He walks slowly around the front of his car, heading towards the blinking electric light ahead of him:

It's a DOWNED POWER LINE, splayed out across the road.

It appears that an animal has chewed away the middle of the wiring. Now, it's shooting ELECTRIC SPARKS up from the pavement into the air.

The power line spasms and dances against the ground, the electricity powering its jolts.

Owen stares down at the light, and he notices something else there in the dark of the street:

BURNT PAPER.

Stray PAGES from an oversized book idling in the wind, all faded and browned around the edges, as if saved from a fire.

Owen crouches down and picks one of the pages up. He squints down at it and discovers:

It's from THE PINK OPAQUE EPISODE GUIDE. That book Maddy was reading years ago in the school on election night

This particular page details a plot summary for an episode titled "Homecoming to Get You." It features a big black-and-white photo of Isabel in her prom dress holding her axe at a high school dance.

More pages blow past. Owen grabs a handful, and thumbs through them: another episode titled, "The Clown from the Carnival." And then one for an episode titled "Escape from the Midnight Realm, Part 1."

Owen notices the FRONT COVER of the episode guide lying nearby too, all ripped up and burnt.

He stays crouched there in the isolated street, surrounded by burnt pages and the sporadic ELECTRIC SPARK from the downed power line...

CUT TO:

46	OMITTED	46
47	OMITTED	47
48	OMITTED	48

49 INT. OWEN'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

49

Later now, as Owen walks into his home. He drops his car keys in a bowl by the front door.

It's the same living room we saw him in as a child. Not much has changed, except that the TV has gotten a little bit bigger.

Owen walks past the staircase and peaks into the living room.

His FATHER is asleep on the couch. The years have not been kind to FRANK. He appears somewhat incapacitated there on the couch, his face pale like a living ghost.

The TV blinks its light across his face. From the screen, we can hear --

The sound of a classic 'TV Land' sorta show. Think 'All in the Family.'

Owen glances at the screen, then at his father.

ADULT OWEN

You need help getting upstairs?

Frank stirs awake. He stares at his son but doesn't speak.

ADULT OWEN (CONT'D)

I'm sorry I'm late. There was a downed power line...

There's something intimidating and disquieting about Frank's stare. Like he only half recognizes his son.

Frank never responds. Instead, he eventually just settles back down to sleep.

Owen stands there on the periphery of the living room for a few moments, then turns to head upstairs.

50 INT. OWEN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

50

Owen inhales a puff from his ASTHMA INHALER.

He holds the inhaler in his hands. He allows his breathing to return to normal.

He's sitting on the edge of his bed in his dark bedroom.

From downstairs, we can still hear the sound of the sitcom on TV.

Owen picks up a remote control and flips on his own TV on a nightstand near his bed.

He changes channels, then settles on what sounds like a late night talk show.

The TV glow dances across his face now too, just like his father downstairs.

He settles into bed as we DRIFT towards:

His bedroom window.

51 EXT. OWEN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

51

And now we're outside his house, on a patch of grass near a streetlamp across the street.

SOMEONE IS WATCHING FROM OUTSIDE.

A WOMAN. Staring up at Owen's house. At the twin TVs glowing on each level of the otherwise dark home.

This mystery woman has her back turned to us, so we can't tell for certain who it is.

Eventually though, we reverse to reveal:

MADDY.

Older and more confident, in a button down shirt that resembles Tara's clothing from The Pink Opaque.

She glares ahead at Owen's house with authority and purpose, like a spy here on a secret mission.

She continues to stare ahead towards the dark house. Then:

She turns and walks away, departing down the road into the abyss of the suburban night.

And now it's just us out here. Alone, watching the twin TVs flickering through the windows on each level of the house.

DISSOLVE TO:

52 EXT. SLEEPAWAY CAMP - EARLY EVENING

52

Isabel (from The Pink Opaque) walks alone across a grass field in the foggy dusk at her sleepaway camp.

The field is still all set up from a game of Capture the Flag earlier in the day.

But Isabel's the only one out now, all by herself on her seemingly abandoned camp grounds.

We hear Maddy in voice-over, as if speaking to us through a dream--

MADDY (V.O.)
Watch the show. Just keep watching
the show.

53 OMITTED 53

54 EXT. CARNIVAL - NIGHT 54

Owen wanders through a county fair, lost in the colored lights and caffeinated buzz surrounding him. He seems more dazed than excited.

TITLE ON SCREEN:

1998

INSERT SHOTS OF:

The neon chaos of the fair...

SPINNING RIDES and TEENAGERS aggressively facing off against each other at game booths, spraying water into cardboard clown mouths, ring tossing, winning tiny goldfish in ziplock bags.

And Brenda (Owen's mom) by a snack booth, eavesdropping with concern on her son as he wanders aimlessly all alone through the fairgrounds.

Something has changed about Brenda since we last saw her:

She's looking pale. Her head is shaved. She wears a snood hat to cover her baldness.

BRENDA (V.O.)
How are you doing these days,
buddy?

55 EXT. GRAVITRON 5000 - LATER

55

Owen and Brenda lean together against a fence outside the spinning Gravitron 5000 ride. Owen picks at a big bushel of COTTON CANDY.

TEEN OWEN

I'm fine.

Brenda studies her son, trying to get a read on him.

BRENDA

You just seem somewhere else lately, and I'm not sure if it's cause of me. I don't know. Maybe I'm making it up.

Owen lets some spit drop out of his mouth onto his cotton candy. He watches the blue and pink bushel dissolve back to sugar with the force of his spit.

BRENDA (CONT'D)

I just want to make sure you're on the right path, you know?

ON THE SOUNDTRACK: The RUMBLE of the Gravitron ride overtakes us...

56 INT. GRAVITRON 5000 - NIGHT

56

Now Owen is inside, strapped in and pinned against the wall for a ride.

Neon colors flash rapidly across his face as he spins. He's moving at warp speed, so fast that gravity is playing tricks on him.

He looks like he's going to be sick. He tries to move his arms and push off the wall, but the velocity of the ride keeps him pinned there.

There's terror in his eyes as he tries and fails to move.

It's like being trapped somewhere terrible.

TEEN OWEN (V.O.)

Mom?

57 INT. BRENDA'S CAR - NIGHT

57

Owen sits in the backseat as his family drives home from the fair.

TEEN OWEN

Can I stay up late tonight to watch
The Pink Opaque?

Owen glances briefly into the rearview mirror.

From the front seat -- Frank drives in grumpy silence. He keeps his eyes peeled on the road ahead.

Brenda glances back at her son from the passenger seat.

BRENDA

What time's it on?

TEEN OWEN

...10:30pm.

BRENDA

You know that your bedtime's 10:15.

TEEN OWEN

Yeah but...

Owen glances again into the rearview, daring to make eye contact.

TEEN OWEN (CONT'D)

No one else in ninth grade even has
a bedtime anymore.

Frank keeps staring ahead at the road for awhile.

And then finally, he speaks:

FRANK

Isn't that a show for girls?

Silence.

Brenda cuts the tension, trying to let Owen down easy:

BRENDA

Not tonight, honey.

Owen looks down at his lap.

End of conversation.

Brenda, her face faded and gaunt from chemotherapy, stares at the road ahead.

58 INT. OWEN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 58

Owen lies in bed, unable to sleep. He rolls over and leans in to check the alarm clock on his nightstand.

10:48pm.

He lays back down and stares up at the ceiling. Oh that special particular agony of knowing your favorite show is on right now but you can't watch it...

Owen sits up, and then:

He looks directly into the camera, addressing us once again as the movie's narrator.

TEEN OWEN

(to camera)

After that first sleepover, I couldn't work up the courage to say more than three words to Maddy Wilson at a time. But when I told her I still wasn't allowed to watch the show, she started leaving tapes for me...

59 INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - LATE AFTERNOON 59

It's after school hours. The hallways are mostly empty.

Owen walks past a few KIDS wrestling at their lockers.

We follow him for awhile through the halls, tracking with him as he enters:

60 INT. HIGH SCHOOL, ART CLASSROOM - CONTINUOUS 60

An empty art classroom. Amateur watercolors sit all dried on easels. Half-finished pencil still-lives are taped up to the walls.

Owen walks across the art classroom, and then through a black curtain, leading into:

61 INT. DARK ROOM - CONTINUOUS 61

The school's DARK ROOM.

Owen is bathed in RICH RED LIGHT, like he's just stepped onto another planet.

He's alone in here, but there's something waiting for him...

A VHS TAPE, sitting on the counter right next to the chemical bath.

Owen picks it up and reads the handwritten label Maddy has scribbled for him:

pilot episode

(rerun)

He stares down at the tape, as if it holds all the mysteries of life in its innards.

62 OMITTED 62

63 INT. OWEN'S KITCHEN - AFTERNOON 63

After school now. Owen sits in the living room, staring down at his biology homework. He's supposed to be filling in names of internal organs on a diagram of the human male body.

But he's not doing his homework, really. Instead, he's waiting, biding his time until--

BRENDA (O.S.)
 (calling from the other
 room)
 Your dad's driving me to my
 appointment!

TEEN OWEN
 Okay!

Owen listens, waiting patiently as the front door opens and closes. He waits a few seconds longer for the house to settle into silence.

Then --

He rushes out of the chair and up the staircase.

64 INT. OWEN'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER 64

Owen digs inside his closet, turning over old toys and clothes until he finds:

A hidden PILLOW CASE where he keeps the various VHS TAPES Maddy has given him, each one lovingly hand-labeled.

He gently empties the tapes out onto his carpet, and then he carefully surveys his treasures.

65 INT. OWEN'S BASEMENT - MOMENTS LATER 65

Owen feeds the tape labeled "Pilot Episode" into the VHS player on a small, old CRT TV in his basement.

He kneels on the carpet in front of the television as the set's blue calibration screen flickers on.

He pauses a moment in front of the screen.

Then, he turns towards us, and:

HE LOOKS DIRECTLY INTO THE CAMERA, suddenly aware of our presence once again. He speaks to us as the narrator.

TEEN OWEN
(to the camera)
I watched these tapes over and over
again, but they never got old.

CUT TO:

65pt2 LATER. 65pt2

Owen is splayed out on the couch, lights dimmed, staring ahead at the TV screen.

From the screen - we can hear the pilot episode of The Pink Opaque playing. The rustling of SOMEONE running through a forest, accompanied by scary 90s score...

MARCO (O.S.)
(threatening, from the
screen)
MARCO!

POLO (O.S.)
(also from the screen)
POLO!

Owen watches, transfixed.

66 EXT. SUMMER CAMP WOODS - LATE AFTERNOON 66

We cut into the episode.

A scared CAMPER, 13, rushes through the woods, hopelessly lost. He glances down at a compass in his hands, but the needle just spins.

MARCO (O.S.)
 (calling from the
 distance)
 MARCO!

POLO (O.S.)
 POLO!

LOST CAMPER
 Who's there?

Footsteps scatter across the forest floor.

LOST CAMPER (CONT'D)
 Please! I'm just trying to get back
 to camp...

MARCO (O.S.)
 We can help you...

POLO (O.S.)
 You just have to follow... the
moon.

MARCO and POLO, two monsters, emerge slowly from the woods. Their faces are white and crater-like, all jagged and shaped like CRESCENT MOONS. They wear slick astronaut costumes, as if NASA collaborated on a new chic line with Gucci.

The LOST CAMPER stares ahead, eyes wide with terror.

He drops his compass into the dirt.

CUT TO:

67 EXT. DOCK BY THE LAKE - NIGHT

67

Isabel is crouched at the edge of a dock at the camp's lake: a large, shimmering body of water with a small area sectioned off with buoys for swim practice.

The water sparkles as Isabel stares up at --

THE MOON. Big and brilliant and full in the sky tonight.

And glowing with...

MR. MELANCHOLY'S GRINNING FACE.

Staring menacingly from the sky like he's keeping watch over this entire world.

TARA (O.S.)
...You can see him too.

Isabel turns around. Tara is approaching her slowly from the other end of the dock.

TARA (CONT'D)
Not many people can. Most kids look up at the night sky and all they see is a big white beach ball.

ISABEL
His henchmen are close by. I can feel them.

She says it with confusion, as if she's not quite sure how she knows this fact.

TARA
Marco and Polo. Nasty little demons.

ISABEL
And he... He's...

She looks back up at the Man in the Moon and thinks harder, as if trying to remember a forgotten memory.

ISABEL (CONT'D)
Mr. Melancholy.

Tara nods.

TARA
That's right.

She sits on the dock across from Isabel.

ISABEL
What is happening to me? How do I know these things?

Isabel turns from the moon and looks at Tara with concern.

ISABEL (CONT'D)
Am I going crazy?

TARA
No. Never let anyone convince you of that.

She says it forcefully.

TARA (CONT'D)
 You're like me. You're special.

Tara brushes her hair aside and turns to show Isabel her own MYSTICAL PINK BIRTHMARK.

It's a match for the symbol on Isabel's neck, except hers bears the mirror opposite symbol, as if the two birthmarks could connect together like puzzle pieces.

TARA (CONT'D)
 We are The Pink Opaque. It's our destiny.

On Isabel -- fear and wonder in her eyes. No one has ever called her special before.

TARA (CONT'D)
 I knew it from the moment I first saw you in the dining hall. Heck, I knew it before I even met you...

CUT TO:

68 INT. OWEN'S BASEMENT - DAY

68

Owen lies on his side, watching the episode. He speaks along with the show, softly mouthing Isabel's lines from memory as she speaks them.

<p>ISABEL (O.S) (from the screen) I don't even have my learner's permit yet. How can I have a destiny?</p>	<p>TEEN OWEN I don't even have my learner's permit yet. How can I have a destiny?</p>
--	--

From upstairs: the sound of the front door opening.

Owen's parents are back home.

Owen jumps up from the couch quickly. He rushes towards the TV and shuts off the episode abruptly.

He hits EJECT, then grabs the VHS tape out from the machine. He hides it under his shirt, crouched there alone on the floor.

69 OMITTED

69

70

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD BLEACHERS - LATE AFTERNOON

70

Maddy sits alone after school on the football field bleachers, eating a tuna sandwich with the crust cut off. She's got the darkened contours of a half-healed black eye, which she's tried to cover up with goth makeup.

From all the way across the empty bleachers: Owen approaches, trying his best once again to feign casualness. Like he's just happened to stumble across Maddy up here alone.

TEEN OWEN

Hey.

Maddy glances up at him as he continues to feign nonchalance.

MADDY

What's up?

She picks at her sandwich. He sits down next to her, a ball of social anxiety.

TEEN OWEN

(quietly, almost to himself)

Nothing much...

A long silence. Maddy doesn't look at Owen as he fidgets around a bit, working up the courage to ask:

TEEN OWEN (CONT'D)

I was wondering...Do you, uh... do you, Amanda, and Christine still watch The Pink Opaque together every week?

A beat. Maddy looks vaguely annoyed at the question.

MADDY

I haven't talked to either of those assholes in a year.

Owen looks disappointed.

MADDY (CONT'D)

Amanda told the entire school I tried to touch her tit, which is a total lie. And Christine, surprise surprise, eleventh grade hits and suddenly it's been her lifelong dream to join the cheer squad.

Maddy snorts and rolls her eyes, pure spite.

MADDY (CONT'D)
Secret agents sent here to make my
life miserable, I swear.

ON OWEN -- working up the courage to ask his next question.

TEEN OWEN
If you wanted... I could come over
again sometime.

Maddy looks at him. Owen's clearly nervous.

TEEN OWEN (CONT'D)
I've been watching the tapes you've
been making me. But I want to see
The Pink Opaque on Saturday night
again. While it airs.

Maddy studies him, trying to figure out his angle here.

MADDY
I like girls. You know that, right?
I'm not into boys.

Owen is immediately nervous, defensive.

TEEN OWEN
I... I know that.

Maddy looks Owen up and down, trying to feel him out.

MADDY
Okay. Just making sure.

A beat of silence. Maddy keeps eying Owen.

MADDY (CONT'D)
What about you? Do you like girls?

Owen looks down through the bleachers.

TEEN OWEN
I don't know...

MADDY
Boys?

Owen just keeps staring down through the bleachers.

He thinks for awhile, like he doesn't know the answer. Then
he half-smiles.

TEEN OWEN
I think I like TV shows.

He says it like a self-effacing joke. But it just sounds sad.

Out in the distance -- some stoner kids in the area below the football field stamp out their joint and head off in the other direction, leaving Owen and Maddy completely alone out here.

OWEN

When I think about that stuff, it feels like someone took a shovel and dug out all my insides. And I know there's nothing in there, but I'm too nervous to open myself up and check. I know there's something wrong with me. My parents see it too, even if they don't want to say anything...

Owen looks at Maddy, as if searching for confirmation of something.

OWEN (CONT'D)

Do you ever feel like that?

Maddy thinks for awhile before responding.

MADDY

I don't know...

Maddy bites her lip.

MADDY (CONT'D)

Maybe you're like Isabel...

ON OWEN -- he ruffles his brow, considering it.

MADDY (CONT'D)

Afraid of what's inside you.

71 EXT. MADDY'S BACKYARD - EARLY EVENING

71

Owen walks across Maddy's backyard, sleeping bag tucked under his arm.

He glances side-to-side to make sure nobody's watching, then slides open the glass door to her basement and slips inside.

RISING ON THE SOUNDTRACK: EVIL CLOWN LAUGHTER.

We cut fluidly into The Pink Opaque:

72 EXT. STRIP MALL PARKING LOT

72

Through the side-mirror of a parked car, we can see:

AN EVIL CLOWN MONSTER, holding court in the middle of the parking lot, giggling and frothing at the mouth like an absolute maniac.

TARA (O.S)

Hey. Bozo.

CUT TO:

Tara, speed-walking across the parking lot, a large SCYTHE in hand. She addresses the psychotic clown as she rushes towards him...

TARA (CONT'D)

Estee Lauder called. They've got a few suggestions about this whole "look" you're going for.

She raises her scythe into the air, ready for battle. But just before she strikes we cut to:

73 INT. MADDY'S BASEMENT - NIGHT

73

Owen and Maddy watching the episode on Maddy's couch. They're sitting side-by-side, closer together, both lost in the episode and the glow of the screen.

FROM THE UNSEEN SCREEN WE CAN HEAR:

The sounds of an epic, kind of over-the-top fight scene between Tara and the evil clown. Lots of GROWLING and SLICING.

Out of the corner of his eye Owen notices something --

Maddy is CRYING.

Tears roll down her cheeks. Her eyes are red and wet. The shadow of that black eye still not fully healed.

Owen looks confused. She knows he notices, but she's not able to cover up her tears.

She keeps her eyes ahead at the screen. She whimpers and continues to cry harder, a full-bodied emotional response now.

Owen sits there, unsure of what to say or do...

CUT TO:

73pt2 LATER. Past lights out.

73pt2

Owen is alone in the basement, once again curled up on the floor in his sleeping bag.

His breathing is slightly and subtly asthmatic.

He's awake, and he's listening to:

NOISES from upstairs in Maddy's house.

It sounds like a heated argument. An angry MAN yelling, and a WOMAN trying to defend herself.

It's muffled enough so it's hard to hear the exact words, but it sounds on the edge of violence.

Owen lays there and listens.

The BASEMENT DOOR CREAKS OPEN.

Owen turns on his side, pretending to sleep as Maddy tiptoes downstairs and takes a seat on the staircase.

She's got something in her hands:

A PINK SHARPIE.

She sits there on the steps, playing idly with the marker.

MADDY

(quietly)

I'm getting out of this town. Did you know that? Soon.

It's not clear if Maddy is talking to him, or just to herself.

Owen slowly turns over on his side and squints across the room at Maddy.

OWEN

What?

MADDY

I'll die if I stay here... I don't know how exactly, but I know that it's true.

A long pause. Owen stares at Maddy from his spot on the floor.

OWEN
(vulnerable)
...I won't have anyone to watch The
Pink Opaque with if you leave.

Owen lies still, staring at Maddy. He turns back over on his other side, facing away from her now.

A long beat. Then -- Owen can hear Maddy getting back up from the stairs and walking slowly towards him.

She crouches at his side.

MADDY
Hey.

Owen doesn't speak or move.

MADDY (CONT'D)
Sit up.

Owen does, slowly.

He sits with his back turned to Maddy, not looking at her.

She reaches out and tilts his head down for him.

She uncaps her marker and begins to draw carefully on the nape of his neck.

She's drawing:

The symbol from the show. The 'half Y' that we've seen on the back of Isabel and Tara's necks.

Her marker's ink is pink and bright. It glows against the darkness of the basement.

Owen keeps his head down. They sit there in silence as Maddy colors in the lines of Owen's new temporary tattoo.

CUT TO:

73pt3 LATER.

73pt3

It's the middle of the night.

Owen and Maddy lay on the floor next to each other. Maddy fast asleep on her side without a blanket.

And Owen still wide awake, lying on his back inside his sleeping bag, staring up towards the ceiling.

A SUBTLE LITTLE LIGHT dances across his face.

We watch Owen in close-up for awhile as he stares upwards.

Then, we cut to a wide shot to see what he's staring up at:

There's a SMALL BLUE FLICKER DANCING IN THE AIR, six feet above his sleeping bag.

Like a TV's glimmering blue calibration screen that has somehow willed itself into this plane of existence.

Owen stares up into the light.

It's tiny, almost imperceptible. Perhaps just a trick of the light, perhaps not.

Perhaps a dream, perhaps not.

HARD CUT TO:

74	OMITTED	74
75	OMITTED	75
76	INT. MOVIE THEATER PROJECTION BOOTH - NIGHT	76

SCRRRRRCHT --

The movie theater's 35mm film projector malfunctions.

The film is caught in the gatehead, causing the projector to stall and spin out. Some of the FILM STOCK itself is spitting up from the reel, unfurling wildly onto the ground.

Adult Owen (back in 2006 now) stands six feet away, watching aghast and frozen as the machine malfunctions. His asshole manager Dave stands behind him, also frozen in the face of the crisis.

DAVE

Fix it!

Owen glances at his manager, who is clearly expecting Owen to take charge here.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Fix it! What did you do?!

Owen moves to grab hold of the projector to try to stop it from unspooling further. It's like trying to grab hold of a bucking bronco.

He thinks twice, and instead UNPLUGS the machine, grabbing its wiring out from the wall socket.

The projector slows to a stop, returning the room to quiet.

Dave shakes his head in annoyance and condescension, like all this is Owen's fault.

Owen stands there, plug in hand, allowing his breathing to return to normal.

77 OMITTED 77

78 OMITTED 78

79 INT. MOVIE THEATER LOBBY - LATER 79

Now Owen shovels popcorn into black garbage bags. Going through the motions of his nightly routine.

TITLE ON SCREEN:

2006

REVERSE ON:

The clear glass doors at the front of the movie theater.

THROUGH THE GLASS WE CAN SEE -

The vast, empty parking lot. A desert of concrete.

A few stray SHOPPING CARTS drift down a slight decline, rolling slowly past the window like tumbleweed blowing in the wind.

RISING THE SOUNDTRACK:

ANTISEPTIC SUPERMARKET MUZAK.

It carries us into:

80 INT. 24-HOUR SUPERMARKET - NIGHT 80

The snack aisle, lit by the impossibly blinding fluorescents of a supermarket past midnight.

Owen lethargically pushes his shopping cart past a towering, carefully arranged Nabisco display. He's half-asleep for this late night shopping trip.

He inspects CRACKER BOXES on the shelf. They all look the same.

The store's overhead speakers switch from muzak to a chipper in-store ad for MICROWAVE POPCORN.

Owen looks up from the shelf and notices something strange at the far-end of the aisle...

MADDY.

She stands there between the two shelves, about two dozen feet away, pale in the supermarket glow.

She's wearing the same button-down we saw her in earlier when she waited outside Owen's house.

MADDY

(firm)

I need to talk to you.

Owen looks around, like he's not sure if this woman is talking to him. Her style and appearance has changed with the years, so he doesn't immediately recognize her.

OWEN

Ma'am? Are you...

He steps in front of his shopping cart, nervous by the intensity of this mystery woman at the end of the aisle.

OWEN (CONT'D)

Do you need help?

Maddy stares at him, concerned and serious.

MADDY

Do you remember me?

Owen squints. He takes a furtive step down the aisle, closer towards her.

And then -- he realizes who it is.

His expression drops as the gravity of this moment hits him all at once.

OWEN

...Maddy?

FROM FAR DOWN THE PERPENDICULAR MEAT AISLE WE WATCH --

Owen rush towards Maddy and hug her. From this far distance his voice kind of blends with the electric hum of the store.

OWEN (CONT'D)
 Jesus, Maddy. Where... where have
 you been?

CLOSE ON MADDY --

She lets Owen hug her, but she doesn't hug back. The fear and concern grows in her eyes...

81 EXT. SUPERMARKET PARKING LOT - NIGHT 81

Owen leads Maddy across another empty parking lot. He walks slowly and glances back at her, as if he's scared that if he doesn't keep an eye on her at all times she'll disappear for another decade...

We're once again watching from far away, so the two of them are little more than specks. They're dwarfed by a billboard looming across the highway, advertising:

THE FUN CENTER. GRAND OPENING!

A state-of-the-art, Kid's Zone-style indoor entertainment complex.

MADDY (V.O.)
 I know a place on the edge of town.

82 OMITTED 82

83 EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - NIGHT 83

BLUE and RED lights from a cop car strobe silently out into the night, reflecting off looming forest.

MADDY (V.O.)
 It'll be safe for us to talk there.

SLOW DISSOLVE TO:

84 INT. DIVE BAR - NIGHT 84

One of this week's SPECIAL GUEST BANDS, playing on a small stage in a dank underground club.

They're draped in fog, in the midst of a moody, sad, sexy song.

LEAD SINGER
 (singing)
*I Saw the TV glow // Reflected in
 your eyes*

We watch the band play for awhile, hearing a decent chunk of their song.

LEAD SINGER (CONT'D)
*I heard the static // Until my ears
 were pierced.*

And the chorus:

LEAD SINGER (CONT'D)
*Night time // Night time // Day for
 night // Night time // Night time
 // Day for night.*

Eventually, we CUT TO:

A corner booth. Where Owen and Maddy sit across from each other, drinks in front of them.

ADULT OWEN
 --I just-- I really think you need
 to go to the police. They think
 you're dead, Maddy.

Maddy shrugs, fully non-committal.

MADDY
 I don't know. Sometime.

ADULT OWEN
 And you won't tell me where you've
 been for the past decade?

MADDY
 I'll tell you everything. I just --
 I need to ask you something first.

Owen is struggling here...

ADULT OWEN
 Does your mom know you're alive?

MADDY
 I need to ask you something first.

Owen sighs, giving in.

ADULT OWEN

Okay.

He leans back in the booth.

ADULT OWEN (CONT'D)

What do you need to ask me?

Maddy glances around the club, then looks back at Owen.

MADDY

Do you remember a TV show we used
to watch together?

She leans in a bit, gradually closing the booth space between them.

MADDY (CONT'D)

It was called... 'The Pink Opaque.'

Owen ruffles his brow. He pauses for a moment to process the question.

Then --

He laughs nervously, like the question is absurd.

ADULT OWEN

Of course I remember The Pink
Opaque, Maddy. It's my favorite TV
show of all time.

He looks her in the eye, as if recalling a blood pact they once took together:

ADULT OWEN (CONT'D)

Always will be.

Maddy stares at him, looking vaguely concerned.

Owen reminisces, a warmth entering his voice. This is his favorite subject.

ADULT OWEN (CONT'D)

I've got the complete series on
DVD. They've got a ride dedicated
to it now at One Universe Studios.
I'm saving up to go out there...

He smiles, thinking about this plan of his.

A long silence. Owen's smile fades a bit with the dead air.

He looks confused.

ADULT OWEN (CONT'D)
That's all you wanted to ask me? If
I remembered The Pink Opaque?

MADDY
No, I...

Maddy leans in closer.

MADDY (CONT'D)
I guess what I mean is... When you
think back on watching The Pink
Opaque... how do you remember it?

A beat. Owen blinks a few times.

ADULT OWEN
How do I remember it?

MADDY
Yeah...

Maddy bites her lip.

MADDY (CONT'D)
Do you remember it as just a TV
show?

She stares at Owen, studying his face as he processes her question.

The music in the club carries us briefly back...

85 INT. MADDY'S BASEMENT - NIGHT, 1998

85

...Into the past. Back into Maddy's basement, all those years ago. The song we heard in the goth club moments ago is now playing diegetically on the unseen TV screen.

Teenaged Maddy sits on a piano bench, facing a closed closet door on the other end of the basement, waiting for:

TEEN OWEN (O.S.)
(from the closet)
Okay. Okay I think I got it.

Owen is rustling around from inside the closet. Maddy waits for him on the other side of the door.

MADDY
 (singing his entrance
 music)
 Da da da duuuuum...

TEEN OWEN (O.S.)
 (from the closet)
 Stop it.

ADULT OWEN (V.O.)
 Yeah... I remember it as a TV show,
 Maddy.

Teen Owen opens the closet door. But before we can get a look at him, we return:

86

INT. DIVE BAR - NIGHT, 2006

86

To 2006. To Adult Owen and Maddy's conversation at the bar. Owen looks slightly alarmed at Maddy's strange question.

ADULT OWEN
 The Pink Opaque was a TV show...

He says it like he's trying to explain to a toddler that you need oxygen to breathe.

He looks from side-to-side, then back at Maddy.

ADULT OWEN (CONT'D)
 We watched it in your basement on Saturday nights. From 10:30 to 11pm. Remember? The last show before the young adult network switched to black-and-white reruns for the night.

Owen looks at Maddy like this is obvious. He's starting to sweat a little bit.

MADDY
 Yeah, but... Are you sure? Are you sure that's all it was?

FROM THE STAGE --

Our Special Guest Band continue their song.

LEAD SINGER
Night time // Night time // Were you up all night?

The music carries us back into:

87 INT. MADDY'S BASEMENT - NIGHT, 1998 87

Maddy's basement. The past.

As Teen Owen steps out of the closet. We see Maddy's expression before we see what she's looking at.

REVERSE ON:

OWEN, wearing the same prom dress we've seen Isabel from The Pink Opaque wearing a few times.

He's embarrassed. He doesn't know what to do with his eyes, so he just glances nervously around the room.

He finally works up the courage to look Maddy in the eye.

She stares back at him, meeting his gaze.

88 INT. DIVE BAR - NIGHT, 2006 88

Back in 2006. Owen is getting alarmed by Maddy's odd questions. Perhaps even oddly defensive...

ADULT OWEN

Is this some sort of joke? Because I--

MADDY

--No. It's not a joke. Listen: I know this might sound crazy, but...

She leans in even closer. There are just inches between them now.

MADDY (CONT'D)

When you think back on The Pink Opaque. When you remember watching it in my basement on Saturday nights from 10:30 to 11pm... do you ever get... confused? Like, maybe the memory isn't quite right?

Owen's heart is beating fast in his chest now.

There's something in his expression that almost resembles guilt. Like Maddy's verbalizing some secret he doesn't want spoken out loud.

The band on stage have finished their song now. There's only silence surrounding Owen as he responds to Maddy's escalating interrogations:

ADULT OWEN

What do you mean, "not quite right?"

MADDY

Like: does time ever seem like it's not moving normally? Like it's all out of whack?

Owen is taken aback, panicked.

ADULT OWEN

(stammering)

I... I, uh--

MADDY

Or do you ever have a hard time distinguishing between what happened in the show and what happened in real life? Like somehow the memories got jumbled around?

89 EXT. SUBURBAN STREETS - NIGHT, 1998

89

Teenage Owen and Maddy walk side-by-side down an abandoned suburban street, gently stepping over chalk drawings left out overnight on the pavement.

Owen's still wearing the prom dress. He's clearly equally terrified and exhilarated to be outside in it, even under the cover of darkness.

Maddy holds him by the hand, leading him down the street, past sleeping houses, deeper into the night...

ADULT OWEN (V.O.)

...Jumbled around?

90 INT. DIVE BAR - NIGHT, 2006

90

A NEW BAND sets up on stage now as Maddy speaks across the table to Owen, her voice full of determination.

MADDY

Shook up in your head. Like a snow globe.

Owen breathes heavy. We can hear that familiar asthmatic wheeze now entering his breath.

MADDY (CONT'D)

I'm trying to go slow. I don't want to alarm you.

ADULT OWEN

You're not alarming me. I just... maybe we should talk to somebody about this. The police, or my dad, or--

MADDY

No.

Maddy says it forcefully.

MADDY (CONT'D)

You can't tell anybody about this. Not like last time. You have to promise.

ADULT OWEN

I...

MADDY

(forcefully)

You have to promise.

She waits for him.

ADULT OWEN

Okay, Maddy. Jesus. I promise.

MADDY

I came a very long way to see you. And to ask you this...

FROM THE STAGE -- the NEW BAND, faces all painted in classic METAL MAKEUP, begin a heavy, satanic dirge.

ADULT OWEN

Will you just... will you tell me where you've been all these years?

MADDY

That's what I've been trying to tell you.

Maddy leans in closer towards him, her gaze intense.

Owen looks ghostly, as if he's terrified for what she's about to say.

MADDY (CONT'D)
I've been there.

A beat. Owen stares back at Maddy, all the color drained from his face.

MADDY (CONT'D)
Inside the show. Inside the Pink
Opaque...

CUT TO:

THE STAGE. Where the new band's intense dirge is building momentum. The LEAD SINGER screams at the top of their lungs into the microphone as we DISSOLVE and DESCEND back in time once again towards...

91 EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - NIGHT, 1998

91

Maddy leading Owen by the hand onto the high school football field.

They're lit by bright moonlight. Owen continues to walk slowly and reluctantly, nervous in the prom dress.

Maddy looks at Owen, then up into the night sky. Up towards the moon.

Owen looks up.

We hold on his expression.

MADDY
You see it too...

Maddy and Owen stand out there, alone on the football field, draped under the moon's strange glow.

And then finally, we reverse up towards:

MR. MELANCHOLY.

THE MAN IN THE MOON.

Grinning silently down at them, huge and imposing in the night sky.

MADDY (CONT'D)
...He's getting closer.

We push CLOSER and CLOSER in towards the moon.

Until he surrounds us. That sick, knowing grin...

He reaches his MOON ARMS out from the sides of the moon. And then --

He PULLS HIMSELF OUT FROM THE MOON.

POUNCING. Craters crumble into the cosmos behind him as he heads straight towards us.

ABRUPT CUT BACK TO:

92

EXT. DIVE BAR, BACK ALLEY - NIGHT, 2006

92

Adult Owen, as he comes bursting out through the backdoor of the dive bar. Out into the parking lot.

He grabs his car keys from his pocket and rushes towards his car.

Maddy exits the club too. She watches Owen as he unlocks his car door and opens it up in a state of panic.

She calls out to him from across the parking lot.

MADDY

I can't stay in this place much longer.

She sounds calm, confident and resigned.

MADDY (CONT'D)

I'm going back there.

Owen pauses by the car door. He doesn't get inside, but he also doesn't turn back to face Maddy.

MADDY (CONT'D)

...Do you remember how it ended?
The final episode?

Owen closes his eyes and winces, as if he doesn't want to remember.

Maddy continues to stare across the parking lot at his back, and calls to him one more time.

MADDY (CONT'D)

I'll be at the high school tomorrow night at midnight. I hope you'll come.

Owen gets inside the car and closes the door behind him.

Maddy stands still, just watching as Owen puts his car into reverse and then drives out of the parking lot.

93 OMITTED 93

94 INT. MADDY'S BATHROOM - MORNING, 1998 94

We're back in 1998. Back at Maddy's house, the morning after their night out on the football field.

Owen is hunched over the sink in Maddy's bathroom,

He's shirtless, desperately trying to scrub the PINK SYMBOL off the back of his neck.

He keeps scrubbing. It's almost entirely gone.

MADDY (V.O.)
It's time. We're ready.

95 OMITTED 95

96 INT. MADDY'S BASEMENT - MORNING, 1998 96

Owen zips up his sleeping bag into a ball. The nape of his neck is raw from his attempts to wash off the symbol.

He speaks to Maddy - who's over on the staircase in her usual spot - but doesn't look at her.

OWEN
...We?

MADDY
Pack as much as you can in your overnight bag next Saturday. You can't tell anyone we're leaving. Not your mom. Not anyone.

Maddy is sitting on the staircase, in her usual spot. The morning light casting shadows across her face.

Owen glances up from his work at her.

She looks resigned, deadly serious.

OWEN
Where will we go?

A long silence.

And then, finally, Maddy answers his question:

MADDY

We'll know where when we get there.

Owen turns back to his sleeping bag and continues his work on the floor, a world of conflict playing out silently in his expression.

CLOSE ON:

The prom dress he wore the night before, draped over the couch.

97 EXT. SUBURBAN BACKYARDS - MORNING, 1998 97

Now Owen walks slowly across backyards, sleeping bag tucked under his arms. Just like all those other Saturday mornings.

He looks like he's in a daze, a ghost sleepwalking in his own skin.

Slowly, he PICKS UP THE PACE, walking faster and faster.

Until he's sprinting. RUNNING as fast as he can across the endless sprawl of backyards.

As if he's trying to ESCAPE.

CUT TO:

98 EXT. JOHNNY LINK'S HOUSE - MORNING, 1998 98

Owen's outside another house now, RINGING THE DOORBELL repeatedly.

He KNOCKS loudly on the front door.

He's in a state of panic.

JOHNNY LINK'S MOM, 45, opens the front door and looks down in confusion at the pale kid on her front porch.

JOHNNY LINK'S MOM

...Owen?

A beat. Owen stares back at her, pale and panicked.

JOHNNY LINK'S MOM (CONT'D)

Johnny's not home, but--

TEEN OWEN

--You need to tell my dad. I've been lying to him.

He's speaking quickly. The woman on the other side of the door struggles to understand what is going on.

TEEN OWEN (CONT'D)

I've been pretending to sleep here while my mom's in the hospital. I need to be grounded.

JOHNNY LINK'S MOM

Slow down, honey. What--

TEEN OWEN

--Please. You have to tell my dad. I've been sneaking out. I've been planning to run away. I've been bad.

Owen is speaking quickly, as if in the midst of a panic attack. He hardly seems aware of his surroundings.

TEEN OWEN (CONT'D)

He'll be here soon, and you have to tell him. Please. I need to be grounded. You can't let me leave...

We stay close on Owen's face. On his desperate pleas for help.

99

EXT. OWEN'S HOUSE - EARLY MORNING, 2006

99

And then we're back a decade later.

As Adult Owen pulls his car into the driveway, finally arriving home from his night out with Maddy at the dive bar, just as the sun is beginning to rise.

He turns the car off but doesn't get out.

He lingers in the driver's seat, his head hung down towards the steering wheel, exhausted with the weight of it all.

100

INT. OWEN'S KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

100

The empty room is bathed in pre-dawn light. We can hear the faint sound of TELEVISION coming from the next room over.

INSERT SHOT:

An urn resting on a table near the hallway, alongside a framed picture of Brenda. A modest shrine to the departed.

Adult Owen lets himself into the house through the backdoor, still exhausted.

He listens to the sound of the nearby television drone, and then walks slowly through the kitchen.

101 INT. OWEN'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS 101

Frank, still looking sickly and weak with the advanced years, rests under blankets on the couch.

He's not watching TV. Instead, his eyes are peeled on Owen sneaking back into the house with the morning light.

Owen stops in the doorway, frozen under his father's gaze.

OWEN

Sorry, I... There was a problem
with the projector at the theater.
I had to stay late to fix it.

He sounds nervous and unsure of himself. He doesn't have anywhere near the conviction needed to sell this lie.

Owen waits for his father to respond to him.

Frank doesn't say anything. He just stares, his gaze weak but penetrating, full of anger and disgust.

We hold on Frank's gaze for several seconds -- that strange, otherworldly stare penetrating through us.

Owen looks around the room, uncomfortable, eager to break the silence..

OWEN (CONT'D)

Let me know if you need anything.
Okay. I'll be upstairs.

Owen turns and hurries up the staircase.

102 INT. OWEN'S HOUSE - NIGHT, 1996 102

We're briefly back in the 90s again, following behind Young Owen as he walks up the stairs and across the second floor of his house.

He heads down the hallway towards his bedroom.

103 INT. OWEN'S BEDROOM - MORNING, 2006

103

And just as quickly, we're back in 2006.

Adult Owen closes the door to his bedroom behind him. He leans against the door and exhales deeply, letting out what sounds like a decade of stress.

CUT TO:

Adult Owen crouching on the carpet in front of his opened bedroom closet.

He empties the contents of his old PILLOW CASE out onto the carpet. The one where he stored Maddy's homemade VHS tapes all those years ago.

The tapes are still in there, grown dusty and faded with time.

They fall from the pillowcase onto the carpet.

Owen sits in front of the collection of Pink Opaque tapes. He studies their labels: all of the different episodes and handwritten notes by Maddy.

He continues studying and surveying the collection.

And then, finally --

He looks up, directly at us.

At the camera.

ADULT OWEN

(narrating)

A little while after Maddy disappeared, she called me one more time. The night the last episode of The Pink Opaque aired.

104 INT. OWEN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT, 1998

104

Owen - his teenaged self once again - is laying in bed, trying and failing to sleep.

It's past his bedtime. 10:32, to be exact.

Owen stares at his bedside clock, feeling his weekly Saturday night FOMO.

THE PHONE RINGS.

Owen's eyes go wide. He shoots up in bed.

He grabs the phone off the receiver in his bedroom, as if acting on instinct. He manages to do it before even the second ring.

He holds the phone up to his ear.

TEEN OWEN
(quiet)
...Hello?

MADDY (O.S.)
(on the phone)
I think they're going to meet
again.

Owen's eyes go wide.

TEEN OWEN
Maddy where are you? The police
came here looking for you. They--

MADDY (O.S.)
(on the phone)
Isabel and Tara. They're going to
meet again. In real life.

The line clicks off on the other end. Owen pauses a moment, processing this.

KNOCK KNOCK.

Owen quickly hangs up the phone and shoots back down under the covers.

It's Frank at the door, suspicious about the phone call. He cracks the bedroom door open and peers inside.

TEEN OWEN
(acting asleep)
...Whaaat? Is it with binoculars?

A beat. Then:

Frank closes the door, satisfied at the incoherence of his son's sleep mumblings.

Owen stares up at the ceiling, wide awake and full of adrenaline.

He waits to hear his father walk down the hall and close his bedroom door. Then:

HE JUMPS OUT OF BED, on a mission.

105 EXT. OWEN'S BEDROOM - DAY, 2006 105

ADULT OWEN sits in front of the VHS collection.

He continues narrating to the camera.

ADULT OWEN
Isabel and Tara begin to notice
signs and portents...

106 INT. OWEN'S HOUSE, TOP FLOOR - NIGHT, 1998 106

Young Owen creeps across the top floor of his house, walking like a jewel thief past his father's room, then down a staircase.

He takes each step gently, afraid of each potential creak in the floorboards.

ADULT OWEN (V.O.)
Frogs in the water fountain. Locust
at the post office.

107 INT. OWEN'S LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER, 1998 107

Shrouded in darkness, Teen Owen opens the basement door and creeps down the stairs.

The clock on the stove nearby reads 10:36.

ADULT OWEN (V.O.)
Craters from the moon rain down
from the sky.

108 INT. OWEN'S BASEMENT - MOMENTS LATER, 1998 108

Owen kneels in front of the small CRT TV in his basement. He flips on the TV and quickly turns the dial to turn the sound down low.

He flips through channels manually on the TV itself, moving as fast as he possibly can, desperate to get to the episode.

And then...

109 INT. ISABEL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 109

We're inside it. Back in The Pink Opaque.

Isabel is sitting cross-legged on her bed. Her eyes closed. The symbol on the back of her neck glowing a BRIGHT, SUPERNATURAL PINK.

She speaks in her mind using her psychic powers, and we hear her in voice-over:

ISABEL (V.O.)
Mr. Melancholy is coming.

Tara answers from somewhere else...

TARA (V.O.)
He's already here. If we don't do something today--

110 INT. OWEN'S BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS, 1998 110

Owen walks backwards towards the couch, careful not to take his eyes off the screen for even a second.

TARA (V.O.)
(from screen)
--this world will be his.

111 EXT. DOCK BY THE LAKE - DAY 111

Now we're at camp, by the lake.

Isabel and Tara sit on the dock, levitating and communicating on "the psychic plane."

TARA
This psychic plane isn't enough anymore. If we're going to defeat him this time, we're going to need to harness the full potential of our shared powers. We're going to need to meet again... in person.

112 INT. OWEN'S BEDROOM - DAY, 2006 112

We're back with Adult Owen in front of the VHS tapes. He looks into the camera and continues to narrate the episode for us:

ADULT OWEN

Isabel protests, telling Tara: But that's impossible. We live on opposite ends of the county.

113 OMITTED 113

114 INT. OWEN'S BASEMENT - NIGHT, 1998 114

We hear Tara deliver her very dramatic next line from the unseen television:

TARA

Start running.

Teen Owen's face: oh shit.

We hear the show's score crescendo on the unseen screen, and then we hear a commercial for FROZEN PIZZA begin.

Now that the show is on break, Owen remembers where he is.

He glances anxiously around the room, from the screen up towards his basement door.

No sign of his father... Yet.

115 EXT. OWEN'S BEDROOM - DAY, 2006 115

Back with our narrator, back in 2006:

ADULT OWEN

When the show returned from its act break, Isabel had already arrived back at sleepaway camp.

116 EXT. CAMP GROUNDS - DAY FOR NIGHT 116

Isabel walks across the sprawling Capture the Flag field at her old sleepaway camp.

She's out of breath, as if she just ran all the way here.

She walks past empty bunks. She looks around, searching.

ISABEL

Tara? Tara?!

The door to her old bunk is hanging open. The door SLAMS over and over again with the wind.

Isabel looks inside the bunk from the porch. It's empty.
 It's a ghost camp. No one else around.
 But then, faintly, in the distance, Isabel hears something...

TARA (O.S.)
 Isabel?!

It's almost so quiet that it could be her imagination. Isabel stands there outside the bunk, listening to the wind.

TARA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 Isabel?!

There it is again, a little louder this time.

It's Tara.

She's calling from the distance, searching for Isabel like Isabel is searching for her.

117 INT. OWEN'S BASEMENT - NIGHT, 1998 117

Teen Owen moves slowly off the couch, once again careful not to take his eyes off the screen.

He gently picks up a nearby TELEPHONE off the receiver. He dials Star Sixty Nine.

He holds the phone up to his ear.

Before the first ring is over, Maddy answers.

She doesn't speak, but we can hear her breathing through the line.

They watch the episode together in silence.

ADULT OWEN (V.O.)
 Isabel follows the sound of Tara's voice. She finds her at the dock by the lake. The real lake. The place where they first spoke five seasons ago.

118 EXT. DOCK BY THE LAKE - DAY FOR NIGHT 118

Isabel approaches from the distance, hurrying, no time to waste.

She can see TARA sitting on the dock in the distance, waiting for her.

As Isabel rushes closer, Tara stands up to greet her friend.

119 INT. OWEN'S BEDROOM - DAY, 2006 119

Back with Adult Owen, our narrator:

ADULT OWEN

But then. As Isabel approaches, she picks something up...

120 EXT. DOCK BY THE LAKE - DAY FOR NIGHT 120

Back to the show. Tara stands in the distance, smiling and waiting for Isabel.

Isabel stops in her tracks, suddenly frozen.

ADULT OWEN (V.O.)

A stray signal from the psychic plane.

TARA (V.O.)

(quiet, sick)
Help me...

121 INT. OWEN'S BASEMENT - NIGHT, 1998 121

Teen Owen watches from his space on the floor, the phone still up to his ear. He's concerned. His breaths vaguely asthmatic.

122 INT. OWEN'S BEDROOM - DAY, 2006 122

ADULT OWEN

It's a desperate message from Tara.
The real Tara. She's buried underground, in terrible danger.

123 EXT. A GRAVE - DAY 123

A jarring and disturbing cut to:

Tara lying buried underground, covered in dirt, coughing violently.

Her pupils are dilated pure white, as if she's in the midst of an epileptic fit.

TARA
(dying)
Help me, Isabel... AGH.

She coughs again, spitting up a GNARLY BLUE LIQUID all over her lips and chin.

CUT TO:

124 EXT. DOCK BY THE LAKE - DAY FOR NIGHT 124

Isabel stands there, frozen, terrified of this vision of Tara she's just had.

ADULT OWEN (V.O.)
Mr. Melancholy had got to her first.

125 INT. OWEN'S BASEMENT - NIGHT, 1998 125

Teen Owen breathes asthmatically into the phone, his eyes wide. We can hear Maddy breathing back on the other end.

TEEN OWEN
(to himself, into phone)
It's a trap...

He lets the phone drift from his ear, lowering it down towards the carpet as he continues to watch the unseen screen.

126 EXT. DOCK BY THE LAKE - DAY FOR NIGHT 126

We push in closer towards Tara. She stands waiting for Isabel on the dock.

But as we get closer, we realize:

It's not Tara. It's MR. MELANCHOLY, dressed up in Tara's clothes.

We see his gnarled, grinning, powdered white face for just a moment before we REVERSE BACK ON;

ISABEL, as she's grabbed by Mr. Melancholy's henchmen Marco and Polo (those monsters with the crescent-moon heads who we saw earlier).

MARCO

Marco.

POLO

Polo.

Isabel struggles against their grasp as they begin to drag her away.

MADDY (V.O.)

(from the phone)

What...

127 INT. OWEN'S BASEMENT - NIGHT, 1998 127

We can hear Maddy's voice faintly from the phone receiver by Owen's side.

MADDY (V.O.)

(from the phone)

What did they do to Tara?

But Owen's too invested in Isabel's struggles on screen to respond.

128 EXT. CAMP GROUNDS - EARLY EVENING 128

Our MOON HENCHMEN are hard at work digging a hole in the ground in the middle of a field.

ADULT OWEN (V.O.)

They dig a hole in the ground. They cut out her heart.

129 INT. CAMP DINING HALL - EARLY EVENING 129

Now the Moon Men carry a STILL BEATING HEART across the dining hall.

One holds open a LARGE STORAGE FREEZER. They place the heart inside next to one already in there, also still beating.

ACROSS THE ROOM:

Isabel is incapacitated now, tied with rope to a chair near the dining hall serving area, and barely conscious. There's a bunch of blood on her shirt in the area where her heart was just removed.

Marco and Polo are forcing a straw between her lips.

ADULT OWEN (V.O.)
They feed her the Luna Juice.

They coax the confused Isabel to take a sip of juice from their oversized LUNA JUICE JUICEBOX.

She struggles a little bit, confused, but lets the BLUE GOO travel from the straw into her mouth; lets it dribble down her chin.

She struggles to return to consciousness, the world a haze around her as:

Mr. Melancholy emerges from the shadows of the dining hall like a mob boss waiting in the wings for his henchmen to complete their work.

Then - he kneels calmly in front of his incapacitated prisoner.

MR. MELANCHOLY
Don't fight it. Let my poison work its magic. You're going to love the Midnight Realm - it's a wonderful prison.

Isabel continues struggling, but a little less hard. We can tell that she's fading.

MR. MELANCHOLY (CONT'D)
Shh. It's okay. Soon you won't remember anything. You won't even remember... that you're dying.

He grins big. He can't help but giggle.

Isabel has just a little bit of struggle left in her. She writhes and fights against the Moon Men's grasp. And then:

Her body goes limp.

130 EXT. CAMP GROUNDS - NIGHT

130

The Moon Men shovel dirt, filling in the fresh grave they've just dug.

ADULT OWEN (V.O.)
They bury her alive.

CUT TO:

Isabel's body TUMBLING over dirt, down into the Earth.

NOTE: the sound of her body falling mirrors exactly the first sound we heard in the film.

CUT TO:

A wide shot, peering down into the open grave.

WE ZOOM SLOWLY IN TOWARDS:

ISABEL.

Her eyes are wide open and blank, dilated pure white and frozen in terror like Tara's were earlier.

Her mouth, cheeks, and chin are CAKED WITH DRY BLUE VOMIT.

She's lying stiff, staring straight up into the night sky as dirt is shoveled over her body.

She's vacant, as if her mind is somewhere else, somewhere far from this body currently being buried alive.

ADULT OWEN (V.O.)

And then...

We keep pushing down closer and closer towards Isabel. Until suddenly...

WE CUT TO BLACK.

131 INT. OWEN'S BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS, 1998 131

We're back in the basement with Owen, staring with him at the BLACK TV SCREEN.

An end credit appears on the screen:

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

Josh Pemberton

Owen struggles to breath, traumatized by this ending, as we hold on the TV screen.

132 INT. OWEN'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT, 1998 132

Upstairs now.

The clock above the oven reads 11:01.

All is still and quiet in the house after dark. Until suddenly, we hear:

THE SOUND OF GLASS SHATTERING. It's loud and abrupt, and over as quickly as it started.

Then -- the sound of a bedroom door opening upstairs, and someone running down the unseen stairs.

FRANK rushes through the living room. He throws open the door to the basement and quickly descends the stairs.

CUT TO:

133 INT. OWEN'S BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS 133

Owen's head is literally INSIDE THE TELEVISION, his body hanging out from it, propped up on the carpet.

Smoke rises from the broken set.

It appears Owen has smashed the screen with his head. He's now unconscious inside the screen.

Frank rushes down the staircase. He works to pull his son out from inside the TV screen.

At first Owen's body is limp and unmoving.

Then, as his father pulls him out, Owen shows signs of life again. And instinctively, he begins to struggle.

He flails his arms around. He tries to hold himself inside the TV screen, clutching for the edges of the set.

But Frank is bigger than Owen, and is easily able to pull his son out from inside.

Owen's head emerges from inside, and once again he GASPS and WHEEZES loudly, as if in the midst of both an asthma and panic attack. It's like some sick parody of a home birth.

ON THE SOUNDTRACK: The sound of a SHOWER turning on.

134 INT. OWEN'S BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER, 1998 134

Frank runs the water as hot as he can.

He holds his son's body over the steam, forcefully positioning Owen to breath it in.

Owen is still GASPING AND STRUGGLING AND WHEEZING VIOLENTLY. His breathes are basically CRIES OF ANGUISH. He's lost all control of his body.

Frank's eyes are stern and resolved. He tries to hold his son up, tries to get him to breathe again.

Owen struggles against his father's grip, trying to break free.

He continues to CRY AND GASP.

He barely has a voice, but he tries to scream:

TEEN OWEN
THIS ISN'T MY HOME! THIS ISN'T MY
HOME!

His eyes dart around the room, red and wet and terrified.

IN THE DISTANCE -- the sound of an ambulance approaching.

Frank holds his son in place, trying to get him to breathe. Owen keeps thrashing and wheezing and crying.

TEEN OWEN (CONT'D)
YOU'RE NOT MY FATHER!

Frank just holds his son firm.

Owen GASPS and HEAVES, as if he's about to throw up.

And then:

He PROJECTILE VOMITS.

But what comes out doesn't look like vomit.

It looks like soil.

Spewed out across the shower floor.

Dirt - brown and thick and wet, as if it was just dug up fresh from the ground and somehow inserted into the pit of Owen's stomach.

We only get a brief glimpse of the soil as it escapes from Owen's lips. Then we abruptly:

CUT TO BLACK.

And we hold on the silence and darkness for awhile.

...

..

.

MADDY (V.O.)
I made it all the way to Phoenix on
the money I'd saved.

A pause.

MADDY (V.O.)
The trees looked different. But
everything else was exactly the
same.

FADE UP ON:

Maddy's TELEVISION, burning in the front yard, flames rising
into the night sky.

CUT TO:

135 INT. OWEN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT, 2006 135

Adult Owen stares at his reflection in his bedroom mirror.

We're back in 2006. Maddy's old VHS tapes are still scattered
across the carpet of Owen's room.

Owen throws on a t-shirt. He looks at himself with
uncertainty and then --

He climbs out of his open bedroom window.

136 EXT. OWEN'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS 136

We watch from across the street as Owen tries to gently
descend from the second story of his house, dropping down
into the grass.

The pavement of the road ahead is lined with those familiar
PINK AND PURPLE CHALK DRAWINGS.

MADDY (V.O.)
I started using a new name.
Sleeping at the cheapest hostel I
could find.

137 INT. OWEN'S CAR - NIGHT 137

Owen drives slowly down quiet streets in his town. He looks
unsure of himself, like a big part of him wants to just turn
back around.

He glances in his rearview mirror and notices --

A CREEPY MAN, 50, standing in his front yard at a workbench, eyes on Owen's car as it passes.

138 EXT. HIGH SCHOOL PARKING LOT - NIGHT 138

Owen is the only one parked in the lot here at midnight at his old high school.

He sits in the silent darkness of the front seat, as if trying to run the clock out on this night. He doesn't want to face what he's about to face.

But he knows he has to.

He opens the door and steps out into the parking lot.

He walks slowly towards the high school.

MADDY (V.O.)
"The Pink Opaque" was over.

139 EXT. SCHOOL BACK ENTRANCE - NIGHT 139

Owen walks a dark pathway around the perimeter of the school.

MADDY (V.O.)
I got a job at the mall. At "Build-A-Bear," filling the dolls up with stuffing.

He's looking for Maddy, but she's nowhere to be found.

Something catches his eye:

A DOOR propped open, leading into the school.

The glass of the door has been BROKEN, shards across the grass and pavement.

Owen steps carefully over the glass, and then lets himself into the school.

MADDY (V.O.)
I had got out of that town. That place I knew would kill me if I stayed. But there was something still wrong. Wronger, even.

ON THE SOUNDTRACK:

The WHEEZE of MECHANICAL BREATHING, like oxygen being pumped.

It's coming from far away.

MADDY (V.O.)

Time wasn't right. It was moving too fast. And then I was 19. And then I was 20.

140 INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

140

Owen walks slowly down the dark hallway.

MADDY (V.O.)

I felt like on of those dolls. Asleep in the supermarket. Stuffed. And then I was 21. Like chapters skipped over on a DVD.

He's headed towards that OXYGEN SOUND. It's rhythmic and powerful, like the sound of a giant respirator.

It's coming from down the hall. From the gym...

MADDY (V.O.)

I said to myself, "This isn't normal." "*This isn't normal.*" "This isn't how life is supposed to feel."

141 INT. HIGH SCHOOL GYMNASIUM - MOMENTS LATER

141

Owen enters the doorway to the gymnasium and stares out at:

AN INFLATABLE PLANETARIUM.

It's a huge plastic dome taking up the entire basketball court, towering high over the bleachers.

It's plugged into the wall, slowly rising towards the ceiling. That respirator sound we've been hearing has been the oxygen machine powering its inflation.

Owen stares ahead.

There's a little light up pixel tunnel connected to the dome that one has to crawl through to get inside.

MADDY (V.O.)

I thought about running away again. About moving to Sante Fe and changing my name one more time.

(MORE)

MADDY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

But I knew that everywhere would be just the same. I had seen how it ended.

We descend into the darkness of the tunnel...

MADDY (V.O.)

I knew where I was.

142 INT. INFLATABLE PLANETARIUM TUNNEL - NIGHT

142

Now Owen crawls through the tunnel. It's been designed for kids half his size, so he has to struggle to make it through. PIXELS flash as Owen crawls.

MADDY (V.O.)

A little bit after my 22nd birthday, I paid this burnout kid who would always hit on me in the food court fifty dollars to bury me alive.

AHEAD, near the end of the tunnel, Owen can see the shimmering glow of the artificial NIGHT SKY.

MADDY (V.O.)

I mean, he didn't know he was burying me alive, but I doubt he would've cared too much even if he did.

He continues to crawl through this portal, clawing desperately forward until he spots:

Maddy, waiting for him in the distance, looking melancholy and lonely.

143 INT. INFLATABLE PLANETARIUM - CONTINUOUS

143

Later now. We've caught up to Maddy's monologue we've been listening to in voiceover.

It's romantic in here, like a pillow fort or the inside of a snow castle you built as a kid after a blizzard.

FAKE STARS shimmer across the inner walls of the planetarium. The FAKE NIGHT SKY glows with a dark blue warmth.

Maddy stands in front of the electric-powered night sky. This is her campfire.

She stares ahead, past the camera, continuing her story:

MADDY

I dug a hole. I bought a coffin. I got inside and I closed the lid.

Her monologue continues as she paces through the space, telling Owen her scary story.

MADDY (CONT'D)

I told myself: this is crazy. *What you're doing is crazy.* But another part of me knew that it wasn't. That it was survival. And that I didn't have much time. That what felt like years in this world was actually just seconds.

MADDY (CONT'D)

And so I waited. And then, finally... the first spadeful of dirt hit the top of the box. And then another. And then another.

MADDY (CONT'D)

I sang songs to myself. I counted to ten thousand without skipping any numbers. I pissed and I shit my pants, and I forced my mouth to produce whatever saliva I could muster just so I'd have something to drink.

MADDY (CONT'D)

I screamed as loud as I could for help, and I apologized for the whole thing. I begged God for someone to come along and save me. I tried and tried to claw my way out. But that burnout guy from the mall had packed the dirt in too tight. Just like I'd asked him to do.

MADDY (CONT'D)

And then, after I don't know how long, I felt myself... start to leave myself. It was like I was watching myself on a TV all the way across the room. And I was moving further and further away from the screen, until the screen was so small that I couldn't even see myself anymore.

We reverse back on:

OWEN, sitting there on the ground in the inflatable planetarium, transfixed by Maddy's story, watching her with the same fascination he used to watch The Pink Opaque with.

MADDY (CONT'D)

And then I was clawing my way up out of the ground. And then I was at the surface, gasping for air, rain pouring down on me. Thunder and lightning. And I was finally back there... Back at sleepaway camp.

ON OWEN ONCE AGAIN -- he furrows his brow. He doesn't move.

MADDY (CONT'D)

And just like I was waking up from a bad dream -- that whole life, that whole reality where I was "Maddy Wilson," it drifted away. A brief hallucination that after a few moments I could hardly even remember. All those memories that felt so real at the time, washed away with the rain back at our old sleepaway camp. And I was me. I was finally me again. And it was the season six premiere.

She sets the flashlight gently down on the ground and crouches. She continues speaking to Owen.

MADDY (CONT'D)

I tried searching for you, but Mr. Melancholy had covered his tracks too well. I knew you were buried somewhere close by, but I didn't know where. And your signal -- that signal I used to be able to close my eyes and feel so vividly -- it was nowhere. I wasn't picking up anything from the psychic plane.

ON OWEN:

He's starting to look frightened as the true weight of what Maddy is telling him is beginning to sink in.

MADDY (CONT'D)

I found my heart...

Maddy continues, nearing the end of her story now.

MADDY (CONT'D)

Isabel, Oh my God I found your heart too. And it was still beating, stored indefinitely in a... in an industrial freezer.

She trails off briefly, her voice breaking with the trauma of it all.

MADDY (CONT'D)

I left our hearts there because I knew I wasn't done. And I found Mr. Melancholy's cauldron. I found the Luna Juice he used to send us to the Midnight Realm, and I drank a big sip straight out from the ladle. And I lay back down on the ground and I waited to fall back asleep.

Owen looks stunned, his eyes nearly popping from his sockets.

MADDY (CONT'D)

I knew I needed to come back to this place. I knew I needed to come back and save you.

ADULT OWEN

Maddy...

Maddy stares back at him. Her voice is resolved, a little angry even.

MADDY

That's not my name.

Owen stares at her, quiet once again.

MADDY (CONT'D)

And I haven't told you anything tonight that you don't already know.

Maddy stares resolutely at him.

MADDY (CONT'D)

Tell me. Tell me you know it's true.

OWEN

I...

Owen looks guilty, as if he knows she's right, but can't bring himself to admit it.

MADDY

You told me yourself you felt it.

Owen remains silent for a long time.

MADDY (CONT'D)

What he put inside us that night in
the dining hall.

ADULT OWEN

This...

He shakes his head.

ADULT OWEN (CONT'D)

This is insane.

He struggles with his memories:

ADULT OWEN (CONT'D)

I remember -- I remember playing in
the snow. Driving to baseball games
with my dad. Cooking with my mom.

MADDY

Those memories were put there to
distract you. To keep you trapped.

Owen winces, squeezing his eyes shut, trying to search his
brain to figure out if this is true.

ADULT OWEN

This isn't the Midnight Realm,
Maddy. It's just the suburbs.

He says it like he's trying to convince himself it's true.

Maddy just glares ahead at him, resolved.

MADDY

I told you. That's not my name.

Her voice is firm, urgent.

MADDY (CONT'D)

And we need to go back down into
the soil. Tonight.

ON OWEN - pale and terrified. But we can see in his eyes that
Maddy's words have cut into him. He can't unhear them.

MADDY (CONT'D)

You don't have much time.

144 INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - LATER

144

Maddy leads Owen slowly down the school hallway, back in the direction they came.

MADDY (V.O.)
I've got everything ready.

Owen's walking slowly. He's sweating. Terrified, almost out of his body.

MADDY (V.O.)
That spot behind the football field. Where the stoners used to get high after school.

As Owen walks past his old lunch room, he fleetingly glances through the doors into the empty cafeteria.

He sees the tables, all broken down for the night once again, turned upside down like turtles stuck on their shells.

The lunch room passes by his periphery as he keeps walking. He continues to follow behind Maddy.

MADDY (V.O.)
No one will find us there.

145 EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - NIGHT

145

Now Owen and Maddy walk side-by-side across the football field, headed towards the goal post out in the distance.

Owen is walking really slowly, like a man headed to the gallows.

He's sweating, ghost white, breathing heavily. Each new yard line on the football field brings him closer to his destiny.

Maddy glances back at him.

MADDY
Come on.

She looks at him, and notices his terror.

MADDY (CONT'D)
I know it's scary. That's part of it.

She keeps walking.

ADULT OWEN

Tara...

Maddy looks back at him once again, happy he's finally called her by her real name.

OWEN

(softly, mumbling)

The Drain Lord. Like the Drain Lords...

Maddy stares at Owen for a few silent seconds, the two of them alone out here in the middle of the football field.

Then -- Owen continues to mumble to himself, like a flurry of ideas are turning over in his head.

OWEN (CONT'D)

It's not real if I don't think about it. It's not real if I don't think about it.

MADDY

Isabel...

Alarm registers on Maddy's face for just a moment before --

Owen ATTACKS.

Very suddenly POUNCING and PUSHING Maddy over onto the grass.

She lands with a thud, and Owen loses his balance too, landing just next to her.

He's quick up to his feet. He pushes against the dirt and grass of the field, struggling to stand.

He kicks up mud and RUNS FOR HIS LIFE.

He sprints across the football field, running as fast as he can, trying desperately to get away from Maddy.

Maddy stands back up, but doesn't chase after Owen.

She just watches him run away.

146

EXT. SCHOOL PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

146

Owen tears through the parking lot. He digs his car keys out of his pockets, hands shaking.

He frantically unlocks his car door and jumps inside.

He SLAMS the door shut --

147 INT. OWEN'S CAR - CONTINUOUS 147

And struggles to fit the car keys into the ignition. His hands are still shaking, as if they have a life of their own.

He finally manages it. He turns the keys to start the engine and quickly shifts into DRIVE.

But before he peels away, he can't help it --

He glances up through the windshield, out into the distant night...

Back towards THE FOOTBALL FIELD.

Maddy is waiting for him there at the near end of the field. Just under the goalpost.

She's not chasing after him or calling out to him or anything dramatic. She's just staring out at him, watching with unsurprised disappointment as:

Owen speeds out of the parking lot, high-tailing it out of there.

148 OMITTED 148

149 EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - NIGHT 149

Owen drives through his town at night, trying to calm down

Even though it's the middle of the night, the owners of each house on this street are STANDING OUT ON THEIR FRONT LAWNS, staring blankly at Owen's car as he drives by.

ADULT OWEN (V.O.)
I locked myself inside. I didn't
leave the house for days.

150 OMITTED 150

151 INT. OWEN'S HOUSE - NIGHT 151

Owen rushes through the front door and bolts the lock behind him.

He leans against the door, still breathing heavy. He closes his eyes, relieved to be back home.

He looks towards the couch, expecting to see his father there waiting for him like always in the living room.

But he's gone. There's no one there - just a pile of blankets.

152 INT. OWEN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

152

Maddy's VHS TAPES are still spread out on the carpet floor of Owen's bedroom.

Owen stands by the window, looking out into the streetlit suburban night. He clutches a pillow close to his chest for comfort.

ADULT OWEN (V.O.)

I kept waiting for her to show back up.

It's like he's barricaded himself in there as he waits for his final showdown with Maddy to begin.

As he waits, he turns and narrates to the camera, as if finishing the thought we've just heard him express in voice-over:

ADULT OWEN

...But she never did. I never saw her again.

153 EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - MORNING

153

The sun rises on the empty football field. It's returned to calm. No sign of anyone nearby.

AND DOWN BELOW --

In that dark, weed-infested field below the football field, QUIET as well.

There's a HOLE dug deep into the ground, and a pile of dirt nearby. But it hasn't been filled back in.

A grave, open indefinitely.

ADULT OWEN (V.O.)

After a few days, I returned to work.

154 EXT. MOVIE THEATER PARKING LOT - DAY 154

The wide open sprawl of the movie theater parking lot.
Shopping carts idling between cars.

We're watching from near the highway. All the way across the lot we can see a GAGGLE OF SENIOR CITIZENS queued up at the box office to buy tickets.

ADULT OWEN (V.O.)

I kept waiting for her to show up
and surprise me one night while I
was cleaning the theater. To kidnap
me and take me back to the football
field. To force me underground.

155 INT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT 155

Owen sweeps up after a screening in the movie theater,
tossing out soda cups into a trash bag and picking up empty
candy boxes from the floor.

He glances behind him into the empty theater, almost
expecting to see Maddy waiting for him in a seat.

But it's just him in here. The theater is empty.

ADULT OWEN (V.O.)

I told myself she was an escaped
mental patient. That the whole
thing had been some deranged
fantasy she'd constructed. That I
had just nearly escaped the most
gruesome fate imaginable.

Owen continues to lifelessly sweep and clean, silhouetted
against the blank movie theater screen.

He turns to the camera and narrates:

ADULT OWEN

Other times I told myself she had
never even been real. That Maddy
Wilson never actually existed. That
she was just some imaginary friend
I'd made up a long time ago.

156 EXT. SUBURBAN STREETS - EARLY EVENING 156

A BRIEF MONTAGE OF THREE SUBURBAN STREETS we've seen before
throughout the film.

The pavement on each has been tagged with those familiar pink and purple CHALK SCRIBBLINGS.

But there's something different about the final drawing we see. Below those familiar intersecting scribbles someone has scrawled some text as well.

There in the pavement, big and bold, scrawled in messy handwritten pink:

THERE IS STILL TIME

Left there like a reminder for the viewer.

And out in the distance:

MADDY, her back to us, chalk in hand, inconspicuous in a hoodie, walking away from this place.

ADULT OWEN (V.O.)

The movie theater closed the next Fall. I got a job at the Fun Center across town.

157

EXT. OWEN'S HOUSE - DAY

157

Owen lugs an OLD, BULKY CRT TV out to the curb, leaving it for the garbagemen.

ADULT OWEN (V.O.)

My father passed away in 2010 after his second stroke.

WE DISSOLVE TO:

A time-lapse of the same shot. It's now ANOTHER DAY, further into the future.

Two DELIVERY MEN carry a big box up to the doorstep.

A FRESH NEW FLATSCREEN TV.

ADULT OWEN (V.O.)

I decided to stay in the house. The idea of living somewhere else just didn't seem worth it. I'm a real adult now. A homeowner.

Owen opens the front door. He drags his new television inside, but pauses to narrate directly to camera before doing so:

ADULT OWEN

I've even got a family of my own. I
love them more than anything.

He closes the door behind him, leaving us alone out here in
the quiet, peaceful suburban morning.

After awhile, we DISSOLVE TO:

158 EXT. FIRE PIT - NIGHT 158

Owen, still alone at the fire pit we saw him set up all the
way at the beginning of the film.

The flames are dying down now, but still Owen sits here in
silent reflection, as if the whole film has been a memory
playing inside his head.

He exhales softly, then digs inside his backpack for a JUG OF
WATER. He pours it out over the fire, immediately
extinguishing the only light left in the forest.

159 EXT. WOODS - NIGHT 159

Owen stomps through the pitch black woods, headed back in the
same direction he came from.

After awhile, he turns his gaze from the path ahead and LOOKS
DIRECTLY INTO THE CAMERA, becoming our narrator one more
time:

ADULT OWEN

Anyway, like I was saying: the
other night it was raining and I
couldn't sleep, so I started The
Pink Opaque again.

CUT TO:

160 INT. OWEN'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 160

Owen is laying on his couch, searching on a streaming
platform on his fancy new 60-inch HD TV.

ADULT OWEN (V.O.)

It's available to stream now. You
don't even need a disc.

Owen scrolls through the episode listings on a streaming
platform interface. Eventually, he chooses episode 204:

"The Curse of Mr. Swirly."

A brief loading icon appears on the flat screen.

And the episode begins.

REVERSE ON:

Owen, lying on the living room couch, looking a lot like his father used to look splayed out there, staring blankly ahead at some old TV show.

He looks terrible. White as a ghost, gaunt, weak.

Near death, honestly.

He's gently wheezing with each breath as he stares ahead at the screen.

ADULT OWEN (V.O.)
I started the Pink Opaque again,
and it was nothing like I
remembered it.

REVERSE ON:

The TELEVISION SCREEN.

NOTE: This is the first time we've actually seen The Pink Opaque playing on a screen (rather than cutting into it in full-screen).

IN THE SHOW, a group of KIDS run down a suburban street being chased by SOMEONE.

ADULT OWEN (V.O.)
The whole thing felt cheesy. And
cheap. Dated, and not scary at all.

The scene on television cuts to:

ISABEL - but NOT OUR ISABEL (another actress, who looks similar) shouting at MR. SWIRLY in his evil, plastic ice cream helmet.

FAKE ISABEL
(on television)
Hey - Mr. Ice Cream Man!

The scene is shot from an awkward mid-length. Suddenly, The Pink Opaque feels less like cinema and more like a shitty 90s TV show.

FAKE ISABEL (CONT'D)
 Stop turning my friends into
 Popsicle sticks!

We reverse on MR. SWIRLY, who seems a lot less imposing in this version of the show.

MR. SWIRLY
 But I'm so lonely. I have nothing
 to do all winter.

Back to Fake Isabel. She thinks for a few seconds, and then with the DING of an unseen lightbulb, she gets an IDEA.

FAKE ISABEL
 I know... In the wintertime, don't
 sell ice cream... just sell soup
 instead!

She raises her hands into frame and shows Mr. Swirly a fresh, hot CUP OF CHOWDER.

REVERSE BACK ON:

Owen, on the couch, watching this garbage.

MR. SWIRLY (O.S.)
 (from the television,
 suddenly happy)
 Why didn't I think of that?

Owen is barely conscious.

FAKE ISABEL (O.S.)
 (from the television)
 Let's all have a soup party!

GROUP OF KIDS (O.S.)
 Yaaay! Soup party!!

OWEN (V.O.)
 I just felt embarrassed.

Owen takes each breath like it's his last. A slow death rattle.

RISING ON THE SOUNDTRACK --

A cacophony of BLEEPS and BLOOPS, as if from an arcade...

A giant, windowless cavern of arcade games and flashing lights. A cacophony of antiseptic neon - an epileptic's nightmare, like if the ninth circle of hell was a Dave and Buster's.

We cut between shots of gameplay at the chic arcade.

We see:

-KIDS in birthday hats, all playing SKEEBALL, one after another, straight down in a line.

When someone gets a ball in a hole, bells RING from the skeeball machine, and it lights up with FLASHING NEON.

-NEON LIGHTS inside another machine whip around in a circle from one bulb to the next. A KID slams his fist down on a BIG RED BUTTON, trying to stop the speeding light in just the right spot to win a prize.

-A KID playing a horror-themed PINBALL MACHINE. The machine clinking and clanking and dinging wildly...

CLOSE ON: The animation screen at the head of the pinball machine. It's old school -- just monochrome yellow graphics against a black background.

ON THE SCREEN -

A lo-fi rendering of Mr. Melancholy, laughing. His image toggles from left to right as if he's just been hit by a pinball.

PINBALL MR. MELANCHOLY
(from the machine)
Ha. Ha. Ha. You got me. Ha. Ha. Ha.
You got me.

Mr. Melancholy's mechanical laugh transitions us into our next shot:

A CLOSE-UP on Owen's face, pale and sickly. He looks exhausted and frightened.

We're across the floor of the arcade, with Owen now as he loads up a TOKEN MACHINE with TOKENS.

He's still wheezing as he works, just like back on his couch. It's like his whole life these days is one long, slowly encroaching asthma attack.

But still he works through it. He's got a "Fun Center" vest on, along with a nametag.

He uses a box cutter to open up a cardboard box of token rolls, then, with his HANDS SHAKING all the while, he rips one roll of tokens open to load into the machine.

But before he can successfully load the tokens in --

He WHEEZES HARSHLY and accidentally drops the opened roll of token across the carpeted arcade floor.

From behind his back:

CHILDREN'S LAUGHTER.

A group of pre-teen kids are eavesdropping and making fun of him.

Owen weakly grabs for his ASTHMA INHALER in his vest pocket.

He shakes it, then attempts to take a PUFF. But it doesn't work:

The inhaler is JAMMED, no longer working.

He shakes it again and tries once more. But it's futile. The asthma inhaler is long broken, now. A stop-gap solution that no longer works...

TITLE ON SCREEN:

2016

ON THE SOUNDTRACK: hysterical, rapturous laughter:

162

INT. THE FUN CENTER - DAY

162

A little later. Now the BIRTHDAY BOY (who we know is the Birthday Boy because he's wearing a big hat that says "Birthday Boy" on it) laughs hysterically from inside:

A BIG, CLEAR BOX. Like a see-through plastic coffin propped up vertically into the air.

He gasps and screams and laughs as he grabs at COLORED PAPER MONEY blowing around wildly in a windstorm inside the box.

It's a game: grab what you can before the wind slows down.

The Birthday Boy continues to grab and flail wildly, his cheeks flapping in the wind as he tries to clutch the colored bills whipping by.

His FAMILY and FRIENDS cheer him on as neon lights blink all around. Everyone's laughing and screaming, on a collective sugar high.

REVERSE ON:

Owen, watching from the other side of the room, still wheezing, but trying to hold himself together. He looks like a living corpse -- gaunt and old, yet somehow still young at the same time.

163 INT. THE FUN CENTER - DAY 163

Now Owen stumbles with the crowd near the back of a line of FUN CENTER EMPLOYEES.

The MAN at the head of the line is carrying a BIRTHDAY CAKE, candles already lit and burning.

We track behind Owen as he follows his co-workers, zig-zagging past the web of games and machines on the arcade floor.

The Fun Center team burst through a door, entering into a new room:

164 EXT. THE FUN CENTER, BIRTHDAY ROOM - CONTINUOUS 164

Where a PIZZA PARTY is underway, crust drying out on paper plates while KIDS laugh in their seats and PARENTS gossip in the corner.

FUN CENTER EMPLOYEES
(singing)
*Happy birthday to you. Happy
birthday to you.*

Owen is singing with them, but he looks like he's not even sure where he is, like this whole thing is a dream he's sleepwalking through.

The employee with the cake sets it down in front of the Birthday Boy.

FUN CENTER EMPLOYEES (CONT'D)
(singing)
Happy birthday, dear Charlie.

Owen stops singing in the middle of this line, as if he's just had a flash of *deja vu*.

FUN CENTER EMPLOYEES (CONT'D)
 (singing)
Happy birthday to you.

Everyone laughs and claps as the song ends. Then --

ADULT OWEN
 AGGGGHH!!!

Everyone in the room is immediately silent as Owen lets out a blood-curdling SCREAM.

They all look at him. He's standing in the corner, looking confused and terrified.

ADULT OWEN (CONT'D)
 You need to help me! You need to
 help me!! I'M DYING!! I'M DYING
 RIGHT NOW!!

He gasps and wheezes and looks around the room at the faces staring at him.

They're all smiling vacantly and staring blankly ahead, like robots powered down.

Owen blinks a few times, then feels embarrassed for his outburst.

ADULT OWEN (CONT'D)
 I'm sorry. I'm fine. I don't know
 what came over me.

He looks at the blank faces for approval.

After a few seconds, life slowly returns to the room. The kids all look at each other and continue to joke around like nothing happened. The parents start gossiping again over by the pizza boxes.

Owen looks around the room, his face still ghost white and damp with sweat.

Suddenly, his co-workers start CLAPPING and SINGING in unison:

FUN CENTER EMPLOYEES
 (singing)
*For he's a jolly good fellow // For
 he's a jolly good fellow...*

Owen doesn't sing with them. He stands frozen in front of some doilies, that look of PANIC returning to his face...

FUN CENTER EMPLOYEES (CONT'D)
*For he's a jolly good fellow, which
nobody--*

ADULT OWEN
TARA!!! TARA I'M SORRY!!

Everyone freezes and quiets down again. All eyes are on Owen as he has another very loud and very public breakdown:

ADULT OWEN (CONT'D)
YOU NEED TO SAVE ME. PLEASE COME
SAVE ME!!

And once again, Owen tries to control himself, looking around the room at everyone staring, feeling a sudden burst of shame.

ADULT OWEN (CONT'D)
I'm sorry. Ignore me. I--

He KEELS OVER and HEAVES VIOLENTLY.

ADULT OWEN (CONT'D)
MOMMY?!! MOMMY?!!!

CUT TO:

165 INT. THE FUN CENTER - DAY 165

One of Owen's COLLEAGUES knocks on the bathroom door, then calls inside.

FUN CENTER MANAGER
You okay in there, buddy?

166 INT. THE FUN CENTER, BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS 166

The sink is filled with little clumps of DIRT, and some BLUE GEL that looks like dishwasher fluid..

Owen stands in front of the bathroom mirror.

His shirt is off, and discarded on the linoleum floor nearby.

His back is to us. He's blocking the mirror from view.

ADULT OWEN
(calling to his manager)
I'm fine. Out in a minute...

We slowly pan around Owen's bare back and torso.

Until:

His reflection in the mirror slowly enters frame...

He stares at the skin of his chest. And he slowly lifts something up towards his ribcage...

The BOX CUTTER we saw him using earlier.

Hand-shaking and desperate, he begins to slowly CUT INTO HIMSELF, tracing as straight a line as he can manage down the middle of his torso.

He stares at his reflection, in no apparent pain.

There is no blood, no grotesque innards spilling out. Just a clean, fresh slit down his body.

CUT TO:

MOMENTS LATER.

Owen has now dropped the box cutter to the ground, and is staring at the FRESH SLIT he's carved all the way down his torso, from his rib cage down to just under his belly button.

Slowly, Owen uses his hands to...

PEEL OPEN THE SLIT.

And something shines at us from inside:

A GLOWING LIGHT -- flickering blue, like the calibration screen on a television.

We don't quite see it, but we see Owen stare into the mirror, at the shimmering blue light glowing from inside his chest.

He stares at himself, terrified by what he's uncovered inside.

CUT TO:

MOMENTS LATER.

Owen is still in the bathroom, but now he's working to clean himself up. He runs the sink, washing away all evidence of the dirt and blue poison he just coughed up.

He crouches over the ground, throwing his uniform back on over his bare back. The fabric shimmies down his spine, hiding his body once again.

167 INT. THE FUN CENTER - MOMENTS LATER

167

Owen steps out of the bathroom and walks back through the arcade, across a long row of games.

He nods to co-workers and to guests from the birthday party as he passes them in the hallway.

ADULT OWEN

Sorry about that before. I'm sorry
about that. Just a new medication
I'm on.

No one's really paying much attention to him as he mumbles these apologies.

And for Owen, everyone else in here is an out-of-focus blur, blending together with the flashing lights of the arcade.

He apologizes to everyone he stumbles past, but there's something more than embarrassment in his eyes:

Dawning terror. Like he's seen something that he can't unsee.

ADULT OWEN (CONT'D)

Hey I'm sorry about that before.

We stay close with Owen as he continues walking through the arcade, continues apologizing to the bodies and lights blurring past him.

He picks up his pace. He's rushing now, as if he wants to beeline towards the emergency exit.

And still, he keeps apologizing as he rushes through the space:

ADULT OWEN (CONT'D)

No. Yeah. I'm sorry about that. I'm
sorry--

We abruptly:

CUT TO BLACK.