

NABBERS



BOOK ONE

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AGAINST THE ASSAULT OF LAUGHTER NOTHING CAN STAND
Mark Twain

B L A C K N E S S -- A *FRIGHTENED WHISPER...*

LITTLE GIRL (V.O.)
DADDY... Do you believe...?

HALLWAY IN HALFLIGHT - A FATHER'S...

Face. Child's SCREAM. He SPINS around rushing into:

GIRL'S BEDROOM - EVER LASTING HALF-LIGHT

The father is confronted by a PLACE that looks like a version of Sendak's *Where the Wild Things Are*.

'The walls became the world all around' -Just not our world.

Isolated...

Pink-BEDROOM FURNITURE, Just like any little girl's room. All that's missing are the WALLS, replaced & set in the middle of a...

SULPHUROUS MARSH. Twisted vines blot-out the sky, as REPTILIAN EYES poke up from a seething-swamp.

A ROCK-SHELL BEETLE flutters over Daddy's head. He ducks it.

GULP - it's swallowed by a TWO HEADED crocodilian beast.

Father scans the bleak view: a MODEL-T, broken tin bits, Rosemary's Baby CARRIAGE & all the awful things we've made, covered in **BLACK ASH**. Center stage is a...

LITTLE GIRL hugging her BED as if a LIFE-RAFT in a nightmare.

FATHER
Tori, c-come quick!

The father jerks at the doorknob, it won't budge; & neither will the Little Girl. --She's shivering with shock.

He puts his hand through a point where the bedroom walls should be. He's instantly knocked-back. An invisible barrier.

LITTLE GIRL
Daddy!

He moves around the room trying different points, NO EXIT.

OUT of every crack, corner & SHADOW-SHAPES approach. Dark and amorphous, except for white eyes gleaming with ill intent.

Seeing this...

Father LEAPS into the Little Girl's life-raft of a bed, which has the feeling of being adrift in an *Ocean of Awfulness*.

He hugs her tightly, as to squeeze the fear out of her limbs, or perhaps his own.

He looks...

Into her eyes, softly asks...

FATHER
Do you trust me?

LITTLE GIRL
No!

He takes pause at this. She looks around, considers.

LITTLE GIRL
But I'm starting to.

Now looking into daddy's eyes.

DISTORTED SHAPES GROW IN THE BACKGROUND. --Time's up.

CRASH CUT TO BLACK:

LITTLE GIRL (V.O.)
Do you believe in monsters?

END OF OPEN

CREDITS WASH ON & OFF SCREEN AS IF MADE OF DUST, NO, MORE LIKE **BLACK ASH** WHICH IS BLOWN BY A DIRECTIONLESS WIND...

ACT ONE

ONCE UPON A TIME IN TODAY'S SUBURBIA - FULL MOON...

MUSIC greets us like a warm hug until...

Like a curse, **NABBERS** title etches itself into the LUNAR ORB.

We descend into an *Amblin* paradise-lost. Overgrown lawns, rusty bikes, & beat-up cars. --A *SAD State of the Union*.

ENDING on a HOME that is much older, and wiser than the rest.

SPINSTER REALTOR (V.O.)

Are you deranged! It just happened.

INT. THE HOME - EVENING OF THE WAKE - TRACE DOWN ON...

A wall of PHOTOS: one picture for each year of a boy's life. Abruptly we end on the final-photo, BOBBY, forever 15 resting on a podium. White FLOWERS veil the frame.

SPINSTER REALTOR (O.S.)

*Wait until after the service.
Estate sales are exceptional, you
can flip the property in ten days,
Cha-ching. Well so long as it
didn't happen in the dining room.*

Pulling back MOURNERS mill-around, most in ill-fitting black. We see no faces: Only lower LIMBS, chest down. *Then...*

A HAND, slumped over the arm of a couch, fingers tapping a perfectly timed heart beat.

SPINSTER MISER (O.S.)

*You can always say it happened at
the public school, you know, some
place no one cares about. Anyway,
this space is so musty, you'd never
get the smell out.*

TAPPING slows. Miser turns over a saucer to see the label.

SPINSTER REALTOR (O.S.)

*Oh bah, boil a pot of Cinnamon,
smells like cookies. But he'll
never sell cuz, what's his name?*

Back on the fingers tapping. They STOP. *Then...*

Up to ROBERT (30s) stare burning a hole in the carpet. Stubble grown over a kindly face. Eyes suggest a recovering alcoholic, that knows it's gonna get worse.

SPINSTER MISER (O.S.)
We should talk to Emma, where is she?

SPINSTER REALTOR (O.S.)
*He's likely got her sealed under
 the attic's floorboards.*
 (murmur)
*She's got nothing to stay for,
 she'll wanna sell.*

Robert appears ABOVE them. They shrink, but his eyes are focused on *something* beyond them -- in the kitchen.

SPINSTER MISER
 I'm so sorry for your loss.

SPINSTER REALTOR
 Brad was such a -- dear boy.

Robert pushes through them, with a voice like asphalt...

ROBERT
 His name was Bobby.

The two CRONES look every direction but Robert's eyes.

INT. KITCHEN

Robert ponders over an ill-conceived gift basket of ALCOHOL. A temptation as seducing as a lost hundred dollar bill.

SPINSTER MISER (O.C.)
 Mr. Robert, a moment of your time?

SPINSTER REALTOR (O.C.)
 Will Ms. Emma be joining us?

Robert eyes snap up boiling with anger. THUNDER roars...

EXT. ALLEY BEHIND HOME - RAIN FALLS...

Painfully slow, a garage door rises, reveals Robert, holding two over-stuffed trash bags. We hope containing the crones.

LOOKING UP FROM INSIDE A TRASH CAN - LID OPENS AS...

Robert reaches in and pulls out a DOLL, this is *POCKET PENNY*. **BLACK ASH** pours off like pixie-dust.

He wipes her off. SLAMS the lid shut & stomps away. We hear the angry clamor of a CREATURE trapped in the bottom of...

...the trash-can: It SHAKES. Perhaps a rat? Guess again!

SMASH! --A two inch dent forms in the side of the can, as if that RAT has bionic-limbs. **BAM!** Damn, another dent.

INT. HOME - UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT RAIN ECHOES OUTSIDE

Water dripping down Penny's face -- held in Robert's hand. He twists the doorknob, *click-click*, it's locked.

ROBERT
Emma, can we talk?

Silence answers back.

ROBERT
Its been too long. Tori wants to see you. Honey?

He places his ear against the door. Nothing. For a second, a shadow blocks the light under the doorway.

ROBERT
Damn it Em, I know you hear me.
(Anger building)
Open up, this is ridiculous!

The light peering from inside CLICKS off. He SMACKS his hand against the door.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

The BOOZE BASKET: less one bottle.

ROBERT (O.C.)
Ten years.

SWISH -- to Pocket Penny, watching Robert across the table: He rolls the glass of whiskey between his fingers, embraced.

ROBERT
Ten wonderfully long, *dry* years.

He raises the glass.

ROBERT
Cheers to you, *Pocket Penny*.
You bitch.

Robert smells it and makes the SOUR face of a teenager's first drink. Then to his lips as if anticipating that same teen's first kiss, when...

A distant PIANO KEY chimes. His eyes look upstairs, then back at Penny, she seems to tilt her head. --A shaky hand...

Pours the booze back into the bottle.

TORI'S BEDROOM

Tiny fingers tickle the keys, struggling, hesitant. Hitting the wrong note. Ouch. Our first good look at...

TORI (7), but tries to act 9. Bewitching eyes grab us, though tonight -- defeat & gloom pour from her gaze.

ROBERT (O.S.)
Remember how I showed you...

Robert enters, slips on a TONKA. The floor is covered with TOYS. All looking at him, and us like protective sentries.

ROBERT
I'm sorry, I was looking for my daughter but it seems she's rented her room to Pig-Pen.

He slides in next to Tori. Begins...

ROBERT
Gray skies are gonna clear up, put on a happy face. Brush off the clouds and cheer up, put on a happy face.

Tori watches his fingers.

ROBERT
I knew a girl so gloomy, she'd never laugh or sing. She wouldn't listen to me, now she's a mean old thing.

Robert pauses, peeks at Tori.

ROBERT	TORI
<i>So spread sunshine all over the place...</i>	<i>So spread sunshine all over the place...</i>

TORI
And put on a 'SAD', 'SAD' face.

Robert grins. Tori doesn't, lost between keys & her thoughts she doesn't look up UNTIL: Footsteps CREAK the floorboards.

HALLWAY

Tori pokes her TWINKLING face through the threshold...

DOWN THE HALL: a bedroom door slams shut. As Robert sticks his head out behind her, Tori's smile dies.

ROBERT
Ah. False alarm, just the wind.

BACK IN TORI'S BEDROOM

Tori spins around, taking Penny off the piano bench.

TORI
Where was she?

ROBERT
The trash. Any idea how she got there?

TORI
Mommy must've thrown her out.
(*Softer*) *Maybe the Nabbers got her.*

ROBERT
Mommy hasn't been...

Robert catches himself. An idea brightens his face...

ROBERT
I bet I know who it was...

His smile deepens -- he shakes his body as if a thousand BUGS were crawling beneath his skin.

ROBERT
It's. The. TICKIES!

He goes in to tickle her, but she swats his hands away. *Quick as a whip*, Robert grabs Penny. Now, dancing her on the keys.

ROBERT
Penny's a natural, see!

Tori snags the doll, pushes her shoulders back like a *Lady*.

TORI
She's *just* a doll, daddy.

ROBERT
Right. Of course she is.

Robert's eyes drift over to Tori's closet. He winks...

Hopping off the bench. Dives into the abyss of *Closet Land*.

ROBERT

We were waiting to give you this...

Tori's eyes brighten as Robert returns with a WRAPPED GIFT. She rips it open, revealing a MINI PUPPET'S STAGE.

ROBERT

It's been in our family for decades. Now -- it's yours.

Robert picks up what looks like the *Pixar LAMP*, aims it, plugs it in. WHOOSH! The stage is engulfed in dramatic light.

He holds Penny like a marionette, plays as *Margaret Thatcher*.

ROBERT

*All the world's a stage & all the little girls just players! Tori! YOUR show is a **tragedy**! If I even see as much as an inch of a canine -- it's the wood-chipper for you!*

Tori bites back a GRIN -- Robert's enthusiasm lifts. He switches his voice to that of a *Valley Girl*.

ROBERT

Ugh! Pahleaaaasse! Wood-chippers are soooo nineteen ninety-six! Smile? Not until Daddy buys me that Pink Porsche he promised...

Robert gasps, then in his southern voice...

ROBERT

Porsche!? I-already got ya a-truck!

He grabs the Tonka he tripped over. Makes Penny look as if she's pouting. A giggle almost escapes Tori. --Almost.

TORI

I'm not a baby, Daddy! Why are you?

He Smiles, gets up & kisses her, walks out, a bit crushed.

Tori's demeanor softens, she picks up Penny, combs the Doll's hair, and hugs her as if remorseful.

CUT TO BLACK:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

KITCHEN - RAIN ECHOES...

Penny, poking out of Tori's pocket. Her dinner: a peanut butter sandwich. -The WHISKEY is unopened. -Robert's winning.

ROBERT

You haven't eaten all day.

TORI

I don't want to get fat. I don't want to smell like peanut butter sandwiches, either. They probably like those.

ROBERT

Who?

TORI

The Nabbers.

Robert's eyes dart from Tori to *the* WHISKEY.

TORI

They took Bobby.

ROBERT

Tori. Where did you hear that?

TORI

I think they have mommy, she's sad, that's when they get you.

ROBERT

(Forced laugh)

Did Mommy tell you this?

TORI

I hear - Crying. In walls.

ROBERT

That's -- that's just your imagination. Nobody is coming for your mommy, Tori.

TORI

They're already here. Soon they'll take ALL OF US!

That does it, Robert reaches for the WHISKEY, *when...*

EMMA (20s) like a cold-draft lumbers in with the mantel of a cancer-patient. PJs stained with food, sweat, & tears. On any other day, she could stop traffic, but not this day, not now.

Never the less, Tori lights up at her entrance.

TORI

Mommy! Daddy made dinner - look
PB&J sandwiches! Our favorite!

Emma opens kitchen cabinets -- searching.

TORI

Oh! He gave me a puppet stage! Even
put on a show! It was kinda' funny.
Wanna see it?!

Five more open cabinets. Now drawers are being opened.

ROBERT

Emma? You alright?

All cabinets ajar, last few drawers are yanked open. At the same moment...

ROBERT

Emma?

TORI

MOMMY!

Emma swings around, inches from Tori's freaked-out face. Eyes twitching with darkening sorrow.

EMMA

Where're your brother's pictures?

TORI

(frightened)
I-I don't know, mommy...

She GRABS Tori's shoulders. The PB&J sandwich falls.

EMMA

WHERE!?

Robert's on his feet, but is STOPPED by her eyes. He turns away pulls a folder out of his attaché.

ROBERT

Relax, I was gonna' make copies.

Emma SNAGS it away...

Flops down at the supper. Staring unblinking into space.

Pulls her chair in, and does the outrageous...

Eating each PHOTOGRAPH one by one like Potato Chips.

TORI

Mommy -- that's not food.

ROBERT

Tori? Lemme take mommy upstairs...

Robert reaches for Emma's shoulder -- she RECOILS from his touch like a battered animal. --Another BITE!

ROBERT

Em -- it's okay...

He tries again. She leaps up, bolts out & up the stairs. Robert chases her. Echoes of Doors SLAMMING, shouting,

Engulf a lone Tori.

Her meal, her happiness swept-away in Emma's icy-wake. Barefoot prints made of **Black Ash** darken the floor.

Tori's eyes snap to where the PB&J should be, it's gone. She tucks her knees up under her chin. --Shivering.

HALLWAY

Robert, at the bedroom door --again. He turns, behind him Tori's tiny feet HURRY inside her room.

ROBERT

Tori, wait...

The door SLAMS. Robert sighs, sheathed in defeat -- ANGER darkens his face: *a way out of this...*

KITCHEN

A shaken Robert advances towards the one thing he craves most: liquid happiness -- waiting for him on the table.

TORI'S ROOM - SUBMERGED IN SHADOWS

OVERHEAD: Tori, blankets half-pulled over her face. Outside, a CONSTANT DOWNPOUR assaults her window.

Rain-distorted moon-light shines ghastly shapes reaching across her ceiling. A distant WHISPER widens Tori's eyes.

She looks to the security of Penny, centered on the puppet stage: her Guardian Angel. Penny almost seems to wink.

From the hallway: a door SQUEAKS open.

Wet FOOTSTEPS slap the floor. Tori sinks deeper into her bed.

A silhouette stands at the threshold...

TORI

Mommy...?

POP! A dark-flash. The STAGE LIGHT has abandoned her. Only DARKNESS broken by shadows, which seem even closer. And worse...

Penny has vanished.

KITCHEN - ROBERT SUSPENDED OVER...

The bottle, mouth-watering like *Pavlov's Dog*.

Beyond the temptation to scattered bits of Emma's snack...

Bobby, holding Tori up like *Simba* -- a perfect memory.
Just enough to push Robert over the edge.

ROBERT

What 'bout your sister. Didn't you
think about that? Didn't you think...

Looks closer, spots Bobby's SNAKE WRAPPED MEDICAL BRACELET.
HIS face twists with an expression of: *something's not right*.

Robert SWIPES at the pictures, KNOCKS the Whisky to the
floor: shattering his only escape.

As the liquor soaks into the tile...

ROBERT

There are no accidents...

TORI SCREAMS. Muffled by something, or *someone*...

HALLWAY

SPRINTING Robert COLLIDES into Emma as she shuts Tori's door.

EMMA

She's fine.

ROBERT

Not after your performance. What
the Hell is your prob...

He HALTS: Robert looks her up & down...

Emma is SUPER-FOXY-HOT. *Told you, she could stop traffic.*

Amidst the shock of HER, he discerns that she's clenching Pocket Penny. He takes the easy road.

ROBERT

...lem. Did you throw Penny out?

EMMA

She's gett'n a little old for a baby doll, don't you think?

ROBERT

It's her favorite...

EMMA

We all have to grow up one day.
Even you.

Emma sways down the hallway. Each of her curves pulls against her nighty --so revealing it would embarrass *Victoria Secret*.

ROBERT

That's a -new -look -for you.

All a very seductive *masquerade*. *She glances back...*

EMMA

Come to bed.

ROBERT

You feel'n okay?!

Emma opens the bedroom door, still not looking back.

EMMA

Don't be absurd. Come.

Robert squints at the halflight, A TRICK of light & shadow: under her nighty a baby-sized hand caresses Emma's back.

ROBERT

I-I'll be in, in a moment.
(Like a *whistle in the dark*)
Don't start without me.

ROBERT ENTERS TORI'S BEDROOM

Tori, in bed, facing away. He steps closer, softly reaches out for her. She SNAPS around so quickly that Robert JUMPS.

She has been breathing hard --in almost a whisper...

TORI
That's not my mommy.

ROBERT
Mommy isn't well...

TORI
She took Penny away.

ROBERT
Lemme talk to her, just...

TORI
It won't make any difference.
It's too late.

Robert can't take his eyes off the door. The WALLS shake.
A low dreadful MOAN, like thunder --it's not, this time.

TORI
Don't go! Please!

ROBERT
Shhhhh, it's OK.

Robert peaks into the Hallway, Emma has vanished. He winks at
Tori. She shakes her head as a final warning.

Robert *into...*

THE HALLWAY

SNAP, there's Emma, gripping Penny, *looking sexy-dangerous.*

EMMA
Coming?

ROBERT
No, I want you to tell me what's
going on. You frighten Tori.

EMMA
Come, I'll show you. Come.

ROBERT
Again, NO.

EMMA
Don't you want Us?

ROBERT
'...Us?!'

Emma twists & bends abnormally, yet somehow a sexy shape.

ROBERT

Tell you what. Give Penny to Tori,
we'll talk, like we used to.

Emma rolls her eyes.

EMMA

'Talk?!' Come hav'a drink with us.

ROBERT

Em, I've been sober for ten years.
Well, not in a row or anything...

Robert mid-sentence, eyes widen at...

What's next SHOCKS Robert to his core.

Emma, falling to pieces. Literally. Her body: various OBJECTS & household items stuck together like an *Arcimboldo* painting. FALLING into **BLACK ASH**.

Robert's back pressed against the wall as Emma's dress FALLS empty to the floor, along with Penny.

Now we get our first good look-see at...

THE NABBERS

As they scatter out of the lumps of ash -- just 10 inches short, ashen-black pelts, DOT SHAPED eyes glow white in the half-light.

ROBERT

You've gotta' be kidding...

SOMETHING swipes out Robert's LEGS. He falls flat onto his face. Eye level with a NABBER.

ROBERT

...me!?

He jumps up. Robert...

SWINGS, PUNCHES, & KICKS.

Nabbers...

DODGE, JUMP & DUCK out of the way, as if his swings are in slow motion.

Moving in on him, FANGS dripping with SPIT. Robert jumps for the hall chandelier, lifting himself off the floor.

They circle. Several jump, grabbing his pants. --SWISH!

He's been PANTS'D. SUPERMAN boxers, a size-too small. Several of the creatures CHUCKLE.

ROBERT
It's laundry day...

He looks down.

ROBERT
...And it's cold in here.

The Nabbers, holding in laughter.

Robert's hand slips. He swings his leg over the lamp's rim.

Pulling further from the claws & teeth below.

He pulls harder - almost clear when his hand comes lose but his shoe & SUPERMAN tighties get hooked.

He swings wide, hanging by one foot. His boxers are no longer his, they now hang from the lamp with pride.

The Nabbers LAUGH at his 'show,

--**BOOM!**-- Robert CRASHES to the floor.

The creatures roll around on their backs, laughing their asses off.

THE UNEXPECTED.

As they laugh harder, their bodies BLOAT ONE by ONE!
The more they laugh the quicker they...

POP! POP! POP! POP! POP! --All that remains is **BLACK ASH**.

Robert pulls his pants up. Still in frozen shock.
He snaps back to himself at hearing...

TORI (O.S.)
DAAADDDYYYYY!!!!

ROBERT'S face. Child's SCREAM. He SPINS around rushing into.

NOW: We come to the scene we saw on **PAGE ONE**.

TORI'S BEDROOM - EVER LASTING HALF-NIGHT HALF-DAY

Same as before, Robert's in a PLACE that reminds us of '**Where the Wild Things Are.**' --This time we focus on Robert & Tori.

Tori & her furniture surrounded by...

Sulphurous marsh, vines, reptilian eyes deep in the swamp's wet-grasp.

Same rock-shell beetle flutters over Robert's head.

He ducks it. **GULP**. It's swallowed by the crocodilian.

The swamp still holds: Model T, tin bits, & Baby CARRIAGE.
All the awful things, covered in **BLACK ASH**.

Tori still hugs her bed in frozen dread.

ROBERT

Tori, c-come quick!

Robert tries the door, it won't budge.

Knocked-back by the absent wall & the invisible barrier in its place.

TORI

Daddy!

He moves around the room, NO EXIT - NO WAY OUT.

OUT of every crack, corner & shadow NABBERS approach. This time we get a better look at them. We see they move through the boundary of the room's walls without hinderance.

Robert LEAPS into Tori's bed, hugging her tightly. This time we don't feel so adrift, the connection has been made.

ROBERT

Do you trust me?

TORI

No!

He takes pause. She looks around, considers.

TORI

But I'm starting to.

Looking into daddy's eyes. Distorted blurry SHAPES GROW in the BACKGROUND.

We now understand what Robert must do, so does he.

But since its the **END OF ACT TWO** you're gonna have to wait.

CUT TO BLACK:

ACT THREE

TORI'S BEDROOM - EVER LASTING HALF-NIGHT-HALF-DAY

Tori & Robert center bed. Creatures, we now lovingly know as Nabbers are encroach in. Tori eyes snap to the free standing door and asks...

TORI

And Mommy?

ROBERT

I didn't see her. It's just us now.
Look at me: We can beat them.

TORI

Are you kidding me?! --How?!

ROBERT

Make'em laugh. If you can make them
laugh -- they have no power over us.

TORI

You got to be kidding me.

Robert grabs books, toys, & the Pixar lamp.

ROBERT

No. We're kidding **them**. Watch what
happens.

Tori's not buying it, she pulls her blanket up. They are...

SURROUNDED by Nabbers. More crawling out from the marsh.

A Nabber clutches Robert's leg. He kicks it - sending it
across the 'room' - It hits & slides down the door. A sound
like fingernails on a chalkboard.

All the Nabbers & Humans hold their ears. A painful...

EVERYONE - EVERYTHING

Ahhh....!

The Chalky-Board-Nabber lands,

LAUGHS at everyone holding their ears --it **POPS!**

Next: Like a cat, creeping up...

A Nabber dives across the piano keys, creating a melody.

Robert throws a BARBIE DOLL at it. The Nabber catches it. Dances with it across the keys back & forth composing with each step.

All the Nabbers WATCH, transfixed by the music.

It tries kissing the Barbie, but the doll's head comes off. The watching Nabbers LAUGH & GIGGLE, till they go...

POP - POP - POP - POP - POP

The Composing Nabber admires himself, smiles, nods, a deep bow then like the others LAUGHS.

-KA-POPS!-

Tori lets out a GIGGLE. The bedroom walls flicker visible.

Robert smiles.

ROBERT

See, its working. They have no sense of humor, it destroys them.

More Nabbers - re-aim their angry teeth towards her.

ROBERT

Tori you try, MAKE A FUNNY FACE!

A Nabber SNARLS two inches from her. *Not so funny!* She HEADBUTTS it. It goes cross-eyed. Falls backwards.

Tori laughs - **harder** now. Like any kid, the funniest stuff often hurts the most. KA-BOOM - IT POPS.

Something moves behind robert.

TORI

Daddy! Look out!

TOO LATE...

A Nabber jumps from the ceiling VINES onto Robert's back. DIGS its claws into him. Robert HOWLS.

He FLIPS over, grabbing its feet. --Jumps up. --Spins it around-&-around like a child. It's laughing hysterically.

A trail of dust works its way up the Nabber's body until it's only a smoke ring. --**PUFF**, it's gone.

An extra UGLY NABBER has grabbed Tori's leg. She screams as it pulls her as if she has no weight.

Robert falls backward, eyes spin with dizziness, he yells...

ROBERT
Tori, try the TICKIES!

Tori goes into its sides with tickles. Raspy Laughter echoes.

KAATAAAAAA -POP, it's gone.

Tori loses it, letting out a cluster of laughter. She dashes into daddy's arms. The Sulphurous World shimmers & shakes.

ZAP-ZIP! THE WALLS are SOLID again, leaving us in silence.

TORI'S BEDROOM - HAS RETURNED - RAINY NIGHT SUBSIDES ON...

A Clean, well-lit Place. Everything is perfect. Robert still holding that Pixar-LAMP as an axe.

TORI
I told you Nabbers were real.
I told you Daddy!

They get up, look for any little monsters, Nope, All Gone.

ROBERT
Yeah, joke's on me.

First time we see Tori really filled with HOPE.

TORI
But where's Mommy?
We have to find her!

ROBERT
Let's go look.

The closet door cracks OPEN, silencing them.

Fear returns, as Tori pokes Robert's side.

ROBERT
(Like a hiss)
I see it.

Robert's fingers tighten on the Pixar-Axe. He's off the bed.

Then the...

UNEXPECTED. FLASH TO:

TORI'S BEDROOM - EVER LASTING HALF-NIGHT HAS RETURNED

Behind them the bed cover has formed into the BIGGEST Nabber we've seen. Tall as Tori, but wide as Robert.

Robert runs for his daughter. TRIPS on the same *damn* TONKA.

Before they can react, it has them in its vice-like grips.

Both struggle to no effect. This MF'er is SUPER STRONG.

ROBERT

I can't move.

TORI

I can.

Tori's eyes go from fear to excitement. Looks right at the beast, & begins to TICKLE the shit out of it...

TORI

THE TICKIES!

The corners of its mouth begin to rise to a smile. Its grip is lessening. Its body bloats up. It's gonna -POP- like the others.

NO ITS NOT!

It SLAMS Tori into the bed post KNOCKING her out.

UBER-NABBER's plan is clear: it's dragging them toward...

The Hellish purgatory. Poking out of the mist, are all the lost evil things of man. WAITING.

Uber almost has them off the life-raft of the bed.

Robert looks closer into his adversary. Light catches the SNAKE WRAPPED MEDICAL BRACELET around the creature's wrist.

ROBERT

You took them. Why are you doing this? You bastard!

The Nabbers eyes swing to meet his.

Closer to the EDGE...

Robert tries one more trick - a crazy funny face that would impress Jim Carry. The Nabber replies with...

A blank dead-pan look.

Robert's heart sinks, as does his energy to fight.

ROBERT
HONEY WAKE UP! --TORI!

She MOANS, but isn't coming out of it.
Without warning and **SUPER FAST**.

There's EMMA. CHARGING right into Uber-Nabber.

BOOM an unexpected BLOW, he's falling backwards, arms swing wide to catch himself: releasing both Robert & Tori.

This is the real Emma, standing on the bed, which is more like a PRECIPICE.

Robert looks up at her from the floor. His eyes water with pride at the return of his wife, and now, their salvation.

ROBERT
EMMA?!

EMMA
They took him, Robert.
They took my Bobby!

Uber reaches out grabbing Emma's ankle.

Robert is in motion...

SLAP. Robert has her wrist in his hand. But she's more than half-way into Uber's world.

Robert has found his power. He LIFTS Emma from the edge. Uber isn't letting go, he's rising too. Emma KICKS the beast to...

No Effect.

EMMA
Let my family go.

Robert's winning the Tug O'War. Uber isn't going back without a prize. His free hand reaches for unconscious Tori.

Grabbing her foot & pulling her down as leverage on Emma.

Emma spots this. Kicks him harder & harder...

Still, NO Effect!

ROBERT / EMMA
Tori Wake up! BABY!

All four are almost completely in the *SWAMP World*. Time...

Slows.

EMMA
(Eyes meet Robert)
I love you. Find me.

ROBERT
Don't you....

Emma lets go of Robert's wrist.

ROBERT
NO. EMMAAAAAA!

Both wife & Uber FALL backwards.

Her last act:

She throws Robert the SNAKE SHAPED MEDICAL BRACELET.

PIZZZ-THUM-ZAP.....!

The WALLS of our world DEVOUR her, leaving only...

TORI'S BEDROOM - IN MORNING LIGHT

The room is a room again. The bed is a bed again. No hint OF pernicious-evil remains.

Tori stirs, her eyes blink open. She calls out...

TORI
M-Mommy, Daddy?

Robert, still gripping the BRACELET, slides down next to her, cradling her head.

He pulls Penny out of his pocket, placing it in her hand.

ROBERT
It's alright, sweetheart. Daddy's here, we're safe.

Sunlight shines through the window onto Tori, still staring at the BLANK WALL.

TORI
What will she do?

His wet-EYES drift over to the breaking light of the window as if by will-power alone he'll have his chance to save Emma.

ROBERT
The only thing she can.

Above the bed...

We see Pocket Penny, slumbers like *Aken the ferryman*.

ROBERT (O.C.)
Think of a funny face.

Again...

The MUSIC warms us, letting us know that all is not lost...

While the credits run the course, we see...

GARDEN - MORNING LIGHT - WITH BACKS TO US

TORI & ROB, in lawn-chairs, surrounded by Spring's first flowers. Clearly Tori. We can't see Rob well.

ROB
They're never gonna go away, are they!?

TORI
No. No they're not. But neither are we. (She holds his hand) That's who we are now.

Distant & like an echo: RING-RING - RING-RING - RING-RING

INT. HALLWAY - SETTING SUN ON AN...

Old phone, looks & sounds like that Matrix phone.
RING-RING -CLICK then CLUNK --A VOICE MAIL echoes.

SWEET SOUNDING WOMAN (V.O.)
Um, Hello Mr Lewis, I, my family needs your help. (Pause) Ah, Your not gonna believe this.

We move IN to the phone receiver

SWEET SOUNDING WOMAN (V.O.)
Do you believe in monsters?

CLICK. --A hand picks up the receiver.

CRASH TO **BLACK ASH:**

END BOOK ONE