

WHEN DARKNESS FALLS

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. GRAYSON, PENNSYLVANIA - STREET - DAY

A suburban town with middle-class cookie cutter homes. A WOMAN walks her DOG. A BOY rides his bike. It's a familiar place we all know except for one thing: there are no cars on the street.

EXT. ANOTHER STREET - DAY

The same here. A MAN cuts his grass. A WOMAN plants flowers while her two KIDS play in the yard. Everything appears normal except for the complete lack of cars.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

Vacant. Not a car to be seen. The deteriorated condition makes it feel like it has been unused for decades. A tumbleweed blows across the pavement.

EXT. SHOPPING MALL - DAY

Several stores of various types. Through the windows, we see dozens of PEOPLE shopping, yet there are no cars anywhere with the exception of an electric police car that speeds past with its SIREN blaring.

EXT. SUPERMARKET - DAY

A large parking lot stands empty. A ghost town appearance. Shades on the windows partially obscure our view of the interior, but there is visible activity taking place inside.

INT. SUPERMARKET - DAY - SAME

The store is busy with CUSTOMERS loading up on groceries. Carts are three feet high and two feet long. A movable canvas prevents food items from falling to the bottom and can be adjusted.

COOKIE AISLE

AMBER CLAYTON (40), a classic suburban mom, stressed but loving her position in the family, shops with her two youngest kids. RYLAND (RY) CLAYTON (8) is all boy. His little sister MADDIE (3) looks like a living doll in her pigtails and checkered dress. She holds her favorite doll protectively.

NOTE: Maddie always keeps the doll with her.

Amber's cart already holds several days' worth of food for a semi-big family. The kids look over the cookie display with vast delight.

Maddie grabs a pack of chocolate cookies. Amber snatches it from her little hands.

AMBER

No chocolate, remember? It makes you break out.

Amber returns the pack to the shelf.

RY

I want peanut butter then.

Ry grabs a pack of peanut butter cookies and adds it to the cart.

Maddie crosses her arms and sulks.

MADDIE

I hate the peanut butter ones.

Amber lays a hand on Maddie's head.

AMBER

No, you don't. You love them.

RY

(to Maddie)

You're such a baby.

Maddie's hands go to her hips.

MADDIE

Am not!

AMBER

Okay, kids. Enough. I think we have everything.

They make their way to the...

CHECKOUTS

Completely automated. Customers scan their own groceries and return them to their cart afterward.

It's Amber's turn. The kids happily try to help. A few things fail to scan. Amber retrieves those items and scans them.

MADDIE

This is fun.

Maddie tries to scan the cookies. Fails to get a beep but goes to lower the pack to the counter with the rest of their groceries. Amber catches the package just in time.

AMBER

Let's try that again.

Amber holds Maddie's hands as she helps her scan the pack correctly. They add it to their stash and share a loving smile.

Amber scans the rest of their items and uses a debit card to pay the total. The three work together to return everything to the cart.

With her kids in tow, Amber pushes the cart to an area toward the front.

TELEPORTERS

Three lines of customers wait at closed doors with a display panel at the top of each. Currently, all three panels read "In Use." A button is next to each door.

The panel above the far right teleporter changes to "Available" as the door slides open to an empty chamber. The next COUPLE enters with their cart. The man presses a button inside.

The door slides closed. The display panel changes to "In Use."

Another SHOPPER enters an empty teleporter. Same procedure. The door closes. When it reopens several moments later, no one is inside and the next customer enters.

It's Amber's turn. She steps inside her teleporter with the cart and her kids. The door closes.

INSIDE TELEPORTER

A small control panel is built into the wall, next to the door. Large white lights cover most of the ceiling.

RY

I want to do it!

Ry enters their home address, "316 Maplewood Dr." and the zip code, "46217."

AMBER

Thank you, Ry.

RY
You're welcome.

A low-key HUMMING fills the small space. The overhead lights flash in sequence. Maddie covers her ears.

In only a few moments, the humming stops and the lights become solid again. The door slides open to a different location... the second floor of their house.

INT. CLAYTON HOUSE - UPSTAIRS HALL - DAY - CONTINUOUS

A teleporter is built into the wall. The family exits. Amber hits the button to close the door behind them. The display panel reads, "Available."

MADDIE
I'm gonna play in my room!

Maddie runs off to her bedroom just down from them.

RY
Wait up!

Ry hurries after his sister.

AMBER
Tell Jacob to come help me, please.

Ry stops at an open doorway and speaks to someone inside.

RY
Mom wants you.

JACOB (O.S.)
I heard, you little dweeb.

Ry shrugs at his mom before entering Maddie's room.

JACOB CLAYTON (15), shoulder-length hair, a poster child for moody teen, dressed all in black, schlepps out of his room. He sees the cart filled with groceries and frowns.

JACOB (CONT'D)
Ry's big enough to help now, in case you haven't noticed.

AMBER
Oh, I've noticed, but he does plenty around here already. You don't.

Bitter about his position, Jacob takes the cart from Amber and cautiously rolls it down the steps.

Amber follows with a grin.

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Jacob wheels the groceries inside and starts past Amber on his way out.

AMBER
Help me put them away, please.

Without stopping...

JACOB
I don't feel like it.

Amber catches Jacob by the arm.

AMBER
What is wrong with you?

JACOB
I just want to be left alone.

AMBER
Are you going to behave this way on vacation? Because if you are, maybe I don't want you there.

Jacob angrily looks Amber in the face.

JACOB
Good! I don't want to go on the stupid trip anyway!

Jacob yanks his arm free and marches up the steps.

Amber leans on the counter and sighs.

EXT. CLAYTON HOUSE - REAR DECK - NIGHT

Amber stands at the railing, looking out to a black yard while enjoying a summer breeze.

Her husband, DOUG CLAYTON (early 40s), short beard, easy going, steps out to the deck and cuddles Amber from behind.

DOUG
Sorry I missed dinner. I had to stay and finish the Hampton run.

Amber turns around in his arms.

AMBER
That factory works you to death.