

Option # 3

Written by

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FADE IN:

INT. FOOTBALL STADIUM TUNNEL - NIGHT

Super bright lights wash out the night beyond the damp tunnel. Mud caked puddles line the cement floor. Floating near the surface of one puddle is the torn remnants of an American flag.

MOTHER, a worse for wear woman in her mid-thirties, entranced by the image of her fallen status, misses the cue to step forward in line. SON, an eight year old wide eyed boy, tugs her back into the now.

They are in line waiting to enter the football field above the tunnel. The line consists of the elderly and mothers with their children. Dirty fingernails, greasy hair, and ragged clothing are worn by all.

A HORN blows. Tension builds in the line. The legs of the GIRL AT THE FRONT OF THE LINE buckle. She sobs, staying in place. Light engulfs the tunnel.

The HORN blows a second time. The OLD MAN NEXT IN LINE gives the girl a nudge. She stands, her shaking limbs unmistakable. A force propels her onto the field above.

Her SCREAM rings in the ears of Son, Mother grips him tight. The line moves forward. Mother and Son are one person away from The Old Man Next In Line.

Bizarre muffled sounds come from the stands above. Etherial shrieks of joy, or perhaps laughter too distorted to tell. The only sound identifiable, the pain of the Girl AT The Front Of The Line.

CARNAGE of a human body makes a sound that any other human can understand. Tearing of bone and flesh. Blood splatters on the face of the Old Man Next In Line. Son looks away.

SILENCE.

Sharp breath.

The HORN blasts.

The Old Man Next In Line steps forward. His moves are robotic. His eyes glazed over.

The second HORN blast. He steps through the light onto the field.

Son dares a glance. Bright lights flood his eyes.

The line moves forward. Mother and Son at the front of the line. They hold hands and wait for the sound of the crowd above. Unearthly sounds come from all sides of the tunnel. The people in line cover their ears, huddling till the sound passes.

GRUNTS come from The Old Man on the field. He will not howl for their pleasure. But the familiar sound of carnage still finds its way down to the waiting.

The lights from the field go dark. Silence from above. The night is over.

Relief grips Mother as she cradles Son.

MOTHER

Another night.

SON

Another night.

INT. ROOM - NIGHT

Mother and Son come back into their plain cinderblock room with only a sink, toilet, dingy mattress, and one single light bulb hanging from a chain in the middle of the room.

The door opens. SLAVE, a small girl crouching obediently near the floor slides a tray of food into the room. Son takes in the lashing welts around her neck and the bruises that run up her arms. She neither makes eye contact or a sound, but continues serving food down the hall.

Stale bread and what looks to be mush in bowls are their dinner. Mother picks up the bread and tears away a molded section. She hands the nourishment to her Son. He dips it into the mush and ravishes it.

He saves the last bite of bread for his Mother. She encourages him to finish. She strokes his head as he inhales the last of the bread.

She takes the bowl and slurps down what little remains. She takes the bowl to the sink attached to the wall. Son takes a seat on the mattress pulling out a stick to play with.

Mother watches Son and his homemade toy, heartache on her lips. She turns back to the sink, reaching for the glass resting on it. From her pocket she pulls a tablet. Small, flat and round, she rolls it between her fingers.

Breaking it between her fingers. Her back to her Son, she crumbles the tablet to dust. The dust settles to the bottom of the clouded glass. She fills it half full with water.

The water swirls, she's mesmerized by the movement of the sediment. The water clears as if the tablet never existed.

She faces her Son. He smiles.

MOTHER

What are you playing?

SON

I'm a soldier in the Resistance.

MOTHER

Are you a good soldier?

SON

What's going to happen to us tomorrow night?

MOTHER

I don't know.

SON

I hate those noises.

MOTHER

It's just a game.

SON

Then why don't the people come back with us?

MOTHER

Maybe they move to somewhere else, like another level, isn't that what you do in games?

SON

I'm good at games, but I don't think there are any other levels.

The Son jumps from the mattress with a display of vengeance. Mother watches intently.

Son takes a seat back on the mattress reaching for the water.

Her arm stretches just out of his reach. Frozen.

He reaches higher. A strange look glazes her face. She places the glass in her Son's hand, but holds onto it.

SON (CONT'D)

What?

MOTHER

I love you.

SON

I love you.

He goes to take the water. She hesitates. Then lets go.

The glass travels to his lips.

Her breath catches.

She slaps the glass away.

It shatters on the wall.

She drags him to the sink.

Violently washing his mouth.

He whimpers in confusion.

She continues the onslaught of cleansing.

He breaks away from her slinking into the corner.

SON (CONT'D)

What did I do?!

Mother gathers him into her arms on the floor, desperate to hold him to her.

MOTHER

Nothing. Nothing.

INT. ROOM - DAY

Son slumbers on the mattress. Mother watches paying close attention to the details of her child's relaxed face. Moving over to the sink she traces her fingers down to the pipe below it.

Digging into the pipe searching for something anything. Her finger withdraws quick as lightning. Blood. No matter, she goes back at it. Furiously fingering the pipe.

Out it slides. The reward. A long piece of metal slightly like a bobby pin. The joy of her find all over her body. Relief.

Moving over to the lock on the door. Fingers bleeding.  
Sweat dripping. Pushing. Prodding the lock.

Listening for the lock to unhinge. Moving the metal gently.

A noise filters down the hallway. Etherial, unearthly, mixed  
with the cries of a neighbor incarcerated nearby. She  
pauses, waiting for the sound to go away.

Back to work. Slowly, slowly, she has it. The lock opens.

She presses softly on the door. No budge. Again. She can  
see a sliver of the hallway. A wooden bar over the door.

She searches the room. Fixates on the stick gun. Grabs it.

Prying the door with her torn fingers, she uses a toe to  
wedge it just enough. Using the stick she tries the bar.

The stick snaps.

MOTHER

Shit.

She pries the door again. Light in the hallway.

She lets it close. Listens at the door.

Gone. Once again, pry and stick. It lifts just slightly.  
Then a little more. Her hand slides out and grasps the bar.

A deep breath before she lifts it from the door.

She goes to the bed. Places her hand over Son's mouth, shakes  
him to wake up.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

(Whispers)

Shh.

Her finger signals him to come to the door. She looks down  
the hallway both ways. He stands at the door terrified.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

(Whispers)

Trust me?

He nods. She pulls him close to her.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Mother and Son ease out into the hallway hovering close to  
the wall. Mother slides the bar back over the door.

They scoot a few inches down the hall, pausing to listen for any sounds.

A large door sits at the end of the hall. Flickering sunlight reflects on the walls. Mother shuffles them closer to the exit.

They pass a door like their own, pausing as they pass. Soft whimpering comes from the other side. Son reaches for the bar. Mother grasps his arm. She continues to move them forward towards the goal.

The same noise heard in the tunnel penetrates the silence. Mother and Son, gripped with fear, rush for the end of the hall. Mother stills him at the door as they gasp for air and calm.

Mother works on the lock while Son watches for anything. The door will not budge. Mother shakes with frustration. Noises slink up from below. Something heads their way. Son takes to the door. He moves with confidence and skill. Pride rises in Mother.

The latch clicks. The door cracks.

EXT. OUTSIDE - DAY

The day's sun hits them full blast. Mother takes fresh air deep into her lungs, but only for a second. Her senses are sharp, she moves them to the bushes.

Crouching beneath detection, their vision impaired by branches and cover. She belly crawls with Son beneath. Together they tunnel away from their prison.

EXT. EDGE OF WOODS - DAY

An open field of waist high grass stretches out before Mother and Son. They hover at the edge of a wooded area.

Just beyond the field lies another Wooded area.

MOTHER

We'll have to run. Fast.

SON

I'm fast.

She puts her finger to her mouth to quiet him.

MOTHER

I know you are, keep your head  
down, don't look up.

Mother scans the horizon.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

Ready?

Son nods. One more scan. They take off. Running as fast as they can, trying to stay low. Neither look anywhere but straight ahead.

They make it to the tree line, dropping and rolling into the cover.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Staying near the ground Mother gathers Son.

MOTHER

(whispering)

We have to move further into the  
woods.

They inch farther into the forest away from the open field. Mother begins to relax. SERGEANT, a menacing man in his early-forties, rolls out from behind a tree. His arm snakes around Mother, locking her in hold with a knife at the base of her throat. He cups a hand over her mouth.

Son, unaware, keeps walking. He becomes entangled in the long arms of PRIVATE, a lean man in his early thirties, who pops out from the bushes. Son struggles and flails about in Private's grip.

Two more soldiers come down from their vantage points in the trees. SPECIALS, an inquisitive man in his thirties. His belt has maps encased in plastic hanging from it, along with gadgets galore. GUNNER, a woman in her mid-thirties with heavy artillery, approaches the boy.

PRIVATE

What cha got there Sarge?

SERGANT

Well, it ain't bunny rabbits.

Gunner approaches Son. She pokes him.

SPECIALS

What do you think Gunner?

GUNNER  
They're Scheduled.

Private drops Son, backs away from him like he were a  
venomous snake.

PRIVATE  
Get rid of em.

SPECIALS  
They'll be hunted.

Sergant eases the knife away from Mother's throat.

SERGANT  
Is this true?

MOTHER  
Yes.

GUNNER  
When?

MOTHER  
Tonight.

Gunner and Sergant exchange a look.

SERGANT  
Leave em.

The soldiers turn to leave.

MOTHER  
Wait.

They pause, look to her.

MOTHER (CONT'D)  
I'm going back.

SON  
No!

He runs to clutch her.

MOTHER  
It's the only way. He can fight.

SPECIALS  
He'll die out there.

PRIVATE

This isn't play time, it's war,  
hard core "kill all" war.

MOTHER

In what option would he not die?

PRIVATE

Run.

MOTHER

They'll find us.

SPECIALS

You know what they'll do.

A grim nod shared.

Gunner crouches to Son. She hands him one of her guns. Helps him to hold it, grip it correctly.

GUNNER

Not bad. Ever shoot one?

Son shakes his head no.

GUNNER (CONT'D)

Good, wouldn't want to correct bad habits.

Mother's heart lurches watching Gunner with her weapon, her freedom, and her son.

Gunner takes back her weapon, faces Mother. Taking each other in, they are the same age, each could be the other.

GUNNER (CONT'D)

He'll do.

Son reattaches to Mother.

MOTHER

It has to be this way.

SON

Why?

MOTHER

Someone must be there.

SON

You're scheduled.

MOTHER

I know.

SON

I won't stay without you.

MOTHER

You will, and you will fight.

Son lays his head on Mother.

SERGANT

That's it then, dusk's coming.

Mother Salutes Son.

He salutes back.

She turns to leave. One foot in front of the other, until she can walk properly.

EXT. OUTSIDE - DAY

Mother tunnels back towards her prison.

INT. ROOM - NIGHT

Filthy, covered in the burden of her journey, Mother stands in the middle of her holding cell. Son's stick gun tucked into her belt, waiting for her call.

Slave opens the door. Her averted gaze darts around the room. No Son. Slave's eyes rise. They meet Mother's.

Mother approaches her. Slave backs up, Mother grabs her hand and places the pill inside it.

Slave looks into her palm. Silence.

Slave boldly makes eye contact with Mother.

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - NIGHT

Mother stands alone on the football field.

The lights switch on. Blinding. The horn blows.

She stands tall. Deep breath.

FADE TO BLACK.

(CONT' (CONT'D)