

THE OTHER DAUGHTER

an original screenplay by

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FADE IN:

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

SUSAN (20s), long skirt, hippy appearance, hurries through the dark woods, taking frequent glances behind her. She carries a bundle in her arms, wrapped in a blanket. A baby COOS from within.

FOOTSTEPS seem to race after her, not just one person's, but several.

EXT. BRENTWOOD - STREET - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

All is quiet. An interior light burns inside a church.

Susan emerges from the woods. She pauses a moment to scan the street. Heads straight to the church.

INT. CHURCH - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

No one in sight. Susan stops inside the main doors, takes a moment to check her surroundings. She pants as she walks up the aisle to the pulpit. There, she lays down the infant on the floor and races back up the aisle.

At the doors, she pauses to look back at the wiggling bundle. She worries but knows what she must do. She exits.

EXT. CHURCH - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Susan showcases extreme paranoia as she leaves the steps. She races to the...

WOODS

Just when she thinks she is safe, something unseen in her way terrifies her. She turns to the opposite direction. Stops suddenly and starts to scream.

Someone grabs her from behind just in time to silence her. Susan is forced to the ground, the hand still over her mouth. Another hand lifts into the air. It firmly holds a knife.

Susan's eyes go wide. She tries to scream, but the first hand muffles the sound.

The knife plunges into her, over and over. Susan grunts in terrible pain. Her eyes drift closed as she grows still. FOOTSTEPS race away from the scene.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

An SUV moves along the scenic route surrounded by nature.

SUPER - 8 Years Later

INT. SUV - MOVING - DAY - CONTINUOUS

The rear of the vehicle is filled with luggage and a few boxes of personal belongings.

TONY RICHARDS (early 30s), a helluva nice guy, born to be a dad, drives. Seated next to him is KIMBERLY (KIM) RICHARDS (early 30s), always smiling, a pleasant person to be around.

Country MUSIC plays on the radio. Kim sings to the tune, having a great time.

Strapped into the back seat is ASHLEY RICHARDS (8), an adorable little girl in a pretty dress. She watches her mom in disbelief.

Kim finishes the song with enthusiasm. She looks back at Ashley for approval.

KIM

What did you think?

ASHLEY

That I need to ask Santa for earplugs
this year.

Tony chuckles quietly. Kim playfully turns to him. Tony tries to wipe the smirk from his face, but he just can't.

Kim turns down the music and sits back.

ASHLEY

Are we gonna have a cow?

TONY

No, Honey... although fresh milk in
the mornings does sound pretty cool.

KIM

(to Ashley)

Just because people live in the country doesn't mean they have to own farm animals.

ASHLEY

What if I want a cow?

TONY

I think you'll have to settle for a cat.

ASHLEY

I'd rather have a dog.

Tony and Kim exchange a smile.

EXT. RICHARDS' HOUSE - DAY - LATER

A nice two-story house on a large piece of land. A full front porch. A pole barn to the rear. A swing hangs from a tree in the backyard.

Tony's SUV parks near the house. All three inhabitants get out. While the parents marvel at their new home, Ashley is caught up in the game she plays on her DS.

KIM

I love it out here.

Tony opens the rear hatch on the SUV and grabs a box.

TONY

Good thing, because I don't plan on moving again any time soon.

He heads to the front porch.

TONY

This job's a keeper.

Ashley looks up.

ASHLEY

Do we have to sleep on the floor tonight?

Kim puts an arm around her. They go to the porch.

KIM

The moving van's supposed to be here any minute. You'll have your bed in time, okay?

Ashley turns her focus back to her game.

ON THE PORCH

Tony tries to stick a key in the lock while juggling the box. He nearly drops the supplies in the process. Kim rushes up to him and takes the key.

KIM

All you had to do was ask for help.

She unlocks the door and opens it.

TONY

(joking)

I'm a man, Kim. It's against our code to ask for help.

He takes the box inside.

ASHLEY

Do women have codes, too?

KIM

You'll have to wait until you become one to find out.

They enter, leaving the door open.

INT. RICHARDS' HOUSE - ENTRY - DAY - CONTINUOUS

A hardwood floor. Stairs nearby along with a coat closet at the bottom. Open doorways to a living room, dining room, and kitchen. A half bath is connected to the hall.

Kim and Ashley stand just inside. Tony leaves the living room without the box. He looks outside and sees a moving van pull in, towing a car behind it.

TONY

Movers are here. I'll give them a hand.

He steps outside.

Ashley watches the DS screen intently as she works hard to get her character through a virtual world. Kim lays a hand on her shoulder as she looks all around them.

KIM

I'm gonna need a little help getting this place cleaned up.

She waits for a response from Ashley. It appears that Ashley hasn't even heard her. Kim swipes the DS out of her hands.

ASHLEY

Hey!

KIM

Your dad and I don't mind you playing these games on occasion but if you start getting obsessed, we'll put time limits on them. Got me?

ASHLEY

I thought you were a cool mom.

Kim grips her chin.

KIM

Oh, I'm cool. And let's try to keep me that way. You won't like me if I'm hot.

Ashley frowns. She holds out her hand. Kim lays the DS in it. Ashley wanders down the hall, full attention back on her game.

Kim crosses her arms and smiles at the sight.

INT. RICHARDS' HOUSE - ASHLEY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

A twin bed is set up but everything else is a mess. A few boxes, contents spilling from one. Some toys on the floor.

Ashley, in a nightgown and hugging a doll (Bonnie) to her, hops into bed. Kim, wearing a robe and slippers, covers her lovingly. The enormous love she feels for her little girl is obvious.

ASHLEY

Mom?

KIM

Hmmm?