

Stephen Mitchell  
70 Palmer Crescent  
Newham VIC 3442

## **THE PERIMETER**

DRAFT #10C

Written by  
Stephen Mitchell

From an idea by Ian Dixon & Stephen Mitchell

**EXT. DEEP IN THE FOREST - DAY**

Between the trunks of vast gum trees, we see a view across a forested valley to hill after hill of impenetrable bushland.

Inside the forest, away from the view, the trees cluster close.

SFX: Birds twitter. Insects add layers of buzz. Frogs creak. The effect is overbearing, claustrophobic.

Suddenly, there is movement - a flash of an animal between leaves. Then nothing.

Nearby, another glimpse. It darts through a dapple of sunlight - tawny fur, a sinewed haunch.

SFX: DRUMMING of paws. SKIDDING on leaves. A quick SNARL.

Rosellas burst squawking from a thicket of lomandra.

**ANIMAL POV - RUNNING THROUGH THE FOREST**

SFX: Animal PANTING.

Darting between trees, leaping fallen branches, following rabbit paths, diving through tunnels in the undergrowth...

Deeper in the forest, it is darker and quieter. The sun finds its way through tight spaces in the canopy.

SFX: The sounds of the forest are less cacophonous, more haunting. The occasional lonely piping of a bellbird is interspersed with anonymous skritches, taps and flutters.

The animal's progress slows.

Ahead, a woman (MUM) stands in a semi-crouch, hand extended into mid-air...feeling for something. Her posture and gently questing hand are intensely focused - but what she is doing is mysterious.

Animal slinks closer.

END ANIMAL POV

SFX: Foliage RUSTLES.

Mum looks around. Animal sinks into the grass.

Mum scans the forest. She is in her mid-forties, serious-looking, dressed sensibly for the bush, with a satchel draped across her shoulder.

She listens. Nothing. Glancing downwards, she spots something on the ground with a frown. She bends down.

It is a green plastic tag with some figures scrawled on it in black marker.

MUM  
(Muttering)  
What the...?

She picks it up. Peering through the trees, she paces carefully until she finds what she is looking for: a bamboo stick planted in the ground. At the top of the stick, a small plastic device is attached by loops of electrical tape. A red sensor light on the box blinks rythmnically. On the ground at the base of the stick are two other plastic tags, red and yellow.

With a grunt of annoyance, she crouches down, rummaging in her satchel. She emerges with three bulldog clips with which she re-attaches the tags to the stick. Satisfied, she pulls out an ipad and plugs a usb cable into the device on the stick.

ANIMAL POV

The animal creeps closer. Mum is unaware. The device beeps and she unplugs. She mutters to herself. The animal gets closer and closer.

A voice calls distantly.

HINNI (O.S.)  
Mum!

Mum looks up. The call comes again. She stands, shoving the ipad back in the satchel, and walks in a direction of the voice, to where the trees thin out and the light is brighter.

The animal follows, keeping low through the grass. It reaches the bamboo stick with the device.

The animal pauses momentarily.

SFX: A querulous GROWL.

Mum dwindles out of sight. The animal's forward movement resumes.

SFX: An EERIE HUM, alien to the environment. It creeps in from nothing, builds to a quiet, unsettling climax as we pass the stick and the blinking light, then fades abruptly away behind us.

**EXT. HOUSE CLEARING - DAY**

ANIMAL POV CONTINUES

Through the trees, a glimpse of a clearing and house at its centre, lit gold by the late afternoon sun.

Emerging from the trees, the animal accelerates, catching up with Mum.

HINNI (O.S.)

Mum!

Mum changes direction, and disappears around the corner of an outbuilding. The animal follows.

Around the corner, it is almost upon her but a gate closes, barring its way. It looks through the crossed wires as Mum walks away.

END ANIMAL POV

Mum pauses. She looks behind her but sees nothing.

HINNI (O.S.) (CONT'D)

(Not so distant)

Muuuum!

MUM

(Irritably)

Coming...

Mum resumes her progress towards the trees on the other side of the house clearing.

**EXT. EDGE OF HOUSE CLEARING - DAY**

HINNI is kneeling among the trees. Sixteen and bespectacled, combining her mother's capable manner with a teenager's funky accessorising, she writes feverishly in a bulging notebook.

MUM

Did you take the tags off the...?

She is halted by an upraised hand as Hinni flips a page and keeps writing. Mum watches her impatiently.

MUM (CONT'D)

Is that data or graffiti?

Hinni finishes her notes, closes the brightly coloured cover of the notebook and looks up. She meets her mother's scowl with a radiant smile.

MUM (CONT'D)

I'm getting a spike in some of the readings.

HINNI  
You mean you haven't...? Ohmygod,  
Mum, just wait!

Hinni jumps up and pulls at her. She drags her over to where another bamboo stick is stuck in the ground.

MUM  
Hinni...

HINNI  
Shh. Listen.

Mum listens.

SFX: A weird, barely audible HUM.

Mum looks at Hinni. Heads together, they lean close to the invisible line marked by the stick.

SFX: The HUM intensifies.

Mum is suddenly thoughtful. She puts a hand on Hinni's shoulder.

MUM  
Okay...

Hinni looks at her excitedly.

MUM (CONT'D)  
(A little exasperated)  
Something else?

Hinni takes her hand.

HINNI  
You'll see.

Mum relents in the face of Hinni's excitement. She follows her lead. They both face into the forest.

HINNI (CONT'D)  
1, 2, 3...

They each raise a foot and step cautiously forward.

SFX: There comes a muted crackling like static electricity.

Mum flinches with surprise.

FX: A subtle RIPPLING in the air around them, like they are passing through a pane of vibrating glass. The rippling envelops them completely.

A look of ecstasy comes over both their faces, peaking to climax. They stumble forward a further step, passing through the invisible field.

FX: The rippling disappears.

Hinni whoops delightedly. Bouncing with energy, she turns to her mum...and stops. Mum is staring into the distance, tears welling in her eyes. Hinni is perplexed, uncomfortable. Mum meets her eyes.

MUM  
It's not right.

HINNI  
(Tentatively)  
But it's amazing.

MUM  
Is it? What about your sister? Is  
it amazing for her?

Hinni looks up at the house. In an upstairs window, a face. The face ducks out of sight.

HINNI  
(Shrugs)  
She's healthy.

Mum swats at her tears and turns away.

HINNI (CONT'D)  
We could ask for help. Is that out  
of...?

MUM  
(Snaps)  
Yes. Out of the question.

Angrily, Mum drops to one knee, swivels her satchel from hip to lap and unpacks it, removing the ipad, a variety of electrical devices, and ziplock bags containing coiled wires.

Hinni crouches in front of her mum and gently helps.

HINNI  
You could just talk to him.

Mum takes hold of her arms.

MUM  
No. I can't. I won't. You  
understand that, don't you? You're  
not lab rats.

Hinni glances at the assembled paraphenalia and grimaces sceptically.

**INT. HOUSE, NURSERY ROOM - DAY**

SFX: The voice of a female AUDIOBOOK NARRATOR (O.S.) overlays the action of the scene. (There is no other sound audible.)

Darkness frames the colours of an octagonal leadlight window. A silhouette steps in front.

AUDIOBOOK NARRATOR (O.S.)  
Once upon a time there was a wicked  
sprite, the most mischievous of all  
sprites.

A second window, with a faint rectangle of light around a drawn blind. The darkness in the room makes way inch by inch as the window blind is slowly raised.

The widening strip of light slowly moves up the expressionless face of a young girl (SARASI), creeping from neck to chin to mouth to nose and, eventually, eyes.

Nine years old, she is wearing a pair of headphones, and listening to Hans Christian Andersen's *The Snow Queen*.

AUDIOBOOK NARRATOR (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
One day he made a mirror with the  
power of reflecting all that was  
good and beautiful so that it  
looked poor and mean...

Sarasi's eyes squint in the light. Through the window, she looks down at her mother and Hinni at the edge of the clearing. Hinni and Mum suddenly look up at Sarasi. Sarasi spins out of sight.

AUDIOBOOK NARRATOR (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
But one day the mirror fell to the  
earth, where it was dashed in a  
hundred million and more pieces.

Sarasi peeks around the edge of the window. Mum and Hinni are no longer looking. Sarasi resumes her position, distractedly pinching her lip and cheek with a bulldog clip. She pulls on the clip, stretching her lip painfully until it tugs free.

Sarasi looks down at her arm. The skin is pinched by a dozen or more bulldog clips.

AUDIOBOOK NARRATOR (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
And now the broken mirror worked  
much more evil than before.

She plucks them off, one by one.

**EXT. HOUSE CLEARING, OUTSIDE THE PERIMETER - DAY**

Hinni submits passively as her mum attaches sensor patches to her skin (temples, under her ears, back of her neck, wrists etc) and connects them to wires with more bulldog clips.

Their eyes meet.

HINNI

What was that about lab rats?

Mum can't hide the distress that flickers across her face. Hinni touches her gently on the shoulder. Mum jumps.

HINNI (CONT'D)

Joke, Mum. Jeez.

Mum smiles weakly. She picks up a transmitter and clips it to Hinni's jeans. She plugs in the tangle of wires from the sensors. Mum tugs on the wires.

HINNI (CONT'D)

Ow!

MUM

(With a smile)

Oh, sorry.

Hinni swipes at her. Mum ducks.

HINNI

Okay, rat number one plugged in and ready.

Mum rolls her eyes.

**INT. HOUSE, NURSERY ROOM - DAY**

SFX: Audiobook.

Sarasi steps in front of the octagonal, leadlight window. She squeezes a bulldog clip open and closed.

AUDIOBOOK NARRATOR (O.S.) (O.S.)

Some of the pieces were hardly bigger than a grain of sand.

She looks down, eyes focussing on something O.S.

Sarasi leans forward, her face garish in the light from the leadlight window. The bulldog clip in her hand looms gigantically. She squeezes it open like enormous jaws.

**EXT. HOUSE CLEARING, OUTSIDE THE PERIMETER - DAY**

Mum cups Hinni's face in her hands.

MUM

We won't be here forever. I  
promise.

Hinni's lips purse noncommittally.

HINNI

Do you?

Mum eyes her daughter carefully. She leans forward so that  
their foreheads touch.

At the same moment, the perimeter goes...

SFX: BZZZZT! Birds SQUAWK in alarm.

Startled, they look up. Birds are scattering into the sky.

SFX: Ominous HUM.

**INT. HOUSE, KITCHEN/LIVING ROOM - DAY**

KITCHEN: Clock display on the microwave goes blank. Fridge  
motor shudders to a halt.

LIVING ROOM: On the TV, 'The Village of the Damned' movie is  
suddenly extinguished as the screen goes black.

Silence.

**INT. HOUSE, NURSERY ROOM - DAY**

SFX: Audiobook.

Sarasi (still with the audiobook narration blocking all other  
sound) drops a bulldog clip, backs in alarm to the nursery  
door, and opens it.

AUDIOBOOK NARRATOR (O.S.)

The pieces of the broken mirror  
flew about the wide world and got  
into people's eyes.

The outside of the door has a nameplate saying 'Nayana' in  
bright primary colours, decorated with concentric rings.

AUDIOBOOK NARRATOR (O.S.) (CONT'D)

And then people saw everything  
perverted, or only had an eye for  
that which was evil.

Staring anxiously, Sarasi steps back out of the room. She  
swings the door slowly and deliberately shut. The door closes  
to a narrow gap, through which we can see Sarasi's eye.

**EXT. HOUSE CLEARING, OUTSIDE THE PERIMETER - DAY**

Hinni steps up to the invisible perimeter. Mum gives her a nod.

MUM  
Darling. Slowly...

Hinni moves forward as Mum watches, drawing closer to the invisible perimeter.

SFX: The HUMMING has a new note to it, shrill. TWITTERINGS suddenly seem to be going berserk.

Birds dart and wheel above, disturbed. Hinni moves forward very slowly.

SFX: A CRACKLING.

AUDIOBOOK NARRATOR (O.S.) (PRE-LAP)  
Some even got a splinter in their heart...

**INT. HOUSE, NURSERY/LANDING OUTSIDE NURSERY - DAY**

SFX: Audiobook. Underneath, ominous HUMMING.

AUDIOBOOK NARRATOR (O.S.)  
...and their heart became like a lump of ice.

Sarasi's eye is all that can be seen in the last thin gap between door and jamb...before the door shuts completely.

**EXT. HOUSE CLEARING, INSIDE THE PERIMETER - DAY**

ANIMAL POV

The distant figures of Hinni and Mum are visible through the crossed wires of the gate. We turn away and circumnavigate the house.

We drop our view to ground level and accelerate towards the front door, which is ajar.

We enter.

SFX: Menacing GROWL.

**INT. HOUSE, STAIRWELL/KITCHEN/HALL/LIVING ROOM - DAY**

SFX: Audiobook

At the top of the steps, Sarasi backs away from the nursery door.

AUDIOBOOK NARRATOR (O.S.) (O.S.)  
The fine splinters still flew about  
in the air. And now we shall hear  
what happened next...

Suddenly, she turns guiltily and pulls the headphones from her ears.

SFX: Replace audiobook with the general atmos of the scene. Headphone audio becomes soft and tinny.

Sarasi thumbs her ipod, extinguishing the tinny sound from the headphones.

Hyper-alert, she listens anxiously. The house is silent.

With a big exhaled breath of relief, she descends the stairs to the HALLWAY. By the glass sliding door to the LIVING ROOM, looks down...and gasps.

ANIMAL POV

Creeping up behind Sarasi as she slowly sinks to a crouch in the LIVING ROOM doorway.

END ANIMAL POV

Sarasi squats before the mauled remains of a baby doll. One arm is missing, an eye hanging loose. She pokes it and finger comes away with a sticky strand of saliva. Disgusted, she shakes it off.

There is a noise behind her. She turns.

A black shape leaps at her. She squeals. It is a dog (TRIPPI). It pins her to the doorframe with its paws on her shoulders and licks her face. She laughs and lets it.

She waggles the doll in the dog's face.

SARASI  
(Sternly)  
You are in big trouble.

With a conspiratorial smile, she inserts the doll in the dog's slavering mouth.

**EXT. HOUSE CLEARING, INSIDE THE PERIMETER - DAY**

Laughing, Sarasi runs in circles across the grass, holding the doll out tantalisingly behind her, while Trippi chases her delightedly.

SFX: There is no sound of birds, no wind, just an eerie, dead silence in which Sarasi's laughter drifts emptily.

Unnoticing, Sarasi spins around, drawing Tripi into a tight orbit. With a whoop she hurls the doll high into the sky. Suddenly...

SFX: A sharp crack like a massive voltage arcing.

Sarasi's gaze drops from the doll's soaring arc to see Hinni enveloped in a bright flash of light. Frozen, open mouthed, she watches as Hinni topples and falls inertly the ground.

Sarasi stares, uncomprehending.

The doll hits the ground.

The dog starts barking, barking, barking. Sarasi runs towards her sister. She stops when she gets close.

Hinni is dead, her body in rictus, her eyes wide and staring sightlessly. Stunned, Sarasi looks to her mother.

SARASI

Mama?

She sees her mum through a slight rippling distortion (like looking through an imperfect pane of glass). Mum cries out to Hinni but Sarasi can't hear her.

**EXT. HOUSE CLEARING, OUTSIDE THE PERIMETER - DAY**

SFX: On the other side of the perimeter, birds are twittering, insects buzzing, the wind is soughing through the trees.

MUM

Hinni! Jesus, Hinni, no...

She leaps instinctively forward, then stops herself. She looks wildly around, spots the stick and its blinking red light just inches ahead of her. She reaches forward...

SFX: SNAP!

A spark of light from Mum's fingertips. She snatches her hand back. The invisible barrier ripples in the air.

Uncertain what to do, she looks up. She sees Sarasi through the distorting ripple MOS. The dog is barking silently, Sarasi mouthing unheard pleas to her mother.

Mum holds up her hands.

MUM (CONT'D)

Sarasi! Go back inside! Go back inside!

Sarasi is frightened, crying MOS. She runs towards her mother. Mum steps right to the edge of the deadly perimeter.

SFX: A CRACKLING sound, like static electricity. Her voice echoes back at her off the barrier, distorted.

MUM (CONT'D)

Sarasi! No! No! Stay away!

Sarasi keeps coming, opening her arms.

MUM (CONT'D)

(Frantic)

Stop! Stop!

Sarasi is surely about to cross the perimeter. Horrorstruck, Mum lunges forward.

SFX: Crack!

A burst of light around her.

**EXT. HOUSE CLEARING, INSIDE THE PERIMETER - DAY**

On the other side, Sarasi is knocked to the ground by her falling mother, who lands heavily on top of her, squashing the air from her lungs and trapping Sarasi underneath. Mum's body judders, spasming, then twitches to utter stillness.

Sarasi lies there for a moment, winded, crushed, but clutching tight to her mum. In the eerie silence, the dog's barking trails off into a tremulous growling.

Sarasi's hands tighten around her mother's back.

SARASI

Mama...?

But her mother doesn't cuddle back. She lies unmoving, her weight pressing Sarasi into the ground, her arm across her throat. Sarasi's hands release their instinctive clutch. She pats her, then pushes at her mother but can't shift her.

SARASI (CONT'D)

(Breathlessly)

Mama...! Too heavy...!

She doesn't answer. Sarasi wrenches at her mum's arm but it won't move. She is choking now. Her legs kick in panic. Her body thrashes beneath her mother's weight. Her mum sags to one side. Sarasi wriggles free. Her mother's head lolls back, the eyes staring.

There is a moment in which the little girl stares, trying to absorb what this means.

She grasps her mum's face between her hands, calling to her, trying to find a place with her own face where her mum's eyes will focus on her. She shakes her. Mum's eyes roll back, presenting just the whites.

Sarasi backs away. She looks from her mother to her sister, both utterly motionless on the ground. She clutches at her headphones. She spins, eyes darting, but there is nothing and no-one to help.

She screws her eyes shut.

SARASI (CONT'D)

Mama's clever girl. Smart Sarasi. Stay where I am, don't move. Don't get in a stranger's car. Drink water. Apply pressure. Elevate. Lie still. Find a grown up. Call for help. Call for help. *Call for help.*

Her eyes snap open. She returns to her mum. Averting her eyes, she pats at her mother's rumpled clothing.

SARASI (CONT'D)

Fire, accident, emergency. Fire, accident, emergency. Triple oh. Oh oh oh. Fire, accident...

She feels the shape of a phone in her mother's pocket. She pulls it out.

The phone screen lights up. She jabs at the zero three times. Onscreen: NO SERVICE. She holds it up, waving it around, looking for some coverage. She shakes it, bangs it on her palm. Nothing. She chucks it down.

**INT. HOUSE, BATHROOM - DAY**

In a blind rush, Sarasi reaches up to open a cabinet. She feels along the shelves, dislodging razors, small bottles, jars. They topple down upon her, clatter and smash on the floor.

**EXT. HOUSE CLEARING, INSIDE THE PERIMETER - DAY**

Sarasi returns to her mum at a run, bringing her panadol and a glass of water. She skids to her knees, presses the capsules between her mother's slack lips and tries to give her water. The water pours from her mouth. The capsules drop out.

SARASI

Please, Mama, don't be sick. Feel better. Wake up. Wake up, wake up, wake up.

(MORE)

SARASI (CONT'D)

Wake up, wake up, wake up, wake up,  
wake up, wake up, wake up, wakeup  
wakeupwakeupwakeupwakeupwakeupwakeup  
pwakeupwakeupWAKEUPWAKEUPWAKEUP!

She hits her, then hits her harder, screams wordlessly at her. The scream tails off into a long low moan as she rocks back and forth.

SARASI (CONT'D)

(Tiny voice)

What do I do?

Mum doesn't answer. Sarasi settles herself, wipes away her tears. Sniffling, she lies down, pressing up close to her mum. She picks up her mum's hand, drags it around her in a cuddle, uses it to stroke her own hair reassuringly, presses it against her chest.

Nearby, the invisible perimeter ripples and hums.

Sarasi pulls her mum's arm tighter around her, pulling the satchel across and spilling its contents over Sarasi. A handful of bulldog clips tumble onto the grass in front of her.

Sarasi freezes. She stares at the clips, startled and appalled.

She bursts into action, throwing off her mum's arm and hurling herself towards the house.

**INT. HOUSE, HALL/STAIRWELL/LANDING - DAY**

The front door slams open and Sarasi careers in. She runs to the foot of the stairs.

SARASI POV

Advancing up the stairs, through a baby-gate at the top, then to the nursery door, closer and closer to the 'Nayana' nameplate.

END SARASI POV

Sarasi places one hand on the door-handle, tilting her head to listen. There is nothing. She opens the door.

SFX: Instantly, the air is filled with the uncontrolled shrieking of a child at full volume.

**INT. HOUSE, NURSERY - DAY**

The shrieking is ear-splitting. In the corner of the room, beneath the leadlight window, is a cot. Inside the cot is a two-year-old child (NAYANA).

Sarasi runs to the cot. Inside, Nayana is beside herself.

There are bulldog clips all over Nayana, clamped to her fingers, toes, ears, arms. Sarasi pulls the clips off.

SARASI

Sorry sorry sorry sorry...

She lifts her out of the cot, sits her on the ground, and attempts to soothe her. She tries the cuddly toys, a dummy...but nothing works.

SARASI (CONT'D)

Just stop, Nayana! Please!

Sarasi stands. She looks down her sister for a moment, then turns and abruptly exits the room.

Abandoned, Nayana sits helplessly, wailing. Several beats, in which Nayana just cries and cries.

Suddenly Sarasi is back.

SARASI (CONT'D)

Look what I've got.

Crouching, she pulls from behind her back the mutilated doll. She brushes off some grass and holds its now grotesque face up to Nayana.

Nayana's wailing hits a new height. She hurls the doll across the room.

Sarasi rocks back on her heels, nearly in tears. Then she has a bright idea.

SARASI (CONT'D)

Nayana, Nayana...wanna play with Tripi?

She calls out to Tripi, gives a sharp whistle. The dog appears and trots into the room. Sarasi beckons him over. Nayana's crying winds down.

SARASI (CONT'D)

See Nayana? It's Tripi. Tripi's here to play. Give him a cuddle.

Nayana reaches out a chubby hand to Tripi. The dog licks her and settles down. Nayana puts her arms around him and snuggles.

SARASI (CONT'D)

That's a girl. Give Tripi a big cuddle.

Nayana and the dog lie together on the rug. The pattern on the carpet forms a series of concentric circles around them.

**EXT. HOUSE CLEARING, INSIDE THE PERIMETER - EVENING**

Sarasi sits kneeling at the bodies of Mum and Hinni. The sun is setting. The light gets gloomy.

SFX: The sinister rasping of a single cicada.

She looks around, listening anxiously.

**INT. HOUSE, NURSERY - EVENING**

The inside of the house is in darkness. Silhouetted against the wan dusk-light of the window, Tripi shakes himself and abandons Nayana.

**EXT. HOUSE CLEARING, INSIDE THE PERIMETER - EVENING**

Pointing the beam of a dolphin torch through near darkness, Sarasi drags blankets and pillows through the trees.

She arrives at the bodies of Mum and Hinni. Hinni's glasses are askew on her face; she takes them off, folds them up and puts them in her sister's pocket. Gently, she covers them up, tucks them in, and kisses both of them on the cheek.

O.S. From the house comes distant crying.

Sarasi sighs and stands.

**INT. HOUSE, KITCHEN - EVENING**

O.S. Nayana's crying drifts down from upstairs.

SARASI

(Mutters)

I'm coming.

Sarasi's torch beam hovers over photos of Hinni, Sarasi and Nayana, a child's drawings of concentric rings, a cleaning roster with Hinni and Sarasi's names, graffitied by both girls - all stuck with magnets to a fridge door.

Sarasi opens the fridge door. No light comes on. She shines the torch in.

SFX: Suddenly, off to one side, there comes a fearsome CRUNCHING.

Sarasi swings the torch. In its light, she picks up Tripi in the corner tucking into the dry food in his dog bowl.

She returns the beam to the fridge, shining it across the contents, working her way up from the vegetable drawer, shelves with butter and spreads, tupperware containers...

On the top shelf, a home-made birthday cake.

Sarasi pulls the cake out and brings the torch closer. Written on it with icing: 'Nayana' and a big number '2'.

O.S. Nayana cries out. There comes a series of THUMPS.

Tripi barks and his claws clatter on the hard floor as he dashes off to investigate. Sarasi follows him with the torch.

**EXT/INT. HOUSE, STAIRWELL - EVENING**

Nayana is lying at the foot of the stairs as Tripi and Sarasi arrive.

SARASI

Naya!

Sarasi peers anxiously at the unmoving Nayana.

SARASI (CONT'D)

Naya?

Tripi snuffles up to her. For a moment, nothing...then Nayana lets loose a long wail.

SARASI (CONT'D)

(Annoyed)

You're not allowed on the stairs.

Nayana wails louder.

Reluctantly, Sarasi crouches down beside her.

SARASI (CONT'D)

Are you hurt?

Nayana begins crawling away.

NAYANA

Mama!

Nayana halts a short distance away and sits, wailing for her mum.

SARASI

Mama can't come!

Sarasi sits too. Tripi noses up to her. She pushes him away.

SARASI (CONT'D)

There's just me.

Sarasi watches Nayana helplessly. She gets up and leaves Nayana in the dark, crying and crying.

After a moment, Sarasi returns and squats in front of her. She holds up some birthday candles.

SARASI (CONT'D)  
Come on, Naya. I've got something  
for you.

**INT. HOUSE, KITCHEN - NIGHT**

Carrying the sniffing Nayana, Sarasi steps into the kitchen.

SARASI  
Tripi, no!

In the torchlight, Tripi is chowing down on the birthday cake sitting on the floor beside the fridge. He looks up guiltily. Sarasi charges at him, chasing him away.

**INT. HOUSE, MUM'S BEDROOM - EVENING**

The torch sits at the end of the bed, the beam shining across to where Sarasi and Nayana sit with pillows propped up behind them. On the covers before them sits the partially mauled cake with the two candles poked into the icing and gleaming with a tiny flame. Tripi hovers hopefully beside the bed.

Sarasi sings dispiritedly.

SARASI  
Happy birthday to you,  
Happy birthday to you,  
Happy birthday dear Nayana,  
Happy birthday to you.

Nayana claps delightedly.

SARASI (CONT'D)  
Go on then.

Nayana leans forward and blows as hard as she can. The flames flutter out. Sarasi plucks out the candles, tossing them aside, and gouges out a chunk of cake with her fingers. She hands it to Nayana who chomps in happily. Sarasi gets herself a bit.

Tripi growls enquiringly. Sarasi looks at him.

SARASI (CONT'D)  
You gotta be kidding.

She crams the cake in her mouth.

**INT. HOUSE, MUM'S BEDROOM - LATER**

Darkness. The torch beam slides across the room: the empty cake plate, Tripi licking up crumbs, Nayana asleep on the big bed.

At the end of the bed, the torchlight comes to rest on a backpack. Sarasi puts food in the backpack and zips it up. She hefts it, feeling the weight. She swings the torch back to Nayana.

SARASI

(Murmurs)

Tomorrow...

She places the backpack beside the bed and climbs in next to Nayana. She drags the covers over herself and her sister and clicks the torch out.

Beat.

The torch is switched back on. For a moment, Sarasi clutches it to her chest again. She looks up to see her shadow, black and huge on the ceiling.

She locates her ipod beside the bed and puts the headphones on. She presses 'play'.

AUDIOBOOK NARRATOR (O.S.)

It was two children looking out -  
Gerda and Kay.

She scrolls through images on the ipod until she finds one of her mum holding Nayana, standing next to Sarasi, Hinni and a MAN whose face is turned away.

AUDIOBOOK NARRATOR (O.S.) (CONT'D)

In winter they had to go down the  
long stairs and out-of-doors where  
there was quite a snow-storm...

She lays the ipod on the pillow, switches off the torch, and lays her face down next to the ipod screen. Eventually, she closes her eyes.

**EXT. FOREST - OUTSIDE THE PERIMETER - DAWN**

As light creeps over the trees. Birds begin to wake up.

SFX: Occasional twitterings build to a full dawn chorus. A magpie adds its carolling.

A magpie launches from a branch and spirals down through the trees.

INSERT: BIRD POV

We swoop through the forest, dodging tree trunks and branches. Up ahead, we see the clearing and the house within.

SFX: A sudden HUMMING, followed instantly by a CRACK!

A blinding flash. Everything goes white.

**EXT. HOUSE CLEARING, INSIDE THE PERIMETER - DAWN**

The magpie plummets and drops dead to the leaves next to the bodies of Mum and Hinni.

**INT. HOUSE, MUM'S BEDROOM - MORNING**

Morning light angles across Sarasi's face. Sarasi's eyes snap open.

SARASI

Mama?

She rushes to the window and presses her face against the glass.

Through the window, across the clearing, she sees the two blanketed lumps that are her mother and sister.

Sarasi slides down the glass till she is on her knees, staring miserably out.

**INT. HOUSE, MUM'S BEDROOM - A SHORT TIME LATER**

Sarasi slips the backpack over her shoulders.

She adds a baby bottle of milk to a collection of food laid out on the bed beside the sleeping Nayana. Running her eyes across the various items, she picks up two bananas, cracks the tops open and replaces them.

Nayana doesn't wake. Sarasi leaves. She pauses as she steps through the doorway. Looks back.

SARASI

Sorry.

She closes the door.

**EXT. HOUSE CLEARING, INSIDE THE PERIMETER - MORNING**

Sarasi runs through the dewy grass. She abruptly slows when the bodies of Mum and Hinni come into view. She halts, staring at the lumps shrouded under the blankets.

Her mum's hand is poking out, pale, beaded with dew.

Sarasi circles them, unwilling to get closer. She leans over her mother and stretches out her hand. She hesitates to touch the body, then pokes a timorous finger into the inert form beneath the blanket. She lowers her whole trembling hand and gives her a tentative shake.

Mum, of course, doesn't wake. Sarasi leans close, uncertainty written across her face.

SARASI

Where do I go?

Sighing, she stands and hunches her backpack up. She looks into the forest ahead fearfully. One step. Then two. She falters on the third step, and turns around.

Back near the house, Tripi sits watching her.

SARASI (CONT'D)

Tripi!

Tripi growls uncertainly, but doesn't move. She steps backwards towards the perimeter.

SFX: Perimeter HUMS.

SARASI (CONT'D)

Come on...!

Her foot catches on Hinni's huddled body. She falls. As she's falling, she sees the red blinking light on the bamboo stick.

INSERT: FLASHBACK, THE DAY BEFORE - SARASI'S POV

In slo-mo, Mum, silently shouting, lunges towards us. Beside her, the red light on the bamboo stick goes blink...blink...blink...As Mum crosses the perimeter, her eyes go dead, her body collapses. A white flash obliterates everything...

END FLASHBACK

Sarasi crashes to the ground, her face pressed sideways in the dirt, face to face with the dead magpie. Beyond the magpie, the red light on the bamboo stick goes blink...blink...blink...She is exactly level with it.

SFX: Eerie HUMMING

Slowly, she turns her face towards the perimeter.

SFX: HUMMING grows louder.

She extends a finger centimetres past her nose.

SFX: CRACKLING sound.

Sarasi's finger retreats.

**INT. HOUSE, MUM'S BEDROOM - MORNING**

Nayana wakes up, grizzling. She crawls over the food Sarasi has laid out. She pauses on the edge of the bed and looks down at the drop.

**EXT. HOUSE CLEARING, INSIDE THE PERIMETER - MORNING**

On the ground before her, Sarasi sees an accretion of black specks forming a line that stretches left and right. She picks up one of the black specks, examines it more closely: a dead fly.

Sarasi stands. She looks at the line of flies on the ground. She listens.

SFX: HUMMING.

She picks up the dead magpie, steps back and flings it as hard as she can. It passes through the perimeter with a BZZZT! and disappears into some bushes on the other side, startling some birds into soundless motion. Sarasi follows one of the birds with her eyes as it flies up.

The bird's flight-path intersects with the perimeter. There is a spark of light.

SFX: ZAP.

The bird drops through the leaves and strikes the ground some way off around the edge of the clearing. Tripi races into the trees to investigate.

Sarasi re-focuses on the little box taped to the bamboo stick. Its blinking red light reflects in her eyes.

Abruptly, she rips it free from the stick, tearing the battery loose. The light stops blinking. She smashes the box against a tree.

Through the trees, she sees another red light. She sets off along the line of the perimeter until she comes to another stick with a light box. She destroys it, then runs to the next one and the next one, faster and faster, smashing them all.

Finally, running as fast as she can, she comes full circle, approaching the bodies of Mum and Hinni from the other side. She wrenches the last light box from its stick and crushes it beneath her foot.

Drawing her panting breath under control, she turns with deliberation towards the perimeter. She leans in close.

SFX: HUMMING.

She reels away with a frustrated cry...and her eyes fall on Hinni.

She squats down next to her sister. Lifting the blanket, she rips the transmitter from her jeans, dragging trailing wires and sensors from Hinni's body. She picks up a rock and smashes the transmitter to bits.

SFX: The rock SMASHES ECHO off the perimeter.

She scrambles over to the perimeter and extends a trembling hand. She winces in anticipation.

SFX: ZAP!

A spark of light. The perimeter RIPPLES in the air. She is thrown backwards and falls to the ground next to Mum.

SARASI

How do I turn it off?

Sarasi kneels beside the two bodies, a small figure in the landscape. All around her - among the trees, high in the branches, deep in the grass, in deep shade and sun-dappled corners - the menacing HUM of the invisible perimeter builds to a threatening peak.

**INT. HOUSE, MUM'S BEDROOM - DAY**

Nayana sits by the bedroom door, crying fitfully. She lifts her head and gives a long despairing wail.

**EXT. HOUSE CLEARING, INSIDE THE PERIMETER - DAY**

Kneeling in the grass, Sarasi catches sight of Tripi digging industriously beneath the trees. She stares, thinking hard. She throws off her backpack and bolts.

**EXT. HOUSE GARAGE - DAY**

A garden spade leaning against the wall. Sarasi pelts past, picking the spade up on the run.

**INT. HOUSE, MUM'S BEDROOM - DAY**

Nayana cries. Through the window, Sarasi comes into view entering the trees with spade in hand. Nayana bangs on the window.

NAYANA

Rasi!



She brushes the soil from her hand. It twitches uncontrollably, giving off fitful sparks of static. She clasps it in her good hand and clutches it to her chest.

**EXT. HOUSE CLEARING, INSIDE THE PERIMETER - DAY**

Flies buzz around the bodies of Mum and Hinni.

Sarasi staggers along the perimeter, her left hand swaddled in a corner of her filthy t-shirt. From the waist up, she is coated in a layer of dirt.

She slumps to the ground next to her mother.

SARASI

(To Mum)

I can't get out.

She comes to her mother's protruding hand, hesitates a moment, then unwraps her hurt hand with a crackle of static electricity. She puts it in her mum's hand. The sparkle of static transfers to the corpse and disappears. Sarasi closes her fingers to hold Mum's tightly. She lies down next to her.

In the grass, she suddenly spies a bright gleam. She reaches for it - Mum's mobile phone. She presses the button, the screen lights up with 'WARNING 3% BATTERY'.

Sarasi sits up. She presses the phone button - 'NO SERVICE'. She dials 000, then backspaces, removing each number. She hits 'CONTACTS', scrolls down to 'HOME'. A phone number comes up.

Sarasi scrambles over to the perimeter.

SFX: Perimeter HUMS.

Phone screen says '2% BATTERY'. She hits the 'CONNECT' button. Phone screen says 'DIALLING'. She tosses the phone across the perimeter.

**EXT. HOUSE CLEARING, OUTSIDE THE PERIMETER - DAY**

SFX: Sounds of the forest snap on.

The phone lies on the grass. 'NO SERVICE' disappears and is replaced by a signal icon - one bar, two bars, three bars...

'BATTERY' ticks over to 1%.

The phone is answered. A man's voice.

MAN (THROUGH THE PHONE)

Hello? Helena?

(Sadly)

I know it's you.

Behind the perimeter, Sarasi stares desperately at the phone screen. She yells and yells MOS with all her might...but no sound penetrates.

MAN (THROUGH THE PHONE) (CONT'D)  
Talk to me. Plea...

'0% BATTERY'. The phone goes dead.

**INT/EXT. FOREST/CLEARING/HOUSE, INSIDE THE PERIMETER - DAY -  
MONTAGE**

SFX: Storybook audio plays over the montage.

AUDIOBOOK NARRATOR (O.S.)  
That summer the roses flowered  
beautifully.

MONTAGE

- Timelapse of phone lying in the grass: day to night to day
- Timelapse of Mum and Hinni's graves: shadows crossing
- Timelapse of food in the fridge rotting

AUDIOBOOK NARRATOR (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Gerda had learned a song about  
roses...

**INT. HOUSE, KITCHEN - DAY**

AUDIOBOOK NARRATOR (O.S.)  
...and she sang the verse to Kay,  
who then sang it with her...

The kitchen floor is scattered with empty food tins and cereal packets. Amongst them, Sarasi lies with headphones on, writing a message on a sheet of paper: HELP. ME AND MY SISTER CAN'T GET OUT...

She finishes writing the message and folds it into a paper airplane. She adds it to a pile of paper airplanes she has already folded. She goes to scoop up the planes in a big armful, slipping the headphones off.

SFX: Nayana's crying suddenly becomes audible.

SARASI  
(Frowning)  
Alright!

**EXT. HOUSE PATIO - DAY**

On the patio, Sarasi sits the grizzling Nayana on a picnic blanket. She tries to interest her in throwing the paper planes but Nayana just rolls up into a ball and puts her hands over her ears.

Sarasi leaves, returning moments later with a toy pram and the mutilated doll. Nayana is un-interested. Fed up, Sarasi picks up all her paper planes and leaves her to it.

**EXT. HOUSE CLEARING, INSIDE THE PERIMETER - DAY**

Sarasi tracks along the perimeter, pitching paper planes through it at intervals. As she comes around to where the bodies of Mum and Hinni lay, she sees Tripi nosing investigatively under Hinni's blanket. She rebukes him sharply and he reluctantly moves away.

Sarasi tucks Hinni's blanket tightly around her. The buzzing of flies is really loud. She pushes her mum's hand beneath her blanket and tucks it tight.

Finished, she stands and cocks her arm to propel another airplane.

**EXT. HOUSE PATIO - DAY**

The doll's pram tumbles down the steps.

The patio is quiet. The doll floats face down on the surface of the pond. Nayana stands at the side. She stretches for the doll but can't reach.

**EXT. HOUSE CLEARING, INSIDE THE PERIMETER - DAY**

Sarasi pitches her last plane. It catches the air well. She follows it with her eyes as it sails up into the air, through the perimeter, and continues to coast through the trees. She moves to keep it in sight as it curves in a long arc, miraculously finding the spaces between the trunks, until it passes out of sight.

Sarasi grins...and freezes.

She stares in shock. Deeper among the trees, a YOUNG MAN is standing side-on to Sarasi. A scruffy 20-something, he is wearing dirty jeans and army shirt with a furry earflap hat, a hiker's backpack slung on one shoulder and a .22 rifle on the other.

Sarasi starts to call out, then stops herself. She looks down at the bodies. She hits the ground and begins heaping dead leaves over them. When they are hidden, she stands back up. The young man has gone.

Panicked, Sarasi hurries along the perimeter, scanning the forest for him.

Sarasi spots the man again, striding away through the trees.

She jumps up and down, waving.

SARASI

No! Wait! Come back! Help! Help me!

SFX: Sarasi's voice echoes off the invisible barrier.

She picks up sticks, stones, anything she can find, and hurls them through the barrier. The man doesn't react, continuing to walk away.

She looks around in desperation. Picking up a massive fallen branch, she staggers towards the perimeter, raising it high above her head...

SFX: A distant CRY and SPLASH.

Sarasi freezes, listening.

**EXT. HOUSE PATIO - DAY**

The area around the pond is vacant and quiet. Tripi trots into view.

INSERT

Nayana's POV: We see the green pond water over us as Nayana sinks into the murk.

Bubbles float up to the surface where the floating doll looks down. Nayana's hands flail...

BACK TO SCENE

Tripi stands at the pond, looking into the water. He laps a few mouthfuls.

INSERT

Nayana's POV: Under the water, Tripi's tongue dips in and out. His muzzle above the surface retreats out of sight. The last bubbles drift up and hit the surface.

Under the water, weeds drift across. The bubbles are all gone. Everything becomes still.

Suddenly, Sarasi comes into view above the surface. She splashes into the water and reaches down.

BACK TO SCENE

Sarasi lurches from the pond with Nayana in her arms. She holds Nayana between her knees, upending her.

There comes a choking cough, a weak cry. A full-blooded wail bursts forth.

SARASI

It's okay. You're alright...

She holds her close, while Nayana wails into her shoulder. Dripping, Sarasi stares over Nayana's head in the direction of the perimeter.

**EXT. ELSEWHERE IN THE FOREST, OUTSIDE THE PERIMETER - DAY**

An incongruous, gleaming white Mercedes Benz is dwarfed by the surrounding forest. On the roof, stands a man stripped to the waist.

MIKHAIL FARADAY closes his eyes behind tinted glasses that don't quite hide a supercilious look. He is in his late 40s, his hair dark and artificial-looking, combed fussily flat to his scalp. Between his teeth he grips a stainless steel sewing needle. His torso is pale and cadaverous, speckled with liver spots and stuck with numerous bandaids.

With his head tilted dreamily back, he peels a bandaid from one of his nipples, revealing a dried scab. He removes the needle from his lips and brings it to the nipple, pressing it in so the slack flesh dimples in. A slow hiss escapes his clenched teeth. A trickle of blood seeps from the needle puncture. Faraday tilts his head back further, taut with expectation. A muscle in his face twitches. His finger on the needle trembles.

SFX: The surrounding blanket of birdsong seems to increase in volume, slowly edging into the uncanny, taking on an insistent, artificial tone.

A long slow exhalation seems to empty the air from Faraday's body. His head lolls.

SFX: Noisy throat-clearing O.S. Sound of the forest snaps back to reality.

Faraday's head rights itself. The needle is withdrawn. He removes the trickle of blood with a deft wipe of a neat handkerchief and re-sticks the hanging bandaid.

He looks down. The young man Sarasi spotted (OLLY) is staring up at Faraday, his expression a combination of distaste and suspicion.

Faraday eases himself to the edge of the roof.

FARADAY

You are more reliable than I gave  
you credit for, Mister...um...

OLLY

Olly.

Faraday holds out his arms. Reluctantly, Olly lowers Faraday to the ground. For a moment, Faraday leaves his hands on Olly's shoulders. Olly's discomfort and confusion grows as Faraday says nothing, but just peers at him searchingly. Finally, when Olly appears about to recoil physically:

FARADAY

Soooo...?

OLLY

(Shrugs)

Nothing.

Faraday does a very poor job of hiding his disappointment. He pats Olly's cheek, then turns and picks up his clothing draped over the bonnet of the merc, pulling on a black skivvy and dabbing at his overly neat hair.

OLLY (CONT'D)

I checked every track. Nobody lives  
this far up.

Faraday takes from his pocket a pair of white cotton gloves, slips them fussily onto his hands.

FARADAY

They're here.

He points.

OLLY

I just been out that way.

Faraday shrugs and smiles thinly. Olly sighs and turns to the direction Faraday has pointed to.

Faraday follows. Between his gloved fingers, the needle gleams brightly.

**INT. HOUSE LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Sarasi wraps a red blanket around the wet Nayana but when she tries to step away, Nayana clutches at her. Sarasi surrenders for a moment's embrace, then tries to disengage. Nayana starts with a little squeak of protest that winds up into a full-blown shriek as Sarasi prises herself out of her grip.

SARASI

Naya. You hungry? Want something to  
eat?

Nayana just wails louder. Sarasi darts away.

**EXT. FOREST, OUTSIDE THE PERIMETER - DAY**

Faraday and Olly march uphill through dense woodland.

Faraday stumbles, struggling to keep up. Behind the tinted lenses, his eyes dart about, searchingly. His breathing is laboured.

FARADAY POV

Through the tint of his glasses, Faraday's gaze swings to right and left in a slightly seasick motion.

SFX: The forest sounds, the crunch of footsteps are all slightly distorted.

END FARADAY POV

The needle is pressed into the end of Faraday's index finger. The white cotton seeps red. A single drop of blood gathers at the end of the finger. It beads...and drops into space.

Faraday's foot hits the ground heavily.

SFX: Exaggerated BOOM of Faraday's footfall.

INSERT

At the edge of the perimeter, one of the bamboo sticks quivers in time with Faraday's footfall.

BACK TO SCENE

Faraday's glove is soaked in blood halfway up the finger. The needle drops from his fingers, falling in glistening cartwheels.

SFX: Forest sounds snap back to normal.

Faraday stumbles to a halt and stares ahead, suddenly on high alert.

**INT. HOUSE KITCHEN - DAY**

Sarasi kicks aside empty food containers littering the floor as she rakes through every cupboard, finding nothing.

Nayana follows her, wailing.

Sarasi scrapes at the inside of an already opened tin, but the half-a-teaspoon of mush looks gross. She sniffs it, gags and drops the spoon. Looking around, she spies the only closed cupboard in the kitchen - way up above head height.

Pushing Nayana out of her way, she drags a chair in front of the cupboard and climbs up. It is not enough for her to reach the top shelf. She up-ends a plastic bucket on top of the chair. Carefully, she gets her knees onto the bucket. She gets to one foot. Wobbles, steadies. Gets to the other foot. Wobbles some more, her hands spread for balance.

Slowly, she straightens until she is standing. She reaches up with her hands. Just out of her sight, her fingers almost touch a solitary bag of dry dog food.

She looks down to where Nayana is chucking a tantrum among the rubbish on the floor.

**EXT. FOREST, OUTSIDE THE PERIMETER - DAY**

Ahead, the trees thin out to a grassy clearing. Olly sees steps cut into the hill, a toy pram upended halfway down.

He looks back over his shoulder, sees Faraday has fallen behind.

OLLY

Hey!

He points towards the pram/steps.

Faraday snaps to attention. He staggers forward, eyes darting everywhere. He scans the area, spotting the bamboo sticks, their remnants of electrical tape, the fragments of smashed equipment.

FARADAY

Stand still.

Faraday closes his eyes. With one hand, he gropes for Olly and seizes his wrist. His other hand feels the air.

SFX: Perimeter HUM.

**INT. HOUSE, KITCHEN - DAY**

Balanced on the bucket on the chair, Sarasi lifts the protesting Nayana into her arms. The bucket wobbles precariously under her feet.

SARASI

Stop it Naya!

She hoists Nayana above her head, shoving her half in the cupboard. Distracted from crying, Nayana drags into view the bag of dog food.

SARASI (CONT'D)

That's it, Naya! Pull!

Nayana tugs. The bag inches closer to the edge. Sarasi's feet wobble. Nayana tugs again.

**EXT. FOREST, OUTSIDE THE PERIMETER - DAY**

Faraday opens his eyes.

OLLY  
Yeah, what exactly...?

Faraday ignores him. Gazing piercingly ahead, he suddenly yanks Olly's arm. Taken by surprise, Olly lurches forward and his face intersects with the perimeter.

There is a flash of light.

**INT. HOUSE, KITCHEN - DAY**

The bag of dog food hits the floor with a thump.

Nayana cries out, falling back into Sarasi's arms. The bucket tips out from under her feet.

**EXT. FOREST, OUTSIDE THE PERIMETER - DAY**

Olly reels away, yelping, clutching his face, knocking his furry earflap hat off. Faraday ignores him. He is almost welling up with pride and delight. His hands caress the air in front of him.

FARADAY  
You clever, clever thing.

Olly is on his knees, shrieking, batting at his face like he is being attacked by wasps. Faraday drags his attention away from the perimeter. He steps towards Olly, eyeing him curiously.

FARADAY (CONT'D)  
Is it painful?

Olly scrambles back, fumbling for the rifle and swings it up to point at Faraday - only he points it in the wrong direction. His eyes stare sightlessly.

OLLY  
Stay away!

Faraday brushes past the rifle and kneels in front of Olly, examining his face. Olly tries to reel away. Faraday rips off his gloves and grasps Olly's cheeks. Tiny electrical sparks arc from Olly to Faraday's hands.

**INT. HOUSE KITCHEN/LIVING/HALL - DAY**

Sunlight glints off a big pair of kitchen scissors as Sarasi cuts open the bag of dog food. She scoops some out and turns to Nayana...but Tripi is in the way. She pushes him away. He growls. She stares at him and takes a step back. Tripi steps towards her. Nayana, sitting on the upturned bucket, calls to Tripi crossly.

Sarasi backs away. Tripi prowls after her. She retreats through the living room to the front door. Tripi is pressing close. She holds the pellets as high as she can. Tripi's eyes never leave her hand.

She opens the door, then fakes throwing the dog food out onto the patio - he doesn't fall for it. Tripi lunges for her hand. Hurriedly, she hurls the pellets outside. Tripi is after them in a flash. She slams shut the door.

She returns to the kitchen. Through the door, she sees Nayana on the floor, the bag of dog food between her legs, manically shoving handfuls of pellets in her mouth.

Sarasi turns back to the front door. Just inside the living room, she sees the red blanket discarded on the floor. She picks it up.

**EXT. FOREST, OUTSIDE THE PERIMETER - DAY**

Olly's eyes clear. He blinks, waving his hand in front of his face. He looks around, then focuses on Faraday. He shoves him away.

OLLY

A fucking electric fence! You shoved me right...!

FARADAY

(Picking himself up)  
It's not an electric fence.

OLLY

Bullshit. What is it then?

Faraday spots his glasses lying on the ground. He picks them up, bends them back into shape and puts them on.

FARADAY

The future.

He straightens his hair, smooths it down.

OLLY

The what?

FARADAY

...And your ticket to a place in history.

Suddenly, Olly has a previously unrevealed look of intelligence in his eyes.

OLLY

My ticket, huh? How much is that worth exactly?

Faraday smiles magnanimously.

**EXT. HOUSE CLEARING, INSIDE THE PERIMETER - DAY**

Sarasi patrols the perimeter, scanning the forest outside. Over her shoulder, she carries a long branch. On the end, the red blanket is tied like a flag.

She comes to the place where Olly and Faraday were. On the ground, Olly's furry earflap hat lies among the leaves.

Sarasi looks up, peering desperately into the forest.

SARASI

Hello?

She waves her flag as high as she can.

SARASI (CONT'D)

Hello! Are you there?

She screams out her pleas as loudly as she can.

**EXT. HOUSE CLEARING, OUTSIDE THE PERIMETER - DAY**

On the other side of the perimeter, the normal sounds of the forest resume but Sarasi's screams are silent.

A little further away, her frantically waved flag is a small waft of red among the trees.

A little further away still, it is invisible.

**EXT. ELSEWHERE IN THE FOREST, OUTSIDE THE PERIMETER - DAY**

Olly is reflected in the lenses of Faraday's glasses. Faraday sits in the driver's seat of the merc, looking at him through the open window.

FARADAY

Two days.

OLLY

I been up here three already!

FARADAY  
Don't let them see you.

OLLY  
They won't see me.

FARADAY  
And don't let them leave.

OLLY  
(Blinks)  
How?

FARADAY  
You'll think of something.

The window winds up, reflecting Olly's troubled expression. The merc drives away through the trees. Olly looks down.

In his hands is a wad of \$100 notes. He shoves it in his pocket. He looks around like he doesn't quite know how he got here.

AUDIOBOOK NARRATOR (PRE-LAP)  
And it was then that Kay said, "Oh!  
I feel such a sharp pain!"

**EXT. HOUSE CLEARING, INSIDE THE PERIMETER - DAY**

Sarasi's eyes are sunken and weary.

AUDIOBOOK NARRATOR (O.S.)  
It was one of those pieces of glass  
from the magic mirror that had got  
into his eye.

Wearing the headphones, she trudges across the grass carrying a big bundle of sticks.

AUDIOBOOK NARRATOR (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
And poor Kay had got another piece  
right in his heart that would soon  
become like ice...

The story suddenly stops. Sarasi drops the sticks. She looks down at her ipod to see an empty battery symbol, then the screen blacks out entirely. In panic, she stabs at it, but it is dead.

She pulls the headphones off and drops them. She listens.

SFX: From the house comes the sound of Nayana CRYING.

SARASI  
(Muttering)  
Just stop.

She stoops, re-gathers her sticks and carries them to a bonfire pile. Dropping them there, she turns to gather more. Suddenly, she stops. Through the trees, she can see the mounds of Hinni and Mum's bodies.

Hinni's body is moving.

Sarasi stares in alarm. Suddenly the blanketed form sits up up. Sarasi cries out in shock. Leaves cascade off the blanket, then the blanket slips down. Underneath is not Hinni but Tripi - his jaws red with gore.

She yells and runs at him. Tripi shies away, emitting an angry GROWL.

Sarasi re-covers Hinni more securely - all the while keeping a fierce gaze locked on Tripi. Flies BUZZ incessantly. Tucking the blanket, her hand settles on...something.

She looks down and discovers Hinni's notebook, which has been lying by her body all this time. She wipes off a layer of sticky putrefaction. She flicks through damp pages and pages of notes, graphs and diagrams.

Tripi takes advantage of her distraction. He edges closer. Sensing his approach, Sarasi's eyes dart up, holding him back with the intensity of her gaze. Tripi GROWLS again, long and slow. His teeth bare. Sarasi's hand squeezes the notebook tight.

SFX: A ZAPPING noise.

A flash of light high up. A bird plummets to the ground. Tripi bolts. Reprieved, Sarasi hurriedly heaps leaves and branches upon the bodies of Mum and Hinni.

**EXT. HOUSE CLEARING, INSIDE THE PERIMETER - A FEW MINUTES LATER**

Clutching the notebook, Sarasi runs back to the house.

Suddenly, Tripi lopes across her path with a dead bird in his mouth. Sarasi's eyes narrow.

SARASI

Tripi! Drop it! Drop it!

Tripi obediently drops the bird from his slavering jaws. Sarasi reaches for it. Tripi SNARLS viciously and snaps at her hand. Sarasi yanks it away just in time, staring at Tripi in shock and sudden fear. She retreats.

Satisfied, Tripi picks up the bird and backs away GROWLING.

Sarasi's eyes narrow with a renewed determination. She lunges for the bird. Tripi dodges and runs.

**EXT. HOUSE PATIO - DAY**

She catches up as Tripi skulks into his kennel. She kneels at the kennel entrance. In the dark interior, Tripi sits with the bird in his mouth.

Sarasi commands him to drop it...but he doesn't. She reaches for it. He growls and backs as far into the kennel as he can get. On hands and knees, she takes the notebook, rolls it up and prods at him with it. She crawls in further and belts him across the chops. Tripi's hold on the bird loosens. She grabs it and they tug-of-war as she begins retreating.

They emerge from the kennel, still locked in the tug-of-war over the bird. She kicks him. Then again. And again. Hard. Tripi yelps and lets go. Sarasi backs towards the front door, lashing out at the furious dog with the rolled up notebook. She gets inside as Tripi lunges for her.

**INT. HOUSE FRONT DOOR - DAY**

Sarasi slams the door shut just as Tripi hits it, leaving him scratching and whining and clawing on the outside. Shakily, she rests her hands on her knees, recovering. Tripi throws himself against the door again. Sarasi flinches, then relaxes. She straightens up, feeling better.

Tripi throws himself at the door again. This time, the catch snicks and the door bounces inward. Sarasi squeals and throws her weight against it, trapping Tripi's slavering maw between door and jamb. She crams the rolled up notebook into his jaws, forcing him back until she can close the door. She shoves against it until the lock gives a definitive click. She sinks down with her back to it while Tripi gives voice to a demented howl.

**INT. HOUSE LIVING ROOM/VARIOUS OTHER ROOMS - DAY**

Sarasi examines the damage to the notebook. The house is silent. Realising, Sarasi looks around.

SARASI

Naya?

Nayana is nowhere to be seen or heard. Sarasi lays the notebook and dead bird upon the coffee table and makes her way to the

KITCHEN

SARASI (CONT'D)

Look what I've got us.

The kitchen is empty.

LAUNDRY

Sarasi calls for Nayana, peering into the gloom.

STAIRWELL

She calls up the stairs, more panicky now.

DINING ROOM

Sarasi looks under the table but shouts loud enough to reach the whole house.

Back to the LIVING ROOM

Sarasi sees Nayana sitting on the floor.

SARASI (CONT'D)

There you are! Why didn't you  
answ...?

The notebook is no longer on the coffee table. Ripped shreds of paper litter the floor around Nayana. Sarasi darts in and snatches the notebook from her sister's hands. Paper rips.

SARASI (CONT'D)

No! No! No!

Standing, she opens the cover to find that just one full page remains, partly obscured by torn remnants of the rest of the book. She turns the shreds aside one by one. Her eyes narrow. On each fragment, one word leaps out at her again and again: 'Nayana'. In the centre of the last page, a photo of Nayana is sticky-taped at the centre of carefully plotted concentric circles, each dated and appended with other figures. The outermost circle has a hand-written note that says, 'I can feel it!!!'

Slowly, Sarasi lowers the notebook to reveal Nayana sitting beneath, looking up. For the first time, Sarasi notices that the shreds of paper are arranged in concentric circles around her, radiating outward.

SARASI (CONT'D)

It's...you!

**INT. HOUSE STAIRWELL - DAY**

Clamped tightly under Sarasi's arm, Nayana kicks and wriggles and screams as Sarasi stomps furiously up the stairs.

SARASI

Shut up.

**INT. HOUSE NURSERY - DAY**

Nayana is hurled into the cot. Roughly, Sarasi ties her hands to the bars with the sheet.

SARASI

(Quietly)

Did you kill our mama, Naya?

She yanks the knot on the sheet tight and plunges her hands into her pockets. As she pulls them out, bulldog clips spill to the floor. Nayana screams louder.

SARASI (CONT'D)

Did you!?

Sarasi reaches through the bars with a bulldog clip. Nayana squeals.

SARASI (CONT'D)

You're going to switch it off.  
You're going to bring them back.  
You're going to make everything the way it was.

She stands and steps back. Nayana is shrieking.

SARASI (CONT'D)

You do it. Or I'm never coming back for you. Never.

She steps back and slams the door.

**EXT. HOUSE CLEARING, INSIDE THE PERIMETER - DAY**

Sarasi steps between the mounded humps of Hinni and Mum. Facing the perimeter, she turns her face up to the sky, listening.

SFX: Perimeter HUM.

Sarasi closes her eyes.

SARASI

(Whispering)

Do it! Do it!

Suddenly, Tripi barks once O.S., cutting through Sarasi's tense concentration. Her head swivels to the sound, eyes wide and alert.

**EXT. FOREST, OUTSIDE THE PERIMETER - DAY**

Olly (now with a hoodie over his shirt) hunkers down in the long grass and munches on a chocolate bar, observing as Tripi prowls around the inside of the perimeter.

Olly whistles quietly but the dog doesn't respond.

OLLY

Here, boy.

Tripi continues what he's doing. Olly stands, breaks a bit off the chocolate, and tosses it towards the dog. It passes through the barrier with a small flash and Tripi gobbles it up.

Now Tripi sees Olly, who holds out more of the chocolate and beckons to him.

Tripi doesn't move. He gives a bark (MOS). Olly frowns and steps closer. He is only a few feet from Tripi. The dog goes mental, barking furiously (MOS). Olly is amazed, realising he can hear nothing behind the barrier.

Suddenly, he looks past Tripi. Behind the dog, staring at him in shock, is Sarasi.

OLLY (CONT'D)

Shit.

**EXT. FOREST, INSIDE THE PERIMETER - DAY**

On the other side of the barrier, Tripi's barking is deafening, echoing weirdly off the invisible barrier. Sarasi sees Olly back away in consternation. She hurries towards him.

SARASI

No, wait! Don't go! Help! Help us, please!

Olly's expression is pained. He pauses. Sarasi looks dirty and desperate. She falls to her knees, miming eating.

SARASI (CONT'D)

Please, we don't...we don't have any food. We can't get out.  
(Begins to cry.)  
Mama's dead.

Olly can't hide his distress. He says something Sarasi can't hear, lifts up a hand, reaches into a pocket and holds up another chocolate bar.

Sarasi smiles through the tears and nods vigorously. Olly smiles back. He cocks his arm to throw the chocolate.

**INT. HOUSE, HALL/STAIR/NURSERY - DAY**

SFX: Tripi's BARKING penetrates indoors, beating away metronomically in the HALL, in the STAIRWELL, and in the NURSERY.

In the cot, Nayana has stopped crying.

SFX: BARKING is the only sound audible. It takes on a strange unearthly quality.

Nayana's face is pressed up between the bars, staring.

SFX: BARKING bores in with greater and greater intensity.

Close up, Nayana's eyes are blank, expressionless.

Suddenly, her brown irises turn inky black.

**EXT. FOREST, INSIDE THE PERIMETER - DAY**

Olly throws the chocolate. Sarasi holds out eager hands to catch it.

SUDDENLY, THE DAYLIGHT TURNS ABRUPTLY TO PRETERNATURAL NIGHT. EVERYTHING GOES BLACK.

**EXT. FOREST, INSIDE THE PERIMETER - PRETERNATURAL NIGHT**

Sarasi SCREAMS. Tripi's BARK chokes off, then he lets loose a demented HOWL.

SARASI

Naya?

High above, there is a pinprick flash of light. In the darkness, the flash radiates outwards in a jagged web of electrical arcs - revealing a vast membrane of raw energy that forms the hemispherical perimeter field.

The light casts the forest, the clearing, the house, into a momentary chiaroscuro. Sarasi looks up to see a bird plummeting from the bright flash-point, silhouetted against the hemisphere of incandescent crackling lines that slowly fade again to darkness. She turns to the distant house.

SARASI (CONT'D)

Naya!

She starts to run. Sounds of impact as she hits trees, branches, bushes. She trips and falls.

Another flash of light, another bird falling. Lit by the burst and afterglow, Sarasi scrambles on her back, staring up. Another flash, and before it has faded away, another. Birds fall. The pulsating light bathes Sarasi.

SARASI (CONT'D)

(Terrified)

Mama! Mama!

She stumbles to her feet and runs for the house.

Tripi howls on.

**INT. HOUSE, HALL/STAIR/NURSERY - PRETERNATURAL NIGHT**

Sarasi races through the house and up the stairs. She bangs through the nursery door. Through the window, the eerie intermittent flashes light the room in pulses as Sarasi races over to the cot, babbling a constant stream of apologies and reassurances.

SARASI

Naya, Naya, I didn't mean it. Rasi make it better. Please, let the light back. Let it back. Don't make it dark. Not dark too.

She rips the knotted sheet away and wrenches Nayana up into an embrace. Bulldog clips tumble to the floor.

SARASI (CONT'D)

Please, please Naya. I'm sorry, I'm sorry!

She cuddles her, walking her back and forth, but Nayana is unresponsive. In a flash of light through the window, Sarasi looks into her face and sees her blank, zombie stare.

SARASI (CONT'D)

Naya?

She sinks to her knees with Nayana in her arms and lets out a long wail of anguish.

**EXT. FOREST - OUTSIDE THE PERIMETER - DAY**

Olly stares in shock. Staring back at him is his reflection.

In front of him, rising up through the trees, passing through trunks and branches and leaves, reflecting all in a perfect mirrored surface, is an enormous, flawlessly smooth, dome wall.

Olly pulls off his hat and tosses it speculatively towards the wall. It sails towards it, meets its reflection and passes clean through the barrier, disappearing.

Stunned, Olly takes out his phone and makes a call.

OLLY

There's...something ...I dunno what's happened...but it's...

Lost for words, he gazes at the perimeter, slack-jawed.

**EXT. HOUSE CLEARING - PRETERNATURAL NIGHT**

A flash from above. A bird drops. Tripi's jaws close on the bird in mid-air. He hits the ground and begins ripping and crunching into the carcass.

Inside the house, a torch beam flashes through the window, swinging wildly. It moves away, appears in another window.

**INT. HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - PRETERNATURAL NIGHT**

Sarasi races through the house by light of the torch beam. In the LIVING ROOM, Nayana is propped on the couch. Sarasi drops a blanket on her and tucks her in, murmuring reassurances. She produces the baby doll and squeezes it under Nayana's arm.

Nayana gives no sign of life.

Sarasi swings the torch around. On the floor, she sees the fragments of the notebook pages. She gets onto her knees, positioning the torch to shine across the carpet, and begins to piece the shreds together like a jigsaw puzzle.

**EXT. PATIO - PRETERNATURAL NIGHT - LATER**

Darkness. Tripi laps at the pond then skulks around the house. He stops, looking at the front door.

**INT. LIVING ROOM - PRETERNATURAL NIGHT - LATER**

Sarasi lies asleep. Next to her, in the yellowing light of the torch is a remarkable reconstruction - page after page of the notebook fragments fitted back together in crazy-paving order.

Sarasi wakes with a start. She sees the weakening torch light and drags it towards her. Cuddling it in her arms, she switches it off.

**INT. LIVING ROOM - PRETERNATURAL NIGHT - LATER**

Darkness. Silence. The torch is switched on. Nayana is sitting, unmoving on the couch. Sarasi lean in close to hear her shallow breathing.

**INT. LIVING ROOM - PRETERNATURAL NIGHT - LATER**

Darkness. Silence. Outside, there is the sound of something scrabbling, a panting, a squeak of dog-nail on glass. Sarasi switches the torch on. Nayana is still catatonic.

Sarasi swings the torch around and finds Tripi's face pressed up against the window, malevolently.

SARASI  
(Whispering fearfully)  
Go away Tripi. Go away.

The dog drops out of sight and patters away. Sarasi swings the torch around the accumulated disorder of the room and ends on a shelf where, in amongst a clutter of objects, there is a collection of different-sized candles and a small clock. The time is ten-past-four. She switches out the torch.

**INT. LIVING ROOM - PRETERNATURAL NIGHT - LATER**

Torch on. The time on the clock is five-to-eight. It is still dark. Torch out.

**INT. LIVING ROOM - PRETERNATURAL NIGHT - DREAM**

Darkness. Outside in the distance, Tripi barks mournfully. Sarasi switches on the torch. The time on the clock is quarter-past-five.

She goes to the window and points the torch beam out. Nothing. She gives a little cry of pain and swings the torch down. Her bare feet are standing on the kitchen scissors. One foot is bleeding. She picks up the scissors.

Pointing the torch at her feet, she makes her way back across the room but stops at the centre of the circles of ripped paper. She stands on the remains of the notebook, her cut foot leaking blood onto the photo of Nayana. With her other foot, she slowly sweeps the circles of shredded paper aside.

Crouching down, she lifts the photo and cuts it in two with the scissors.

She lifts the scissors, then the torch, pointing them both at the sleeping Nayana. She approaches closer, hovering over her sister with the scissors gleaming in the torchlight.

She brings the scissors down in a sharp jab. Blood spurts. She stabs down again and again and again.

She lifts Nayana's bloody arm up to her mouth. She takes a deep breath...and sinks her teeth in.

Suddenly, the lights come on. It is daytime. Mum and Hinni are standing in the door.

MUM & HINNI  
Sarasi!

Sarasi looks up shocked, blood trickling out of her mouth.

**INT. LIVING ROOM - PRETERNATURAL NIGHT - DREAM**

Darkness. The torch is switched on. Sarasi swings the beam to Nayana, who lies unhurt beside her.

Sarasi stands, picks up the sleeping Nayana, carries her to the front door which is already wide open.

**EXT. HOUSE CLEARING - PRETERNATURAL NIGHT - DREAM**

Sarasi carries Nayana across the grass. She lays her down on the ground and shines the torch on her. On either side lie Mum and Hinni, sans blankets. Sarasi holds her hand into the light of the torch. Blood wells out from under the fingers gripping the scissors. She shines the torch on the ground again. Now it is three body-sized piles of leaves, in front of them a collection of sticks making the word 'HELP'.

She rakes her hands through the leaves. There is nothing there. She crawls through a giant pile of leaves. Suddenly hands reach through and drag her down. She screams.

**INT. LIVING ROOM - PRETERNATURAL NIGHT - DREAM**

Sarasi screams in the darkness. The scream stutters into panicky breathing as she fumbles with the torch. A click and the beam illuminates her terrified face. She swings it around the room and finally settles on the place on the couch where Nayana was sleeping.

SARASI

Naya...?

Suddenly, a tiny hand clutching the big scissors swings around her neck and stabs her in the chest.

**INT. LIVING ROOM - PRETERNATURAL NIGHT - LATER**

Darkness. Silence. A sudden intake of breath. Another breath. And another. Then one long shuddery one. Finally, the torch is switched on, swinging across the shelf to the clock: ten-thirty-five. Sarasi backtracks, moving the beam of the torch back along the shelf, noticing for the first time the candles stacked beside the clock.

**INT. LIVING ROOM - PRETERNATURAL NIGHT - LATER**

A match is struck. A candle is lit and added to a collection on the coffee table. In the flickering yellow light, Sarasi ponders the array of jigsawed notebook pages on the carpet. Her face crumples. In a frenzy, she rakes her hands through the pages, destroying the order, casting them all about the room.

Breathing raggedly, she presses her face to the window, gazing out into the darkness.

She turns back to face zombie-Nayana, sitting in the little circle of candlelight. From her back pocket, Sarasi takes out the kitchen scissors and advances on her sister. Nayana's black eyes stare blankly. Drool escapes the corner of her mouth. Sarasi stares at this inhuman creature. She raises the scissors.

The candlelight reflects in Nayana's black eyes. With a flicker of flame, the black is gone, replaced by Nayana's normal brown irises. Nayana sits up. She whimpers, stretches out her arms beckoningly.

NAYANA

Rasi...

Nayana puts a chubby hand on Sarasi's arm and smiles sweetly. Sarasi drops the scissors to the floor and allows herself to be drawn into Nayana's embrace. She cuddles her tightly.

SARASI

It's okay, Naya. Everything's going to be alright.

Sarasi looks back at the dark window.

SARASI (CONT'D)

You can let there be light now.

Nayana just looks at her blankly. Sarasi seizes her arms.

SARASI (CONT'D)

Let there be light!

Nayana tries to twist away. Sarasi shakes her, losing control.

SARASI (CONT'D)

Let there be light!!!

Nayana wails. Sarasi wails too, drawing her back into an embrace. The two wail together.

Over Nayana's shoulder, Sarasi sees the dead bird still lying on the coffee table. The crying catches in her throat. She stares hard at it. The bird's dead eye stares back.

#### **EXT. HOUSE CLEARING - PRETERNATURAL NIGHT**

Torch beam sweeps slowly across the trees, searching. It finds what it's looking for: Tripi looks up momentarily, his eyes reflecting the torchlight demonically, then disappears into the trees.

**INT. HOUSE, KITCHEN - PRETERNATURAL NIGHT**

Sarasi is up on the kitchen bench, shining the torch through the window. She sits back, redirecting the torch beam into a plastic bucket brimming with candles of all shapes and sizes - from big scented bathroom candles, to birthday candles, to dozens of tealights. On top, she chucks a box of matches... and the dead bird.

**EXT. HOUSE PATIO/CLEARING/FOREST - PRETERNATURAL NIGHT**

The front door is open. There are candles on the step. More are placed at intervals, in a line going around the corner of the house.

Sarasi steps down out of the house. She is holding the bucket in one hand and the scissors at the ready in the other. Her eyes scan the darkness nervously. She beckons to Nayana, standing on the threshold, clutching her baby doll. Nayana shakes her head.

SARASI

C'mon Naya. Listen. I'll tell you more of the story about Gerda and Kay, yeah?

Nayana acquiesces, joining Sarasi and reaching up with one hand to hold the bucket handle. Sarasi leads her along the line of candles. Her eyes continue to peer watchfully. Her fingers grip the scissors tightly. But her voice is artificially gentle and carefree.

SARASI (CONT'D)

You remember how Gerda went looking for Kay? And she had to travel far away from her home? Well, on the way she met a witch. Not a bad witch, but a lonely one who wanted to keep Gerda for herself...

Around the corner, a double line of candles leads off into the trees. Sarasi and Nayana walk down the candle-path into the darkness.

Behind the sisters, the tiny flickering points of the candles stretch back towards the house. Unnoticed by Sarasi and Nayana, the candle nearest the house blinks out. Then the next. And the next.

SARASI (CONT'D)

...and she cast a spell on her to forget Kay. Until one day Gerda saw some roses and remembered him...

In among the trees, the bodies of Hinni and Mum are ringed by a circle of candles.

SARASI (CONT'D)

...But she realised that Spring had gone and Summer too and Autumn was nearly over. And she would have to walk in the cold to find where Kay had gone...

Sarasi prods Nayana towards her mum. Nayana sits.

NAYANA

More.

SARASI

No. No more. I need you to do something for me, Naya, okay?

Nayana nods dutifully. Sarasi prises the doll from Nayana's fingers. Nayana resists but Sarasi takes the dead bird from the bucket and pushes it into her hands instead.

SARASI (CONT'D)

This is for Tripi. Can you call Tripi?

NAYANA

Tripi.

SARASI

Yeah, but louder, okay?

NAYANA

(Louder.)

Tripi!

SARASI

That's the way. I'll just be over here.

NAYANA

Don't go.

SARASI

It's alright. Mama's here. Look.

Sarasi brushes away the leaves and pulls back the blanket to reveal Mum's grey face. She tugs her arm out and places it around Nayana. Nayana grasps Sarasi's hand.

SARASI (CONT'D)

Mama's sleeping.

NAYANA

'leeping.

SARASI

That's right. Now where's Tripi?

NAYANA

Tripi!

Slowly, Sarasi stands up. Nayana continues to hold her hand until the stretch becomes too much and their fingers pull apart. Sarasi backs away down the candlelit path.

SARASI

Keep going. Don't stop.

NAYANA

Triiiipi!

Sarasi turns away. Out of Nayana's sight, she breaks into a run. Her breath catches. She dashes tears away.

From the forest behind her, Nayana's innocent calls to Tripi come clear and plaintive.

As she scuttles down the path, Sarasi sees that the line of candles ends unexpectedly ahead. Puzzled, she frowns as she approaches the blackness beyond the last candle. She stops. She can't see the house.

She inches forward to the last candle.

SFX: There comes the HUMMING.

She stretches her hand out.

SFX: A CRACKLING.

Then a spark at her fingertips. She looks back to the distant circle of candles where Nayana calls plaintively for Tripi.

SARASI

It moves! You move and it moves  
with you!

**EXT. FOREST - PRETERNATURAL NIGHT**

Sitting in the embrace of her dead mother, Nayana still calls for Tripi, but in a dreamy, distracted way.

NAYANA

Tripi, Tripi, Tripi...

ELSEWHERE...TRIFI POV:

Tripi prowls between the trees. Up ahead, candlelight spills through the bush. Tripi pauses on the edge of the light.

END POV

Nayana's singsong call dies away. She looks around nervously. At the edge of the candlelight, Tripi's eyes gleam mercilessly. He GROWLS, low and mean.

NAYANA (CONT'D)  
(Twisting round to see)  
Tripi?

Tripi slinks into the light, then rushes forward. Nayana squeals and scrambles away. Tripi leaps with a SNARL and a flash of teeth. Nayana screams.

Tripi's slavering maw lunges again and again. Nayana's arms flail.

But Tripi's frenzied sounds tail off into a wet gurgling. He twitches on the ground. The handle kitchen scissors stick out of his neck, where Sarasi has plunged them with both hands. She lets go and rises up spattered with blood.

SARASI  
Bad dog.

She picks up the baby doll and presses it into Nayana's hands. Nayana puts her arms around Sarasi's neck.

**EXT. FOREST - PRETERNATURAL NIGHT - LATER**

Within the circle of candles, there are now three mounds, Tripi's corpse covered with leaves.

Sarasi and Nayana approach from the house. They are both wearing anoraks. Sarasi has a backpack on and is carrying the torch.

She kneels beside her Mum.

SARASI  
Mama, Nayana and I are going to get help.

She replaces the blanket over her face. Nayana helps to scoop leaves on top. Together, they stand, hold hands and walk off into the forest.

As they walk away, the dark edge of the perimeter advances (corresponding to Sarasi and Nayana walking away), snuffing out the line of candles one by one. The darkness reaches the ring around Hinni and Mum.

Sarasi and Nayana stop and look back at the ring of candles. They turn and move on. The ring is extinguished, starting at the far side and sweeping around to the front, leaving only darkness.

TRANSITION: THE EDGE OF THE PERIMETER PASSES US. ON ONE SIDE IS DARKNESS AND SILENCE, ON THE OTHER, DAYLIGHT AND FULL AMBIENT SOUND.

**EXT. HOUSE CLEARING - OUTSIDE THE PERIMETER - DAY**

SFX: The full ambient sound of the forest fades up as the line of the perimeter passes. Birds TWITTER, PIPE and CALL. Trees RUSTLE. Insects BUZZ. Underneath it all...the eerie HUMMING of the perimeter.

The reflective wall of the perimeter moves off through the forest. Trees, bushes, grass emerge through the 'mirror' and are then reflected.

SFX: The HUMMING dwindles as the perimeter moves off.

**EXT. HOUSE CLEARING - OUTSIDE THE PERIMETER - A SHORT TIME LATER**

Olly comes scurrying around the house, pinching out candles and talking frenetically on his mobile.

OLLY

It's fucking gone, is what I'm saying. Disa-fucking-appeared. There's fucking candles everywhere and...

Olly comes up the line of candles to the mounds of Hinni and Mum and Tripi. His hand goes reflexively to cover his nose and mouth. He sticks a toe under a blanket and flips it over. He recoils, staring aghast.

**INT. HOUSE - OUTSIDE THE PERIMETER - DAY**

LIVING ROOM:

Olly surveys the detritus of the living room - the mess, the piles of blankets and pillows. Amongst the scatters of torn paper, he picks up the remains of Hinni's notebook, flicks through it, sticks it in his back pocket.

KITCHEN:

Olly scans surfaces crowded with empty packets, tins, bottles, dishes etc.

STAIRWELL:

Olly stalks warily up the steps to the nursery door and pushes it open. Slowly, he reaches down and picks up a bulldog clip.

He surveys the view outside the window.

He peers into the empty cot. He lifts the corner of the mattress and finds a maze of wires snaking underneath it.

He looks under the cot and follows wires down one leg and along a skirting board to where they disappear into a wardrobe. He opens the wardrobe door.

Inside is a collection of electronic equipment all plugged into a laptop. Olly taps at the keyboard; the computer is dead. He shakes his head and turns away...

He shrieks with surprise and recoils back against the cupboard.

Faraday is standing right behind him.

OLLY  
Jesus, fuck, man!

Faraday gestures him aside and assesses the contents of the cupboard.

OLLY (CONT'D)  
Any of this make sense to you?

FARADAY  
All except how it managed to disappear without you noticing.

OLLY  
You realise I still got to eat, drink, sleep...stuff like that?

FARADAY  
So, you were asleep?

OLLY  
I went off to shit. Away from where I sleep.  
(Sheepish)  
Came back, it was gone.

He fumbles in his back pocket and brings out the notebook.

OLLY (CONT'D)  
(Eager to please)  
Found this downstairs.

Faraday takes it. He's disappointed at the shredded remains within.

OLLY (CONT'D)  
There's something else...

Faraday looks up eagerly.

**EXT. FOREST - OUTSIDE THE PERIMETER - DAY**

Faraday stands looking down at the bodies of Hinni and Mum. His face is impassive, his eyes unreadable behind the tinted spectacles.

Some distance away, Olly surveys the clearing. Faraday's white merc is parked up by the house. Olly's gaze picks out the branch with the red blanket tied like a flag. He spots another branch propped up in the fork of a tree, a pink shirt tied to that. His eyes cross a bonfire pile, then another, and another, placed at equal intervals around the clearing.

Cautiously, he approaches Faraday, holding his hand up to his nose and mouth against the smell of decomposition.

OLLY

So, I think you just need to know,  
I uh, saw someone yesterday...a  
kid. And now there's no sign...

He trails off as Faraday sinks to his knees with an anguished moan.

OLLY (CONT'D)

(Uncomfortably)  
Yeah, I...Okay...

He gestures pointlessly that he is going to step away, then does so, backing into the trees. He doesn't quite turn away however, watching curiously as Faraday, sobbing, reaches out a hand to the two corpses.

Grimacing, Olly averts his eyes from Faraday's grief. He pokes around aimlessly, toe-ing at the ground, directing occasional surreptitious glances back at Faraday.

Suddenly, he stops. At his feet, is a bamboo stick. Next to it, another one laid perpendicularly, and another one next to that. In fact, a whole bunch of sticks laid out on the ground, spelling the word...HELP.

OLLY (CONT'D)

(To Faraday, but not loud  
enough)

Hey.

Not hearing, the distraught Faraday is brushing away leaves and peeling back blankets. His sobbing dries up. He presses his hand investigatively in and around the corpses, searching. He begins yanking things aside, desperate for something he can't find.

Olly scans the ground around the sticks. In the dirt and leaf mould he finds a clear print of a child's foot.

OLLY (CONT'D)  
(Louder, more urgent)  
Hey!

Faraday looks up.

**EXT. FOREST, INSIDE THE PERIMETER - PRETERNATURAL NIGHT**

Sarasi and Nayana sit huddled in a thicket of branches.

SARASI  
Gerda followed Kay all the way to the Snow Queen's palace but she was barefoot. The guards in silver, and the lackeys in gold, would not allow her in. But she met a Raven who said "Caw, caw! Here is bread for you. You are hungry. And do not cry, you shall come in still."

And when the lights in the palace had all disappeared, the Raven led little Gerda to the back door, which stood half open.

Sarasi falls silent.

NAYANA  
More!

SARASI  
(Tired)  
Later.

She switches on the torch. The beam is faint. She bangs her hand against the side, to no avail. She stands, stretches out her hand to her sister. Nayana takes it.

Together, they struggle through the thicket. Behind them, the baby doll lies forgotten.

**EXT. FOREST - OUTSIDE THE PERIMETER - LATER**

Rifle over his shoulder, Olly presses on through the bush. Faraday follows, somewhat breathlessly. Scanning the ground, Olly pauses and squats down. He gestures at a scuff mark on the forest floor.

OLLY  
See this?

FARADAY  
I see it.

OLLY  
It's a footprint.

FARADAY  
You can tell that?

OLLY  
(Shrugs)  
Not a wombat. Or a roo.

He points to another disturbance further ahead.

OLLY (CONT'D)  
And that...is two sets of  
footprints.

FARADAY  
You're sure?

Olly shrugs again. He measures Faraday with a steady look.

OLLY  
What are you going to do to them?

FARADAY  
Find them.

OLLY  
They're kids.

Faraday looks at him.

FARADAY  
They are much more than that, I can  
assure you. One of them, at least.

**EXT. FOREST - OUTSIDE THE PERIMETER - LATER**

Olly and Faraday push through thick brush. Faraday is now leading, although he is even more breathless than before. His suit is worse for wear.

OLLY  
Hey! Hold up!

Faraday stops, looks back, sees Olly holding up Nayana's baby doll. Faraday nods briskly and turns to continue.

OLLY (CONT'D)  
I don't get it. Why didn't they  
just walk around this stuff?

He swats at the thick undergrowth. Faraday presses on.

**EXT. FOREST, INSIDE THE PERIMETER - PRETERNATURAL NIGHT**

Sarasi and Nayana walking hand in hand through the darkness.

SARASI

We just got to keep walking, Naya.  
We walk until we find a road. You  
know a road? With cars? Brmmm  
brrrrm!

NAYANA

Brrmm brrmm.

SARASI

Someone in a car can give us a  
ride. Give us some food maybe. They  
might have some chips. Or some ice  
cream.

NAYANA

Eye cree.

SARASI

Or a sandwich, or a cake, or a...

Suddenly, there is a rustle of branches and Nayana's hand is yanked from Sarasi's. Nayana gives a shriek.

SARASI (CONT'D)

Naya!

Nayana's cries mingle with the sound of twigs cracking, leaves shaking, thumps and bumps - all getting further and further away.

Sarasi steps forward...and suddenly she is plummeting down a hill, plunging through bushes, striking the ground with shoulder, hip, back, knees. In the darkness, it is all snapping twigs, crashing impacts, the twisting shadows of trees, Sarasi's cries of pain.

Eventually, she hits the bottom with a thump, a pattering of falling leaves and a hail of stones and dirt.

Sarasi moans. She levers herself up.

SARASI (CONT'D)

Naya? Naya!

From somewhere else, Nayana wails.

SARASI (CONT'D)

Wait there! I'm coming!

Sarasi limps through the undergrowth, listening as Nayana's crying gets closer and closer. Finally, she is there and she gropes around until she makes contact. She pulls Nayana into a hug.

SARASI (CONT'D)

Naya! It's okay, I've got you. Are you hurt? Did you hurt yourself?

Nayana just wails louder.

**EXT. FOREST - OUTSIDE THE PERIMETER**

Another part of the forest. Olly has the baby doll tucked into a strap on his backpack. He scans the ground while Faraday catches up. Faraday's neat hair is mussed and bedraggled, his suit torn. He leans back against a tree, exhausted.

OLLY  
You sick? Like, something wrong  
with you?

FARADAY  
Yes. Many things.

OLLY  
We should stop a bit.

FARADAY  
No.  
(Levers himself erect)  
This way?

Olly shrugs. Nods. Faraday continues forward, pushing through a dense thicket of leaves. Olly follows.

OLLY  
They can't be far. We gotta be  
moving faster than a couple of...

With a yell, Faraday suddenly drops out of sight in front. For a moment, Olly stares in confusion at the empty space. Then he drops down to his belly and commando-crawls forward through the undergrowth until he comes to a place where he can see a steep drop down through thick trees.

Hastily, Olly edges over the drop and lowers himself down the slope.

OLLY (CONT'D)  
Hey!

No answer. He continues down, crawling backwards, using tree trunks as footholds, branches as handholds. Reaching for something to grasp, his fingers hit something that catches the dim light. He brings it up to where he can see - it is Faraday's spectacles.

Slipping between tree trunks, he comes across Faraday trying desperately to reassemble his destroyed wig. Seeing Olly, Faraday sighs and gives it up, letting the sorry thing slump to the ground. His real hair is snow-white, patchy and thin.

OLLY (CONT'D)  
You okay?

Faraday shakes his head petulantly. Olly retrieves the spectacles from one of his pockets, holds them out to him. Faraday takes them with a nod.

FARADAY

Thank you.

OLLY

You may as well rest. We've fucken lost 'em now.

FARADAY

No. They can't be far. I can...

(He hesitates)

Do you have something sharp?

Olly looks at him as if suspecting he might be a bit addled.

OLLY

Sharp. Sure.

Olly pulls out a hunting knife. Faraday reaches out. Olly hesitates, then gives it to him. Faraday lays it on the ground and sits up straight.

FARADAY

You heard of Dr Barry Marshall?

Olly shakes his head, uncertain what's going on.

FARADAY (CONT'D)

He won a Nobel prize when I was seventeen. He discovered the link between a microaerophilic stomach bacterium and gastritis.

Faraday's hands are plastered with bandaids and unhealed sores. He looks at them.

FARADAY (CONT'D)

He did it by drinking a petri-dish of the *Helicobacter pylori* from a patient.

Olly responds with an obligatory grimace, but he continues to watch warily.

FARADAY (CONT'D)

Great knowledge, great steps forward, must be paid for. With your own body if that is what is required.

He picks up the knife in one hand.

FARADAY (CONT'D)

I am - have made myself -  
effectively, a different species to  
you. My genetic make-up is as  
different as yours is to a  
chimpanzee. And I have a very  
unique response to certain types of  
pain.

He lays his free hand on the ground and raises the knife.  
Olly lurches forward.

OLLY

Whoa...

Faraday drives the knife down. His mouth opens in a soundless  
scream of pain. Olly falls to his knees in front of him.

OLLY (CONT'D)

Jesus fucking christ man...

From Faraday's mouth comes a long rasping exhalation. His  
hand on the knife quivers. Olly dithers. He tries to gently  
pull the fingers from the haft. He stares into Faraday's  
twisted face.

Suddenly, Faraday's eyes open. Olly freezes in horror.  
Faraday stares with sightless eyes, black like a seal's.

FARADAY POV: AUGMENTED VISION

We see the forest in monochrome negative: pale trees, black  
sky. We propel through the trees, heading downhill, until in  
the distance...two green, incandescent silhouettes walking  
hand-in-hand, the tiny figures of Sarasi and Nayana.

END POV

Faraday's hand drops away from the knife handle. Olly takes  
hold of the knife, hesitates, winces, then wrenches it free.

Faraday cries out in pain and slumps back against the trunk  
of a tree.

Olly throws off his pack and rips out a first aid kit. He  
empties a bottle of disinfectant on Faraday's hand and wraps  
it with a bandage.

Faraday's cry of pain declines to an extended 'Ahhhh...'. He  
opens his eyes. They are no longer black. He smiles weakly.

FARADAY

Pain excites the nervous system.

He lifts a shaky finger, pointing.

FARADAY (CONT'D)

Down there. Not far.

**EXT. FOREST, INSIDE THE PERIMETER - PRETERNATURAL NIGHT**

The forest is silent and dead. A tiny light sparks into existence, bobs for a few minutes, then drops to the ground and goes out.

In the distance, there is a listless grizzling from Nayana, the crack of twigs and the steady crunching of footsteps on the leaf litter of the forest floor. The footsteps come closer.

A match flares. Sarasi is carrying Nayana. She holds the lit match awkwardly in one hand as she trudges wearily onwards. It burns down to her fingers and she drops it.

SFX: The matchbox RATTLES, nearly empty. A RASP on the side of the box.

Another tiny flame flares into life. Sarasi lifts the match higher. In front of them lies the body of a dead wombat.

Sarasi drops the match. She crouches over the dead wombat, pressing her hands into its fur. She feels around her in the dark. Her fingers settle upon a stick. She breaks it sharply across her knee. She lifts it high above her head and brings the sharp point down viciously into the side of the animal. She does it again. And again. And again.

Nayana stops her whinging and crawls forward. Sarasi falls to her knees too. They both bend their faces to the gash.

For a long while there are only the sounds of slurping and gnawing.

**EXT. FOREST - OUTSIDE THE PERIMETER**

The sun is angling towards late afternoon.

Olly peers ahead.

At the bottom of a sharp slope: something bright and yellow. Faraday picks it up - Sarasi's dolphin torch. He switches it on and off. Nothing. The torch is dead. Olly scans the area around them.

OLLY

You hear anything?

Faraday looks at him but doesn't say anything.

OLLY (CONT'D)

No birds? Not a single, solitary fuckin' bird?

He peers at a spider web between two branches - in the centre an unmoving spider. He pokes. It falls off, dead.

OLLY (CONT'D)  
That thing, back at the  
house...It's gone, right? Switched  
off?

Faraday continues to fiddle with the torch.

OLLY (CONT'D)  
Well, is it?

Faraday finally meets his eyes. He gives a tiny little shake  
of the head.

OLLY (CONT'D)  
You fuck.

Olly turns and shoves ahead, pushing through branches.  
Faraday scurries after. He catches up as the trees thin out  
and they pause on the edge of a gully.

Looking down on the gully, the perimeter appears as a silvery  
dome emerging from the tops of the trees, reflecting the  
golden streaks of the late afternoon sky.

OLLY (CONT'D)  
They're going downhill.

FARADAY  
Downhill's easier.

OLLY  
Downhill is houses. People.

FARADAY  
Yes, you're right. No-one can know  
about this.

Olly's face turns hard. He turns on his heel.

FARADAY (CONT'D)  
Wait, wait. They've stopped now.  
Let me get in front of them.

OLLY  
Then what?

FARADAY  
Do you have a torch?

Olly looks at him. Faraday holds up the yellow dolphin torch.

FARADAY (CONT'D)  
They're in the dark. Alone. They're  
children. They just need to know  
someone's here. Someone's going to  
help them.

Olly jerks a finger at his backpack. Faraday un-velcros a pocket and takes out a reel of fishing line. He rummages further and finds a torch. He pockets the torch, then decides to keep the fishing line too. The baby doll is tucked into the straps of the backpack. He yanks that out as well.

FARADAY (CONT'D)

Give me ten minutes, then get them moving.

OLLY

How?

Faraday pats the barrel of Olly's rifle. He looks at Olly.

FARADAY

You'll think of something.

**EXT. FOREST - IN FRONT OF THE PERIMETER - DAY**

Faraday stops, listening.

SFX: Birds are twittering in the trees around him. Flies buzz.

He kneels before a fallen log. On the log he places the baby doll, the torch and the reel of fishing line. He looks up. Through the trees, he sees himself reflected in the wall of the perimeter.

**EXT. FOREST - BEHIND THE PERIMETER - DAY**

Olly looks at his watch.

His backpack is sitting on the ground in front of him. The rifle is strapped to the side. He looks at it for a moment, biting his lip, then un-velcros it.

Hefting it, he advances to the perfect mirror surface of the perimeter. Keeping his distance, he extends the rifle barrel until it meets its reflection and passes through.

Olly reaches his other hand up to the trigger, and slowly squeezes it back against the guard. The hammer clicks, the rifle jerks in recoil, but the only sound is a muffled PRRM in the barrel.

**EXT. FOREST, INSIDE THE PERIMETER - PRETERNATURAL NIGHT**

SFX: The SHOT ECHOES loudly.

Sarasi's head comes up from feeding like a startled roo.

SFX: Another SHOT. In the confined silence of the perimeter, it is an explosion. Then another and another.

Sarasi scoops up Nayana and runs.

The flight is panicked and unheeding. They stagger over uneven ground, collide with trees, skid down slopes. Finally, they trip on a tree root and go sprawling.

Nayana cries out.

Sarasi drags her into a tight huddle, listening...but there is only their own panicked breathing in a great empty silence.

Sarasi looks up. Directly ahead of them she sees a light and in the light, like magic, Nayana's baby doll. Slowly, she climbs to her knees.

SARASI

Naya, Naya...look.

She helps Nayana up and points ahead. Nayana stops crying and points too. Slowly, they approach. Under the light of the suspended torch, Nayana re-unites with her baby doll, squeezing the life out of it.

Sarasi unloops the torch from the branch. Then she feels a tug on the line. And another one.

She tugs back.

**EXT. FOREST - IN FRONT OF THE PERIMETER - DAY**

Faraday, holding the other end of the line, smiles as the reel is tugged gently.

FARADAY

Good girl.

He takes out his phone again. He thumbs it on, then presses play. On the screen, a video appears of himself, recorded just moments before, speaking to the camera.

PHONESCREEN FARADAY

Hello, my little one. My little Sarasi.

Faraday props the phone on a fallen log and steps backward, pulling gently on the line. He walks backwards, keeping a steady tension on the line.

**EXT. FOREST, INSIDE THE PERIMETER - PRETERNATURAL NIGHT**

Sarasi holds the torch in one hand, Nayana's hand in the other, allowing them to be pulled along by the fishing wire.

Suddenly, she stops. Faintly, in the silence and the dark, she can hear a voice. The fishing line tugs in her hand. She scoops up Nayana and hurries forward.

Up ahead, she sees a faint glimmer of light. The voice is getting louder. She slows down, listening. A frown creases her brow.

PHONESCREEN FARADAY

...want you to listen to me very carefully. We need to get you home and we will, but first we're going to make sure you're warm and safe and you have some food to eat.

They advance. The tiny rectangle of screen in the darkness comes closer and closer. The voice becomes clearer and louder...

PHONESCREEN FARADAY (CONT'D)

I want you to know that I am here now and I'm not going to leave you again. I know mama would feel so much better to know that I am going to look after you. I know you trust mama and you can trust me too...

They arrive at the phone. Sarasi drops Nayana and squats before the video. She drags the slider back to the beginning of the video.

PHONESCREEN FARADAY (CONT'D)

Hello, my little one. My little Sarasi. It's your father. Hello, my precious Nayana.

NAYANA

Dadda.

PHONESCREEN FARADAY

Well done. Well done to both of you. I am so proud. You have performed miracles and endured a terrible time but it is over now and everything is going to be alright...

The two girls crouch before the screen, listening to their father's reassuring words. Nayana reaches out to touch the screen but Sarasi stops her. She holds Nayana's little hand in hers as they continue watching.

PHONESCREEN FARADAY (CONT'D)

...I am going to look after you. I know you trust mama and you can trust me too. So we're going to use this wire to talk...One pull for 'no', three pulls for 'yes'. Okay?

(MORE)

PHONESCREEN FARADAY (CONT'D)

First of all, I need to know it is you, Sarasi. Three pulls for 'yes'. Then, can you tell me if Nayana is there. Three pulls for 'yes'...

Sarasi winds the fishing line around her hand.

**EXT. FOREST - IN FRONT OF THE PERIMETER - DAY**

Faraday sits expectantly, holding the reel end of the fishing line. Suddenly, the line is tugged gently, pulling the reel in his hand one, two, three times.

FARADAY

(Whispering)

Sarasi.

There is a pause, then the line tugged one, two, three times again.

Faraday nods his head in confirmation, a smile almost escaping his clamped lips. He continues to eye the line.

FARADAY (CONT'D)

Come on...

**EXT. FOREST, INSIDE THE PERIMETER - PRETERNATURAL NIGHT**

Sarasi and Nayana watch the video of their father on the phone.

PHONESCREEN FARADAY

You cannot go any further. In fact, I'm sorry, and I know it's hard... but you must turn around and go back. Do you understand? Back the way you've come. Back to the house. Where you'll be safe.

Three pulls for 'yes'. Tell me you underst..

Sarasi pauses the video. She doesn't pull on the line. She shines the torch on Nayana, filthy, exhausted, sitting in the dirt, dried wombat blood on her chin and clothes. She directs the torch to her own face so Nayana can see her.

SARASI

Naya, listen to me. You gotta sit here for a minute, okay? I'm going to walk ahead a little bit but you can have the torch and I'll be able to see you the whole time.

She tucks the doll and torch in Nayana's hands, picks up the phone and starts backing away.

NAYANA

Rasi!

SARASI

I'm here. Stay there. I'll be quick. I promise...Here, look.

She switches on the phone and presses play on the video. Her father's voices begins to speak as she backs away from Nayana.

SARASI (CONT'D)

See? You can tell where I am too.

She continues to back away. The rectangle of light and Faraday's voice dwindle into the dark.

SARASI'S POV: Nayana and the koala inhabit a tiny pool of light that gets further and further away.

END POV

Sarasi turns and walks forward, holding the phone high so Nayana can see, her other hand winding the fishing line. Ahead of her is utter darkness. She slows.

SFX: Perimeter HUM.

Sarasi inches forward

SFX: HUM increases in intensity.

Sarasi pulls on the line. It pulls back. She pulls again reeling it in until it will come no further. She leans close to the perimeter, where the HUM amplifies and distorts her voice.

SARASI (CONT'D)

Dad?

FARADAY (O.S.)

(Through the perimeter,  
distorted and faint)

Sarasi. I'm here.

Sarasi sobs with relief.

**EXT. FOREST - IN FRONT OF THE PERIMETER - DAY**

Faraday crouches so close to the perimeter he is almost touching his reflection. From his pocket, he removes a silver case. He flips it open - inside is a row of syringes. He lifts one out and deftly flips the cap off the needle.

SFX: Sarasi's voice emerges from the HUM, thin and ghostly, dropping in and out like a bad phone line.

SARASI (O.S.)  
...can't get out...hungry...

FARADAY  
Listen to me, Sarasi. It's vitally important. Come as close to me as you can.

SARASI (O.S.)  
...am...close.

Faraday looks down at the fishing wire. He twists his hand to loop it around a few times, then clenches it into a tight fist.

**EXT. FOREST - BEHIND THE PERIMETER - DAY**

Olly stares down at the dead wombat with the gory, mutilated hole in its side. In the dirt, there is a tiny bloody handprint. Olly grimaces.

He takes out his phone.

**EXT. FOREST, INSIDE THE PERIMETER - PRETERNATURAL NIGHT**

Sarasi crouches, lit by the phone screen in her hand.

SARASI  
Dad?

Suddenly, her other hand holding the fishing wire is yanked forward hard. With a shriek, she falls to her knees.

SFX: The perimeter CRACKLES.

Sarasi strains backward, desperately try to shake the coils of fishing wire from her wrist.

FX: A FLASH of lurid light as...

Faraday's arm burst through the perimeter, flailing, groping for Sarasi. She ducks, squealing. The phone is knocked from her hand.

**EXT. FOREST - IN FRONT OF THE PERIMETER - DAY**

Faraday wrenches apart from the perimeter, screaming. His arm hangs lifeless, giving off sparks of static electricity. The syringe drops to the ground. He hammers at his arm with his fist, maddened by pain.

Suddenly noticing the fishing wire still looped around his hand, he yanks it viciously but there is nothing there but loose coils. He staggers to his knees with a bellow of fury.

With eyes clenched shut, he brings his breathing under control.

SFX: A HUM swells out of nowhere.

Faraday's eyes open in sudden alarm.

**EXT. FOREST, INSIDE THE PERIMETER - PRETERNATURAL NIGHT**

NAYANA  
(In the distance)  
Raasiiii!

SARASI  
Naya! I'm here!

Sarasi sees Nayana's tiny torchlight bobbing in and out of trees as Nayana bolts towards her. She runs towards the torchlight. Behind her, the fall to the ground has started the video on Faraday's phone again.

Nayana is panicking, screaming for her. Sarasi can see her coming closer. She angles her run to intercept her.

SARASI (CONT'D)  
Naya, here I...!

In the darkness, she runs into a tree with a sickening thud. She rebounds, hits the ground. All the air bursts out of her.

SARASI POV:

SFX: There is a ringing in her ears. In the distance, she can hear her father's voice:

PHONESCREEN FARADAY  
Hello, my little one. My little Sarasi. It's your father. Hello, my precious Nayana.

Dimly she can hear Nayana calling and calling. The branches of the trees above her flicker with the wild swings of Nayana's torch-beam. To the dazed Sarasi, it is a dreamlike kaleidoscope.

PHONESCREEN FARADAY (CONT'D)  
Well done. Well done to both of you. I am so proud. You have performed miracles...

INSERT:

Winded, Sarasi struggles for breath. Finally one catches and she sucks it in. She rolls over.

BACK TO POV:

With the dark world tilted ninety degrees, she sees Nayana career through the forest, seeming to run vertically (like the ground is a wall).

SARASI  
(Croaking)  
Naya...

She rolls again. Nayana and her torch seem to rotate. Now she is running on the horizontal again, but away from Sarasi.

END POV

Sarasi heaves herself onto all fours, then to her feet. She reels. She can hear Nayana still calling but she can't see her. Disorientated, she swivels one way, then another.

PHONESCREEN FARADAY  
...and endured a terrible time but  
it is over now and everything is  
going to be alright...

A glimpse of torchlight - so far away! She lurches in pursuit.

SARASI  
I'm coming, Naya.

**EXT. FOREST - IN FRONT OF THE PERIMETER - DAY**

Faraday stumbles backwards.

FARADAY  
No, no, no...

His foot is tangled in the fishing line. It snags on a tree root. He trips, stumbling, shaking his foot free of the line. He breaks into an awkward dog trot, gains some distance, then turns to look behind him, continuing to pace backwards.

As he steps backward, his foot disappears down a wombat hole. He overbalances.

As he tries to stand, he realises his foot is wedged.

He glances up. His eyes widen in fear. He leans forward and reaches into the hole. He pulls at his ankle. No good. He tries digging at the dirt wedged up against his shoe.

He reaches in with his one good hand, ripping at his shoelace.

SFX: Ominous HUM.

Faraday yanks at his foot.

FARADAY (CONT'D)

Come on!

The mirrored surface of the perimeter sweeps towards him. Faraday stretches every part of his body away from it.

**EXT. FOREST - BEHIND THE PERIMETER - DAY**

The echo of Faraday's cry reverberates through the trees.

Olly is on the run, chasing the perimeter and talking urgently on his phone.

OLLY

Mate, I need everyone you can get hold of. Get up to those tracks that run off the back road. I'm somewhere in there. And bring plenty of ammo, okay?

He hangs up, pauses, cocks his head, listening. Faraday is yelling distantly. Olly re-shoulders his pack and takes off again.

**EXT. FOREST, INSIDE THE PERIMETER - PRETERNATURAL NIGHT**

Sarasi staggers along. Nayana is just ahead, still running, wailing, swinging her torch. Sarasi takes a swing at her but her fingers just brush her back. Nayana shrieks and bolts faster. Sarasi throws herself forward and brings her down in a tackle. Nayana thrashes in a blind panic, fighting to get away.

SARASI

Naya! It's me!

Nayana stops.

NAYANA

Rasi?

SARASI

Yes. Rasi.

Nayana hits her with the torch.

NAYANA

Rasi go away.

SARASI

No. Rasi stay. Rasi never go away again.

**EXT. FOREST - IN FRONT OF THE PERIMETER - DAY**

Faraday screams and thrashes. His reflection in the perimeter wall screams and thrashes, just inches away. Faraday suddenly realises it has stopped. His panic subsides. He reaches into the hole, fumbling for the laces with his one good hand.

Suddenly, he spots Olly running around the edge of the perimeter.

FARADAY

Olly!

Olly skids to a halt.

FARADAY (CONT'D)

Help!

Olly assesses the scene, then resumes trotting past Faraday into the trees ahead.

FARADAY (CONT'D)

Olleee!!!

SFX: HUM.

Faraday looks around to see the perimeter has begun moving again, his reflection so close it seems joined at the foot. Faraday thrashes desperately. Suddenly his foot wrenches free, minus his shoe, sparking with static. He scuttles back on his bum.

He staggers up, yelping with pain, and limps away.

**EXT. FOREST - ELSEWHERE IN FRONT OF THE PERIMETER - DAY**

Olly emerges from the trees onto a dirt track.

Suddenly, he's scanning everywhere - up and down the road, through the trees. He darts across the track into the trees on the other side, peering between trunks. Finally, he spots it: a clearing and, in the clearing, a house - an incongruous gothic mansion.

He looks back. The mirror wall of the perimeter is advancing steadily through the trees.

He presses through the trees to the clearing. He yells in the direction of the house.

OLLY

Hey! Hey!!

He rams the bolt of the rifle home and fires into the air three times.

He turns. The perimeter is breaching the clearing. He lowers the rifle and fires into it.

**EXT. FOREST, INSIDE THE PERIMETER - PRETERNATURAL NIGHT**

Sarasi and Nayana emerge from the trees onto a dirt road. Sarasi halts, looking up and down the track.

SFX: A sudden WHIZZING sound over head. Leaves FIP as *something* (Olly's bullet) flicks through them.

Sarasi looks up.

SFX: The WHIZZING again, closer. And a loud THOCK as another bullet hits a tree trunk behind them.

Sarasi turns slowly, unable to tell where the sound is coming from.

SFX: Another WHIZZ.

The torch in Sarasi's hand suddenly shatters. They squeal in fright. Sarasi bursts into motion, pelting across the track and through the trees.

SFX: WHIZZES and THOCKS all around them.

She bursts into a clearing. In the darkness, she can make out the looming shape of a gothic mansion, nestled in the forest. She turns and runs for it.

**EXT. MANSION CLEARING, OUTSIDE THE PERIMETER - DAY**

Olly backs away firing metronomically into the perimeter.

Suddenly, Faraday slams into him from the side, grabbing at the gun, fighting for control. But Olly is too strong and Faraday's arm hangs limply at his side. Olly wrenches Faraday aside, throws him to the ground, and stands.

It is too late. The perimeter has swallowed up the mansion. Olly lashes into Faraday with his boots.

OLLY

You were supposed to turn them  
back!

He grabs a double handful of Faraday's clothes and drags him up and over to the wall of the perimeter. He holds him right up close so that the reflective surface spits and sparks, throwing out myriad electric arcs (like from a plasma ball).

Faraday throws his good arm around Olly's neck, locking him into an embrace.

FARADAY

You want to come with me, Olly?  
Shall we see who makes it through  
alive?

They face off, nose to nose, haloed by a storm of electric arcs.

**EXT. GOTHIC MANSION, INSIDE THE PERIMETER - PRETERNATURAL NIGHT**

Sarasi stumbles up the steps to the front door, which she bangs on in a panic. There is no answer.

She tries the handle. The door opens, swinging slowly inwards to a rectangle of blackness inside.

Suddenly, all Sarasi's urgency drains out of her. With one long inhalation, she stills her panicked breathing. She revolves, taking in what she can see of the clearing and the surrounding forest. All is silent. No more whizzes or explosions. She completes her revolution facing the darkness inside the door.

She lowers Nayana to the floor. Together they take one step across the threshold.

SARASI

Hello?

The darkness swallows up her voice, dry and flat. Nayana puts her arms around Sarasi's leg. Sarasi reaches over to a light switch beside the door. She flicks it on. Nothing. She jiggles it on/off/on/off/on/off.

Sighing, she takes out her box of matches. There is only one left. Sarasi lights it and takes Nayana's hand. They sidle inside.

**EXT. GOTHIC MANSION CLEARING, OUTSIDE THE PERIMETER - DUSK**

The mirror wall of the perimeter reflects the setting sun.

Faraday sits leaning against a tree. Olly stands above him, looking down. His face is a hard mask as he turns away and rummages in his backpack.

Faraday pokes a needle into his dead arm, experimenting with different spots.

FARADAY

Sarasi was the one I thought. Hinni showed nothing. But Sarasi was like me. Fixated. There was a story she asked me to read. Over and over. What was it? I can't remember.

(MORE)

FARADAY (CONT'D)

I thought she was the one, until little Nayana. That's what changed everything.

Suddenly, Faraday's finger twitches. With a little grimace of satisfaction, he moves the needle fractionally. Another finger jumps.

Olly retrieves a 300mm tube from his pack.

OLLY

They...what?...get this from you, do they?

FARADAY

(Looking up, as though just noticing him)  
Of course not. It took years of engineering. Thousands of gene sequences. Artificial insemination.

OLLY

And your wife agreed to this?

Faraday stares at him with a puzzled expression, as though not understanding the question.

FARADAY

I experimented on myself first.  
(Pulls at a tuft of white hair)  
Look what I did to myself. That was the ethical thing to do.

Olly shoulders his rifle and backpack. Holding the tube in one hand, he strides away. Faraday contemplates his arm. The multiple beads of blood from the needle pricks all fade away to nothing. He clenches and unclenches his fingers.

FARADAY (CONT'D)

Oliver.

Olly looks back.

FARADAY (CONT'D)

All great things must first wear strange and terrifying masks in order to inscribe themselves on the hearts and minds of humanity.

OLLY

Whatever.

Olly cocks his ear.

SFX: Sound of approaching vehicles.

Faraday scrambles to his feet in alarm.

OLLY (CONT'D)

Maybe humanity's got something else  
planned for you and your little  
frankensteins.

Headlights come into view along the dirt track. One, two,  
three sets. Engines rev.

Olly does something to the tube. It ignites, the end flaring  
with incandescent light. He waves it. The cars veer off the  
track, homing in on the flare. They switch on spotlights,  
lighting up Olly and Faraday. Faraday backs away. Olly drops  
the flare to the ground.

OLLY (CONT'D)

(Grins)

Guess I thought of something, eh?

Faraday turns and runs away.

**INT. GOTHIC MANSION, ENTRY HALL, INSIDE THE PERIMETER -  
PRETERNATURAL NIGHT**

Sarasi surveys the interior of the entrance hall. The  
furnishings are stately, expensive. She swings the match  
around slowly, taking in artwork on the wall, a staircase,  
coat-rack, antique sideboard...She pauses at the sideboard.  
Among the objets d'art stands a candelabra, with very big  
candles.

Sarasi lets loose a very satisfied smile.

**EXT. GOTHIC MANSION CLEARING, OUTSIDE THE PERIMETER - NIGHT**

Olly stands in the semi-circle of headlights/spotlights. He  
fist-pumps IAN, an acne-faced young bloke in footy shorts and  
Blundstone boots, carrying a hunting rifle and festooned with  
ammo belts and bags of bullets, who dumps the lot on the  
ground with a triumphant flourish.

OLLY

Jeezuz.

IAN

More in the truck.

Olly nods.

OLLY

Good.

**INT. GOTHIC MANSION, CORRIDOR, INSIDE THE PERIMETER -  
PRETERNATURAL NIGHT**

At the end of a dark corridor, sickly yellow light grows. The fully lit candelabra comes into view around the corner, followed by Sarasi and Nayana. As they advance, their shadows on the wall behind them swell and dance in the flickering light. They stop before a door at the end of the corridor. Sarasi pauses, hesitating.

There comes a clear little knock, knock, knock. Sarasi looks down. Nayana has her little fist raised, poised to knock again. She looks up at Sarasi enquiringly. There is still dried wombat blood on her chin.

SARASI

In here?

Nayana nods decisively. Sarasi shivers and reaches for the handle.

**INT. GOTHIC MANSION, LIVING ROOM, INSIDE THE PERIMETER -  
PRETERNATURAL NIGHT**

The door opens without a squeak. Nayana pokes her head around the door jamb. She takes Sarasi's hand and leads her into the room.

Sarasi moves slowly, apprehensively, while Nayana ricochets from cupboard to cupboard, opening everything, jumping delightedly on the very plush couches, experimenting with the television remote control.

Sarasi halts at double doors at one end of the living room. Nayana squeezes in front of Sarasi's legs and pushes the doors apart.

Ahead of them, they see the tall backs of chairs at a large dining table. They move in. Sarasi winces as she sees the first figure - a MAN - slumped at the table. She circles it, lips clenched as she takes in two more figures - two children around Sarasi's age, a BOY and a GIRL - hunched over in their chairs. There is food on the table, largely untouched.

A fourth chair is tipped over. Beyond it, a WOMAN half-crouches, crumpled at the side of a pram parked in the corner. One arm stretches up, her hand locked in a death grip on the side of the pram.

Sarasi doesn't go any closer. Nayana comes up alongside her.

NAYANA

'leeping.

SARASI

Yes. Like Mama.

Nayana points imperatively at the table.

NAYANA

Up!

Sarasi places the candelabra on the table, picks up the fallen chair and stands Nayana on it. Immediately, Nayana digs her hands into the food on the plate there and crams it in her mouth.

In the adjacent chair, Sarasi lifts the boy's arm off his plate, then gives him a gentle push. He topples off the chair, his head giving a loud crack as it strikes the floor. Sarasi slips into the vacated seat and wolfs down the food on his plate. She finishes it, reaches across the table and, lifting the man's head, pulls his plate out from underneath. She sets to work on that too.

Nayana is grinning with pleasure. She chuckles and bangs her food-smearing hands on the table in delight. Sarasi sniggers, still shovelling food in. She laughs out loud and Nayana squeaks with unrestrainable joy.

**EXT. GOTHIC MANSION CLEARING, OUTSIDE THE PERIMETER - NIGHT**

Dozens of torches string out through the darkness. Voices call to one another, shouting directions.

Back at the trucks, Olly snaps his rifle shut.

**INT. GOTHIC MANSION, CHILD'S BEDROOM, PRETERNATURAL NIGHT**

With the candelabra in her hand, Sarasi scans a bookshelf, selecting books and adding them one by one to a pile clutched under one arm. Suddenly, she exclaims, drops the pile of books and pulls one book out of the shelf. She gazes at it, rapt.

**INT. GOTHIC MANSION, MASTER BEDROOM, INSIDE THE PERIMETER - PRETERNATURAL NIGHT**

The room is ablaze with light. The candelabra sits on a bedside table but there are more candles next to it. Around the room, on the floor, on shelves and dressers, are dozens of lit candles - on plates, in bottles, and ornate candle holders. Dotted amongst them are torches, all switched on and pointing at...

Sarasi and Nayana tucked up in a queen-sized bed.

Sarasi reads from the book she found in the other bedroom - The Snow Queen.

SARASI

(Reading)

"Tis true little Kay has a splinter  
of glass in his eye and the Snow  
Queen has power over him."

Nayana is looking glassy-eyed and sleepy. Sarasi struggles to read fluently. She burps and swallows.

SARASI (CONT'D)

"But don't you see how great  
Gerda's power is? Don't you see how  
men and animals are forced to serve  
her? How well she gets through the  
world barefoot? She must not hear  
of her power..."

Nayana hiccups and vomit bubbles out of her mouth. She convulses. Projectile vomit lands on the pages of the book.

Sarasi gulps and throws herself to the side of the bed, where she heaves the overfed contents of her own stomach onto the floor. Nayana begins to cry.

Sarasi struggles back up. She jettisons the book and wipes the bedcovers with her sleeve. She uses the bedcovers to wipe Nayana's face, then snuggles up to her. Nayana puts her arms around her.

Sarasi strokes her hair. Nayana stops crying.

The girls lie peacefully in the big bed in a room full of candles.

**EXT. ORIGINAL HOUSE CLEARING - NIGHT**

Against the starlit sky, the house stands in silhouette, various lights on. The clearing is peaceful. Insects creak. The lumps that are Hinni and Mum lie unmoving. The word HELP made out of bamboo sticks lies undisturbed.

Through the trees...something moves in the moonlight. It is Faraday, limping like a faulty automaton, a shambling, one-shoed gait, taking a straight line, brushing unheeding through anything in his path. Without a sideways glance at Hinni and Mum, he ploughs through the line of candles.

Stiff armed, he raises a hand holding a key.

Beside the house, the Mercedes' locks blip and the parking lights flash. Faraday crosses the distance without slowing down. He collides with the side of the car as though he has forgotten how to stop himself. He wrenches the door open and throws himself inside.

CAR INTERIOR

The interior light comes on as Faraday collapses into the driver's seat. He reaches under the passenger seat and pulls out a metal briefcase. Slamming it on his lap, he opens it. Inside glows with a cold blue light - a row of three packed syringes and one empty space.

BACK TO SCENE

The car accelerates up through the trees and away. Peace returns. Insects resume.

**EXT. GOTHIC MANSION CLEARING, OUTSIDE THE PERIMETER - NIGHT**

Torches flash signals in the darkness.

Olly flashes his torch in response. He cocks his rifle and aims. He looks to his right, where a few metres away, IAN shoulders his rifle. Olly nods. Ian nods back and gives a short, sharp whistle. Down to his right, every few metres, rifles and shotguns are brought to bear on the looming bulk of the perimeter.

Olly squeezes the trigger. The gun fires loudly, setting off a deafening cannonade from the semi-circle of shooters.

**INT. GOTHIC MANSION, DINING ROOM, INSIDE THE PERIMETER - PRETERNATURAL NIGHT**

Nayana sits in a high chair at the head of the dining table, contentedly munching on a piece of cheese. Across the table is scattered the remains of the scavenged family meal. The candelabra (now with just two guttering candles) sits among it. The father and daughter are still slumped in their places.

Behind Nayana, Sarasi holds the stub of a third candle - her attention on the pram in the corner, drawn by the gravitational power of what lies within. She holds her candle up to see, inside, the tiny swaddled form of a baby. Gingerly, she reaches in and pulls back a blanket. She stares impassively.

SFX: A TINKLE and a FFTTT in quick succession.

Sarasi glances across at Nayana, who is happily engrossed.

There is a bullet hole in the black glass of the window. A matching hole punctures the opposite wall.

Not noticing, Sarasi places her candle on the breakfast bar. She turns to the woman and, one by one, unpries her fingers from the pram. She rearranges the woman into a position more 'restful'. She strokes her hair back from her face.

Sarasi reaches into the pram and lifts out the dead baby. She straightens, cuddles the baby close, rocking him soothingly, murmuring reassuring words, humming a soft little song, then places him gently with the woman. She takes the blanket from the pram and tucks it around them both.

SARASI

Finish up Naya. We need to find  
Daddy.

**EXT. GOTHIC MANSION CLEARING, OUTSIDE THE PERIMETER - NIGHT**

Olly signals to Ian.

OLLY

(Shouting over the volleys  
of gunfire)

Work our way around. Altogether.  
Everyone shooting the same way.

Ian nods, signals to the next guy. They all start to move around the perimeter.

**INT. GOTHIC MANSION, DINING ROOM, INSIDE THE PERIMETER -  
PRETERNATURAL NIGHT**

In the kitchen, multiple bullet holes appear in the windows and walls.

In front of Nayana, the dead father jerks. Nayana stares. In the candlelight, a pool of black blood spreads across the table.

Suddenly a glass shatters. Nayana squeals. Sarasi looks up. Suddenly, there are dozens of bullet holes in the wall. More appear, with puffs of plaster dust.

SFX: TINKLE/FFTT. TINKLE/FFTT. TINKLE/FFTT. TINKLE/FFTT.

Sarasi plucks Nayana out of the high chair and drops her into the pram. She yanks the dining room door open as more bullets hit it, striking the wood with a THOCK, THOCK, THOCK.

Sarasi hurtles the pram through the living room. All around them comes the sound of glass shattering, bullets hitting walls and picture frames, ricocheting off the metal fireplace.

**EXT. GOTHIC MANSION CLEARING, OUTSIDE THE PERIMETER - NIGHT**

SFX: Gunfire echoes in the forest.

Olly has become separated from the others. He looks up to see the silhouette of the perimeter dome moving against the backdrop of the starlight sky. He looks around, glimpses Ian through the trees.

OLLY  
(Shouting)  
Get away! It's moving!

Ian waves and darts away. Olly follows. He hears Ian's sharp whistle.

SFX: Slowly the gunfire starts to peter out.

**EXT. GOTHIC MANSION, INSIDE THE PERIMETER - PRETERNATURAL NIGHT**

Sarasi wrestles the pram down the steps of the mansion. For a moment, it almost gets away from her.

She races the pram through the garden and down the driveway a short distance and then hits something hard, coming to an abrupt, complete halt. The pram teeters. Sarasi collides with it. Nayana squeals. Sarasi shushes her, listening. There are no more sounds of bullets.

She peers all around. Through the wheels of the pram, she sees what they hit. A body lies in their path. She manoeuvres the pram around and takes a look.

It is Ian. He is on his back, his rifle still clutched in two hands, his head craned back. Sarasi frowns, looks at the gun, where his finger is still curled around the trigger, a spent casing resting on his shirt.

She picks up the gun awkwardly. It is heavy. With an effort, she points it at Ian. She puts her finger in the trigger guard and pulls it. The rifle clicks. Empty.

She drops it beside his body, returns to the pram.

SARASI  
Dad's going to have to find us.

**EXT. FOREST TRACK/ROAD, INSIDE THE PERIMETER - PRETERNATURAL NIGHT - LATER**

Sarasi pushes the pram along the track, looking around nervously. Inside the pram, Nayana is singing a tuneless, wordless song to herself - it hangs flat and lifeless in the heavy silence.

SFX: Pram tyres GRIND disquietingly.

Sarasi stops the pram, peering blindly into the treed blackness. Unreassured, she pushes forward.

SFX: GRINDING tyres resume.

They arrive at a t-junction, where the track meets a narrow, winding road. She looks left and right. She looks at Nayana.

SARASI

(Gesturing with her hands)

This way, or that way?

Nayana stops singing, looks at her. After a moment, she starts singing again. Sarasi shrugs.

They go right.

**EXT. EDGE OF TOWN, OUTSIDE THE PERIMETER - DAWN**

SFX: Birds trill a morning chorus.

Morning sun shafts across the handful of buildings that make up the mountain town of Merry.

A tired and dishevelled Olly stands facing up the hill, watching fiercely. Behind him, his assembled vigilantes set up a makeshift roadblock.

Tucked into a lay-by further up the road, Faraday watches Olly from the open window of the Mercedes. He looks down at his 'dead' arm. He wriggles his fingers, clenches and unclenches his fist. He presses a button and the window slides noiselessly up, occluding his face with a reflection of the morning sky.

The car starts and purrs up the hill.

Olly spots it. He stalks up the hill away from the roadblock, staring hard at the departing Mercedes.

**EXT. FOREST ROAD, INSIDE THE PERIMETER - PRETERNATURAL NIGHT**

Sarasi pushes Nayana up the centre of the road. In the eerie silence, there is only the pad, pad of Sarasi's feet, the steady susurrus of pram wheels on road. Nayana's song has stopped.

SARASI

(Distractedly, her eyes watching everywhere)

Gerda at last found Kay. She ran to him. "Kay, sweet little Kay! Have I found you at last?" But Kay sat quite still, numb and cold. And little Gerda cried. Her tears fell right to his heart and thawed the splinters of the looking-glass. He looked at her, and she sang:

(Singing)

(MORE)

SARASI (CONT'D)

"The rose in the valley is blooming  
so sweet..."

**EXT. ROADS MONTAGE, INSIDE THE PERIMETER - PRETERNATURAL  
NIGHT - LATER**

V.O. Sarasi continues the Snow Queen story as...

1. She pushes the pram down a narrow, pot-holed bitumen road.
2. A wider, smoother, bitumen road.
3. A road with line markings down the middle.

SARASI (V.O.)

When Gerda cried, Kay burst into  
tears too. He wept so much that the  
splinter rolled out of his eye, and  
he shouted, "Gerda, sweet little  
Gerda! Where have you been so long?  
And where have I been? How cold it  
is here! How empty and cold!"

**EXT. EDGE OF TOWN - INSIDE THE PERIMETER - PRETERNATURAL  
NIGHT**

The road slopes downward. Sarasi is absorbed in the  
storytelling now.

SARASI

Gerda kissed his cheeks...

She leans under the pram handle and kisses Nayana. Nayana  
beams with delight.

SARASI (CONT'D)

...and she kissed his eyes...

She kisses Nayana's eyes.

SARASI (CONT'D)

...and they shone like her own.  
She kissed his hands and he was  
well again...

Nayana holds up her hands. Sarasi laughs and holds up her  
hands too. But then her laugh falters. She looks up to see a  
sign, which says: WELCOME TO MERRY. POP 153.

NAYANA (O.S.)

Raaasiiii...

Sarasi's head whips down. Her eyes widen in surprise. The  
pram is metres away, rolling down the hill, Nayana sitting  
with her arms outstretched to Sarasi.

SARASI

Naya!

**INT. FARADAY'S CAR - EDGE OF TOWN - MORNING**

Faraday slams on the brakes. Heading straight for him is the oncoming wall of the perimeter. He rams the car into reverse, does a screaming three-point turn.

But, in his panic, he bunny-hops it. The engine stalls. He turns the key. The engine is flooded.

He steals a look behind. The perimeter is almost upon him. He throws open the door, remembers the briefcase, reaches back for it, and hurls himself out.

**EXT. EDGE OF TOWN - INSIDE THE PERIMETER - PRETERNATURAL NIGHT**

Nayana races away downhill.

NAYANA

Raaasiiii...

Sarasi gives chase but the pram is gathering speed, disappearing into the darkness.

SARASI

Nayaa!!

She puts a spurt on. Now she is running hard but in darkness. She tries calling for Nayana but her breath is coming in gasps.

SARASI (CONT'D)

Na...Na...Na...

Suddenly, she hears something behind her.

SFX: A HUMMING sound.

She looks back, eyes wide with fear. A panicky noise escapes her. She runs even harder.

SFX: The HUMMING grows loud.

A cry of fear bursts from Sarasi. There are crackling sparks of electricity at her heels. She screams.

For a long moment, there is only her screams of terror, the pounding of her feet, the darkness, her silhouette against a halo of electric sparks. She falls in a burst of white light.

**EXT. EDGE OF TOWN, OUTSIDE THE PERIMETER - MORNING**

The sky is bright blue and dotted with cumulus. Trees stir with a gentle breeze. The narrow road between the trees is empty save for a small figure, still and lifeless in the centre, limbs splayed awkwardly from her fall.

Olly steps from the trees. Cautiously, he descends to the roadside and crosses to where Sarasi lies. He prods her with the toe of his boot. Nothing. Crouching, he feels for a pulse, purses his lips. With a grunt, he hoists her up and slings her over his shoulder. Sarasi flops like a dead animal.

**EXT. ROADBLOCK, EDGE OF TOWN, OUTSIDE THE PERIMETER - A FEW MINUTES LATER**

Olly descends from the trees onto the road, now on the downhill side of the perimeter. Sarasi is slung over his shoulder. Up the hill, the perimeter stretches across the road like a great curved mirror wall.

Across the road is an improvised barricade of roadworks crash barriers, wheelie bins, mattresses, scrap timber, bicycles, and trampolines.

Olly stops in front of the barricade.

OLLY

Hey!

His voice echoes emptily. No-one answers. No-one appears. He sniffs in disgust.

Over his shoulder, Sarasi hangs still as before, but then...a finger twitches. Another finger. A toe. A leg.

Olly jumps with cry of fright. He flings Sarasi from him like a giant spider he has just found crawling up his arm. She lands on the road meatily.

Olly stands over her, watching in alarm. A shivering travels from limb to limb until Sarasi's entire body is in tremor. Choking sounds emerge from her mouth.

Olly unshoulders his rifle. He watches for a moment more, then points the rifle at her.

Suddenly, a metal briefcase clobbers him in the side of the head with a ferocious impact. Olly slams into a jumble of barbed wire on the barricade. Faraday leaps on him. They struggle, getting tangled in the barbed wire. Olly's rifle fires. Faraday screams. He wraps wire around Olly's neck and strangles him.

Detaching himself from the barbed wire, the now seriously bleeding Faraday collapses alongside Sarasi.

Reaching into her mouth, he pulls her tongue forward. The choking sound stops but the fitting continues.

He reaches up and flips Olly's knife off his belt. Spreading Sarasi's hand on the road, he raises the knife to plunge it through her palm. Before he can, there comes a spasmic intake of breath from Sarasi and her eyes flick open. For a moment, they are black. Static electricity sparks up her arm and into Faraday.

She blinks and her irises return to normal. She sits up, sucking in massive, laboured breaths. She looks to Olly strung up in the wire. She directs her attention up the hill to the perimeter's huge mirrored dome. Then finally she turns to Faraday kneeling before her, his pants leg soaked red and blood pooling on the ground beneath his knee.

She punches him hard in the mouth. He reels back. She stands.

SARASI

Save her.

Faraday dabs at his bleeding mouth.

FARADAY

I can't.

She raises her fist again. He holds up his hand placatingly.

FARADAY (CONT'D)

But you can.

(Beat.)

**EXT. ROADBLOCK, EDGE OF TOWN, OUTSIDE THE PERIMETER - A SHORT TIME LATER**

Sarasi stands looking at her reflection in the perimeter wall, a hollow-eyed Lazarus contemplating her resurrection. Faraday plucks a fresh syringe from the glowing briefcase. He holds it out to her.

SARASI

Will it hurt her?

FARADAY

(Pauses too long)

No...It's temporary.

Sarasi stares at him, eyes boring into his.

SARASI

You're my dad. We've got no-one else now.

He blinks stolidly from behind his tinted lenses. With a look of absolute loathing, she reaches out and takes the syringe. He licks his lips.

SARASI (CONT'D)

I have to get back in there.

FARADAY

Yes. Unfortunately, that will hurt.

Dartingly swift, he grabs her by the throat. Taken by surprise, Sarasi's arms flail helplessly while Faraday plunges Olly's knife into her thigh.

Sarasi's staring eyes turn black. Faraday shoves her through the wall of the perimeter and collapses back against the barricade. He throws the knife aside and buries his face in his hands.

**EXT. EDGE OF TOWN - INSIDE THE PERIMETER - PRETERNATURAL NIGHT**

Darkness.

SFX: Fade in the sound of Nayana crying.

Sarasi lies face down on the road, one hand clutching Faraday's syringe. She gasps. Her eyes flick open. She emits a long, tremulous wail of pain. The cry subsides to ragged breathing. Bit by bit, she moves.

She gets up shakily, presses gingerly at the knife wound on her leg. Out in the darkness where Nayana is crying, twin beams of light shine coldly. Sarasi limps towards them.

SFX: Nayana's crying gets louder, closer.

SARASI

(Croaking)

Naya...

The two spots of light turn out to be the headlights of the Mercedes. Sarasi feels her way around the bonnet, down the side, following Nayana's crying to the rear of the car. There in the red glow of the tail-lights, she sees the pram has halted up against the boot.

NAYANA

(Crying)

Rasi...!

SARASI

I'm sorry. I'm here now.

Sarasi's voice breaks. She lifts Nayana out of the pram and squeezes her tight. Behind Nayana's back, Sarasi's hand clutches the syringe tightly.

After a moment, she pulls herself together and puts Nayana down. Together, they make their way around to the front. Sarasi opens the door. The interior light comes on, dim and yellow. She helps Nayana in.

SARASI (CONT'D)

You drive.

Nayana climbs onto the driver's seat, holding the wheel and making BRRRM BRRRM noises.

Sarasi hides the syringe as she sits in the passenger seat and closes the door. The interior light goes out.

In the glow of the dashboard lights, she sits staring at the road ahead, to where the headlamp beams peter out and fade into darkness. She takes a deep, painful breath. With the syringe secreted in her hand she leans over to Nayana, reaches around her as though to hold her still...and releases the handbrake on the car.

The car rolls forward silently. Nayana bangs the wheel in excitement. Sarasi steadies it. She stares fixedly ahead like an avenging angel.

Nayana chuckles delightedly. The car picks up speed. Nayana clutches the steering wheel. Faster and faster.

The roadblock appears in the headlight beam. They plummet towards it. Caught amongst the bits and pieces of the barricade, frozen in the act of trying to escape, is Faraday, dead as a dodo.

The car barrels straight for him. Nayana squeals and ducks.

Suddenly Faraday twitches. His eyes snap open, black pupilled. They widen in terror, reflecting the Mercedes' headlight beams.

FARADAY

(Guttural roar)

Noooo!!!

Sarasi holds the wheel steady. She jams her hand on the horn and stares steadfastly into the eyes of her father. The intensity of the headlights on his terrified face grows blindingly bright as the car, horn trumpeting, plunges into him. There is a great rending crash. Sarasi is hurled against the windscreen. Nayana screams.

SFX: The cacophony of CRASH and HORN echoes into nothing.

It is suddenly quiet. Outside, a bicycle tumbles off the barricade with a clatter.

Nayana begins a hiccupping wail. Sarasi pulls herself up from the footwell. She gathers Nayana up, opens the door and lifts Nayana onto the bonnet. She clammers after her.

Sarasi looks behind where there is only darkness. She looks left and right. Darkness everywhere. Straight ahead, in the light of a single broken headlight, Faraday is crushed up against the barricade.

Stepping down to the front of the bonnet, Sarasi hoists Nayana onto Faraday's shoulder, using him as a ladder, boosting her sister up onto the top of the barricade. She follows, stepping onto Faraday's shoulder too.

Suddenly, Faraday's hand grabs her ankle. His other hand gropes for her. He snarls with rage.

Sarasi kicks but she can't break free. He drags her down until they are face to face. Sarasi realises she is still holding the syringe. With a mighty stab, she buries it in his neck and depresses the plunger. Faraday gives a choking sound. He spasms. His hands release her and flop to his sides.

FARADAY (CONT'D)  
(With his last breath, a  
faint rasp)  
Saraaaasssiiii....

She climbs over him, her foot stepping on his face as she lunges for the top of the barricade.

Nayana begins to cry - a tired grizzle. There, on top of the barricade, surrounded by darkness but lit by the remaining car headlight, Sarasi shushes and rocks and reassures her.

SARASI  
I'm nearly at the end of the story.  
Shall I tell you what happened to  
Gerda and Kay?

Nayana nods, her arms tight around Sarasi's neck. Gently, Sarasi prises Nayana off her and holds out her hand. Nayana takes it.

SARASI (CONT'D)  
They took each other by the hand  
and left the Snow Queen's palace.

She helps her down the other side. Through gaps in the barricade, the Mercedes' headlight shines through in splinters.

SARASI (CONT'D)  
And wherever they went, the winds  
stopped blowing, and the sun came  
out.

They reach the bottom and begin walking.

SFX: From the darkness around them comes the sound of bullets - not the gunshots themselves, just the whizzing through the air, striking masonry, metal, breaking glass, ricocheting.

Nayana freezes, pulling back on Sarasi's hand. Looking back, Sarasi sees bullet holes pepper the barricade. Sarasi draws Nayana forward.

SARASI (CONT'D)  
The church-bells rang, and the  
children recognised the town where  
they used to live...

They pass the body of one of Olly's vigilantes, felled while running away.

SFX: Bullet STRIKES continue, hitting close, WHINING past their ears.

Nayana whimpers. Sarasi picks her up and continues walking.

SARASI (CONT'D)  
(Whispering to her)  
...and they ran up to their room,  
where everything was standing as  
before.

Sarasi darts an anxious glance into the darkness, then back to Nayana, who gazes at her with rapt, loving attention. Sarasi breathes shakily, calming herself. She smiles at her sister.

SFX: Bullet STRIKES are very close.

SARASI (CONT'D)  
But as they entered, they saw that  
they were now grown up. The  
roses...

Sarasi suddenly staggers as though pushed back. She cries out. Nayana flops in her arms. Sarasi sinks to her knees.

SARASI (CONT'D)  
Naya? Nayana!

There is a huge amount of blood. Nayana's clothes are soaked. Sarasi calls her name, cuddling and kissing her. Nayana doesn't respond. Her arm flops. Sarasi calls for help.

**EXT. EDGE OF TOWN - DAY**

Suddenly, there is a rush of sound and bright daylight. Sarasi's cries die on her lips. She is kneeling in a small forest town street with her dead sister in her arms.

SFX: A siren wails. A rattle of firing guns suddenly stutters to a halt.

Ahead in the distance is a line of townspeople with guns. Stretching up the road behind Sarasi are scattered bodies.

Sarasi stands, clutching her baby sister close. She looks terrified.

THE END