

THE SANDMAN

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INT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

A decently well-kept living room but obviously used by a family with kids.

BRANDON (9), not bratty but certainly not the most upbeat child, is focused intently on the VIDEO GAME on the TV in front of him. He leans forward, almost falling off the edge of the sofa.

A loud thump as if someone jumped off of something and then DAHLIA (6), cheerful and a bit weird, bolts into the room. She lands beside Brandon on the couch and he startles in surprise, his game controller clattering to the ground.

DAHLIA

Guess what!

Brandon opens his mouth to say something snarky but Dahlia bowls his right over by shoving a BOOK into his hands.

DAHLIA (CONT'D)

Do you know about the Sandman?

BRANDON

No.

He shoves the book back at Dahlia, a bit too hard and she rocks back with the force. But her excitement doesn't flicker as she pulls the book open.

DAHLIA

So Mr. Hudson was telling us about the Tooth Fairy and he gave me this book and I thought it was really cool and I wanted to read it --(so)

BRANDON

I don't care.

DAHLIA

Did you know that there are a lot of other things besides the Tooth Fairy and the Easter Bunny?

Brandon sighs and reaches for his controller. From under the sofa there's a quick movement of a shadow just behind the controller as Brandon picks it up.

DAHLIA (CONT'D)

But the Sandman is the coolest because all he does is make you sleepy! He doesn't give anything, he doesn't take anything! He's just there to make you close your eyes.

BRANDON

Cool...

Brandon unpauses his game. Dahlia remains beside him, reading her book.

INT - BRANDON'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Brandon's room is a mess, just what you'd expect from a kid's room. Brandon himself is playing on a handheld game system but is ready for bed.

JOHN (35), a jovial and friendly father, pokes his head in.

JOHN

It's too late for you to still be up. It's time for bed.

Brandon pouts but tucks the game away and lays down.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Night. Love you.

BRANDON

Yeah, night.

The minute John is out of view, Brandon pulls out the system again. The time on the systems says 10:36pm.

INT - JOHN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

The office is clean and very different than the rest of the house. John is yawning into his hand, leaning over a laptop.

The computer says that it's 12:34am.

He closes the laptop and heads from the room.

INT - BRANDON'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Brandon is asleep, the game system resting beside his head as if he fell asleep while playing. The time on the game reads 12:35am.

A hand gangly and decrepit looking hand creeps out from under the bed, but after a moment it retreats.

INT - DAHLIA'S ROOM - DAY

Dahlia has a puppet house and has created an audience as she reads dramatically from the book.

DAHLIA

And then the Sandman sprinkles sand into your eyes to make you sleep! So you better-

JOHN (O.S)

Dal, come on, you're going to be late for your lesson!

DAHLIA

Coming!

She puts the book on her bed and runs from the room.

INT - JOHN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

The computer reads 12:35am. John has fallen asleep on top of his computer.

INT - BRANDON'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The hand from before slides out from under the bed of a sleeping Brandon. A glimpse of glowing red eyes.

It makes it out all the way to the shoulder before it stops and retreats back into the darkness.

INT - DINING AREA - NIGHT

The dining area is much like the rest of the house; well cared for but lived in. The three are sitting around the table, eating and talking. Well, Brandon and Dahlia are arguing but their father doesn't look bothered.

BRANDON

The Sandman isn't real.

DAHLIA

Well, duh! But ghosts are!

BRANDON

No they aren't!

DAHLIA

Are too!

Brandon huffs in annoyance and turns back to his food. Their father looks between them, amused.

JOHN

What sort of ghosts?

DAHLIA

The ones with the old clothes and you can see through them!

JOHN

They sound scary.

DAHLIA

They are! Molly says that they can never leave.

JOHN

Never leave? Even if they get hungry?

Dahlia laughs.

DAHLIA

Nope!

JOHN

Must be a awful.

Brandon makes an disgusted noise at the two of them and Dahlia rolls her eyes. John smiles fondly at the kids.

JOHN (CONT'D)

So, Brandon, how did your meeting with Mrs. Murphy go today?

Brandon glares at his dad and ducks his head.

INT - JOHN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

1:09am reads John's computer. He's still typing.

INT - BRANDON'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Brandon is asleep in his bed.

From under his bed, the body of THE SANDMAN slithers out. Gangly and tall, it skitters across the floor and towards the open door, like an insect.

It's red eyes glow, the rest of it's body almost melting into the shadows of the darkness.

It doesn't spare a glance to Brandon as it heads out of his room. After a moment of silence --

The sound of Dahlia screaming echos through out the house.

Brandon startles awake, jumps to his feet and heads to her.

INT - DAHLIA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Dahlia is sobbing under her blankets when Brandon enters her room. He flicks on the light and she lets out a startled yelp, cowering more.

Brandon looks around the room but there's nothing there.

BRANDON
What's wrong?

He crosses and sits on the edge of her bed.

DAHLIA
There was something here!

BRANDON
Like a bug?

DAHLIA
A man!

Brandon immediately jumps up, throwing open her closet and looking under her bed.

BRANDON
There's no one here.

DAHLIA
No, no. He was... He wasn't... It was a ghost!

Brandon visibly deflates and starts to look annoyed.

BRANDON
They don't exist, Dal.

DAHLIA
They do!

Dahlia is starting to get herself worked up again, still under the covers. Brandon stands there unsure what to do when he hears John's quick footsteps in the hallway.

JOHN (O.S)
What's wrong?

BRANDON
Dal had a nightmare.

The footsteps slow slightly.

JOHN
Oh good.

John rounds the corner into the room and for a moment Brandon can't figure out what's wrong, but then it clicks.

JOHN
Hey bud, do you mind turning the lights on?

John's eyes are gone. There are only two black holes.

John smiles and Brandon screams.