

STRANGER THINGS

"Episode 8.5: THE SNOW BALL"

Written by

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Based on

STRANGER THINGS

By

The Duffer Brothers

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FADE IN:

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - NIGHT

PRINCIPAL COLEMAN leads EDDIE (janitor, 50s, slouched/lazy) down the school hallway, pointing out the mess of blood and debris leftover from the final Demogorgan fight.

PRINCIPAL COLEMAN
Damn kids must've broke in sometime last month. I need this place spotless when the kids come back tomorrow.

EDDIE
You don't expect me to clean that?

Eddie points to the broken wall.

PRINCIPAL COLEMAN
No, we'll have construction come in later this week and take care of it.

Principal Coleman leads Eddie down another corridor. Eddie looks back to the broken wall, unnerved.

Down the other corridor, Eddie grimaces at the amount of blood.

EDDIE
What the hell were these kids up to?

PRINCIPAL COLEMAN
I don't know, and I don't want to know. Teenagers.

EDDIE
Oh, don't worry, Coleman. You can count on me.

Eddie steps around him. Principal Coleman exits.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - NIGHT

Sometime later. 80S POP MUSIC plays over Eddie's headphones. He half-cleans and half-dances down the hall, rocking out.

A SHADOW moves quickly across the hall. He doesn't notice.

A loud METALLIC CLATTER breaks his focus. Eddie removes his headphones.

EDDIE

Hey!

He waits. Nothing. Eddie starts to put his headphones back on. Another METALLIC CLATTER stops him.

INT. SCIENCE CLASSROOM - NIGHT

Eddie peers into the room. Desks are a mess, but the room is empty.

EDDIE

Hello?

A METALLIC CLANG sounds from outside. Eddie jumps, turns back to the hall.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - NIGHT

Eddie follows the sound of METALLIC CLANGING down the hall. Lights FLICKER overhead.

The nurse's office sits at the end of the hall. Lights flicker wildly behind the closed door. METAL CLANGING.

Eddie holds his mop up like a weapon.

A shadow moves behind the nurse door windows.

Eddie hesitates for the doorknob. The GROWLS are LOUD and VICIOUS.

INT. NURSE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Eddie throws open the door.

The office is a mess. Bandages lay across the floor, syringes and pill bottles spill over the counter.

A stethoscope LIGHTLY CLANGS against a metal arm of a chair.

Eddie looks around the empty room.

An EGGO waffle sits on the floor.

OPENING CREDITS.

EXT. HAWKINS MIDDLE SCHOOL - DAY

Snowy. Kids break off into familiar groups, CHATTER about their winter vacations.

MICHAEL, DUSTIN, LUCAS, and WILL huddle outside.

WILL
What's this for?

Dustin holds out a partially eaten twinkie.

DUSTIN
It's a welcome back present.

MIKE
Dustin, what happened to the other half?

DUSTIN
I missed breakfast.

Lucas rolls his eyes, annoyed. Dustin offers it to Will; he accepts.

WILL
Thanks, but you guys really don't need to.

LUCAS
Just think of it like a welcome back to normal.

MIKE
We really missed you, man.

The boys agree. Will smiles, takes a bite of his twinkie. BELL RINGS. They head inside.

INT. MIDDLE SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

The boys enter. Big handmade posters for the upcoming SNOW BALL OF '83 hang on the wall. Michael and Will grimace; Dustin and Lucas light up.

DUSTIN
Oh my God, guys, that's in a week.

WILL
Wait, we're going?

Dustin spins around to face Will, astonished.

DUSTIN
Of course we're going! I heard last
year they had a leaning tower of
twinkies--

LUCAS
AND a chocolate fountain!

Mike shifts away from the posters, avoiding them. The boys
follow.

MIKE
I kinda forgot about it.

Dustin grabs his arm.

DUSTIN
How could you forget? You asked El
to go with you--

LUCAS
Shut up, Dustin.

DUSTIN
Sorry.

Mike waves them off.

MIKE
It's fine.

Mike walks past them nearby the principal's office. He stops,
hearing a COMMOTION behind the door.

DUSTIN (O.S.)
I'm just saying.

Mike SHUSHES them. The boys listen in.

PRINCIPAL COLEMAN (O.S.)
I don't want to hear it! Pack your
things up and go, Eddie.

EDDIE (O.S.)
I'm telling you, the place was
spotless when I left! I think you
need an exterminator; there were
rats making a mess in the nurse's--

PRINCIPAL COLEMAN (O.S.)
Rats didn't leave waffles all over
the damn floor, Eddie. You're
fired.

Their voices grow LOUDER as Eddie approaches the door. The boys step back as Eddie exits, sparing a quick glare at the kids before he leaves.

Coleman steps up to the doorway, about to close the door.

MIKE
Principal Coleman?

PRINCIPAL COLEMAN
Oh, yes?

MIKE
Did Eddie just say he found waffles
on the floor?

Coleman HUFFS, shifts.

PRINCIPAL COLEMAN
Don't worry about it, Mike. You
boys get to class.

Coleman enters his office, shuts the door. Mike turns to his friends, excited.

MIKE
Did you hear that?

LUCAS
Hear what?

MIKE
The waffles. Do you think...?

Lucas puts a hand on Mike's shoulder, shares a look with Dustin. Will watches Mike, interested.

LUCAS
It's just a coincidence. I wouldn't
get my hopes up.

DUSTIN
'Sides, we just got Will back.

Dustin throws an arm around Will, excited. Mike smiles, but it doesn't touch his eyes.

MIKE
Right.

BELL RINGS. Boys exit to class.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

NANCY enters, sees Barb's desk. Flowers and pictures of Barb sit up like a memorial. She takes a deep breath, keeps walking.

JOHNATHAN fiddles with his new camera in the back. Nancy approaches.

NANCY
Hey, Johnathan.

She startles him. Johnathan fumbles with his camera.

JOHNATHAN
Hey, Nancy.

Awkward silence. Nancy sits down at the desk in front of him.

NANCY
How was your break?

JOHNATHAN
It was good. Got lots of photos and stuff.

Johnathan reaches in his bag, pulls out Christmas photos of himself, JOYCE, and Will. Nancy admires them.

JOHNATHAN
How was yours?

NANCY
It was... okay. Steve and I saw some movies. Scarface.

She grimaces, playful.

JOHNATHAN
Oh boy.

NANCY
It was... not our thing.

JOHNATHAN
Doesn't sound like it.

Awkward silence. Nancy drums her fingers on his desk.

NANCY
So Steve and I are helping out with the middle school's dance.

JOHNATHAN
The Snow Ball?

NANCY
Yeah. They wanted some people to help chaperone, and we needed the volunteer work, so.

Johnathan looks around the classroom. Students are still filling in.

NANCY
Why don't you come?

JOHNATHAN
It's a kid's dance.

NANCY
No, I mean, come volunteer. You could be the photographer!

JOHNATHAN
I don't know about that.

NANCY
Oh, come on, Johnathan.

Nancy puts her hand on his arm. Johnathan looks, surprised.

NANCY
It'll be fun. Will would love it.

Steve plops down on top of Nancy's desk, wraps his arms over her shoulders. He smiles to her and Johnathan. Johnathan recedes a little, focuses on his camera.

NANCY
Hey.

Steve notices Johnathan's camera and the pictures. He picks one up.

STEVE
Huh. You take this with the camera we got you?

JOHNATHAN
Yeah.

STEVE
It's good.

Steve hands the picture back.

NANCY

Johnathan was telling me that he's going to take pictures at the dance.

Johnathan shares a look with Nancy. He shakes his head, but she gives him a pleading look. Johnathan gives up.

JOHNATHAN

Yeah. I'm going to set up a photobooth station.

STEVE

Oh, cool. Nance and I are doing that, too. Maybe you can take over for us for a bit while we're there. Give us a little time alone, right?

Steve winks, wraps his arms around Nancy. She LAUGHS, rolls her eyes. Johnathan shifts, uncomfortable.

Steve motions for Nancy to join him at another set of desks. Nancy smiles at Johnathan.

NANCY

(mouthing)

Thank you.

She leaves with Steve. Johnathan watches after them, looks back to a Christmas photo of Will.

INT. MIDDLE SCHOOL CAFETERIA - DAY

Will, at the table with his friends, stares at a set of discarded Christmas lights across the room.

DUSTIN (O.S.)

I was thinking--

LUCAS (O.S.)

Don't hurt yourself.

Dustin smacks his hands on the table.

DUSTIN

I was THINKING-- I'm going to ask Heather to the dance.

LUCAS

Heather Bentley? Like?

Lucas glances to another table. A small group of middle school girls sit and chatter, with HEATHER BENTLEY (12, blonde, cute) at the center.

Dustin nods, confident.

LUCAS
There is no way she'll go with you.

DUSTIN
You don't know that.

LUCAS
Really? Then why don't you go over there and ask her?

Dustin looks back at Heather, suddenly intimidated.

DUSTIN
Maybe not right now.

LUCAS
Why not? You scared?

DUSTIN
No!

Dustin takes a deep breath, stands up.

DUSTIN
I'm doing it.

He leaves. Lucas LAUGHS, looks to Will. He touches Will's shoulder.

Will snaps out of it.

LUCAS
You okay, man?

WILL
Yeah, yeah. I'm fine.

They look to Mike, who solemnly plays with his cafeteria food.

WILL
Mike?

MIKE
Yeah?

LUCAS
Still thinking about Eleven?

Mike SIGHS, sets his utensil down.

MIKE
I don't think she's gone. She can't
just be-- gone.

Mike pushes his tray away, uninterested in eating.

MIKE
Didn't you hear what Eddie said?
About the waffles, and the mess--

LUCAS
It's probably just some rats. Which-
-

Lucas pushes his school lunch away, disgusted.

LUCAS
--gross. But I don't think El's
wandering around the school.

Will nudges Lucas, quiet.

WILL
Who, exactly?

MIKE
Eleven. She was the girl we were
telling you about. She was super
cool, and--

LUCAS
She had mind powers.

MIKE
--And she was here until you came
back.

Mike stops, thinking. Will notices blinking nearby. The
Christmas lights in the corner LIGHT UP.

LUCAS
Mike.

MIKE
I'm just saying. We haven't even
tried looking for her.

The Christmas lights BLINK more erratically. Will focuses on
them. Something behind the wall moves.

MIKE (O.S.)
She could be out there waiting for
us to find her. Will--

Will turns back to his friends, uneasy. He tries to ignore
the Christmas lights, but fails to do so.

MIKE
You saw Eleven when you were in the
Upside Down, right?

WILL
Um. Maybe.

MIKE
And you got out because you were
able to hide really well. Maybe
that's what she's doing. Maybe
she's just hiding--

The lights flash for one long moment. A few of them POP,
startling students eating nearby.

Will suddenly stands up, clutching his stomach. He exits in a
hurry. Lucas glares at Mike.

LUCAS
Nice going.

MIKE
What?

Lucas shakes his head, irritated.

INT. BOY'S BATHROOM - DAY

Will rushes into the bathroom, clutches the edge of a sink. A
STUDENT finishes washing his hands nearby, gives Will an odd
look, leaves.

Flashes of a deteriorated Upside Down bathroom flash before
Will's eyes. He closes his them, tries to block it out, but
it lingers.

He HEAVES into the sink, but tries to hold it back. GROWLING
heard nearby.

He is unable to hold it back, and he vomits up three slugs
into the sink. They are larger than previously shown.

INT. SCHOOL CAFETERIA - DAY

Dustin approaches Heather's table. SEVERAL STUDENTS sitting there stop when they notice his arrival. Heather looks up, surprised.

DUSTIN
H-Hi, Heather.

Heather smiles.

HEATHER
Hi.

Dustin looks around at the other students at the table. He squirms under their gaze, uncomfortable.

DUSTIN
I was just, um, wondering--

One of the GIRLS at the table whispers something to a STUDENT across from her. They laugh.

DUSTIN
Um--

Dustin notices a brownie on her tray.

DUSTIN
Are you going to eat that?

Heather is clearly taken aback. She glances at the brownie, a little discouraged.

HEATHER
Oh. I guess not.

Heather passes him the brownie, awkward. Dustin accepts it, unequally uncomfortable. He nods.

DUSTIN
Thanks.

Dustin exits back to his table, plops down beside Mike.

LUCAS
How'd it go?

DUSTIN
I got a brownie.

Dustin takes a large bite out of the brownie, looks back at Heather.

INT. BOY'S BATHROOM - DAY

Will tries to wash the slugs down the drain, but they are a little too big. He forces one down with his fingers. It SCREECHES, but he turns the hot water on. The pressure pushes it down.

The other two try to escape. Will grabs one trying to escape over the ledge, but misses the other one.

The slug falls onto the floor with a PLOP, wiggles toward the door. Will struggles to grab it, drops down, crawls for it.

He manages to grab it before it slides under the door, but the one in his other hand BITES him.

Will drops the slug that bit him. It flees across the bathroom.

Will, with the first slug in hand, throws it into a nearby toilet.

He rushes out, searches for the second slug. It's hiding behind a toilet. As Will approaches, it dashes past him.

Will catches its tail with his foot. The slug SHRIEKS, but Will grabs it by the tail and carries it to the toilet. It tries to slide out of his grasp unsuccessfully.

The other slug in the toilet tries to crawl out. Will tosses the one in his hand in the water, flushes them both down. He waits until they are gone.

The bathroom returns back to normal, away from the Upside Down.

The door CREAKS open.

MIKE (O.S.)

Will?

Will exits the stall, sweaty, looks sick.

MIKE

Are you okay?

WILL

Yeah. Sorry, I wasn't feeling well.

Will returns to the sink, washes his hands. Mike stands beside him, awkward.

MIKE
I'm sorry about what I said at
lunch.

WILL
It's okay.

Mike notices odd slug patterns on the floor. He looks to Will's hand; the bite mark is bleeding.

MIKE
What happened?

WILL
It's fine.

Will tries to wash it off in the sink.

MIKE
Will, you can talk to me, alright?
What's going on?

Will looks at him for a bit, debating.

WILL
I... I just...

A SCHOOL WARNING BELL RINGS.

WILL
We should get back.

Will exits the bathroom. Mike starts to follow, but notices something move behind one of the bathroom walls. He stares at it until it disappears.

INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

A cart pushes through the frozen section. A CHILD begs his MOTHER for ice cream nearby. Another CHILD CRIES. The cart stops in front of EGGO waffles.

JIM HOPPER opens the glass door, tosses a box on top of his other groceries.

Hopper pushes the cart toward the register lines.

EDDIE (O.S.)
Hey, Hops!

He turns. Eddie approaches from a nearby aisle, mop in hand, dressed in a grocery store janitorial uniform.

HOPPER
Hey, Ed. What're you doing here?
Why aren't you at the school?

Eddie SCOFFS.

EDDIE
The school! Guess you didn't hear.
Coleman fired me.

HOPPER
What happened?

EDDIE
Some damn kids snuck in, made a
mess of the place.

Eddie notices the EGGO's in the cart.

EDDIE
Damn waffles cost me my job.

Eddie shakes his head, continues mopping the floor, exits.

EXT. CABIN - DAY

Hopper, bags of waffles in hand, approaches the cabin. He performs a SECRET KNOCK on the front door. It opens.

INT. CABIN - DAY

Hopper enters, places the waffles in the freezer. The TV shuts off behind him.

ELEVEN approaches from behind.

ELEVEN
Snow ball?

Hopper glances at the TV, then outside.

HOPPER
It's when you roll some snow
together and make a ball shape.

ELEVEN
The dance.

HOPPER
Where did you hear about that? Did
you go to the school?

ELEVEN

No.

HOPPER

Then what happened?

Eleven looks away. Hopper SIGHS, frustrated. He puts the other groceries away.

HOPPER

You need to stop doing this, kid.
You can't keep trying to talk to him.

ELEVEN

I don't talk. Just listen.

HOPPER

Well stop, alright? And don't worry about the kids' dance or whatever.

Hopper puts the remaining groceries away, sits down in front of the TV. Eleven follows him.

ELEVEN

Mike asked me to go.

HOPPER

When?

ELEVEN

Before.

He turns on the TV.

HOPPER

You're not going, and that's final.
You hear me?

Eleven nods. Hopper turns back to the TV. Eleven joins him. They pause, watching an old movie.

ELEVEN

He said there was something at the school.

HOPPER

There's always something there.
It's a middle school.

ELEVEN

He thinks it's me.

Hopper gives her an odd look.

HOPPER
And is it you?

Eleven shakes her head.

INT. WILL'S HOME - NIGHT

JOYCE, Johnathan, and Will sit at the dinnertable, eating. Joyce often glances between her boys, especially Will. Will pokes at his food.

JOYCE
Sorry about the burgers. I left them on a little too long.

WILL
They're good.

Will takes a bite to prove it. Joyce continues to fret.

JOYCE
So, how was school?

Fine.

WILL

Fine.

JOHNATHAN

JOYCE
Anything new going on?

WILL
The janitor was fired.

JOYCE
Oh.

Awkward silence. Joyce sits upright, determined.

JOYCE
What about the school dance?

The brothers GROAN.

Mom.

WILL

Mom.

JOHNATHAN

JOYCE
What? Karen told me about it. The Winter-- The Snowflake--

WILL
The Snow Ball, mom.

JOYCE
Come on, it'll be fun. Johnathan,
Karen told me you're volunteering
for it.

JOHNATHAN
Yeah. Didn't have much of a choice.

Will stands, hand by his stomach.

JOYCE
You okay, honey?

WILL
I'll be right back.

Will runs to the bathroom. His COUGHING and HEAVING can be heard. Joyce watches after him, worried.

JOYCE
Ugh. I should've stuck with take-
out.

She gets up, gathers dishes.

JOHNATHAN
I don't think it's the food, mom.

Johnathan stands, helps clean up the table. Joyce joins him. Another HACKING COUGH causes her to wince.

JOYCE
Do you think he's okay? He might be
choking--

JOHNATHAN
Mom, he's okay. He probably caught
the flu or whatever. Everyone has
it.

Joyce nods, not convinced. Johnathan gives her a hug, carries dishes to the kitchen.

INT. MIKE'S BASEMENT - NIGHT

Mike, Lucas, and Dustin sit around a phone. Mike and Lucas stare at Dustin, while Dustin stares at the phone in horror.

MIKE
Go on.

DUSTIN
I can't.

LUCAS
Yes you can. Just call her.

Dustin walks away from the phone in a panic.

DUSTIN
What if she says no?

MIKE
Then you go with us. What's there
to lose?

DUSTIN
Right. Okay.

Dustin picks up the phone, hesitates as he reaches for the dial. He drops it back on the table, walks away. Mike and Lucas HUFF in frustration.

DUSTIN
Not okay. Not okay.

Mike wraps an arm around Dustin. He nods to Lucas while Dustin isn't paying attention. Lucas picks up the phone.

MIKE
There's nothing to be afraid of.
She's just a girl.

DUSTIN
That's exactly why I'm afraid!

Lucas dials a number. It rings, he hands the phone to Mike.

MIKE
Just pretend you're talking to your
turtle.

DUSTIN
But she's not a turtle!

Mike shoves the phone up to his ear.

DUSTIN
It's ringing!

Dustin tries to throw the phone away, but Lucas and Mike forcibly hold it to his face.

HEATHER'S MOM (V.O.)
(distorted)
Hello?

DUSTIN
Hi Yertle-- Ah, Mrs. Bentley! I-Is
Heather home?

Lucas and Mike sit back on the couch, high five each other.
Dustin paces in front of them.

HEATHER'S MOM (V.O.)
(distorted)
Of course, just give me a second.

There's the MUFFLED NOISE of Heather's mom putting her hand
on the phone.

HEATHER'S MOM (V.O.)
Heather, there's a boy on the phone
for you!

A pause.

HEATHER (V.O.)
(disorted)
Hello?

Dustin nearly throws the phone to his friends, but Mike and
Lucas rush up to his side and help him hold it still. Dustin
shakes.

DUSTIN
H-Hey, Heather.

HEATHER (V.O.)
(distorted)
Hey! What's up?

DUSTIN
Um... Uh...

Lucas and Mike lean in.

MIKE
(whisper)
Will you--

LUCAS
(whisper)
Go to--

DUSTIN
Will you-- will-- Where did you get
that brownie at lunch today?

HEATHER (V.O.)
(filtered)
Uh... the cafeteria?

Lucas smacks his face with his hand. Mike grabs the phone from Dustin's hand, covers the speaker.

MIKE
What was that?

DUSTIN
I don't know, I panicked!

LUCAS
Just hang up!

MIKE
He can't just hang up!

HEATHER (V.O.)
(distorted)
Hello?

Mike tosses the phone to Lucas. Lucas tosses the phone back to Mike. Mike tosses it to Dustin. Dustin, clumsy, catches it, holds it back to his ear.

DUSTIN
Hi! So, Heather, um--

Dustin takes in a deep breath.

DUSTIN
Do you wanna go to the Snow Ball with me?

Lucas and Mike lean in towards their friend/the phone in anticipation. A short pause.

HEATHER (V.O.)
(distorted)
Yeah, that sounds great!

Mike and Lucas CHEER, the trio shares high fives.

DUSTIN
Great! I'll, uh, pick you up at seven.

HEATHER (V.O.)
(distorted)
Cool! Wait, who is this?

Dustin STAMMERS, unable to form words. Lucas PUNCHES him in the side.

DUSTIN
Lucas!

HEATHER (V.O.)
(distorted)
Lucas?

DUSTIN
No! Dustin, Dustin!

HEATHER (V.O.)
(distorted)
Oh, Dustin! Yeah. I'll see you then.

Dustin hangs up. The boys CHEER in triumph.

INT. WILL'S HOME BATHROOM - DAY

Joyce rushes in the bathroom, disheveled and preparing for work. Her hair is a mess, overshirt unbuttoned and half tucked in, cigarette between her lips.

She plugs in the curling iron, sets cigarette down, brushes her teeth.

JOHNATHAN (O.S.)
Bye, mom!

WILL (O.S.)
Bye!

JOYCE
Bye! Be safe!

The door SHUTS in the other room. Joyce spits out toothpaste, rinses out her mouth. She grabs her curling iron, starts on her hair.

Something floats in the toilet. Joyce looks down.

JOYCE
Ew! God. Seriously!

Joyce reaches to flush it, but it starts crawling up the side of the toilet. Upon closer inspection, it's a giant slug.

She freaks out, drops her curling iron. She tries to catch it, but it burns her hand.

She lets go; the curling iron CLATTERS on the floor. She grips her hand in pain.

The slug slithers out of the toilet, PLOPS onto the floor. Joyce stomps on the slug. It HISSES, moves away.

Joyce grabs the curling iron, searches for the slug. She spots it sliding toward the doorway.

She beats the slug with the metal rod. The slug HISSES as its skin SIZZLES.

It tries to bite back, but SCREECHES as the curling iron comes down on it. It splatters/flattens with each SMACK.

Joyce pulls away; there's slug remains all over her floor and curling iron. She BALKS in disgust, sets the curling iron down.

A small, cocoon-like egg-sac lays nearby, split open. Joyce leans over, inspects it.

SEVERAL SMALL SLUGS POUR OUT OF THE COCOON. They slither in different directions around the bathroom.

Joyce tries to beat them with her curling iron; there's too many, several are getting away.

She grabs some toilet paper, scoops the baby slugs up. She drops them into the toilet, repeats the process until they're all in there.

Joyce flushes the toilet several times, watching until they all swirl down the drain.

She sits back on the bathroom floor; out of breath.

INT. GENERAL STORE - DAY

Joyce stands at her register, still recovering from this morning. Her boss, MR. MELVALD, walks by.

MR. MELVALD
Everything alright, Joyce?

She tries to pick herself up.

JOYCE
Yeah, fine.

Mr. Melvald goes about his duties, exits into another aisle. Joyce TAPS her fingers against the counter.

Eddie brings his items to the counter. BOB, stands beside him, not quite listening. Joyce rings him up.

EDDIE

And I'm telling the guy, "Look, some kids musta broken in and wrecked the joint."

Joyce listens in on the conversation, places items in the bag.

BOB

Maybe they had a rat problem.

EDDIE

No rat leaves a mess like that. Blinking lights? Blood? Waffles? Kids trying to recreate some damn horror movie in there.

BOB

Let me see if I can talk Mr. Coleman into buying some of our cameras at Radio Shack. Then you'll have some proof, at least.

EDDIE

Uh-huh.

Eddie GRUMBLES, fumbles with his wallet.

EDDIE

What's my total, baby?

When he looks up, Joyce is gone.

Joyce rushes toward the front doors. Mr. Melvald walks out of the aisle, stops her.

MR. MELVALD

Everything alright?

JOYCE

I have to go.

MR. MELVALD

Wait. Joyce!

Joyce leaves the store. She calls behind her as the door closes.

JOYCE

I'm sorry, Donald!

Mr. Melvald watches after her in disbelief. Defeated, he steps behind the register.

INT. PRINCIPAL COLEMAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Hopper sits across from Coleman at his desk.

PRINCIPAL COLEMAN
So what brings this pleasant visit,
Chief Hopper?

HOPPER
Just stopping by, checking in to
see how the kid's adjusting after
everything.

PRINCIPAL COLEMAN
Ah, Will. He's doing alright. The
kids are a little rough on him, but
nothing he can't handle.

HOPPER
Rough how?

PRINCIPAL COLEMAN
It's just an adjustment period.
Boys will be boys.

Hopper nods, but seems distant. Principal Coleman leads forward.

PRINCIPAL COLEMAN
Is something on your mind, chief?

HOPPER
Heard you fired your janitor.

PRINCIPAL COLEMAN
So that's what this is about. Is Ed
trying to press charges?

HOPPER
No, nothing like that.

Principal Coleman waits, expectant. Hopper SIGHS.

HOPPER
If there's a case of some kids
breaking in, I can at least check
the place out. Give the kids a
warning.

PRINCIPAL COLEMAN

I appreciate the sentiment, chief,
but Ed wasn't the best at his job.
Unless there's any real charges--

Coleman stands, Hopper mimics him. Coleman gestures to his door.

PRINCIPAL COLEMAN

A pleasure seeing you as always.
Have a great afternoon.

HOPPER

You too, Mr. Coleman.

Hopper exits.

INT. SCHOOL OFFICE - DAY

Children wander past outside, exiting the school. A SECRETARY, BERNICE, tidies up at her desk.

Joyce walks by the windows outside, enters the office.

BERNICE

Oh, Ms. Byers. How can I help you?

JOYCE

I need to see my son.

BERNICE

Well, school just let out, but I can give the intercom a try if you'd like.

JOYCE

Yes. Please, hurry.

Bernice presses the intercom button, but before she can speak, Joyce grabs the microphone and tugs it to her.

INT. MIDDLE SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Dustin, Lucas, Will, and Mike walk down the hall towards the AV room. Dustin and Lucas chat eagerly at Will's sides.

LUCAS

The radio was so cool! You would've loved it.

DUSTIN
 You could talk all the way to China
 on that thing!

Some lights flicker down another hallway. Mike hangs back,
 watches them.

WILL
 Wow.

LUCAS
 Maybe Mr. Clarke will replace it
 sometime.

JOYCE (O.S.)
 Will, honey, it's mom.

The boys stop. A FEW KIDS walk by, SNICKERING. Will's face
 drops; humiliated.

INT. SCHOOL OFFICE - DAY

Bernice tries to grab the microphone away from Joyce, but she
 holds it firm.

JOYCE
 Come meet me at the school office.
 Right now, okay? Hurry. I love you.

Bernice yanks the microphone away, cuts off the intercom. She
 glares up at Joyce.

JOYCE
 Thank you.

Joyce paces the office, glances at several advertisements on
 the bulletin board.

Hopper exits Principal Coleman's office. Joyce is taken
 aback.

JOYCE
 Jim?

Hopper approaches, concerned.

HOPPER
 Hey. Is everything alright?
 Something happen with Will?

JOYCE
 No, no. Yes. I mean-- can you
 explain this?

Joyce holds out her hand, removed a bandage. A large bite from the slug is imprinted on her skin. Hopper looks at her hand, at a loss.

HOPPER
How did you--?

JOYCE
They were crawling out of my toilet.

Joyce looks around, making sure no one else is listening. She and Hopper step further away from Bernice.

JOYCE
I don't know what, or how, but this- this thing was just- it was just floating there! Then it starts moving, and crawling on my bathroom floor- and it did this!

She holds up her hand again as evidence.

HOPPER
Do you know where it came from?

JOYCE
Hell no. It was like- like a slug but not and now I have to throw out my curling iron.

Hopper looks disgusted.

JOYCE
And it had this like, egg that just-
-

Joyce makes a motion with her hands like an explosion.

JOYCE
And they were everywhere! I mean-- God. Shit.

HOPPER
Jesus. And I thought things here were bad.

JOYCE
No, no, no, no, no. I can't do this. What if it happens again? What if it gets Will?

Hopper puts his hands on Joyce's shoulders. Joyce pulls out a cigarette, lights it up.

Bernice CLEARS HER THROAT, points to the "NO SMOKING" sign on the door. Joyce rolls her eyes, puts her cigarette away.

HOPPER

It's going to be okay. I need to check this place out, but I can't do it during the day.

JOYCE

You don't think I'm just going to sit by, do you?

HOPPER

No, but we can't do this while all the kids are in school. We need to get in here at night.

Joyce stares up and down the bulletin board, stressed. She notices a poster advertises the "SNOW BALL" with a note "CHAPERONES NEEDED" underneath. Hopper notices it, too.

Hopper turns to Bernice.

HOPPER

Hey, Bernice. You still looking for some chaperones?

Hopper approaches the desk. Joyce follows behind. The secretary hands Hopper a paper.

JOYCE

For me, too.

Bernie gives Joyce a sour expression, hesitantly hands her one as well.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

The boys walk toward the office, awkward and uncomfortable.

LUCAS

Isn't your mom a little early? She knows we have club today.

WILL

Yeah. I don't know.

Dustin stops cold. Lucas and Will stop, confused, but notice Heather walking down the hall. She smiles, waves to them.

HEATHER

Hi, guys.

WILL
Hi, Heather.

LUCAS
Hey.

DUSTIN
Hi!

Heather walks past Mike, exits down the darkening hall. The lights flicker after her.

MIKE
Guys, did you see that?

DUSTIN
(dreamy)
Yeah.

Mike shakes his head, gestures after Heather.

MIKE
Not her. The lights. In the hallway?

LUCAS
Give it a rest, Mike.

Mike SIGHS, looks back down the hall.

MIKE
I-- I forgot something at my locker. I'll be right back.

DUSTIN
Really, Mike?

LUCAS
Let him go.

Lucas and Dustin lead Will toward the office.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Mike walks down the darkened hallway. The lights flicker above him, as if in a trail. He follows it down another turn--

Heather glances around. Mike hides behind a set of lockers. She exits down into a door marked "FACULTY ONLY".

Mike follows after the door has closed. He quietly opens the door; a set of stairs lead downward.

The lights flicker above, he can't see the bottom.

INT. SCHOOL OFFICE - DAY

Will, Dustin, and Lucas enter the office. Joyce turns, immediately grabs onto Will. Hopper hands his paper to the secretary.

JOYCE
Oh, Will! My boy!

She squeezes him tight, tears brim at her eyes. Lucas and Dustin give each other a confused look.

WILL
Mom.

Will tries to pull away, embarrassed. Hopper CLEARS his throat.

HOPPER
Joyce.

Lucas and Dustin stare at Hopper, suspicious. He nods to them.

HOPPER
Nice to see you boys again.

LUCAS
Same.

DUSTIN
Yeah.

Joyce pulls away, but keeps her hands on Will's shoulders.

WILL
Why are you here?

JOYCE
I just wanted to check on you. Make sure everything is alright.

WILL
I'm fine.

Joyce grasps his hands, but immediately looks down. She notices the slug bite on his hand.

Will pulls his hand away.

JOYCE
Will?

WILL
It's nothing.

JOYCE
When did you get that?

WILL
I was petting Mews and she bit me.

Dustin takes offence.

DUSTIN
Hey! My cat wouldn't hurt a fly.

Joyce stands, holds onto Will's hand.

JOYCE
It's time to go home now.

WILL
But mom--

JOYCE
You can see the boys at Mike's
tonight. Come on.

Joyce holds onto Will's hand, leads him out. Hopper nods, awkward, to the boys, and leaves behind. Dustin and Lucas share a confused look.

INT. SCHOOL BASEMENT - DAY

Mike walks down the stairs, enters the school basement. Several chairs and desks are stacked up against the walls. No Heather.

MIKE
Hello?

Mike walks through the basement.

The lights FLASH above wildly. He stops, looks around. Something down the hall GROWLS.

Mike approaches, cautious.

MIKE
Heather?

ELEVEN (V.O.)
Mike!

Mike rushes down the hall.

MIKE
El? El! Eleven!

He finds himself at a dead end. Mike steps back, looks the area over.

MIKE
El?

Nothing. He turns around, defeated. He starts to go back--
PLOP.

He looks back at the dead end.

A waffle sits on the floor.

INT. MIKE'S BASEMENT - NIGHT

Dustin, Will, and Lucas sit around the table, a game of Dungeons and Dragons set up before them. They look bored. Lucas checks his watch.

LUCAS
Mike!

MIKE (O.S.)
One minute!

The boys GROAN, lay their heads in their arms.

DUSTIN
Are we gonna play or not?

Mike hurries downstairs, backpack over his arm. He sits down at the table, fumble through his bag.

The boys sit up, interested.

DUSTIN
Is it the doppelganger? We're gonna
fight the doppelganger!

Lucas elbows him.

Mike throws the half-eaten waffle on the table. The boys stare, dumbfounded.

MIKE
I found this in the basement at
school.

The boys pull away, disinterested. Mike leans forward.

MIKE

I followed Heather down there and she disappeared. I turned around and this was on the floor.

DUSTIN

So you're saying that Heather... is really Eleven?

MIKE

No, but she has to be down there. It came out of nowhere.

LUCAS

Why were you following Heather?

MIKE

She looked suspicious.

DUSTIN

Heather is an angel!

Lucas slams his dice on the table.

LUCAS

Come on, Mike. We just wanna play the game.

MIKE

Haven't you guys noticed anything weird going on?

LUCAS

No! The only weird thing going on is your obsession with El! She's gone! Leave it alone!

Will shifts, avoids looking at them. Mike notices, turns to him.

MIKE

What about you, Will? Haven't you noticed anything?

WILL

I...I--

LUCAS

Leave him alone.

DUSTIN

We came here to play a game. Are we gonna do that or not?

MIKE

Guys--

Lucas SCOFFS, Dustin GROANS. The boys gather their bags, Lucas and Dustin head up the stairs.

Will starts to follow, stops, looks back to Mike. He opens his mouth to say something--

LUCAS (O.S.)

Will! Come on!

Will closes his mouth, hurries after his friends. Mike stands alone.

EXT. HAWKINS MIDDLE SCHOOL - DAY

It's the Snow Ball. Students enter the school, dressed up. MUSIC PLAYS from inside.

INT. MIDDLE SCHOOL HALLWAY - NIGHT

Lucas and Will psyche themselves up, ready for the night. Dustin approaches, Heather on his arm.

DUSTIN

Hey guys.

Lucas and Will nod. Dustin gestures toward the gym doors. They all enter--

INT. SCHOOL GYM - NIGHT

The gym has transformed into an awkward school dance. Fake snowflakes, streamers, and white Christmas lights hang from the ceiling. A few students dance, uncomfortable, but most sit by the bleachers.

The boys look around, disappointed. Will looks to a few Christmas lights behind Heather; they're brighter than the others.

DUSTIN

Let's, uh, get some punch.

Heather smiles, nods. She and Dustin leave. The Christmas lights dim to normal.

AT THE SNACK TABLE, Nancy fills up two cups of punch for Dustin and Heather.

NANCY
 (mouthing to Dustin)
 Good luck!

Dustin nods his thanks, the couple leave.

Behind her, Joyce and Hopper stalk the outskirts of the gym, watch over the kids.

Joyce stares at Will, fidgety He notices, she waves awkwardly.

Hopper puts a hand on her shoulder. She looks up, surprised.

HOPPER
 I'm going to go check out the
 school, you take things from here.
 Alright?

Joyce nods.

JOYCE
 Yeah. Okay, right.

Hopper pats her shoulder, exits the dance. Joyce assists Nancy and pours two kids their punch, but keeps her eyes on her son.

Steve approaches, Nancy fills him a cup.

NANCY
 Aren't you supposed to be DJ'ing?

STEVE
 Yeah, but I got one of the parents
 to cover for a bit.

He gestures toward the DJ stage where TED WHEELER fumbles with the machinery.

Steve holds out his hand to Nancy.

STEVE
 Come on.

Nancy looks to Joyce. Joyce nods for her to go. Nancy accepts Steve's hand, they walk off.

FLASH!

ACROSS THE ROOM, Johnathan has a makeshift PICTURE STATION set up with silly props and a plain background. A COUPLE OF KIDS line up, pose.

FLASH! He takes the picture. They exit.

Johnathan fumbles with his camera, preparing it for the next shot.

He positions himself for the next take; it's Nancy and Steve. He falters.

NANCY
Having fun?

JOHNATHAN
As much as anyone can while they're hanging around middle schoolers.

NANCY
They're not so bad.

STEVE
Hey, mind taking one of us?

Steve pulls Nancy into an embrace, posing. She laughs, adjusts to his pose.

Johnathan holds up the camera, hesitant.

JOHNATHAN
Okay. Uh, big smiles...

STEVE
I got one better.

Steve kisses Nancy. Johnathan stops, disheartened, but catches himself. FLASH!

The couple pulls away, Nancy a little awkward, Steve enjoying it.

STEVE
Make sure to send me a copy of that one.

Steve wraps an arm around Nancy, they leave. Johnathan sets up his camera for the next take.

AT THE GYM ENTRANCE, Mike enters. He waves to Lucas and Will. Will waves back, Lucas ignores him.

ON THE DANCE FLOOR, Dustin and Heather dance. Dustin, awkward, tries to be cool with his moves. He fails. Heather's clearly distracted.

HEATHER
Hey, Dustin.

He continues dancing, gets more into it.

HEATHER

I'm just going to use the bathroom really quick. I'll be right back.

DUSTIN

Oh. Okay. Um, take your time! Have fun!

Heather exits. Dustin stops dancing, smacks his hand against his face, embarrassed.

Heather rushes past Mike. Mike follows her into the hallway. Will sees the Christmas lights flicker as Heather leaves.

WILL

Bathroom.

Will leaves. Lucas nods, Dustin approaches him.

LUCAS

How's it going?

DUSTIN

I told her to have fun in the bathroom.

Lucas LAUGHS.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - NIGHT

The hall lights flicker as Heather rushes down the hall. Mike follows her, trying to be inconspicuous. She turns down a bend.

Mike peeks around. She's gone.

Someone grabs his shoulder. Mike YELLS, flips around.

It's Will.

WILL

Sorry.

MIKE

It's fine.

Mike looks back around the bend. The lights return to normal.

WILL

Mike--

MIKE

Will--

Mike gestures toward Will to go first.

WILL

I just wanna say I'm sorry. About Eleven, and everything.

MIKE

It's okay. I'm sorry, too. She's all I've talked about since you got back. I know the Upside Down wasn't easy.

WILL

It's okay.

Will looks around, making sure they're alone.

WILL

I think you're right about something going on in the school, though.

MIKE

You do?

He nods. The two smile, fist bump each other.

The lights above flicker. The power in the hallways goes out. The boys look up, surprised.

There's GROWLING down another hall. The boys take off after it.

EXT. NURSE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

The light's on inside; shadows move under the gap of the door. Hopper hears fumbling.

HOPPER

Hey. Open up kids, fun's over.

Hopper opens the door. The light's turned off. No one's there.

He traces his flashlight over the room.

HOPPER

Hello?

The light stops on the back of what looks like El. Hopper's taken aback.

HOPPER

What?

The girl turns. Her front half appears as Heather. She HISSES, lunges after him--

Hopper fends her off, pushes her back--

She CRASHES into a set of waiting chairs. She shakes it off, prepares for another lunge--

Hopper holds out his arms in defense. She dives past him, into the wall.

Hopper reaches for the wall, but smacks his hand against its hard surface.

FOOTSTEPS clatter in the hallway outside. He sneaks out after it.

INT. SCHOOL GYM - NIGHT

Untouched by the power outage, the party continues.

Lucas and Dustin stand by the entrance, discouraged.

DUSTIN

She still hasn't come back yet.

LUCAS

Maybe she's sick.

DUSTIN

No, I think it's time to face the facts. She blew me off.

They both SIGH, look out over the dance floor.

AT THE SNACK TABLE, Joyce finishes filling up a long line of children's punches. They disperse. She looks back to the gym entrance.

Will isn't there.

Joyce, panicked, glances around the gym. He's nowhere to be found.

JOYCE

Will?

No sign of him.

JOYCE

Will! Oh, damn it.

Nancy and Steve approach the table.

NANCY

Hey! Sorry--

Joyce rushes past her, toward Lucas and Dustin. She and Steve share a confused look.

JOYCE

Have you boys seen Will?

Lucas and Dustin glance at each other, shake their heads.

LUCAS

He went to the bathroom a while ago.

DUSTIN

Come to think of it, I haven't seen Mike either.

Joyce runs out of the gym. Dustin and Lucas share a look chase after her.

AT THE PHOTO STATION, Johnathan finishes another child's picture. He looks back to the punch stand, but notices Joyce is missing.

Johnathan scans the gym; no sign of her or Will.

He TAPS the shoulder of a PARENT CHAPERONE.

JOHNATHAN

Hey, can you just watch this for a second?

AT THE PUNCH STAND, Johnathan approaches Nancy and Steve. Steve's about to leave.

JOHNATHAN

Hey, do you know where my mom went?

NANCY

Um, yeah. She just went running out the gym. Is everything okay?

Johnathan runs out of the gym. Nancy glances between him and Steve.

NANCY

Do you think we should...?

Steve SHRUGS, disinterested in joining. Nancy stares him down.

STEVE
Fine. Yeah. Okay, let's go.

They exit.

BY THE DJ STAGE,

INT. SCHOOL BASEMENT - NIGHT

Mike and Will wander downstairs, careful not to trip over each other. The lights above flicker.

MIKE
El?

They walk across the basement. Mike grabs Will's shoulder. They stop abruptly.

A few feet away, ELEVEN stands before them. She stares at the boys, lost.

Mike starts to rush forward, overjoyed.

MIKE
El!

Will grabs his shoulder, yanks him back. Mike looks to Will, betrayed.

MIKE
Will, this is Eleven. She's--

WILL
No.

Will points to Eleven's neck. A LONG NEEDLE sticks out. She isn't bothered by this.

MIKE
El?

HOPPER (O.S.)
Stand back!

Hopper rushes in front of the boys. Will pulls Mike back.

Eleven HISSES, TRANSFORMS briefly into Heather, then INTO A HIDEOUS MONSTER WITH TWO ARMS STICKING OUT OF A ROUND BODY, ALL TEETH, AND A LONG TONGUE.

The monster uses its arms to leap forward.

HOPPER

Shit.

Hopper reaches for his gun, SHOOTS at the creature.

HOPPER

Run!

Will and Mike run for the basement stairs.

The monster gives chase, grabs at Will.

It claws into his leg, pulls him back toward the basement.

Mike stops mid-way on the stairs.

MIKE

Will!

He rushes back down.

The monster wraps its tongue around Will, tries to snatch Mike with its arm.

Hopper SHOOTS the creature's tongue.

It SHRIEKS, unravels around Will.

Mike yanks Will up the stairs.

Hopper readies to shoot again, but the monster dives into the wall, disappears.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - NIGHT

Dustin and Lucas search between locked door windows.

DUSTIN

Mike? Mike!

LUCAS

Will. Will!

The monster slowly pulls out of the wall behind them.

Lucas and Dustin turn around.

"Will" stands in place of the monster. Lucas and Dustin SIGH in relief, approach him.

LUCAS (CONT'D)

There you are, man. We got worried.

DUSTIN
Is Mike with you?

"Will" stares ahead, emotionless. Dustin and Lucas share a look, freaked out.

Lucas waves a hand in front of "Will's" face.

LUCAS
Will. Earth to Will!

Dustin looks at the side of "Will's" head, steps back, frightened.

DUSTIN
Lucas.

LUCAS
Snap out of it!

DUSTIN
Lucas!

Lucas whips back to Dustin, annoyed.

LUCAS
What?

Dustin points to the side of "Will's" head. Lucas turns back to "Will".

Eleven and Heather's faces morph onto the side of his head, their expressions gaping in horror.

Lucas and Dustin step back, slow, terrified.

A LOW GROWL erupts from "Will". He starts to TRANSFORM to his normal monster form.

The boys SCREAM, flee down the hall. The monster GROWLS, dives into the wall.

INT. ANOTHER SCHOOL HALLWAY - NIGHT

Joyce searches with a flashlight.

JOYCE
Will? Will!

Dustin and Lucas's SCREAMS can be heard.

She runs after the sound.

As she turns a bend, "Will" stands there, searching.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

Will?

Joyce touches his shoulders. The boy stares at her, blank. She steps back.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

Who are you?

DOWN ANOTHER NEARBY HALLWAY, Johnathan, Steve, and Nancy search behind closed doors.

JOHNATHAN

Mom?

NANCY

Mike? Guys?

Nancy flashes a flashlight through a classroom doorway. Steve pops his head in.

STEVE

Alright guys. Go back to the dance.

Nancy and Steve look at each other, continue down the hall.

NANCY

Where are they?

STEVE

They probably ran off to play that dragon game somewhere.

Steve rubs Nancy's back as they walk. Johnathan is clearly uncomfortable.

STEVE (CONT'D)

We'll find them.

They turn around the bend, to "Will's" back.

JOYCE

What have you done with my boy?!

Joyce grabs the fire extinguisher off of the wall.

JOHNATHAN

Mom, stop!

Joyce sprays the monster with the fire extinguisher.

Johnathan steps forward, about to run and stop her. Nancy grabs his shoulder, holds him back. They look to "Will".

The monster HOWLS, transforming various limbs rapidly between Eleven, Heather, Will, and its normal form. Pieces of its skin fall to the floor.

Steve hurries in front of Nancy, ready to fight.

Joyce sprays the monster again. It disappears from sight behind all of the foam.

She stops, they all wait for the foam to settle.

They look back to the monster.

It's gone.

Johnathan strokes the wall it was up against, shocked by its disappearance.

On the floor, bits of skin bubble and dissolve.

STEVE
Was that all of it?

JOYCE
No.

Joyce, pissed, marches past the teens. They follow.

INT. SCHOOL BASEMENT - NIGHT

Hopper checks on Will and Mike, assuring they aren't hurt. The boys dust themselves off, Will disgusted by the sticky slime left on him from the monster's tongue.

HOPPER
Are you boys alright?

WILL
Yeah.

MIKE
Fine.

HOPPER
I think we should get you boys back to the dance. I can take care of this from here on out.

MIKE
No way! That thing turned into El-- what if it has her? We have to stop it.

The basement door BURSTS OPEN, followed by Dustin and Lucas charging down the stairs. They run right into Mike and Will, the four becoming a pile on the floor.

The boys sit up, gather themselves.

DUSTIN
Mike! Will!

Dustin hugs onto Mike and Will tightly. Will and Mike share a look, equally confused. They pry out of Dustin's grasp.

LUCAS
Knock it off! You don't know if they're the real thing.

MIKE
You saw it, too?

The boys help each other up.

DUSTIN
Oh yeah.

LUCAS
What should we do about it? We can't just let it around the school.

HOPPER
No, no, no, there is no "we". You boys are going to go back to the dance and pretend none of this happened.

Hopper points at Will.

HOPPER (CONT'D)
Especially you.

Hopper ushers the kids upstairs. The walk into the--

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - NIGHT

Hopper follows the boys back to the gym.

MIKE
We can't just pretend it's not here. We have to help.

HOPPER
And how would you be helping?

MIKE

I think I know how we can stop it.

JOYCE (O.S.)

Will?

The boys look forward. Joyce, Nancy, Steve, and Johnathan run up to meet with them.

Joyce rushes up to Will, drops the fire extinguisher, pulls him tightly into her arms. She clings onto him, pets his hair.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

Oh, Will! I was so worried! My boy!

Will glances back at his friends, uncomfortable. He gently pulls from his mom.

WILL

I'm fine, mom. Really.

Hopper steps up. Will and Joyce part, but Joyce keeps her hands on his shoulders.

JOYCE

We're going home now. All of you.
Come on.

WILL

I can't leave yet. We need to stop
this thing.

MIKE

It's just like one of our D&D
characters. It can transform to
anyone or anything--

DUSTIN

The doppleganger!

Dustin fist pumps.

MIKE

Exactly.

HOPPER

Hold on a minute. This isn't one of
your board games. This is serious.

DUSTIN

We're completely serious! The
doppleganger dies when it
dissolves.

Nancy crosses her arms.

NANCY
Well that's specific.

MIKE
If we can find something big enough
to just dump it in, maybe we can
kill it.

HOPPER
And how do you know if that will
even work?

JOYCE
Pieces fell off when I washed it
out with the fire extinguisher.

STEVE
But that wasn't enough. We need
something that'll get rid of it at
once.

A GROWL down the hall-- close to the dance-- silences them.
The group looks between each other, panicked.

Hopper grabs his gun.

HOPPER
Shit.

They rush to--

INT. SCHOOL GYM - NIGHT

The group enters. OLD 1960S MUSIC plays over the speakers.
They each scan the dance floor, cautious.

Mike spots "Heather" in the midst of the dance floor.

MIKE
There.

"Heather" glances back at them, rushes into the crowd.

The group splits up; the boys into the crowd of kids, Steve,
Nancy, and Johnathan toward the DJ stage, Joyce and Hopper on
each side of the crowd.

IN THE CROWD, Lucas grabs the arm of a blonde girl. She spins
around, pissed: not Heather. He backs away apologetically,
hurries back into the crowd.

Dustin and Mike search over the heads of fellow students.
They can't find her.

Will, on his own, searches between students. After a bit he
sways, dizzy. THE NOISE OF THE CROWD IS OVERWHELMING.

FLASHES of the upside down appear. The crowd is gone.

"Heather" sneaks back stage.

Will follows after her.

THE GYM RETURNS TO NORMAL.

Mike sees Will head back stage. He follows after him.

ON THE DJ STAGE, Steve, Nancy, and Johnathan run up.

TED WHEELER, Mike's dad, plays OLD CLASSICS.

TED
There you are, Steve.

He turns to Nancy, waves a bit.

TED
Hi, honey.

Nancy and Johnathan focus their attention on the crowd.

NANCY
Hi, dad.

STEVE
Thanks, Mr. Wheeler, but I can take
it from here.

TED
Oh, not to worry. I got this thing
figured out now. Besides, I think
the kids like me!

Steve glances at the crowd. The kids try to dance, but
they're clearly displeased.

STEVE
Yeah, uh, you're doing a great job,
Mr. Wheeler.

DRIP!

Steve looks to his shoulder: a splotch of SPOILED MILK. He
recoils from the smell, looks up.

The bucket of SPOILED MILK hangs above the stage.

INT. BACK STAGE - NIGHT

Troy sits back, stares up at the bucket, proud. James heads down the stairs.

JAMES
You want anything else?

TROY
Just punch.

James nods, exits. "Heather" hurries up the stairs after him. Troy jumps up.

TROY
Hey, this area's off limits.

"Heather" ignores him, looks around. She looks a little malnourished; hungry.

TROY
I said it's off limits.

Troy steps in front of her. "Heather" sizes him up, licks her lips.

HEATHER
You'll do.

"Heather" grabs his arms, opens her mouth.

Will and Mike rush up behind her.

Mike rushes up, tackles her to the side.

She claws at Mike's face in her attempt to get away. She scrambles to her feet.

Mike grabs her leg, pulls her back down.

Will hurries to help--

Troy grabs him by his shirt, yanks him back.

TROY
Where are you going, zombie?

Will pushes at Troy to get away. Troy drags him toward the stage. Will opens his mouth--

WILL

Mike!

Troy shoves his hand over Will's mouth.

"Heather's" mouth transforms, its teeth pointed and tongue long. It tries to bite Mike--

He kicks her away. "Heather" HISSES, starts to transform. Mike scrambles to his feet.

As they near the curtains, Troy about to shove Will out, Will bites down on his hand.

Troy yelps, Will pushes him out of the way. He rushes back to Mike.

The doppelganger, half "Heather"-half monster, GROWLS at the boys. Troy steps back, horrified.

TROY

What the Hell?

The monster goes after Will.

Mike tackles the monster into Troy. They all fight to stay out of the monster's grasp and fall through the curtain into--

INT. SCHOOL GYM - NIGHT

THE BOYS COLLAPSE ON THE DJ STAGE.

The teens jump back in surprise. Ted looks at his son.

TED

Mike!

Steve pushes past Nancy and Johnathan into--

INT. BACK STAGE - NIGHT

Steve looks around, finds the rope for the bucket. He unties it, watches the boys and "Heather" struggle on stage.

The monster's fangs hang over Mike's head, about to bite in.

Steve sets the rope free.

INT. SCHOOL GYM - NIGHT

The bucket tilts--

AND POURS ALL OVER "HEATHER" AND THE BOYS.

Nancy and Johnathan jump out of the bucket's way.

"Heather" SHRIEKS.

Mike slides out from under her.

Its skin burns wherever the spoiled milk touched.

Troy gapes at his ruined clothes in anger and disgust,
hurries off stage.

Dustin and Lucas meet up with the boys. They gag, back away
from the smell.

The doppelganger tries to transform, but it doesn't work.

Limbs start, then stop halfway through--

Faces appear and disappear around its body--

Pieces of skin melt off onto the floor--

They bubble, sizzle, then dissolve on the stage--

Translucent goo is left in its wake. The monster is gone.

The kids stare, shocked. Then--

APPLAUSE and EXCITED SHOUTS.

KID 1

This dance is AWESOME!

KID 2

I didn't know Heather did magic
tricks!

KID 3

She's so cool!

The boys are relieved.

INT. SCHOOL GYM - SHORTLY AFTER

The party picks up. Kids dance with more enthusiasm now.

Dustin, Lucas, Will, and Mike stand by the snack table. Will
and Mike continue to clean themselves off with paper towels.
Joyce puts several car air fresheners around their necks.

MIKE
Sorry about your date.

DUSTIN
It's okay. I'm just glad I didn't
have to kiss her.

Dustin glances over the crowd, his face lights up.

DUSTIN
Guys, Tony Angelo's eating a whole
box of twinkies!

Lucas and Dustin run off. Will glances to his mom; Joyce nods for him to go. He looks to Mike.

MIKE
I'll be there in a sec.

Will nods, follows after his friends.

Mike digs into his jacket pocket. He pulls out the EGGO waffle from earlier, stares at it, sad.

INT. ABANDONED CABIN - NIGHT

Hopper arrives, sets his stuff down. Eleven watches TV.

ELEVEN
Work?

Hopper nods.

HOPPER
Yeah. I think I'm going to go to
bed early. You mind?

Eleven shakes her head. Hopper exits into his bedroom. She stares at the door, making sure he's gone.

Eleven reaches under the couch cushion, pulls out a blindfold and ties it around her eyes.

INT. UPSIDEDOWN - NIGHT

Total darkness. Eleven stands still, in front of the gym doors. She approaches the doorway.

She pulls out a waffle from her back pocket. She opens the door, tosses it out into the gym.

INT. SCHOOL GYM - NIGHT

The dance resumes. Will stands off to the side of the gym, near the doors. He watches a kid, TONY ANGELO, swallow twinkies whole. KIDS NEARBY CHEER HIM ON.

PLOP.

Will looks down to the floor. A waffle sits in the doorway.

FADE OUT.