

THE FLOODGATES OF WILLOWHILL
by **MARY SanGIOVANNI**
Adapted for audio by **LANCE ROGER AXT**
for the **HORRORSCOPES** audiothology (Season 2)

CHARACTERS:

SAMANTHA (“SAM”):	14
PROF. JOE RICCI	30’s
TED LARSSON:	60’s
HANK JEDSOE:	60’s
CHUCK McCAULEY:	60’s
JONAS BECKER:	60’s
NELLIE:	50’s

ALSO: HUNTER (hound dog), and CREATURE

PROLOGUE

SFX: GENTLE WINDCHIMES.

SAM NARRATION: Do you love early autumn evenings as much as I do? It’s clearer, somehow, everything seems to click into place. Here in Willowhill, the air seems filled with... possibilities... that and the warm glow of the setting sun, and the warm smells of hot cider and apple pie. Up through Columbus Day, the Willowhill Country Store would stay open till eight, though not many people came that late, but it gave Ted Larrison a chance to sip a thumb of whisky with his bud Hank Jedsoe on the porch, soaking up the last rays of sun and the sights and smells of the town.

SFX: WINDCHIMES FADE OUT FOR:

SCENE ONE: EXT. LARSSON GENERAL STORE – NIGHT

SFX: TWO ROCKING CHAIRS CREAKING QUIETLY ON THE PORCH WOOD.
CICADAS AND CRICKETS ARE CHIRPING IN THE DISTANCE.

LARSSON: Look at you, girl, nose in a book. Always reading.

SAM NARRATION: That’s Mr. Larsson. My parents died rather – abruptly -- two years ago, and he took me in, being my dad’s uncle. He’s been good to me. As good as he can be, at least.

SAM: I want to go to University, Mr. Larsson. Miss Nellie tells me I need to do lots of reading if I’m to go to university.

JEDSOE: Miss Nellie is right on that. Go get yourself to University, get yourself out of this one-horse town.

SAM NARRATION: And that's Hank Jedsoe. He and his tobacco pipe are a fixture on the country store's porch.

LARRSON: I s'pose. Though how anyone is gonna pay for you to go to college is outside my estimation. Hey. You fancy some hot cider, Sam? I reckon I've seen the last customers for the day and I'd hate to waste the pot.

SAM: I'd love some.

LARRSON: How bout you, Hank?

HANK: The whiskey will do me right solid.

LARRSON: S'pose it will!

LARRSON chuckles and steps inside, pours glass, comes back in.

LARSSON: ...Just me or it did it just git a little chilly in the last couple of minutes?

JEDSOE: Sweater weather soon enough, Ted.

LARRSON: Here's your cider, Sam.

SAM: Thanks, Uncle Ted.

LARRSON: You got another mite of that whiskey, Hank?

JEDSOE: Ayuh, where's your glass?

LARRSON: Here.

SFX: **SPLASH OF WHISKEY**

LARRSON: Much obliged, old timer.

JEDSOE: Anytime, ya dotty codger.

JEDSON/LARSSON Chuckle, clink glasses.

LARRSON: Well look at that...

SFX: **BUICK SLOWLY APPROACHING UNDER:**

JEDSOE: Now I'll be damned, Ted, looks like you have a customer after all. What are those plates... New York?

SFX: **CAR STOPS AND IDLES ON STREET UNDER:**

RICCI: (*distance; from out of car window*) Evening!

JEDSOE: *(only a little louder in volume)* Evenin'!

LARSSON: *(shouting)* We're about to close up shop, you wanna pull in?

RICCI: I uh - no. No, thank you. I just need to know if there's a motel or maybe a boarding house around here.

JEDSOE: A motel he says - -(GUFFAWS)

LARSSON: *(under breath)* Knock it off. (LOUDER) What Hank here means to say, is, round the corner two blocks there's a green house with white shutters. Nellie there will rent you a room, I reckon.

RICCI: *(distance; from out of car window)* Thanks.

SFX: **CAR HEADS OFF.**

JEDSOE: And I thought we'd seen all the flatlanders we was gonna get for this year. You know what you shoulda told him?

JEDSOE/LARSSON: "You can't get there from here"

SFX: **THE TWO CHUCKLE**

LARRSON: You ol' coot...

LARSSON STOPS FOR:

LARSSON: Honey, you okay?

SAM: *(under her breath)* ...Yes, I'm fine. I just...need to get ready.

LARSSON: Ready? Ready for what?

FX: **SAM RUSHES OFF**

LARRSON: What was that all about--

JEDSOE: "You got a motel," he says... Ha!

AMBIENCE: **CHANGES TO ANOTHER STREET OFF THE MAIN DRAG.**

SAM NARRATION: About this time the sun had turned from golden to a corpse-skin haze of violent and corpulent shadows. A sharp chill had come into the air, New England's early warning of how quickly the languorous summer could transition to murderous winter.

SCENE TWO: **EXT. BED AND BREAKFAST – NIGHT**

SFX: FOOTSTEPS ON GRAVEL WALKWAY.
FOOTSTEPS WALK UP WOOD STEPS, THEN STOP.
A KNOCK ON THE SCREEN DOOR.
THROUGH THE SCREEN DOOR WE HEAR NELLIE:

NELLIE: Yes?

RICCI: Are you “Nellie?”

NELLIE: (*a little cautious*) Depends whose askin’.

RICCI: Two gentlemen over at the Country Store said to ask for Nellie. Looking for a room for the night.

SFX: **NELLIE OPENS THE SCREEN DOOR.**

NELLIE: (*smiling*) Oh, those two. I might have room for an out of townner such as yourself. Come on in.

SFX: **RICCI ENTERS UNDER:**

RICCI: Thank you.

SFX: **SCREEN DOOR CLOSES BEHIND HIM.**

CUT TO: INT. RICCI’S ROOM - MOMENT LATER

SFX: FOOTSTEPS STOP.
NELLIE OPENS DOOR.
GIVES KEYS TO RICCI UNDER:

NELLIE: You have your own private bath, shared kitchen downstairs. Checkout’s at noon, ‘less you need to leave later, in which case it’s an extra five –

RICCI: Not sure yet. Guess we’ll play it by ear.

NELLIE: Well, everybody’s cleared out so you should have a real quiet sleep tonight.

RICCI: I sure hope so.

NELLIE: You need anything, let me know.

RICCI: Thank you much.

SFX: **RICCI CLOSES THE DOOR BEHIND HIM.**

SFX: **HE PUTS HIS BAGS ON THE BED AND UNZIPS ONE OF THEM.**

RICCI REMOVES A HEAVY TOME FROM ONE OF THE BAGS AND RESTS IT ON A NEARBY DESK. WE HEAR HIM CAREFULLY TURNING THE MASSIVE PAGES UNDER:

RICCI: *(talking to the book)* ...Alright... where are you... next to the legend of Zimaxar.. (ZIM-AX-ARR)... Yes... I'm certain of it... The gates are open.. And tonight... Tonight something big will slip through... Unless... Unless...

AMBIENCE AND SFX: **FADE OUT.**

MUSIC: **TRANSITION.**

SCENE THREE: **INT. CHUCK McCAULEY'S TRUCK – NIGHT**

SFX: **PICK UP TRUCK SLOWING DOWN ON ROAD...**

MUSIC: **(THROUGH RADIO, COUNTRY TWANGING BANJO, ETC)**

COUNTRY DJ: Quiet night in the Faulkesville Valley folks, but the bad news I gotta break is that it looks like Indian Summer is over. Arctic air is bringing in a deep chill, so get out your sweaters and put plastic on your veggies.

MUSIC: Banjo Music returns.

DOG MOANS

McCAULEY: I know, Hunter, I know. We'll just take a quick look around, see what's going on, and skedaddle back outta there. Woulda been simpler if Katy hadn't gone and moved on up Boston-way. It'd be her lookin' in on her pa, 'stead of you 'n me. Hard to believe I been friends with her pa ever since we was boys. Even then, I didn't like these woods so much, and I like 'em even less now. Huh. Gate's open. That's weird.

SFX **OLD TRUCK PULLS UP, STOPS, AND IDLES UNDER:**

SAM NARRATION: That's Chuck McCauley, he's got a woodlot near Jonas Becker's place, on the Willowhill side. He just got a call from Jonas's daughter, Katy Becker. She'd been ringing her dad for a few days now, he didn't answer, didn't call her back. That wasn't like him. Would he mind giving a search? Well, Chuck, he started by swinging by the Swagger - that's our local watering hole – and sure enough, not a soul had seen old Jonas. They hadn't seen him by Mel's Diner, either. So here was, taking a ride out to Becker's farm, through the Faulkesville woods, a patch of woods that even an old logger like Chuck never wanted to set food in after dark. Except. Here he was.

McCAULEY: No such thing as ghost and goblins, Chuck. The Good Book says there's God and angels and demons. But there ain't no boogeymen jumping out of trees.

SFX **McCAULEY puts the THE TRUCK INTO GEAR AND SLOWLY, VERY SLOWLY, INCHES ONTO A GRAVEL ROAD.**

SAM NARRATION: Everybody whose grown up in Faulkesville, well, they've always guessed there's something wrong with the woods on the edge of town, the ones that border Willowhill, something people don't like to bring up in polite company.

There was that moss that killed a couple trees in a day or two during a cold weather spell; the dark silt in the riverbed that almost looked like... blood flowing away from the woods; and then there's that... "thing"... that Hank and Ted say they shot at when they were boys... the two would never dare breathe a word, except, one time McCauley got them drunk on Coffee Brandy and they told the story of a thing with a head like a shark and eyes black as midnight, and how it kept coming after they shot it, three times, before the two of them ran. But Chuck could laugh that off as wild stories by a couple of drunks. At least, that's what he told me, but the cloud that came over his eyes after he finished the story, suggested he might believe more than he was letting on.

SFX: **TRUCK STOPS SUDDENLY AND IDLES.**

McCAULEY: Damn you, Jonas, what the hell are you doing out here anyway? I wouldn't stay here if I'd lost MY wife and son. And your daughter ran as far as she could as soon as she could. But you... You are a stubborn old goat, ain't ya? But even with all those stories, even after your wife and boy died in those freak...

HUNTER GROWLS, LOW AND MENACING.

McCAULEY: Hold up boy, hold up...

SFX: **McCAULEY TURNS OFF THE IGNITION.**

McCAULEY: Oh damn... somethin' knocked over his *truck*?

SCENE FOUR: **EXT. BECKER HOUSE, NEAR FAULKESVILLE WOODS – NIGHT**

SFX: **TRUCK DOOR OPENS.
HUNTER GETS OUT OF TRUCK.
DOOR CLOSSES AS McCAULEY COCKS A HANDGUN.**

McCAULEY: C'mon, buddy. We gotta check on ol' Jonas. Come on!

SFX: **WINDS BLOW SOFTLY THROUGH THE TREES.
CRUNCH OF McCAULEY'S BOOTS ON TWIGS AND GRAVEL,
WITH HUNTER UP AHEAD.**

HUNTER GROWLS AGAIN AS McCAULEY MOVES TO THE TRUCK.

McCAULEY: Stay, boy... stay... Hmpf. shouldda put fresh batteries in my flashlight. Can't barely see...

SFX: **McCAULEY STEPS BACK AS WE HEAR SOMETHING SLIMY DRIPS TO THE GROUND.**

McCAULEY: (*to himself*) ...the hell?

SFX: **HUNTER GROWLS AGAIN.**

McCAULEY: (*quietly to Hunter*) Stay back, buddy, stay back. Don't want you near this... this whatever th' hell this is... Slime? Lord Jesus protect me that ain't a thing from nature.

SFX: **WINDS BLOW HARSHLY THROUGH THE TREES FOR A MOMENT, STARTLING McCAULEY. Whispery-ghostlike voices.**

McCAULEY: (whispered) What is... out there... somethin' in those woods....?

SAM NARRATION: McCauley's flashlight fell on a strange angle emerging from the cursed woods. Its beam caught something and was absorbed by an endless void beyond the edge of the outermost stars, a place so far removed from even the dreams of humanity as to fill him with a frozen dread

McCAULEY: (*to himself*) No... God help me... Jonas brought it *out* of the woods... Hunter! Hunter! You get in the truck now!

SFX: **McCAULEY DRAGS HUNTER BACK TO THE TRUCK. HE OPENS A TRUCK DOOR AND HUNTER JUMPS IN.**

McCAULEY: That's right pal, you stay here... be right back! Gotta check on Jonas!

SFX: **McCAULEY SHUTS THE TRUCK DOOR. CRUNCH OF McCAULEY'S BOOTS ON TWIGS AND GRAVEL. BOOTSTEPS ON WOOD STEPS AND PORCH. FRONT DOORKNOB IS TURNED. McCAULEY PUSHES THE DOOR OPEN...SLIGHTLY. HE THEN PUSHES THE DOOR ALL THE WAY OPEN, AND WALKS INTO BECKER'S HOUSE.**

CUT TO: **INT. BECKER HOUSE – NIGHT**

McCAULEY: (*whispers*) Jonas? Jonas, you here?

SFX: **McCAULEY FLIPS ON A LIGHTSWITCH. FLIPS SEVERAL TIMES ON/OFF – NOT A LOT OF LUCK.**

McCAULEY: *(whispers)* Damn power's out. Jonas?

SFX: **FOOTSTEPS INDICATING McCAULEY WALKING THROUGH THE SPACE.**

McCAULEY: *(to himself)* Where the hell are –

SFX: **UNEARTHLY MOANING IN THE DISTANCE. HE UNCLICKS THE SAFETY ON THE GUN AS THE MOANING GROWS LOUDER IN VOLUME. HUNTER BARKS LOUDLY FROM THE TRUCK.**

McCAULEY: Jonas? JONAS! What the hell's going on out there?!

CUT TO: **EXT. BECKER HOUSE, NEAR FAULKESVILLE WOODS – NIGHT**

SFX: **McCAULEY RUNS OUT OF THE HOUSE, ACROSS THE PORCH, DOWN THE STEPS, AND SEVERAL STEPS ONTO GRAVEL.**

SOMETHING STAGGERS OUT OF THE WOODS. MOANING BECOMES SCREECHING.

HUNTER BARKS INCESSANTLY FROM INSIDE THE TRUCK.

McCAULEY: Jonas... Is that you... JONAS!! Oh!!!

SFX: **McCauley starts firing**

McCAULEY: Get away from him you son of --- AAAAUUUUGGGHHHH!!!
McCAULEY SCREAMS, diminishes into the distance.

MUSIC **BRIDGE...**

SCENE FIVE: **EXT. LARSSON GENERAL STORE – NIGHT**

AMBIENCE: **MAIN STREET IN FAULKESVILLE; NIGHT. A GENTLE BREEZE BLOWS PAST.**

SFX: **FROM INSIDE STORE: CASH REGISTER CLOSING. RECEIPTS BEING TALLIED.**

LARRSON: Sam? Can you help me, Sam?

SAM: Excuse me?

LARRSON: Sorry, don't mean to disturb you from your reading. Just, maybe you can help me clean up?

RICCI: (*approaching*) Mr. Larsson? Ted Larsson?

LARRSON: (*sighs*) Always happens, someone shows up right at closing time.

JEDSOE: (OFF) Store's Closed, Mr. –

RICCI: (*still approaching*) So you must be Hank Jedsoe, yes?

JEDSOE: (*getting up from chair, defensive*) Yeah, I am Hank Jedsoe, now who the hell're you?

SFX: **RICCI IS NOW ON THE PORCH WITH HANK AND SAM.**

RICCI: Professor Joe Ricci, I'm a linguist and cryptoanthropologist at Miskatonic University in Arkham. I know it's –

Our POV follows LARRSON, out of the store, and onto the porch where he interrupts Ricci.

LARSSON: (*exiting the store*) Excuse me, yer a what?

RICCI: (*slowly*) Cryptoanthropologist. (*normal speed*) I know it's late, but I was wondering if I might have a quick word with you on a matter of great importance.

JEDSOE: Regarding?

RICCI: Willowhill; specifically, the boundaries between the Faulkesville woods and Willowhill.

AFTER A BEAT

Sam pokes her head out.

SAM: What's going on?

LARSSON: Sam, go inside.

SAM: Uncle –

LARSSON: Sam, go inside now.

SFX: **FOOTSTEPS UP AND INTO GENERAL STORE, WITH SCREEN DOOR OPENING AND CLOSING BEHIND HER.**

CUT TO: INT. GENERAL STORE

SFX: **WE HEAR MUFFLED TALK COMING FROM THE PORCH BETWEEN JEDSOE, LARSSON, AND RICCI. / improvised script about Willowhill, Woods, creature out there, etc.**

RICCI: There's a creature that might slip through the gates, sir, if we don't do anything about it. This book told me...

LARSSON: You are right out of your mind...
JEDSOE: You been drinkin', pal?

SFX: **FROM OUTSIDE: McCAULEY'S TRUCK CAREENS INTO THE PARKING LOT NEXT TO THE STORE AND STOPS SUDDENLY. TRUCK DOOR OPENS.**

McCAULEY: *(from outside)* I NEED SOME HELP! IT'S JONAS! SOMETHIN'S HAPP'NED TO JONAS!

RICCI: *(from outside)* Jonas BECKER?

SFX **WE HEAR JEDSOE, LARSSON, AND RICCI RUN FROM THE PORCH TO THE TRUCK. HUNTER THE HOUND DOG BARKS AS THE OTHER TRUCK DOOR OPENS.**

JEDSOE: *(from outside)* Inside, get him inside...

SFX: **THREE SETS OF FEET DRAGGING JONAS BECKER TO THE PORCH AND INTO THE GENERAL STORE.**
WE ALSO HEAR HUNTER, McCAULEY'S DOG, FOLLOWING THEM IN.

LARSSON: *(grunting, carrying Becker)* Sam, call us an ambulance –

McCAULEY: Nope, won't go!

JEDSOE: Whaddya mean "won't go?"

McCAULEY: Hank, last thing he said before passin' out was "no hospitals!" Real firm 'bout that!

JEDSOE: Oh, did he now?

LARSSON: In that case, Sam, get us bandages and some peroxide, I'll clean these wounds best I can.

SAM: Okay.

SFX: **SAM HURRIES TO A BACKROOM AND GATHERS SOME SUPPLIES AND BRINGS THEM TO LARSSON:**

LARSSON: I'm just going to clean you up a little, Jonas. Get this, this slime off you.

JEDSOE: What the hell's going on, Chuck? Who did this to Jonas?

McCAULEY: (*speaking fast, stumbling over words*) He came stumblin' outta th' woods all glowin' and bleedin' and somethin' behind him was wailin' like a banshee! Becker's eyes – I could see he was skairt a' that thing followin' behind. And then I saw it, too... oh God, I saw it... I fired my gun like crazy – maybe I killed it, maybe I scared it, I don't know, didn't stay long enough to see. I grabbed Jonas and put him in the pickup with Hunter and got the hell outta there!

RICCI: Excuse me, excuse me – did you say he was – glowing?

McCAULEY: Yeah, he was – um – who the hell are you?

RICCI: Professor Joe Ricci. From Arkham University. I came here, uhm... well I came here looking for Mr. Becker.

McCAULEY: Is that so?

SFX: **RICCI REMOVES THE TOME FROM HIS BAG AND SETS IT ON A TABLE UNDER:**

RICCI: Well, for his farm. You see –

McCAULEY: (*under Ricci's page turning*) Holy Jesus!

SFX: **humming from the tome**

JEDSOE: (*under Ricci's page turning*) What in the –

SFX: **RICCI TURNING PAGES IN TOME UNDER:**

RICCI: (*cont'd*) – we've made some, uh, discoveries regarding some things going on out there just beyond his farm limits, in what I think is commonly referred to as the Faulkesville woods.

LARSSON: ... “We” have?

SFX: **HE FINDS THE RIGHT PAGE.**

RICCI: My fellow professors and me. Right... here. Here, these are distilled invocations and incantations, some taken from the archaic Pnakotic [NA-KOTIC] Manuscripts – a hell of a find right there –

SFX: **HE TURNS THE PAGE.**

RICCI: – and others from “Liber Ivonis” and “De Vermis Mysteriis, some from “Cultes des Ghoules” and “Unaussprechlichen Kulten”, and some from the Necronomicon of the mad Arab –

JEDSOE: Son: in English.

RICCI: Well, they're all specifically... spells.

JEDSOE: Spells? What, like... magic spells?

RICCI: For opening a kind of a... well, a “floodgate” to a place beyond our known universe, a place beyond stars, even.

SAM: It's pretty.

LARSSON: Sam?

SAM: It's got powers, Mr. Ricci?

RICCI: Yes. Powers like no other. In every book I just mentioned, there is only a fragment of the process, as even the authors found the prospect of completing it too ghastly to include in its entirety. You see there are supposedly these... “things” ... formless and powerful – and their presence anywhere alters time and space.

By invoking the completed spell one can open this “floodgate” allowing that piece of their home seat to pour into the caster's home world or dimension.

However, by invoking portions of it, it pours in a little at a time.

LARSSON: [incredulous] Is that right?

RICCI: Now, everything that comes through, from vegetation to... other things – it's all unstable, deadly. Predatory. And it spreads, changing things in our world, and then as more parts of the complete spell are invoked, even more pours through the floodgate and more changes occur.

All throughout the world you have these places where the gates are... thin. But none of them are like Mr. Becker's farm.

SAM: You mean we have a flood-gate, right here in Willowhill?

JEDSOE: Pay no mind to this city-slicker, Sammy, he's talking crazy. Demons and other worlds ain't gonna do you no good if you want to get to college.

RICCI: According to the tome, one of the weakest gates is in those woods. And as recently as this morning... the barrier between the worlds has deteriorated. Something set it off, maybe, or maybe it's a combination of the moon and the stars. It's not really clear... Only... We have to act fast. This book also has a way to stop up the floodgate out there, and maybe force whatever's come through the gate to go back to where it came from –

LARSSON: According to the tome, you say?

AFTER A BEAT:

- RICCI:** Yes. The Dark Tome.
- LARSSON:** The... Dark Tome?
- RICCI:** This book here... this is The Dark Tome.
- JEDSOE:** This's gotta be the biggest load a'bullcrap I ever heard in my life –
- McCAULEY:** Hank... hold up, here. Hold up. I seen things. You seen things too.
- LARSSON:** Hank and I were kids when that happen'd, drunk off our first taste of blueberry wine, Chuck, I still don't think we –
- McCAULEY:** Ted, I don't know if this man is crazy or not, his talk of the tome and whatnot but I do know something ain't right out in those woods! I seen it myself. We also know what happened... to... well, you know...
- LARSSON:** I know what?
- McCAULEY:** You know what I'm talkin' 'bout ... her--
- LARSSON:** Stop right there.
- McCAULEY:** It was weird, wasn't it? Us finding her out there, no memories of the whole thing, her folks sucked dry like empty packets of –
- LARSSON:** I said never, Hank. Not with her here.
- McCAULEY:** You're the one who saw the shark thing when you was a boy, you know --
- JEDSOE:** Hey, easy, easy, both o' you –
- BECKER:** (*mumbling*) Started with the fungus first, month before last...

THE WAR OF WORDS BETWEEN McCAULEY AND LARSSON STOPS.

JEDSOE: ...Jonas?

MUSIC

LOW OMINOUS MUSIC PICKS UP AGAIN UNDER:

BECKER: (*mumbling*) Looked kinda like mushrooms, I guess, little caps growing up the sides of the trees, but bigger 'n any mushrooms I ever seen. And they had...well, uh, roots, I guess, or shoots a' some kind, all tangled up in the ferns and brush and around the base a' the trees.

Them roots were growing in among the tree roots there, and the whole was

black and blue and kinda see-through, and both them colors glowed, I swear it! Glowed like they had their own dark moonlight to 'em.

And that ain't the only thing, neither. There are those... things that feed on those mushroom things.

I can't rightly tell you what they look like exact... I ain't never got a good look at 'em. They only come out at night, and what with them noises they make, I got to keeping indoors when they was about.

But I seen their eyes – that same black that glowed, and that same blue.

JEDSOE: Jonas, you ain't makin' any –

BECKER: (*cutting in, mumbling*) They had them eyes and mouths, too, all over their bodies – and some kinda... arms, I guess, that keep waving and shifting, being and then unbeing, like...well, like the bodies were changing their shape and texture.

And those was the small ones! Oh yes, I heard them baying and howling, and I'll be damned if something else bigger and louder didn't answer back before setting them littler ones to screaming...

Chuck... that thing you shot in the woods – I seen it in my dreams... it's an “avatar” ...a' Nyarlathotep or Hastur, it ain't clear which one... but man alive, it screams like its throat goes straight to hell, and I swear, them formless things – the big and the little – they respond.

Or maybe that thing we shot is just one form the formless things take, like when they're wanting to move all physical-like, with a shape...

JEDSOE: Ny – who? Jonas, tell us who attacked you?

A BEAT BEFORE:

RICCI: Those names. They're gods.

JEDSOE: What?

RICCI: According to ancient occult beliefs, they're alien beings... entities, if you will, of great power and great evil, revered by dark cults as gods and the rest of those in the know as monsters.

LARSSON: (*to Becker*) Jonas: you're saying... you seen it... in your dreams?

BECKER: Mm-hmm. (DRIFTS OFF)

A BEAT BEFORE:

LARSSON: (*quietly*) Awww dammit... Sounds like we got to put a stop to something.

JEDSOE: Where's the ammo?

LARSSON: (*deadly serious*) Up in the safe. You know the combo.

JEDSOE: (*heading to the back room*) I'll be right back.

RICCI: I – I don't know --

McCAULEY: (*hard and firm*) Sounds like we're all doing a field trip out to the Faulkesville woods. I don't know if everything you're saying is true, but we ain't no strangers to...well weird things going on out there in the sticks, and if something's out there that could do what it did to Jonas Becker or to Sam's parents before him... or worse, well, we gotta put an end to it.

RICCI: Thank you. I mean, for the help. It won't hurt.

LARSSON: What are we looking for out there?

RICCI: A cemetery. One too old for America.

LARSSON: Too old for Amer –

RICCI: Just trust me on this.

JEDSOE RE-ENTERS, BRANDISHING CROWBAR

JEDSOE: Whatever it is, I hope cold steel can put an end to it.

LARSSON: Me too. Just – you guys get in the truck, I need a minute.

FX: Other men leave.

MUSIC **CHANGES FOR:**

LARSSON: Sam. I'm sorry about what Hank said. I know it still must hurt to hear, what happened to them... Sam?

SAM: (STILL READING) Mm-hmm.

AFTER A BEAT.

LARSSON: We're going out to take a quick look at the woods out there. I expect I'll come home. You been through a lot, and I think I owe you that much.

You're a smart girl, Sammy. You're smart and you're inquisitive. You want to get to University? You bet, you have the brain for it. I love you for that. And if you love me back and respect me at all, you're going to walk over to Miss Nellie's right now and wait for me. Take your book if you want, study all night. Just get yourself inside, lock the doors, and wait this out. Promise me.

AFTER A BEAT:

SAM: (NOSE STILL STUCK IN BOOK) I promise.

LARSSON: Good. Ain't nothing worth saving, girl, if I don't have you safe, and the peace of mind knowing it. I owe that much to your mom and dad, and to you.

SAM: I'll be over at Nellie's, Mr. Larsson... I mean, Ted. The whole time.

LARSSON: That's a good girl. Take Hunter with you while you're at it, poor dog's been through enough tonight. (LEAVING) Alright, folks, let's go kill us a monster!

FX – TRUCK motor howls

EXT- IN THE TRUCK, DRIVING OUT TO THE FARM

JEDSOE: I got a Winchester bolt-action and you got your... "Dark Tome" to protect you, Mr. Ricci?

RICCI: That's right. I think my weapon will be of more use than yours, Mr. Jedsoe.

BECKER: (*still mumbling*) No bodies...but they got mouths. Oh Lord, they got mouths. And eyes like black holes, but they glow, too.... I got one – shot it and even got it into the back of my truck – but there's others the like it out there, too, and they came for the corpse.

The Faceless God told 'em too, I s'pose. It has many faces, many names. I heard its voice, and the piping of the mad idiot god, and the screams of windless movement and formless thought. So much... too much in those damned dreams.

RICCI: Mr. Becker, it would be extremely beneficial if you could tell us what happened out there in the woods tonight.

BECKER: (*a dry, hoarse laugh*) You'll see. Oh, heh heh, yesss... you'll see.

MUSIC **OUT.**

SCENE SIX: INT. CHUCK McCAULEY'S TRUCK – NIGHT

SFX: **TRUCK HEADING DOWN ROAD.**

McCAULEY: How long you had that book, now?

RICCI: A little while. I got it from a... well, the previous owner had a run in with.... A hazard of the trade.. I figured if I learned its meanings, maybe I can stop what's coming through before it happens. Before something

BECKER: (*weakly*) Helluva responsibility fer someone as young as you.

RICCI: And how long have you been protecting the gate?

BECKER: (*weakly*) You mean me? Or my pa? Or his pa before him?

McCAULEY: Wait, your pa was mixed up in this, Jonas?

BECKER: (*weakly*) What, you think I ain't budging from the farm 'cause I'm stubborn or stupid or something?

McCAULEY: Jesus, even when we was kids...

BECKER: (*weakly*) Pa might not've told me what it was we was minding, growing up, but he sure made it clear I wasn't gonna bug off the duty.

LARRSON: And this cemetery, where is it, Jonas?

BECKER: Don't rightly know.

JEDSOE: Wait, you don't know where an old cemetery is on your own property?

RICCI: It doesn't really work like that, gentlemen... The place has a way of hiding itself, especially from people who would seek to stop creatures from crossing the gate. But... The tome has a story, from colonial times, white settlers massacred an Indian village, burned every man, woman and child alive, an event like that, it can change things, warp the very energy attached to the spot... (STORY CONTINUES UNDER)

SFX: **TRUCK BARRELING DOWN THE ROAD.**

SCENE SEVEN: **EXT. BECKER HOUSE, NEAR FAULKESVILLE WOODS – NIGHT**

MUSIC **UNDER:**

SFX: **TRUCK PULLS UP TO BECKER'S DRIVEWAY, RICCI JUMPS OUT BEFORE THE TRUCK STOPS. WINDS WHIPPING VIOLENTLY.**

RICCI: (*adrenaline taking over*) Okay.... okay...

SFX: **RICCI OPENS THE BOOK AND IS TURNING PAGES UNDER THE FOLLOWING:**

(reading in alien language) Bal-ah-mazhar... No... Rekhreem? No...

TRUCK STOPS.
IGNITION TURNED OFF.
WE HEAR JEDSOE AND LARSSON GETTING OUT OF THE BACK OF THE TRUCK, WHILE BOTH THE DRIVER AND

PASSENGER DOORS OPEN, AND McCAULEY AND BECKER EMERGE FROM THE FRONT, CLOSING THE DOORS BEHIND THEM.

JEDSOE: (*approaching*) Alright, young man, where is this secret cemetery we're looking for?

RICCI: (*turning pages*) One second, Mr. Jedsoe... one second...

SFX: **AFTER TWO SECONDS OF FLIPPING PAGES HE STOPS, FINDING THE ONE HE'S BEEN LOOKING FOR...**

RICCI: (*reading, to himself*) Here we go... North...

AFTER A BEAT.

McCAULEY: (*whispering, to Larsson*) What's he doin'?

LARSSON: (*whispering, to McCauley*) Consulting the tome I guess? I don't -

RICCI: (*adrenaline taking over*) I got it! It's this way. There's even... Look... a trail of ichor.

JEDSOE: Ichor?

McCAULEY: Slime. Yeah I saw that earlier.

SFX: **HE RUNS INTO THE WOODS.**

JEDSOE: Guess we follow him?

SFX: **THEY FOLLOW HIM.**

LARSSON: (*on the move*) I guess we do. (*to the group*) Everyone keep your eyes open, and your gun ready.

McCAULEY: You okay to handle this, Jonas? After everything you've been through?

BECKER: I been asked by my pa to do one thing, I sure as hell am gonna do it.

McCAULEY: But your daughter, Katy, she's right worried about you...

BECKER: I'm coming with you....

MUSIC: **UP AND UNDER:**

SCENE EIGHT: **EXT. FAULKESVILLE WOODS – MOMENTS LATER**

SFX: **RICCI HURRIEDLY FLIPPING PAGES IN THE BOOK.**

RICCI: (*mid-conversation*) ...Yes... Yes this way... The Dark Tome is starting to hum, can't you hear it hum? It's responding to the rift in the floodgate.

JEDSOE: You see, that's the one thing sticking in my craw. Someone had to open the floodgate, right? So who would do that? Why?

RICCI: Supposedly, the reward for opening one of these floodgates is unlimited knowledge – so much knowledge as to allow the possessor to bend the physical properties of the world and passages of time to one's own will.

LARSSON: Sounds like some evil sons a bitches out there.

RICCI: Not so much evil, as... tempted. The temptation of power is hard to resist for a man, don't you agree?

McCAULEY: Nope. Not at all. Not for folks like us who want a table with our Lord Savior when our days are through.

JEDSOE: But this ain't the first time, either, is it? If that's what happened that night Sam's parents came out here... Somebody has been messing with this gate for a long time now... Someone... Someone clever...

LARSSON hits something with his foot

LARRSON: Ow!

JEDSON: You okay, Ted?

LARSSON: Hit something... A... Oh... Hell...

McCAULEY: What is it?

LARSSON: A rock, huge, old... shape kinda funny...

JEDSON: Yeah... look... there's lots of 'em, in a circle all around us, funny old stones... They got symbols on 'em, too... Like... Oh, hell...

McCAULEY: Like out of Mr. Ricci's book.

JEDSON: Ayuh.

FX – Snarling growls suddenly circle them.

LARSSON: You best get to sealing this gate up, flatlander.

McCAULEY: Jonas? Jonas? Hey, Jonas, bub, look alive.

BECKER: It's the monster.

McCAULEY: What do you mean it's the...

FX – A low, moaning roar emanates from beyond

RICCI: Keep them away from me! I'll need to complete my incantation!

BECKER: You stay in the hell you came from!

FX - Becker unloads a few rounds of ammo, snarl retreats for a moment.

SFX: **WINDS WHIPS THROW THE TREES.
WE BARELY HEAR RICCI AS HE MUMBLES A PHRASE IN
GUTTERAL, NONSENSICAL DIALECT. MONSTERS START
EMERGING FROM THE SHADOWS, RAGING AT THE
CHARACTERS IN THE SCENE...**

RICCI: R'yalum... r'yalum... r'yalm am'l phtalu.
R'yalum am'l phtalu.
R'hrii 'ai Nyarlathotep... Nyarlathotep... R'hrii 'ai Nyarlathotep...

MORE MOANING GROWLS COME FROM THE SHADOWS

BECKER: Stay away, you hear! This is my land!

FX – Becker fires off a few more shotgun rounds.

RICCI REPEATS THE PHRASE “R’YALM AM’L PHTALU” OVER AND OVER.

**A SLIMY, SLITHERING TENDRIL WRAPS ITSELF AROUND JEDSOE, UNNOTICED AT
FIRST...**

JEDSOE: Mother Mary... Wish this was just a drunken nightmare but I'm sure it --
ARrrrkkk!!!

**THE TENATACLE MAKES ITS MOVE; JEDSOE SCREAMS AND IS SUCKED UP INTO
THE TREES.**

LARSSON: HANK!

BECKER: IT'S FIGHTING BACK! SHOOT IT!

SFX: **GUNSHOTS FIRED, CREATOR HOWLS BACK – A SOLID HIT!**

**RICCI IS NOW SCREAMING “R’YALM AM’L PHTALU” OVER
AND OVER**

**THE SOUND OF ANOTHER SLIMY, SLITHERING TENDRIL
WRAPPING ITSELF AROUND BECKER:**

BECKER: Get off me, you bastard!! You hear me! This is my --

McCAULEY: IT'S GOT JONAS! IT'S –

SFX: **IT BREAKS JONAS' NECK.
HIS BODY IS THROWN TO THE GROUND.**

LARSSON: GODDAMIT! GODDAMIT!

McCAULEY: Oh Jesus... Ted... Ted... Behind you... The shark thing!

LARSSON: Come back to finish the job, huh! I was ten then, buddy, now I'm old and ain't scared of a—a—auuuuuk auuuukkk!!

SFX- **HORRIFIC SHARK MONSTER, RENDS LARSSON TO PIECES.**

LARRSON: **(SCREAMS)**

McCAULEY: No! NO! BACK TO HELL !!! BACK TO HELL WITH ALL OF YOU!!

SFX: **MORE GUNSHOTS BEFORE THE MOANING SUBSIDES.
RICCI IS NO LONGER SHOUTING.
THE WHIPPING WINDS DIE DOWN.**

**RICCI FALLS ONTO HIS BOOK. HE IS BREATHING HEAVILY,
EXHAUSTED.
McCAULEY CRAWLS OVER TO DEAD BODIES.**

McCAULEY: *(quietly, in shock)* Oh Jesus.. Jonas... Hank... Ted... They got all of you...

SFX: **RICCI BEGINS TO LAUGH... A LAUGH THAT LIES
SOMEWHERE BETWEEN SHOCK AND SORROW, ON THE
VERGE OF MADNESS.**

McCAULEY: What the hell're you laughin' for? You think this is funny, City Boy?

RICCI: You should have seen it... Inside... Inside the Gate...

McCAULEY: Seen what?!? The thing that killed my friends?

RICCI: It was... powerful... Amazing... I could see... So far... Wait. You hear that?

McCAULEY: Hear... what? I don't hear a damn thing.

RICCI: Exactly. We did it. We closed the gate. Now help me... I need to read some more incantations. Seal it forever..

McCAULEY: No sir. We need to be preparing for a funeral, is what needs doing. A bunch of 'em. Need to tell Sam what happened her poor Uncle Ted.

MUSIC - TRANSITION.

SCENE NINE: NARRATION

NELLIE: You okay, Sam? Can I get you some tea?

SAM: I'm alright, Miss Nellie, thank you.

NELLIE: They'll be along soon, I'm sure. You just hold on a mite longer. (SMILES)
You're such a sweet kid, always reading.

SAM: I hope to get to University, Miss Nellie. I'll need to study if I ever hope to do that.

NELLIE: That you do, Sam...

FX – McCAULEY's TRUCK CAREENS UP, McCALEY and RICCI GET OUT.

McCAULEY: Nellie?! Nellie?!

RICCI: Look, Ma'am, I'm sorry –

McCAULEY: You don't talk. I talk. Ain't been nothing but trouble since you showed up in town.

NELLIE: Hank? Hank what happened? Where are Ted and Hank? Wha', is that blood?

McCAULEY: You might want to sit down for this one... Trouble started about as soon as my headlights hit the edge of the Faulkesville woods...

McCAULEY relays to Nellie what happened under narration

SAM NARRATION: (*calmly, innocently*) Hank McCauley's telling Miss Nellie everything that happened out behind Jonas Becker's farm, but of course, I know it all already. I know, because I see things. Wondrous things..

My parents were my first blood sacrifice. It was like being born again, that night I asked them to come with me to the cemetery before the age of man. Giving my parents up to the ancient ones – well, that was enough to grant me keys to the floodgates, and I was not disappointed in the knowledge they'd given me. But I needed more.

RICCI: (OVERHEARD) I'm so sorry... But... We stopped it. We sealed the gate. This will never happen again

SAM NARRATION: Oh, Professor Ricci. I'm afraid you're wrong. You just stopped up the floodgates temporarily. It'll be 'bout a week, maybe two before I can get back to what I started.

It's true, Mr. Ricci's book is much nicer than mine. It's cleaner, not as worn 'round the edges. I have had to spend countless hours piecing together missing fragments, whole spells I've had to piece together letter by letter.

I sure like its name – The Dark Tome. I know all the major players in it, too: Shub-Niggurath the Goat with a Thousand Young, Nyarlathotep, Hastur, Azathoth. There's a lot of things in that copy that aren't in mine, but I always managed to fill in the gaps.

Uncle Ted did say I was a smart girl.

I was really hoping the ancients would take Mr. Ricci, but, no. They did take Uncle Larsson, Jonas Becker, and Hank Jedsoe, so I think the gods will be happy with me. Once I break the weakling spell Ricci has cast on the gate.

NELLIE: I'll go tell her.

McCAULEY: You sure?

RICCI: I can –

McCAULEY: No.

SAM NARRATION: I do wonder how it would be to spend an afternoon discussing the mysteries of the outerverse with Mr Ricci. I mean he doesn't understand as much as I do, but he definitely understands more than these country bumpkins I'm forced to live with. And I suppose it will be lonely now that most of my friends are gone. But Miss Nellie will be very accommodating with my studies. And once I'm at Arkham University, well, the old ones can devour this whole town, if they care to.

You see, time and space are really all part of a one-way river. You just have to know how and where to dig the ditches.

SFX

DOOR CREAKS

NELLIE: Sam...? Excuse, me, Sam? Something terrible happened.

SAM: I know.

NELLIE: What?

SAM: I mean... Oh no... (*Starts crying, preemptively*)

NELLIE: Oh... you must've heard us talking... Oh dear... Dear....

NELLIE starts comforting SAM

SAM NARRATION: I play the act with Miss Nellie until I can see she believes me, and then I ask her to leave me alone. It's time to go to bed. In my dreams come more knowledge from beyond the woods. In my dreams come many things... things seen and unseen that the little ones draw from the earth and water, the trees and rocks, and things that the big ones draw from the skies and stars not only of my universe, but of those beyond

I can't wait to see what'll come through when I open the gates again.