ROD SERLING'S AFTER TWILIGHT

A New Anthology Series
For the 21st Century

"Knife Through the Veil"

by
Marc Scott Zicree

FIRST DRAFT

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From 1959 to 1964, Rod Serling's TWILIGHT ZONE blazed a trail of unique, powerful and unforgettable stories, winning three Emmys and inspiring legions of writers, directors and producers to create the great films and TV shows of the last five decades.

More than that, Serling's masterpiece became a part of all of us, a shared national treasure that has lived on beyond its creator.

Who can forget…

Burgess Meredith breaking his glasses…

The woman waiting for the bandages to be removed to see if she'll look "normal…"

The gremlin on the wing…

The Monsters on Maple Street…

"Wish it to the cornfield, Anthony!"

"It's a cookbook!"

And so many more.

What made them great? Serling's unparalleled storytelling, of course. But something more than that - his compassion, his outrage, his humanity…

And that incredible voice.

There were 156 episodes, and as wonderful as they were, that was all there were…

Until now.

Rod dictated all his scripts, his speeches, his errant thoughts onto dictabelts, an early recording medium. It was thought, for the most part, these belts were lost.

But now… two-hundred of them have been found.

That singular talent, that presence, that voice -- vibrantly alive again.

And so we propose **ROD SERLING'S AFTER TWILIGHT**, a new anthology series derived from, hosted and inspired by Rod Serling.

Stories with the themes, outlook and moral power of the master himself. Overseen by Marc Scott Zicree, author of THE TWILIGHT ZONE COMPANION and a noted TV writer-producer with credits including STAR TREK - THE NEXT GENERATION, BABYLON 5, DEEP SPACE NINE, FRIDAY THE 13TH - THE SERIES and SLIDERS.

How would it work? We would comb these dictabelts for appropriate material by Serling to utilize as onscreen narration, storylines, characters and so on.

Beyond that, we would look to other Serling materials from scripts and storylines he wrote before and after TWILIGHT ZONE, many of which aired on live anthologies long since forgotten (possibly including outlines from ROD SERLING'S WAX MUSEUM, his intended sequel show to TWILIGHT ZONE).

In some cases, we would use Serling's scripts verbatim. In others, we would glean themes, story elements, characters and dialogue from Serling's works, interpreted and freshly imagined by the top writers in film, TV and imaginative literature.

Serling lived in perilous times, marked by the Cold War, racial turmoil, social upheaval of all kinds. What it created in him was a burning need to speak to the best in man, to use his show as a bully pulpit to urge us to be better, kinder, wiser.

For the most part in the TWILIGHT ZONE, characters were given a choice to rise to their higher nature or, failing that, be destroyed. By and large, it was a moral universe.

And it succeeded in Serling's intent. Beyond sheer entertainment, TWILIGHT ZONE instructed us how to live, how to interact with our fellow man, how to be humble in a universe of infinite complexity and possibility.

Many experts have lately been proclaiming that our current time is the true Golden Age of Television, but what's missing is what Rod provided so richly and so well. We need him now more than ever.

We need **ROD SERLING'S AFTER TWILIGHT.**

SAMPLE SCRIPT

In the following pages, we present an original script by Marc Zicree to demonstrate the specifics of ROD SERLING'S AFTER TWILIGHT. The opening and closing narration is taken from unaired Serling material, which can be heard on our website.

ROD SERLING'S AFTER TWILIGHT

"Knife Through the Veil"

FADE IN:

EXT. FOLIAGE - NIGHT

Moving CLOSE through lush greenery, we don't yet know where we are. But in the distance, we hear a man SPEAKING, though we can't yet make out the words.

EMERGE from the greenery and we're moving over a BODY OF WATER, GLIMMERING in the night. Romantic, mysterious...

Still MOVING, we WIDEN to see that we're in the back yard of an OPULENT HOME IN PACIFIC PALISADES, that we've passed from tropical landscaping to skimming over the pool toward the owner's GUEST HOUSE/BACK OFFICE, where a LIGHT BURNS.

A MAN sits in that office, his back to us, and at last we can make out the words of that INCREDIBLY FAMILIAR VOICE.

ROD SERLING (O.S.)
I don't think we dare succumb to violence...

We PLUNGE THROUGH THE WINDOW into

THE OFFICE

Where ROD SERLING lounges at his desk, talking into a DICTAPHONE, mic held loosely in his hand. A cigarette burns in an ashtray; he takes an occasional drag on it.

Smoke hangs in the air under the single bulb, the room cast mostly in darkness. Books fill floor-to-ceiling bookcases, and although the scene is NOT black and white, there's a subdued tonality that suggests it.

We only see Rod from the back, as he continues dictating the script (as he dictated all of his scripts).

ROD SERLING
I don't know of any social progress to be born out of the rubble of a bombed building, or the ashes of a burnt-out street, or the body count of men, however impassioned and however martyred...

CLOSE IN ON THE SMOKE, swirling upward, as we

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BOXING GYM - DAY

BLURRY, we don't yet know where we are, only we get a sense of two BODIES moving, HEAR the SOUND OF BLOWS.

ROD SERLING (V.O.)
Violence, my friends, is violence, whether it comes under the guise of retribution or poetic justice...

And WHAM! We're ON KATIE RYAN (early 30s) sparring with a TRAINER. She's good for an amateur, focused and intense.

TRAINER
C'mon, kill me, take my head off, get angry about something. Is that it, girlie girl? That the best you can --

BAM! She clocks him with a solid right. He goes down hard.

TRAINER
Oof!

And stays down, curling in against the pain.

KATIE
(sweet, solicitous)
You okay?

MAIN GYM - MINUTES LATER

Katie emerges to where JOSH, her husband (30s, amiable but no hunk) works the exercycle, and SERENITY (11) her daughter, is beside him on the stairmaster. The Trainer -- recovered now -- brings up the rear.

KATIE
(to Josh)
What, you're still on the bike? When're you gonna do some upper body?

JOSH
I'm trying to keep that svelte, muscle-less look.

KATIE
(kisses him on the cheek)
Right.

JOSH
Besides, I've got two Amazons in the family. Right, Rennie?

SERENITY
Right, Dad.

Josh stops pedaling.

JOSH
Enough of that. Who's for Fatburger?

SERENITY
Me! Me!

She's off the Stairmaster, running for the door.

KATIE
(shaking her head, amused)
You're hopeless.

He climbs off the bike, toweling his hair, looks at her full of love.

JOSH
You've got enough hope for both of us.

She smiles lovingly back. Arms around each other, they head out to join Serenity. Katie calls back to the Trainer --

KATIE
Manana, Eddie.

They exit.

ON TRAINER

Looking after them enviously, he says to a SECOND TRAINER --

TRAINER
Where do you go to get some of that?

EXT. RYAN HOUSE - MORNING

Well-kept, with manicured lawn, concrete birdbath and a pebbled walk between front door and carport, flanked by lamps. In the carport sit a Toyota Prius and an SUV. The plates read "RYAN ONE" and "RYAN TOO".

Katie, in business attire, is backing the Prius, as Josh runs out of the house with her briefcase. Serenity watches from the open doorway.

Katie stops the car, cranks down the window, takes the case.

JOSH
Don't pick any fights.

KATIE
Don't write any cliches.

She kisses Josh, then drives off. Josh heads back to the house.

SERENITY
What's a cliche?

JOSH
What your father lives by.

We follow them

INTO THE HOUSE

Josh settles into the writer's office part of the living room, calls to Serenity --

JOSH
Go watch something empty and violent.

Serenity grins and lopes off to her room. Josh turns on the word processor and gets to work.

He pauses, looking at the front door. Thinking better of it, he rises, crosses to it and turns the deadbolt, locking it with an authoritative CLICK.

INT. MCCLINTOK-VERE GREETING CARD COMPANY - DAY

ON KATIE. Her office is a glass partition, through which we see a larger room, filled with artists at drawing tables. Nearest Katie, who functions as art director, are her own desk and drawing table. A clock on the desk reads 4:40.

J.P. (40s) enters. Sharp and tough, though not hard, she has the easy manner of a good co-worker and friend to Katie. Katie switches off her overhead lamp, slips on her jacket.

J.P.
And where do you think you're going, Ms. Ryan?

KATIE
I'm outta here.

She opens a drawer in the desk, brings out a gift-wrapped box.

KATIE
Surprise for Josh. Bottle of champagne. Dinner reservations. Tickets to the theater.

J.P.
Special occasion?

KATIE
Yeah. The day after Tuesday night.

J.P. chuckles. Katie heads for the door.

J.P.
(shouting after him)
Give him my best. I know you'll give him <u>your</u> best.

EXT. RYAN HOUSE - ECU ON KILLER'S SHOES - DAY

Scuffed tennies with frayed laces. They move stealthily up the pebbled walk.

EXT. KITCHEN WINDOW - KILLER'S POV

Through the gauzy curtains, we see Josh sorting laundry, while Serenity sits at the table, open textbook within reach, writing in a notebook. RADIO BLARES, inches from her.

Gloved hands come INTO SHOT. Try the window -- it's locked.

INT. KATIE'S CAR

Moving though sluggish traffic, the gift-wrapped present on the seat next to Katie. With one hand she absently punches buttons on the radio. A GARBLED MIX OF STATIC, COMMERCIALS, CLASSICAL, ROCK AND COUNTRY. As part of this we hear:

REPORTER (V.O.)
...series of daylight assaults and burglaries...

It is off-signal and barely discernible, a throw-away. IT SHOULD NOT STAND OUT FROM the Other RADIO SOUNDS. Katie doesn't even stop to hear it, is unaware of it.

She continues the dial-search for a moment, switches the radio off.

KATIE
(miffed, contemptuous)
FM's getting bad as AM...

INT. RYAN KITCHEN

Josh comes up to Serenity, TURNS THE VOLUME DOWN.

JOSH
How can you think?

SERENITY
(matter-of-fact)
I think better with it loud.

She TURNS THE VOLUME BACK UP.

EXT. RYAN HOUSE- FRONT DOOR - ECU ON DEADBOLT - DAY

A gloved hand grips the outside of the raised circle; it won't spin. The hand withdraws. A beat.

Then the hand returns, gripping a heavy, black-metal pair of CHANNEL LOCKS, like big pliers. They're secured to the deadbolt, twisted tight. O.S., the Killer GRUNTS, putting his weight to the device, twisting it. With a TEARING, the lock pulls clear of the door, leaving a gaping hole and shattered wood.

INT. RYAN KITCHEN - JOSH AND SERENITY

Both react to the sound, puzzled, not overly alarmed... yet.

JOSH
What the hell's that...?

INT. RYAN LIVING ROOM - LOW CLOSE UP ANGLE ON KILLER

The gauzy curtains mute the light. The front door is partially open; light streams in through the hole where the lock had been.

The Killer is in the room now; CAMERA DOLLIES BACK as he advances deliberately toward the kitchen. All we see of him are arms, torso and tops of his legs. He is dressed in jeans and a worn, cheap zippered jacket you could buy at any K-Mart. Dangling from one hand, held like a club, is the pair of channel locks.

The other hand comes up, holding a Filipino flip-knife. Its business-end flicks out, catching a beam of light, glinting in the dim room.

EXT. RYAN HOUSE - DAY

Katie pulls into the carport, turns off the engine, humming to herself. Idly, she glances at the front door, stops dead.

The front door is ajar. FAST ZOOM IN on the hole.

Katie throws open the car door and dashes toward the house, keys in hand.

INT. KATIE LIVING ROOM

Katie runs into the room, looking toward the kitchen, where the radio still BLARES.

KATIE
Josh? Rennie?

INT. KITCHEN - ON DOORWAY FROM LIVING ROOM

Katie blunders into the room and stops, eyes widening in horror (we could or could not have the suggestion of two slumped masses blurrily in the foreground -- unmoving and very <u>dead</u>).

O.S., in the living room, a chair is KNOCKED OVER. Katie turns at this

KATIE
(soft, low)
No...

INT. LIVING ROOM

The Killer scrambles for the door, channel locks in hand. Katie dives INTO FRAME, tackling him, the Killer's knife goes flying. Both go down.

They struggle, the Killer trying to get free. Katie's wild with rage and grief, extremely formidable. <u>She gets a good look at the Killer's face.</u>

The Killer brings the channel locks around and gives Katie a glancing blow to the head.

Katie falls back, stunned, her keys flying. The Killer gets to his feet, grabs the keys and stumbles out the door.

A beat, then we HEAR the sound of a car ENGINE coming alive.

EXT. RYAN HOUSE

The Killer GUNS THE ENGINE. Then a BIG ROCK SHATTERS THE WINDSHIELD.

Katie's hurled it from the front yard. Still woozy, she staggers toward the car.

The Killer dives out of the car and runs down the street. Katie SCREAMS after the departed Killer.

Katie looks about wildly, spies a BLACK-AND-WHITE down the street. Katie runs between the cars, unmindful as they HONK at her.

She hurls himself in front of the cop car, pushing her hands down on the hood. The car SCREECHES on the brakes to avoid running her down.

EXT. ANOTHER STREET - ON KILLER

Running wildly. For the first time, we get a good look at him. The immediate impression is one of youth, of peach-fuzz, but looking closer we see that he's <u>not</u> that young, just that the inside hasn't grown while the outside <u>has</u>: pieces are missing.

From afar, comes the distant wail of SIREN. The Killer picks up the pace.

INT. MOVING COP CAR - HAND-HELD CAMERA - FAVORING KATIE

Sitting in back, looking like a woman who has stood too long before a blast furnace and had her eyes singed. Up front are TWO OFFICERS. The one riding shotgun barks urgently into the mike:

OFFICER #1
Adam ninety-one. We are in pursuit of possible two-four-five suspect. Male Caucasian.. heading westbound on the seven-thousand block of Norton... Also have possible two-four-five victims...

KATIE
There!

Katie has spied the running Killer. She dives out of the car, which SCREAMS to a stop.

EXT. CITY STREET

The Killer running full out, Katie and the cops giving chase. Looking back, he dashes across a side-street --

And gets STRUCK FULL ON BY A SPEEDING CAR! It's a moment of shocking violence, and we're sure he must have been killed.

MOMENTS LATER

The crumbled body of the Killer on the pavement, a crowd of onlookers. The Black-and-white is near now, Officer #2 on the horn.

His partner comes up alongside him, shakes his head, grimly

OFFICER #2
(into radio)
Get the coroner. We'll cordon him off...

The other nods, takes a step back toward the body, then stops as he sees Katie, who slowly approaches the body. Officer #1 moves up to Katie, awkwardly, not knowing what to say.

OFFICER #1
You don't need to see it, ma'am...

Katie doesn't stop moving. She is a terrible, silent presence.

Warily, the officers clear a way for her, giving her room, as though the anguish in her might explode and blanket the world.

Katie nears the body, bending to appraise the inert form on the ground. She stares at it, unblinking, for a long moment. Then, eyes burning, she cries out:

KATIE
It's not <u>enough</u>!

Then she breaks down in wracking sobs.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT RYAN HOUSE - LOW ANGLE - NIGHT

The house dark, lawn overgrown, birdbath dry. A square of wood covers the hole where the deadbolt was.

From O.S., someone walks toward the house,CRUNCHING dead grass under their feet.

INT. KATIE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Like the yard, dark and untended. Katie sits in a chair, brooding.

Insistent KNOCKING sounds at the door. Katie doesn't stir.

The door opens. J.P. steps in.

J.P.
I figured your unplugging the phone and keeping the lights off was an economic measure. But what's your rationale for not answering the door?

KATIE
Just didn't see the point.

J.P. draws near, surveying her.

J.P.
Let's get you some food.

INT. GREASY SPOON - NIGHT

Crowded. J.P. And Katie sit at a table, Katie lost in thought.

J.P.
If I'd known I was eating alone, I would have sat at the counter.

She stares pointedly. Katie catches it, comes to, half-smiles.

KATIE
I'm here, J.P. I just need some time.

J.P.
How long, Katie? Days? Weeks? It's been <u>months</u>... It's a big world out here. Time you rejoined it.

KATIE
(absently)
Mm.

She scans the faces of the patrons, all in animated conversation, laughing arguing. Her face is stone; she's a lid tightly capped over something boiling. J.P. watches her mutely. A beat, then:

J.P.
(soft, meaningful)
Who're you looking for, Katie?

KATIE
(grim)
Someone who's not here.

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

Katie and J.P. Move quickly along the sidewalk. J.P. is trying to jolly Katie, who's making an effort to respond.

J.P.
You're not listening.

KATIE
I am. Honest. Go on with it.

J.P.
All right, all right... A big guy and a little guy are in the bar in the Empire State Building. Bartender's cleaning the glasses. And the big guy says --

As she says the above, they pass a PAMPHLETEER, rumpled and slight, reminiscent of the Killer without actually looking like him. He overtakes them, backpedaling as he tries to press a pamphlet into J.P.'s hand. J.P. And Katie keep walking all the while.

PAMPHLETEER
(interrupting)
Here. Take one.

J.P.
(waving him off, pleasant)
No thanks.

PAMPHLETEER
(more insistent)
It's good news.

J.P.
Thank you, no.

PAMPHLETEER
Really. It'll do you good.

Katie suddenly erupts in fury, grabbing the man and pushing him up against a wall. The pamphlets go flying.

PAMPHLETEER
Hey!

Katie pounds him against the wall repeatedly, furious way out of proportion. He struggles to get away.

KATIE
The lady said no. She said no!

J.P.
(grabbing at Katie)
Katie, let him go
(Katie keeps it up)
Katie, it's not him. It's not him!

At this, Katie deflates. J.P. Hauls her away, into a doorway.

KATIE
I know it's not him. Don't you think I know that?

She collapses against a wall, anguish added to the fury. A beat, then she raises her tear-streaked face upward, and suddenly she's no longer there. She's inside... remembering.

KATIE
What he did to them. What he did to them. And he got away. Got away clean.

J.P.
(alarmed, trying to keep her voice calm)
Katie, he didn't. They got him.

KATIE
(not listening)
Wherever he is, he's laughing. Laughing at me. It's like I can hear him -- "You want me? Come get me." If I could somehow get to him. Do to him what he did to them. Do it to him.

J.P.
This is crazy, Katie. Can you hear yourself? Katie, the man is dead.

Furious, J.P. grabs Katie's hand and presses it against the wall.

J.P.
Feel that. Feel it. That's reality. That's real. And what you've been talking about won't bring back anybody. You hear me?

Katie doesn't answer. J.P. Brings her face level with Katie's.

J.P.
I won't say I know what you're feeling. But I will say this -- you won't get what you want. You can't. And if you continue to pursue it, your hate will eat you alive.
(beat, steady)
You've got to put it aside, start putting your life back together.

KATIE
(tortured)
Why?

J.P. reaches out, takes her hand; J.P.'s sleeve pulls back from her wrist, revealing a long-healed scar crossing the artery.

J.P.
Because there's no other choice that's worth a damn.

Katie looks at her and, perhaps, sees some small bit of hope.

INT. GYM - DAY

ON KATIE, running on the treadmill. She's in incredibly good shape, running fast. As she continues, her expression transforms from neutrality to pure rage. We're seeing the hot core inside her, and it's harrowing.

INT. KATIE'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Still sleeping on her side of the bed. She awakens, looks out the window. It's a beautiful day, the BIRDS are SINGING.

She sits up, sighing. Time to get a life... or at least try to.

INT. KATIE'S BATHROOM - MINUTES LATER

Katie's getting ready for the day. O.S., SOOTHING MUZAK plays on the radio. Her demeanor is calmer -- determined, though not happy. She looks at herself in the mirror, appraising what she sees.

KATIE
Put it back together.
(SIGHS)
Right.

INT. KATIE'S BEDROOM

Katie emerges from the bathroom, dressed in running pants, pulling on a t-shirt. Casually, she moves to the nightstand, switches off the radio. She stops, eyes falling on

FAMILY PHOTO

Katie, Josh and Serenity, happy, captured in that lost idyllic moment.

ON KATIE

Face grim and tight again. The thought can be read in her eyes: the bastard got away!

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

Katie emerges and jogs along the street, as we MOVE WITH HER.

Suddenly, from out of nowhere, a BLUR OF ANOTHER RUNNER cuts her off, speeding along the street. Katie GASPS in surprise, nearly falls.

KATIE
Hey! What's the matter with y--

The word dies off; Katie's mouth hangs open.

HER POV - ON DEPARTING RUNNER

Just heading into the park. Obscured by trees, IT LOOKS FROM THE BACK LIKE THE KILLER!

ON KATIE

KATIE
(it can't be)
No...

Despite her words, she's seized with a sense of desperate urgency. She takes off running in pursuit.

(NOTE: Throughout this chase, we always see the other runner from Katie's vantage -- either from near Katie or as Katie's POV.)

INT. PARK

As Katie gains on him.

KATIE
(mumbling)
This is crazy...

Katie puts on the juice, racing past other people -- skaters, mothers with strollers, etc.

The other runner is on a parallel path, obscured by trees, running fast.

Finally, Katie comes up alongside him, gets a look at his face.

<u>It's the Killer</u> -- sweaty, hollow-eyed, but most definitely <u>alive</u>.

Katie is devastated by the realization: impossible as it is, it's <u>true</u>.

The Killer grins mockingly, silently mouths, "Come on...," then picks up the pace.

In a frenzy, Katie races after him, blindly knocking people aside.

KATIE
Oh <u>no</u>... oh no, not this time...

And they're both running full-out.

ON OTHER PEOPLE IN THE PARK

Watching Katie in consternation, shaking their heads.

THEIR POV - ON KATIE

We see from their viewpoint that KATIE IS ALONE, CHASING NO ONE, yelling her head off in rage!

BACK ON PEOPLE IN THE PARK

TWO GUYS stand watching her, shaking their heads.

SECOND GUY
Drunk and on drugs, man...

KATIE

sees it differently, through: the Killer is right in front of her.

KATIE
Come on, come on!

Katie narrows the gap between them. Both zigzag between park benches, swings, slides and the like.

And now the Killer darts into an open lot of the park, a construction site with no workers. (NOTE: This could be any structure that allows our characters to get up to a lethal height.)

The Killer veers up a long, overhead curving ramp, fronted by warning signs that say DO NOT ENTER and CLOSED FOR CONSTRUCTION. Katie is hot on his tail.

A big wooden barrier bars the way. The Killer speeds right through it, leaving it unbroken. As he does so, the Killer evaporates like smoke.

Katie is right behind him. Too late, she sees the barrier looming up. She SCREAMS, HITS it full on, SHATTERING it.

Katie flies off the unfinished end of the ramp, spinning wildly through space. She plunges downward, a long drop below.

CLOSE ON KATIE

Screaming and spinning. Then BLACKNESS, accompanied by a final, sickening CRASH.

EXT. URBAN LANDSCAPE - CLOSE ON CURB - NIGHT

Katie's body is thrown INTO SHOT, as though tossed by a giant hand, rolling to a stop against a curb, limp on her back, arms out like a discarded doll. She looks dead.

Like a drowning victim coming around, she gives a choking CRY as a stomach contraction seizes her, bringing her torso and legs up with the intensity of it.

Her eyes snap open. She blinks, breathing hard. She looks at her surrounding, disoriented.

Shakily, she gets to her feet. With growing disquiet, she surveys:

THE NIGHTSCAPE

It might be the bleakest heart of any big city, left to rot for a hundred years. All pavement, wetly black, weathered buildings falling to ruin, doors and windows shut up with plywood or cinderblock. Street lamps are mostly shattered, dark. Huge cracks crisscross broken sidewalks. Water GURGLES weakly from a twisted hydrant. Garbage is piled everywhere.

But there's something <u>more</u> about this place, something sickly and perverse, a suggestion that this is <u>somewhere</u> <u>else</u>.

KATIE

takes a few uncertain steps, trying to get her bearings. Storefronts have rusty bars slid across them; long-closed, signs splintered, faded and illegible. Those windows at street level not blocked are broken.

Katie passes double metal doors, chained shut and secured with a padlock. As she does so, they are pushed <u>outward</u> repeatedly from within with great force; the chain hold them shut. On the other side, an OLD WOMAN RAVES in frightened, raging SPANISH. Startled and repulsed, Katie stumbles away.

KATIE
(low, confused)
What is this...

She moves to the opposite side of the street, watchful, wary. A dozen yards or so ahead of her is a cross-street. From it comes the SOUND of a Molotov cocktail being thrown at a wall, SMASHING and IGNITING with WHOOMPH!

We don't see the flames but the light it casts licks outward, illuminating the street, casting long shadows. O.S. WILD, DELIGHTED LAUGHTER, then O.S. FOOTSTEPS, ECHOING, running away. (NOTE: From now on, distantly -- but often -- come ECHOING SOUNDS: SHRIEKS, CRUEL LAUGHTER, things BREAKING, etc. -- though <u>no</u> guns.)

As in a nightmare, Katie turns away from this, eyes clamped shut. Immediately behind her is a narrow space between two buildings, pitch black.

KATIE
(struggling to remember)
Okay. I was... I was...
(comes clear, calming)
In the park...
(eyes open, expression turns black)
Chasing him.

Suddenly, a figure grabs Katie from behind, a very old, bone-handled hunting knife at her throat. A strangled GASP escapes from Katie. From this angle, we cannot see the figure.

FIGURE
(hissing whisper; off-hand but deadly)
What are you doing here, eh?

Katie struggles to speak against the pressure on her throat.

KATIE
(heated by fire)
Looking for someone...

FIGURE
Yeah...

The figure releases Katie.

Katie turns to see FERRET (40S), small, wiry and tough, all bone and muscle covering taught skin. His clothes are worn and dirty but not in tatters, functional and anonymous. His voice is parched and raw, as though much of it has been burned away. The left side of his face is entirely in shadow.

He sheaths the knife, gives Katie a hard, humorless grin.

FERRET
You just got to keep your throat in one piece.

Katie rubs her throat, eyes Ferret nervously.

KATIE
Where is this?

FERRET
(hint of mockery)
I don't really have to tell you that --

As he says this, he brings his face forward into the light, close to Katie's. We see that the left side of his face is scarred and vaguely skeletal (grotesque, though still human). The left eye (very subtly) glows red.

FERRET
Do I?

Katie draws in a quick, startled breath, take a step back.

From O.S. comes a man's SHRIEK, distant, high and ghastly, ECHOING between the buildings.

Katie turns her face at the sound, away from Ferret.

She turns back to look at Ferret and starts -- Ferret is right there, an inch from her face.

FERRET
Night-Time in the City of the Dead. Get what you want here... what you deserve...

KATIE
(sudden, sharp suspicion)
What... who deserves?

FERRET
Only two kinds here. Someone looking for someone...
(pointed)
Someone afraid he'll be found.

KATIE
(aflame)
Where? Where is he?

Ferret steps back into the blackness between the buildings, that razor-cold grin on his face. As he speaks, darkness surrounds him; he grows dimmer and dimmer

FERRET
(increasingly ominous)
Think of him.. seeing him... touching him... Your hands making him lovely...
(grim chuckle)
Yeah...

The word trails off. Katie is alone.

KATIE
(bitter frustration)
But where?

Abruptly, there is THE SOUND of METAL BARS RATTLING across the street. Katie turns to it.

Across the street, standing in silhouette, is the Killer, pulling on a bent set of sliding bars fronting a building, trying to make enough room to slide through. Katie starts across the street toward the dark figure, slowly, stalking.

KATIE
You... Come here...

the Killer sees her, stops what he's doing. He takes a few steps away from Katie, who quickens her pace.

KATIE
(soothing, dangerous)
Come on... Come on...

The Killer bolts, turning the corner, disappearing from sight. Katie takes off after him, turns the corner, slowing, listening intently. Silence.

Then something grabs her leg.

A twisted, blotchy, incredibly old arm reaches up out of a basement window, fingers snatching at Katie's pant leg. With a cry of revulsion, Katie pulls free, hurries on.

Ahead of her stretches desolation. A sound: RUNNING FOOTSTEPS, then a breathless GRUNT and tearing of fabric.

CAMERA FOLLOWING, Katie speeds up. She comes to a bent, rusted chain-link fence, studded with barbed wire. A big opening is torn in it, a bit of the Killer's jacket hanging limply from the barbed wire. Katie fingers it, ducks through the fence.

ON DEMOLISHED BUILDING

The ground uneven, debris piled high. Katie makes her way over the broken concrete and brick, searching. Some feet off is a window frame; broken shards remain of it.

The Killer huddles nearby, trying to hide, his face mirrored in the glass.

He looks like he's been living on the streets for months, dirty, cold and hungry, his clothes in tatters (though his hair is the same length as before). He is worn down, worn out.

TRUCK IN, as the reflection spies Katie, reacts with fear. Katie walks toward him, grabbing a loose brick.

KATIE
Get up...Come on...

Slowly, the Killer rises. Katie closes on him, relishing the moment. The Killer spins, arm extended, flip-knife in his hand. Katie stops. Tense, silent stillness. Then:

CLOSE ON THE KNIFE

IT CRUMBLES IN HIS HAND.

WIDE

the Killer looks at it appalled, full of dread. He tosses the useless pieces aside. Katie advances menacingly.

KATIE
(amused, scary)
Yeah? Yeah?

The Killer turns and runs. Katie lunges after him, loses her footing on the uneven surface, falls. Dropping the brick, Katie gets to her feet, rushes away.

EXT. SIDE STREET

In the middle of the street is a smoldering, blackened mass that might be garbage... or a body. The Killer runs past this. Out of breath, frightened, he slows, turns and see Katie coming for him. Katie slows, too. Stops.

The two eye each other, breathing hard. Then Katie starts toward him, inexorable, inevitable.

The Killer starts to back away, but there seems no escape possible. When suddenly...

A section of plywood covering a big doorway Immediately behind Katie BURSTS outward from within.

A SHRIEKING HOWLING MOB OF SHADOWY CHILDREN pour forth, pursuing, snatching at a hideous FAT MAN in rags. WHIMPERING, he tries to get away.

Katie is caught up in the midst of the mob; she can't see the Killer.

In a frenzy, she pushes through the mob, who ignore her, intent on their victim. They fall on their prey, as he SCREAMS.

Katie emerges, looking about desperately. The Killer is gone. Utter SILENCE descends on the mob, as though a switch has been turned.

Startled, Katie turns to gaze at this uncomprehendingly. The children are still, unmoving.

Katie hasn't time to examine this: she turns again to the chase. As she runs O.S., the victim suddenly pushes through the motionless mob and runs off, in a different direction from Katie.

After an instant, the mob rouses, takes off after him again, SHRIEKING as they depart.

Katie is alone again. She moves up the street, senses sharp. Sounds: a lone pair of feet, RUNNING full-bore, and ragged PANTING.

Drawn, Katie moves to the mouth of an alley and peers in. Running toward her is a man, ill-lit, dressed like the Killer. Katie moves back out of the man's line of sight, waiting... waiting.

The man emerges. With a cry, Katie grabs him -- but it's not the Killer, just someone dressed in similar rags, haggard and gap-toothed. His eyes are wild with fright.

KATIE
(taken aback)
Sorry...

Hysterically, IN GERMAN, the man babbles to be released. With a stifled CRY, he suddenly stiffens. Katie releases him as he crumples to the ground, revealing a SECOND MAN behind him, a long, blood shard of glass in his hand, wrapped round with a rag.

Startled, horrified, Katie takes several steps backward. The second man ignores Katie, focusing entirely on his victim. Exultant, IN GERMAN, he shouts his triumph.

The man lies on the ground, a bloody tear in the back of his shirt. With a GURGLING SOUND, he expires. The light around the second man dims slightly; his eyes close and his head drops, as though he were asleep (though he's still standing).

Reacting, Katie looks as though she might go mad. She makes a tentative move to bolt, then stops, surprised, as she hears a low GROANING from the fallen man. She peers at him, astonished.

THE VICTIM'S WOUND FADES AND IS GONE! With a convulsion, he's alive again. PULL BACK as he struggles to his feet, casts a frightened glance at his frozen assailant and Katie, then runs O.S.

A beat. The light comes back up on the second man. He lifts his head, opens his eyes. With a shock, he sees his victim is gone.

He grabs Katie with an angry urgency, demanding, IN GERMAN, to know where the man has gone.

Katie grasps the meaning. She tilts her head in the direction of the man's flight. The second man hurries off.

Katie watches as, some distance away, the second man catches his prey <u>again</u>, stabs him <u>again</u>. Stillness <u>again</u>. Then the victim staggers to his feet and disappears into the darkness. The second man stirs, takes off after him and is gone.

Katie makes her way along the street, alert, searching. A long beat. From afar comes a SCREAM OF PAIN. Katie pricks up her ears. Then from afar comes a TRIUMPHANT CRY, IN GERMAN.

Katie moves on. She passes under a fire escape; a can CLATTERS down from above and bounces on the sidewalk near her feet. She turns quickly at the sound, spies the can. Then, with a knowing look, she peers up the fire escape.

Frantically, the Killer climbs upward. Katie leaps up, pulling the lowest section of fire escape down. She ascends, inflamed. Quickly, she overtakes the Killer, grabbing his legs.

KATIE
No way! No way!

The Killer kicks at her, but Katie pulls him <u>down</u>. The two roll down a section of fire escape.

Katie gets a hand-hold on the rail. Deliberately, mustering her strength, she shoves the Killer off the final section of fire escape. The Killer falls five feet to the pavement, lands hard.

Katie lands on top of him, knocking the wind out of him. With a cry of molten anger, she turns the Killer over and begins pummeling him.

She brings down a double fist, hard. The Killer pants, seeing stars, eyes rolling, trying to focus. Katie gets off him, breathing hard. She stands, looks about wildly for some weapon.

A heavy PIPE projects from the side of a building, nearly broken off. Katie moves to it, grasps it and pulls hard. It tears free. She hefts it like a baseball bat.

The Killer is coming around. Blearily, he sees Katie returning. He squints to make out the pipe. His eyes widen in fear.

KILLER
No...

Katie rushes to him, grabbing his shirt with one hand and raising the pipe high.

KILLER
(shrieks)
No!!!

Scrambling, he manages to pull free of Katie and dart away. Katie is thrown momentarily off-balance. She regains and takes off after him.

KATIE
Come back here, you bastard!

EXT. NIGHTSCAPE STREET

Steam hisses up from a vent. As the Killer runs past it, hands come up out of it, snatch at his legs. He stumbles. Katie is coming closer. The Killer gets to his feet, hurries on.

EXT. CUL-DE-SAC

the Killer runs into it, stops as he sees it's a dead-end. Near hysteria, he turns back to the opening.

Katie, in silhouette, stands at the opening, slapping the pipe against her palm.

KATIE
No place to run, huh? No more escape... Guess it's payday.

Slowly, she advances. The Killer backs toward the wall, half-crazed, a cornered animal. As Katie closes on him, he speaks, full of fear, yet also somehow triumphant.

KILLER
All right. All right, you got me. But you listen, man. I got you, too. That's why you're here -- I went back and got you!
(beat)
What you gonna do to me ain't so bad as what could happen if this don't. You're my dance partner all night, and night goes on forever. I brought you 'cause I need it. I need it. And you came -- 'cause you need it, too.
(frightened LAUGH)
You need it too!

His back touches the wall and he GASPS. He can't hold back the tears anymore. SOBBING, he sinks down. He looks away, tries to marshal his courage for the blow to come. He turns back, glaring up at Katie venomously, frightened.

KILLER
So what are you waiting for!?

Terror erupts through the facade, awaiting a blow that must come.

KILLER
DO IT!!!!!!!!

Enraged with blood-lust, scarcely human, Katie raises the pipe up and back for the final blow... then stops.

She sees the Killer, huddled, shaking. The Killer looks up, and as he does so, his face comes fully into the light. He looks like a child: defenseless, vulnerable and afraid.

Katie blinks, her expression changing, softening. She stares at the Killer, seeing him as a human being for the first time: sick, pathetic -- and helpless.

Holding the pipe in mid-air, no longer a weapon, more a forgotten object, Katie peers down at him, eyes full of pity...and horror at what she might have done.

KATIE
(shaking his head)
No...no... I can't...

Katie turns away from the Killer, takes a step, still shaking her head. She puts a hand to the blackened brick wall.

Her expression is one of wonderment, as though she has looked within and found someone... someone who is no killer.

KATIE
(softly, to herself)
I won't.

She straightens; the pipe drops from her hand. From behind her comes a low MOAN. She turns to it.

The MOAN issues from the Killer, rising in intensity, full of failure, frustration and hate. He stares at Katie, his expression one of pure, unrepentant evil.

The moan is now a SCREAM of homicidal rage -- but a new note enters in: terror, anticipating something far worse than Katie could mete out.

With this sound, THE KILLER DISSOLVES, SHATTERS AND IS GONE (the EFFECT is not that he has disintegrated, but rather that he has been yanked away, painfully, against his will). All that is left of him is an ECHOING CRY, fading on the wind.

Katie is alone in the dark, in a reverie; a weight has been lifted.

Then from nearby, a sound of STONE SHATTERING. Cracks appear in the brick wall near her. Brilliant blue-green light issues forth from them.

Alarmed, Katie steps back. With a ROAR, a large opening is rent in the wall. The stones fall aside.

Shielding her eyes against the glare, Katie cautiously nears it, peers into the opening. The light is blinding, but we can make out BLUE SKIES, A ROLLING HILL.

And coming clear in the middle ground -- standing, waiting -- are Josh and Serenity The brilliance of the light makes their skin and clothes the same shade of light blue. A gentle wind billows their hair.

Tears of relief and joy stream down Katie's face.

KATIE
Josh... Rennie... Oh...

She starts toward the opening, then pauses. She turns back to look at where the Killer had been.

The spot is bare and ugly and black. A breeze scatters some paper there. Perhaps a little mist rises, too.

Katie's face is momentarily somber. She understands from what she has just emerged.

With a sigh, Katie faces the opening again. Embracing the light, she steps through... heads toward Josh and Serenity.

ROD SERLING (V.O.)
Men do not die of the darkness, they die of the cold. It is the frost that kills... And warmth is love...

The intensity of the light increases until the three figures are lost to us and the SCREEN is ENTIRELY WHITE.

ROD SERLING (V.O.)
Every man's death does indeed diminish us, as John Donne would have us believe...

THE IMAGE RESOLVES AND WE'RE ONCE AGAIN IN

ROD'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Serling from behind, lounging at his desk, dictating the script, cigarette in the ashtray.

ROD SERLING
And it follows that every man's poverty, every man's indignity, every man's frustration and hopelessness, they are a part of mankind, just as we are.

As he speaks, we MOVE IN CLOSE on the SPINNING REELS OF THE DICTAPHONE and the ashtray beside it.

ROD SERLING
Love... is our human capacity to accept, to embrace, and to be as one with our fellow man. I can't think of anything on this night... that is such of the essence.

Rod switches OFF the dictaphone, stubs out the cigarette, rises and (still seen only from behind) exits the room, switching OFF the light as he goes, plunging everything into

BLACK.

THE END