

NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD

Credit: Written by
Author: GEORGE A. ROMERO and JOHN A. RUSSO

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EXT. CEMETERY - DUSK

It is an ordinary dusk of normal quiet and shadow. The gray sky contains a soft glow from the recent sun, so that trees and long blades of grass seem to shimmer in the gathering night. There is a rasp of crickets, and the rustle of leaves in an occasional whispering breeze.

Transitions are easy and gradual, with relaxed studies of earth, grass and leafy branches on a high-mounded hill. Revelation of cemetery markers does nothing to disrupt the peacefulness of our established mood; when awareness comes, it is almost as though we have known where we were all along. We are in a typical rural cemetery, conceivably adjacent to a small church ...

Although the presence of a church is felt rather than confirmed. The stones range from small identifying slates to monuments of careful design...an occasional Franciscan Crucifix, or a carved image of a defending angel. Over a hundred years of death indicated in stones syllabic with their year and the status of the families they represent.

Over the other night sounds is added the gravel-rumble of a slow-moving car. A wider shot reveals the car and the mounded cemetery, as the car pulls into the gate and moves down one of the cemetery roads, the car passes in extreme foreground and moves away from the camera. In the breeze of its passing, the dead leaves that clutter the little road swirl and move.

Beyond the distant trees, the last receding gray of dusk in surrendering to the black. The car continues. When the car stops, we feel the absence of its sounds...replaced by the crickets and the subtle wind. Even as the car is still rocking slightly from its stopping action, we cut to a shot through the driver window at the occupants of the car. The DRIVER is a young man in his mid-twenties, and his PASSENGER is a young woman, his sister. The man is in shirtsleeves with a loosened tie. His suit-coat is on the clothing hook over the back seat. The girl is wearing a simple but attractive summer suit, with the jacket removed and folded on her lap. She is fussing with her purse, while the man shuts off engine, lights, and leans back to yawn and stretch his legs. The girl closes a potato chip bag, brushes crumbs, fluffs her hair ... typical feminine gestures after a long ride. The man stretches again.

BARBARA

They ought to make the day the time changes the first day of summer. Then two good things would happen all at once.

A little laugh from the man as he straightens his tie.

BARBARA

I love the long days and the extra sun.

JOHN

A lot of good the extra daylight does me. i lost an hour's sleep. And it's dark already, and we still have a three-hour drive, and we won't get back till after midnight.

Barbara reaches down to put her shoes on.

BARBARA

If it really dragged you that much, you wouldn't do it.

JOHN

Are you kidding? I certainly don't want to blow sunday on this scene. We're gonna either have to move mother to Parkville or move the grave to pittsburgh.

BARBARA

Oh, you're just being silly.
Mother can't make a drive like
this.

John reaches to the back seat and produces a flowered,
cross-shaped grave ornament. In the center of the cross, in
gold script on a red field, is written "We Still Remember"

JOHN

Look, twenty-five dollars ... "We
Still Remember"... I don't, you
know it ... I don't remember what
the guy looks like.

BARBARA

Johnny ... it takes you five
minutes.

JOHN

Three hours... no, six hours ...
six hours and five minutes.

Barbara continues to primp and straighten her outfit. John
hands her the grave ornament and leans forward to struggle
into his suit jacket.

JOHN

Mother wants to remember. So we
have to drive four-hundred miles
to plant a cross on a grave, as if
he's staring up through the ground
to check out the decorations ...
(he points at the cross
inscription)
... we have to remember ... and
she stays at home.

BARBARA

Johnny, we're here ... all right?

She opens her door and turns to step out. John takes the
keys from the ignition and drops them into his pocket.

JOHN

Hey ... hey, Barb, you know the
radio's been on all this time ...

(Tighter Shot of Radio)

VOICE

Ladies and gentlemen ... please
forgive ... what ... hey, you got
a signal, Charlie? ...

JOHN

It must have been the station.

VOICE:

... do not be al ...

John clicks the radio off. He gets out of the car and walks around the front of it, trotting to catch up with his sister. It is obvious that she didn't hear him. He catches up to her and starts to repeat his discovery about the radio.

JOHN

Hey, the radio is okay, it's
just ...

Barbara is more interested in finding the row containing their father's grave.

BARBARA

You remember which row its in?

JOHN

(Momentarily forgetting the
radio)

Huh? Oh, it's over here, I
think...

They start in his suggested direction.

JOHN

Did you hear the radio?

BARBARA

(Looking ahead, trying to
spot the grave)

Hmmm?

JOHN

The radio's fixed. Must've been
the station, not the radio.

BARBARA

(Still searching intently,
she tosses this Line away)

Good ... you won't be as bitchy
driving home.

Their jibes at each other are not really in anger, but are typical of brother-sister annoyance. They walk through the row of gravestones in the growing darkness.

JOHN

(Making conversation, with no more Significance than a comment about the weather)
Nobody around.

BARBARA

Well, it is late. If you'd get up a little earlier ...

JOHN

I already lost an hour's sleep on the time change.

BARBARA

Oh, sometimes I think you complain just to hear yourself talk.

JOHN

An hour earlier and it'd still be light. (He squints into the dusk)
It's hard enough to find in the light.

BARBARA

There it is.
(She points)

They move toward a grave with a standard rectangular stone. It is an unkept grave, its outline cropped and overgrown with grass and wilted flowers. John takes the flowered cross and, stepping close to the headstone, embeds its wire-prong base into the earth, as he rambles on.

JOHN

Wonder what happened to the one from last year? Every year twenty-five bucks for one of these things, and the one from last year is gone....

We hear Barbara's voice. The camera stays on John as he builds up some dirt around the base of the ornament.

BARBARA

The flowers die.... and the caretaker or somebody takes them away...

JOHN

(Standing, brushing himself
off)

Yeah, a little spit and polish and
they can sell them again. I
wonder how many times we've bought
the same...

He doesn't finish, in standing he sees his sister with a
pair of rosary beads and he stops talking.

She is praying silently, looking down at the ground. John
straightens his tie and buttons his jacket. He steps
behind his sister, puts his hands in his pockets, and rocks
nervously on one foot. She continues to pray. John looks
around the cemetery.

The stones are soft and white... they seem very pale.
There are a few moving shadows. The sounds of the night
seem louder, but this is only because they have stopped
talking. The situation does not seem ominous. John is
merely bored. In the distance, a huddled figure is walking
among the graves.

JOHN

(Glancing at his watch)

C'mon, Barb, church was this
morning...

The girl continues her prayers. John lights a cigarette,
idly exhales the first puff of smoke and looks around
again.

The huddled figure still moves slowly among the graves.
John turns to his sister and is about to say something but
sees her making the sign of the cross and dropping her
beads in her purse. She turns from the grave and they both
start to walk slowly away.

JOHN

(Slightly uncomfortable about
urging her to leave)

Well ... I mean ... prayin's for
church.

BARBARA

I haven't seen you in church
lately.

JOHN

Well, grandpa told me I was damned to hell ... (He says this lightly, looking ahead to a large tree. He smiles.) You remember? Right here... I jumped out at you from behind that tree ... Grandpa got all excited ... "You will be damned ta hell" ...

Barbara smiles.

JOHN

Right here, I jumped out from behind that tree at you.

Barbara expresses annoyance.

JOHN

You used to be so scared here.

BARBARA

Johneee!
(With forced irritation)

JOHN

(Laughing, playfully)
You're still afraid...

BARBARA

Stop it... I mean it...

JOHN

(Mockingly)
...They're gonna get you,
Barbara...

BARBARA

Stop it.. You're ignorant...

JOHN

They're coming for you,
Barbara They're gonna get
you... (He leers at her, as though
he is about to pounce).

BARBARA

(Becoming a little nervous)
Johnny, stop...

JOHN
 (Mockingly ominous)
 They're coming out of their
 graves ... after you... they're
 coming... to get you...

With this, John throws up his arms and his voice rises.

The figure moving among the graves stops, and stands for a moment. Barbara glances toward the figure and momentarily her anxiety turns to embarrassment.

BARBARA
 (As we cut back to her)
 You're acting like an idiot.

John speaks in a low tone now, glancing at the figure as they draw closer in their perpendicular paths. John's remarks now are directed to Barbara, as though he didn't want the old man to hear...

JOHN
 Here comes one of them now...

BARBARA
 (Walking faster)
 He'll hear you...

JOHN
 Coming to get you...

Barbara purses her lips in anger. The couple is now only a few yards from intersection their path with the old figure...

JOHN
 (In a mocked-panic whisper)
 I'm getting' outa here...

He bolts and runs up the path.

BARBARA
 John

Embarrassed, she cuts herself short and continues to walk, more rapidly now. Up the path, beyond the intersection of the man's row. John stops, laughing, and turns to look back at his sister. She is near the place where the paths meet, and so is the old man. We cut close to her. She is looking down in embarrassed silence, aware of her proximity with the old man. She feigns poise, and as she makes the intersection looks up nervously to deliver a socially necessary smile to the old mourner...

The old man lunges at the girl, his hand grabs at her hair. A frightened gasp chokes her. She is coughing. The man grips her arm and slashes at her clothing. She flails about choking trying to yell....

JOHN
(Horrorified)
Hey... god...

The man is all over Barbara, unable to hold her in her violent flailing. His grabbing tears her jacket and scratches her face. He seems to be trying to bite her arm.

John leaps at the man. The three fall to the ground, Barbara kicking, and beating with her purse. John gets a firm hold on the man and Barbara is able to wrench free. The man is thrashing wildly at all parts of John's body. They struggle to their feet, the figure thrashes, beats, tears like an animal... John clutches at him and they fall in a heap. In the darkness, their form is as one thrashing thing.

Barbara screams wildly. The two men make animal sounds. One figure gains the advantage and slams his fists down against the other's head. Barbara is panic-stricken. Her screams turn to frenzied gasps as she finds a tree limb and snatches it up. But when she looks up, she sees that one has vanquished the other. She stops in her tracks. Night sounds. A close shot makes it clear that John is lying limply on the ground with the other man hunched over his form. The man is doing something with the limp body, still ripping at it... perhaps groping for money... Barbara cannot tell...

BARBARA
Johne... .

The old man freezes and looks up. The girl raises her club and rushes toward him. He jumps into a half-standing position, like an animal hunched to spring... Barbara stops in her tracks. The man is breathing heavily. She starts to back away. The man holds very still. She backs further... Faster... total fear. The man starts to move slowly... cat-like. He steps over the body.

Barbara drops the club and breaks into a dead run down the path. She screams. The man moves after her, but he is considerably slower than she, with seeming difficulty in moving. He appears almost crippled.

In a flailing run, Barbara reaches the car, sobbing. She yanks open the door. She can hear the man drawing nearer. She scrambles into the front seat and slams the door shut ... No key. The man draws nearer, seeming to move faster, more desperate to reach the girl. Barbara sobs ... she clenches the steering wheel. The driver's window is open, she struggles to roll it up ... then pushes the lock button. The man is upon the car. Barbara dives across the seat to slam down the passenger-side lock button. The man rips at the door handles and pounds violently at the car. The girl starts screaming again. The man.. Pounding.. Clawing ... he grabs a stone from the road ... the passenger window shatters into thousands of little cracks. Another pound sends the stone through the window, and hands grab through the opening to peel away the flakes of glass in sections. Barbara's screams become more violent.

She summons enough presence of mind to reach for the emergency brake. The man pounds and flails at the window. The car, at the top of a long grade, slowly starts to drift. The man struggles to hold it ... to rip out the glass ... his arm breaks through, his sleeve is ripped and tattered ... the hand grabs at the inside of the door ... the car moving faster ... the man struggles to cling ... he is forced to trot after the car ... faster ... he loses his footing ... grabs at the fender, the bumper. He falls into the road ... the car gains momentum. The man regains his footing and starts after the car. It is moving faster. Barbara is frozen in the driver's seat, clenching the wheel. The road ahead is black ... the speed is frightening ... she pulls the light switch ... The headlights dance beams of light among the trees. The beams reveal the grade in the road, which is narrowing to one car width, and, about two hundred feet ahead, the downhill grade ends and an uphill grade begins. In desperation, the girl looks out the rear window. Against the sky, in the light from the cemetery gate, the man is still coming after them. In panic, she looks about. She is still in the cemetery proper. Rows of graves on both sides of the road. No lights from houses, no signs of life. The car slows. It's momentum carries it some distance up the upgrade. Barbara glances backwards ... the man is moving faster toward her ... she is terrified... the car reaches a full stop. There is increased panic in her face ... as she forgets herself and the car begins to drift backward ... toward the man, as he draws nearer. The car picks up momentum, carrying her toward her pursuer.

She grabs at the emergency brake and yanks it tight, the lurch of the car throwing her against the seat. She struggles with the door handle; the button pops up ... the man draws nearer ... she breaks from the car. The man keeps coming, desperately trying to move faster ... Barbara runs, off the roadway and onto the turf of the cemetery. She falls ... kicks her shoes off ... gets up and keeps running. The man is still after her. She reaches a low stone wall which marks the end of the cemetery. She struggles over it and looks ahead for a moment to get her bearings. Across a main highway is a darkened gasoline station, and beyond it an old house. She pants heavily, glancing up and down the highway ... but there is no sign of traffic. The man is nearing the low cemetery wall. She breaks into a run across the highway.

The gasoline station shows no signs of life. It is old and decrepit. One light is out over the pumps. The pump house and surroundings are nearly lost in shadow. Some fifty yards away, there is the old house. She runs toward it.

She presses against the side of the house, in a darkened corner, trying to look up into the window. Across the highway, she sees her pursuer struggle over the little wall, and in his clumsiness fall groveling on the ground. In panic, she runs to the rear of the house and into the shadows of a small back porch. Her first impulse is to cry out for help, but she silences herself in favor of trying to stay hidden. She gasps, trying to hold her breath. Silence ... night sounds ... and the sounds of the man's fanning footsteps slowing to a trot ... then a walk ... the footsteps stop.

Barbara quickly glances about. There is a rear window. She peers through it, but inside everything is dark. The pursuing footsteps take up again. She presses back against the door of the house, and her hand falls on the doorknob. She looks down at it, grabs it with a turn, and the door opens. She enters quickly, as quietly as possible, and closes the door softly behind her, bolting it and feeling in the darkness for a key. Her hand finds a skeleton key, and she turns it, making a small rasp and click. She leans against the door, listening, and can still hear the distant footfalls.

Barbara finds that she is in the kitchen of the old house. She gropes through a door and into a large living room ... no sign of life. Her impulse is to cry for help, but again she stops herself for fear of being heard by the man outside. She darts back to the kitchen, rummages through drawers in a kitchen cabinet, and finds the silverware. She chooses a large steak knife and, grasping it tightly, goes to listen at the door again. All is quiet. She goes back into the living room.

Beyond it is an alcove that contains the front entrance to the house. She rushes to the front door and makes sure it is locked. Cautiously, she pushes back a corner of the curtain to see outside. The view overlooks an expansive lawn, large shadowy pine trees, and the service station across the road.

There is no sign of the attacker. Suddenly, there is noise from outside: the pounding and rattling of a door. Barbara drops the curtain edge and stiffens. More sounds. She hurries to a side window. Across the lawn, the man is pounding at the door to the garage. She watches, her eyes wide with fear. The man struggles with the door, then looks about and picks up something and smashes at it. In panic, Barbara pulls away from the window.

Across the room is a telephone. She rushes to it and picks up the receiver ... dial tone ... she frantically dials the operator ... some Buzzes and clicks ... then ...

TELEPHONE OPERATOR RECORDING
(V.O.)

I'm sorry ... our lines are
busy ... would you hold the line
please ... I'm sorry ... our lines
are ...

She quickly depresses the receiver buttons ... lets them up and dials again ... long pause ... she can hear sounds from the gas station ...

TELEPHONE OPERATOR (V.O.)

I'm sorry ... our lines ...

She depresses the buttons again ... dials 411 for information ... another long pause ... then the rasp of a busy signal. The noises from the service station have stopped. She listens for a moment ... she shudders with fear ... notices a telephone directory in a stand near the phone. Frantically, her fingers search to pages for the emergency numbers ... the police. She dials shakily, but before she has dialed the last numbers the rapines of the busy signal comes over the receiver. She depresses the buttons again ... footsteps ... she puts the phone down and rushes to another window. A figure is crossing the lawn, coming toward the house. It is a different figure, a different man. She runs to the door and peers out through the curtains again. The man still walks toward the house. A shadow darkens a strip of window at the left of the door. Its abruptness startles her. She peels back a corner of the curtain and sees the back of the first attacker not ten feet away, facing the man who is approaching. The attacker moves toward the new man. Barbara freezes against the door, and glances down at her knife ... she looks back out at the two men.

They join each other under the dark, hanging trees, and stand looking back toward the cemetery. From inside the house, Barbara squints, trying to see. Finally, the attacker moves back across the road, in the direction of the cemetery. The other man approaches the house, seeks the shadows of a tree, and stops ... in an attitude of stolid watching ... Barbara stares, but can see little. She lunges toward the phone again ... dials the operator ... the same recorded message. She barely stops herself from slamming down the receiver.

Then suddenly a distant sound ... an approaching car. She scampers to the window and looks out. The road seems empty. But after a moment a faint light appears, bouncing and rapidly approaching ... a car coming up the road. Barbara reaches for the doorknob, edges the door open very slightly. The light spills dimly over the area. There, under the great tree in the lawn, is the silhouette of the second man. Barbara shudders ... she is afraid to make her break for the approaching car.

The figure appears to be sitting, quite still, it's head and shoulders slumped over ... it seems to be looking right at the house. The car speeds by ... Barbara just stares at the figure. She cannot run. She closes the door and backs into the shadows of the house.

She turns to see all around her. The large dreary rooms are very quiet, cast in shadow ... she spies a stairway ... runs toward it still carrying the knife and starts up the stairs. The camera is level with her eye, and picks up her view of the stairs as she runs up ... panting and frantic she climbs, her hand grazing the banister ... still at her eye level, The camera starts to pick up the top of the stairway ... the floor of the second landing ... A brief glimpse of something on the floor there ... she continues to climb ... the floor of the landing ... zoom in ... toward camera, the hand of ... A corpse.

Barbara stops ... the corpse is almost skeletal with its flesh ripped from it, and it lies at the end of a trail of blood. Screaming in absolute horror, Barbara almost falls down the stairs. She is gagging ... she breaks for the door, unlocks it, and flings herself out into the night, completely unmindful of consequences ... she is bathed in light ... two headlights are screeching toward camera ... the sounds of a vehicle stopping. Barbara covers her face with her arms. Someone rushes toward her ...

MAN

Are you one of 'em?

She stares, frozen. A man stands in front of her. He is large and crude, in coveralls and tattered work shirt. He looks very strong, and perhaps a little stupid. Behind him is an old, battered pick-up truck, which he has driven right up onto the lawn of the house. He holds a large jack-handle in his hand, and stands there panting. Behind him, the man at the tree still stands.

Barbara is still frozen ...

MAN

(The man shouts again)

Are you one of 'em? I seen 'em to look like you ...

The man at the tree moves forward ... Barbara screams and steps back ... the truck driver spins to face the other man. The other man stops in his tracks. The truck driver backs protectively toward the girl, while the other stands, just watching. Finally, the truck driver seizes Barbara's wrist and pulls her into the house, slamming the door behind them.

Barbara falls back against a wall. The truck driver locks the door and throws the bolt. He is breathing hard. He turns to look at the girl. She brings the knife up in a defensive gesture ...

TRUCKDRIVER

(Soothingly, in a drawl, almost as he would address a scared rabbit)

All right ... It's awright now ...

She stares widely at him. He immediately concerns himself with his surroundings. He moves into the next room to check the windows. He tries a lamp, it lights, he turns it off.

Barbara weakly lowers the knife and falls to a sitting position in a chair. She watches the man intently ... he calls to her from the other room

TRUCKDRIVER

Don't you mind the creep
outside ... I can handle him ...
There's probably gonna be lots
more of 'em ... soon's they fin'
out about us ... I'm outta
gas ... them pumps over there is
locked ... is there food
here? ... I'll get us some
grub ... then we beat 'em off an'
skedaddle ...

She just stares at him.

TRUCKDRIVER

It ain't no good no way. Might's
well have two tincans and a
string ... You live here?

She remains silent, looking toward the top of the stairs. The man follows her stare and starts toward the stairs Halfway up he sees the corpse and stops ...

TRUCKDRIVER

Oh ... bejeses ...
(He stares for a moment, then
slowly backs down the
stairs.)

At the bottom of the stairs, he just looks at the girl shivering with shock in her chair. Then he forces himself back into action.

TRUCKDRIVER

We gotta bust outta here ... git
to where there's some folks ...
somebody with guns or
somethin
(He quickly moves toward the
kitchen.)
I'll try to scare up some grub.

He enters the kitchen and starts to rummage. He flings open the refrigerator and the cupboards. Finding a stack of large paper grocery bags, he opens one and starts to fill it with things from the refrigerator. He hurls the stuff into the bag. He is interrupted by Barbara's voice ...

BARBARA

(Weakly)

What's happening?

The man looks up at her ...

BARBARA

(Repeating)

What's happening?

(She shakes her head in
fright and bewilderment)

The truck driver looks at her. She stands like a frightened child in the kitchen doorway. He is amazed at her question. A shattering crash startles them. The man drops the groceries and seizes his jack-handle. He runs to the front door and looks out through the curtained window. Another shattering sound. The first attacker has joined the second man at the old pick-up truck, and with great sticks the two are smashing out the headlights.

TRUCKDRIVER

Two of 'em.

Once the lights are battered out, the two men outside start to beat at the body of the truck. The truck driver spins and lunges toward the girl.

TRUCKDRIVER

How many ... how many ...

She backs further away ... the truck driver lunges again, this time in desperation to make her understand

TRUCKDRIVER

How many ... come on, now ah
know you're scared ... but ah can
handle them two bohoppers ... Now
how many more is out there ...
that truck's our only chance to
git outta here ... How many ...
how many ...

He grabs her shoulders and she struggles against him, thrashing hysterical ...

BARBARA

I don't know ... I don't know ...
 what's happening? I don't
 know what's happening

She breaks into hysterical sobbing. The truck driver spins away from her and breaks for the door. He looks out the window for a moment. The attackers still beat at the truck, wildly trying to tear it apart. The truck driver flings open the door and leaps off of the porch. The two men look up ... for the first time we see the faces of the attackers ... they are dead things ... the flesh on their faces is rotting and oozing ... their eyes bulge from deep sockets ... their hair is long, and their clothing rotten and in tatters. They are ghoulish beings, staring up at the truck driver ... he starts for them slowly, with building vengeance. He moves steadily at first ... with controlled power ... he speaks as he advances ... wielding his jack-handle

TRUCKDRIVER

Come 'n git it ... come on 'n git
 some o' this jack-handle ...

He concentrates on his attack ... moving stolidly toward the two creatures ... he breaks almost into a run. But the two, rather than backing off, move toward the man ... as though drawn by some urge. The man pounds into them, swinging and thrashing with arms and jack-handle. They are buffeted by his blows ... they seem weak compared to him ... but his powerful blows don't really stop them. It is like beating a rug. He flings them back and they advance again. It is a violent, brutal struggle. But the big man finally beats the two into the ground, and for a great while continues to pound a their limp forms. He breaks into almost sobbing with each of his blows. He beats at them and beats at them as the girl watches in shock from the porch ... he thrashes and beats until she starts to scream again. Her screams pierce the night. The man stops. Breathing heavily, he stands, enveloped in the quiet of the night.

The girl stands in the doorway, the truck driver turns to face her, he is out of breath. Suddenly, a noise behind the girl, she spins ... and walking toward her from the kitchen is another of the hideous creatures ... the truck driver leaps toward the thing ...

TRUCKDRIVER

Lock that door!

Barbara slams the door and locks it, backing against it, as another equally brutal struggle ensues in the living room. The big man again beats the attacker down but another appears at the kitchen door. The truck driver leaps toward it, and with powerful jack-handle blows drives it out beyond the door so that he can fall against it, shutting it. He bolts it and stands leaning against the frame trying to breathe.

Long silence ... the truck driver just stares down at the floor ...

TRUCKDRIVER

They know we're in here, now ...
there ain't no use disputin' that.

Outside the house, the fourth ghoul stands staring at the back door. Another slowly walks up behind it ... and another. At the front of the house, three more stand near the bodies of the first two.

Pull off and follow focus from the front yard of the house, through the curtains at the front door, to the face of the girl as she spins to face the camera. Her face twitches in fright, and her eyes are wide with a non-blinking stare. As she spins, her eyes fall on the floor, where the dead humanoid lies. The thing is askew on its back, its right arm extended toward the girl with fingers twisted as though to grab.

(Cut to MCU. Camera is trucking in slowly.)

There is a slight movement in the thing's hand. It twitches ... the whole body twitches slightly. The bent, broken neck has the being's head twisted upward, in an open-mouthed glassy stare ... Barbara steps toward the thing. The fear in her face bears the beginnings of a sick frown. The hand twitches again. The girl moves closer, drawn toward it, staring down at it with overpowering curiosity.

The thing is something dead, with the beginnings of decay on its face and neck. Barbara moves closer. The thing still twitches ...

She is staring right down into the thing's eyes ... her hands come up to her mouth ... the urge to be ill, to scream, to run must all be fought...the glassy stare from bulging eyes ... right back up at her ...

(Camera shoots back and forth at her face and the staring eyes of the dead thing ... zoom in on the thing ... it seems as though the body is going to stand again ... it's face holds as much life as it did when it walked.)

Suddenly, with a rustling sound the thing moves ... (Cut back.) The big truck driver has a hold on the thing's legs and is dragging it across the floor.

TRUCKDRIVER

Shut your eyes, girl ... I'm
gittin' this dead behopper outta
here

He is sweating. His face shows anger and anguish as he drags the body across the floor. Barbara just stands, her hands still at her mouth, watching. The sounds of the man's breathing, and his struggle, fill the room. With the body, he reaches the back door and lets the legs fall ...

TRUCKDRIVER

You ... filthy ...

(He cuts himself short. Cut-in for close-up.)

The stark light on the big man's face makes him shine in his sweat. His eyes are alert, and afraid. He turns quickly to see through the small window-panes in the door.

Outside, lurking in shadow from the huge trees, the three beings watch and wait, their arms dangling and eyes bulging, as they stare at the truck driver's activities. With a swift move, the big man unbolts the door, flings it open, and bends toward the inert thing at his feet. The ghoulish things begin to move toward him. With one great heave, the dead form is flopped outside the door. It lies across the threshold. The things advance silently

TRUCKDRIVER

Filthy

Another great effort shoves the body almost clear. From inside the house, the big man's efforts cannot be clearly seen by the girl, because the doorframe is blocking her view. She moves into the kitchen. The truck driver flops the body down onto the edge of the porch. The three figures are close upon him, are starting to reach out. The big man shudders. He fumbles into the breast pocket of this work shirt. The things advance. He produces a pack of matches, manages to strike one ... and touches the burning tip to the clothing of the dead thing, and with almost a popping sound the clothing catches fire

The things in the yard stop in their tracks ... the fire blazes slowly. Shaking, the truck driver touches the match to other aspects of the thing's clothing. His fingers burn, and he snaps them, throwing the match into the heaped form. He is breathing hard. Standing, he kicks the burning thing off the edge of the porch ... watches it roll down three small steps onto the grass, where it lies still, the flames licking around it. The three beings step back slightly ... the big man clings to the banister around the little porch ... his fists clench and his face is fiery in the glow of the flames. His voice quivers ...

TRUCKDRIVER

I'll git you.. ah'm gonna git you.
All of you (His voice grows
stronger in his violence) All of
you ...

He stands defiantly on the little porch, the flaming corpse separating from the things that wait. He spins suddenly ... the girl stands inside the kitchen door. His face is a fury of sweat and quivering anger. His eyes meet the girl's ... she steps slowly back into the room. The big man, in great strides, re-enters the kitchen and slams the door, bolting it again. His breathing, still loud, is even more rapid than before. His eyes dart quickly about the room in search of something.

He rushes to the cabinets and throws them open, begins rummaging through them. Standard kitchen utensils and supplies. He does not speak, just frantically ransacks the room

TRUCKDRIVER

See if you can find the light
switch.

Barbara falls back against a wall, and her hand gropes to a switch. The light from an overhead fixture comes on, providing dim illumination. The big man continues to clatter about frantically. The light coming on makes the girl blink. She remains against the wall, her hand still touching the switch. It is as though she dare not move. She watches silently.

The man flings open drawers and spills contents onto the shelving and onto the floor. His hands fall to the silverware drawer, still open from when Barbara first discovered it. He pulls it out until it stoops itself with a crash. He roots through it, pulls out a large knife and, sucking his breath in, stuffs it under his belt. Then he reaches into the drawer again and produces another knife. Taking Barbara by surprise, he strides toward her. He shoves the knife at her, handle first, but she falls back slightly. Her action stays his franticness ... breathing heavily through his words, he speaks to her ...

TRUCKDRIVER

... now ... you hang on ... to
this ...

She hesitates, but she takes the knife. She seems weak, almost apathetic, as though she is losing control of herself. She stares at the weapon in her hand, then her eyes come up to meet the man's intense face.

TRUCKDRIVER

All right.

He pulls away from her and continues to rummage, but he speaks periodically now, between great breaths, and between the brief times when his interest is wrapped in something he finds in his rummaging. His search is not without control; it has a coordinated purpose; it is selective, although frantic and desperate. He looks for nails and strips of wood or planks that he might nail around doors and windows. His actions are hurried, and intent after these defensive ends. At first, his search has his full attention. Gradually, as he moves about, and begins to come up with several key items that he needs, his efforts pace down into a more deliberate flow ... he starts putting up boards and tables against the vulnerable parts of the old house.

The mood relaxes in intensity, becomes calmer, more analytical ... the barricading instills a feeling of greater security. And the knowledge of some security begins to overtake the girl, bringing her out of her shock and passivity. The scene proceeds as follows ... the girl looks at her knife, recedes against the wall. The noise of the search is ever-present. The man mutters occasionally, and spills his findings about the room. At first, as new cabinets and drawers fail to turn up what he is looking for, he grows impatient and more violent ... spools of thread, buttons, manicure implements, shoe-shine materials ... Another drawer ... immediately, as the drawer is flung open with a clatter, the big man sees what he needs ... he almost leaps into the drawer ...

TRUCKDRIVER

Tell me ... you ain't the sweetest
thing ...

His big hand comes out of the drawer with an old pipe-tobacco tin, and in one gesture he spills its contents onto a shelf ... nails and screws and washers and tacks spill out onto the wooden shelf. A few roll too far and clatter onto the floor. His fingers scoop them up. He fumbles through the little pile of things and selects the longest nails. In the batch, and stuffs them into the breast pocket of his work-shirt. Even as he stuffs the nails into his pocket, he is already moving, his eyes seeking for his next need ...

TRUCKDRIVER

See if there's any wood around the
fireplace out there!

His hands explore the shelf surface. The girl does not respond immediately. His impetus carries him toward another shelf, but in turning he notices the girl, still motionless.

TRUCKDRIVER

Look ... You ...

(Angry at first, he stops himself, then speaks still frantically, but with less harshness)

TRUCKDRIVER (Cont'd.)

... You're scared ... ah'm scared ... ah'm scared, too ... jist like you ... now ... (he composes himself even more) we ain't gonna be worth a plugged nickle if we don't do something' ... ah'm gonna board up these doors and windows ... but you gotta pitch in ... We gotta help ourselves, 'cause there ain't nobody around to help us ... and we're gonna be all right ... ok? ... now ... I want you to scamper out there and see if there's any wood in that fireplace ...

He stops, still breathing hard. The girl just looks at him. She starts to move, very slowly, away from the wall.

TRUCKDRIVER

Ok?

The girl is still for a long moment; then nods her head weakly.

TRUCKDRIVER

Ok

The girl leaves the room and he continues his search. She moves quickly into the living-room area. The darkness stops her for an instant, slowing her pace. From the kitchen, come the clattering sounds of the man's search. She looks ahead. The white curtains on the windows seem to glow, and every shadow seems suspect. Barbara shudders.

(Shot of the foreboding room. Closer shot on her face.)

On a table is a bowl of large, rounded flowers ... a breeze causes them to stir in sync with a sound from the kitchen.

The effect startles the girl; she dives for a table lamp, clicks it on, and dull illumination fills the room. The room is empty. She starts slowly toward the fireplace. Near it, is a stack of logwood, and a few planks that might be large enough to nail across the windows. Still clutching her knife, she bends over the pile and gathers up the planking. She stands with her awkward load, and the foreboding room faces her again, stopping her. She bolts and hurries toward the kitchen.

Bursting through the door, she finds the big man pounding with his jack-handle at the hinges on a tall broom-closet door. One final swipe and a great yank frees the wooden door, and the man stands it against the wall next to the broom-closet. In the recesses of the closet, the man spots other useful items and pulls them out ... an ironing board, three center boards from a dining table, and some old scrap lumber.

He motions for Barbara to follow, as he grabs the closet door and moves to the back door of the house, which he had previously bolted against the beings outside. He slaps the closet door up against the paned portion of the kitchen door and finds that with this same piece he can cover the kitchen window. He leans against the piece of wood and gropes in his pocket for nails. The door starts to slip slightly; it does not completely cover the adjoining window, but it leaves slots of glass at the top and bottom: however, it does cover the glass part of the entrance door. Barbara drops her burden and moves swiftly, helping the man by holding an end of the barrier in position. The truck-driver accepts her help automatically, without recognition, and gives the barricade a cursory inspection as he determines where to sink the nails. Pulling several nails from his pocket, he places them and drives them in with his jack-handle. He drives two on his through the door and molding until they grab, then moves to her side and drives two more. When four are in, he whacks at them with the jack-handle until they are completely sunken, then begins to add more. Now he starts to talk. The first decisive steps are taken. Quite a lot of relief comes with it. Most of the house is still vulnerable, but the measures taken instill confidence. While he talks, though, he keeps working rapidly, his pace as intense as ever ...

TRUCKDRIVER

There, by god ... this ought to
hamp their crimper ... they ain't
that strong ... there

Two more nails, in position, driven to the molding. He tests the barricading wood with two good yanks. It holds.

TRUCKDRIVER

They ain't comin' through that.

He drives the last two nails in all the way.

TRUCKDRIVER

Gotta figure out how much nails we
got.

He sees the parts of the windows that remain uncovered.

TRUCKDRIVER

I'll leave that for now. We'll
fix the rest.

He turns quickly from the barricade and looks around the room. No other doors or windows except the door that leads to the living-room.

TRUCKDRIVER

Well ... this place is fairly
secure ...

He examines planks and table extensions.

TRUCKDRIVER

Now ... if we have to ...

The girl just stands and watches him.

TRUCKDRIVER

If we have to ... we just run in
here ... and no draggin' now, or
fussin' with your make-up, or I
leave you out there. We run in
here and board up this door.

The door between the kitchen and living-room has been open all the time. The big man closes it, tests it, it shuts tight. He opens it again. He quickly chooses several of the lumber strips and stands them against the doorframe. He gropes in his pocket and notices that his supply of nails is dwindling. He checks the pile sprinkled from the can. He empties the can completely and fingers the contents for all of the longest nails, and tosses just these back into the can. He hands the can to the girl ...

TRUCKDRIVER

You take these.

This time she reacts quickly and takes the little tobacco tin from his big hand. As she does so, the man gathers as much of the lumber as he can into his arms and starts out of the room. Barbara follows. They are in the living-room.

TRUCKDRIVER

It ain't gonna be too long, they
be tryin' to hammer their way in
here. they're afraid now.

He drops his load of wood in the middle of the floor and walks over to the largest front windows, talking as he moves. His speech is rapid.

TRUCKDRIVER

They're scairt of fire too, i
found that out ...

His eye measures the size of the big windows. He looks all around the room. Finally, his eyes fix on the large dining table, and he moves quickly toward it, talking as he moves, resuming his train of thought ...

TRUCKDRIVER

There must've been fifty ... a
hundred of 'em down in cambria
when the news broke

Barbara watches, almost transfixed. At his mention of the number of the things, her eyes reflect amazement, and frightened curiosity. The man reaches the table, walks around it studying its size, then hoists one end and turns it onto its side. Bracing it against himself, he heaves on one of the legs and tries to break it free. With a great ripping sound, the table leg is torn off, and the man drops it onto the rug. He continues talking, punctuation his remarks with vengeance on the table as he rips all the legs off.

TRUCKDRIVER

I seen this big gasoline truck,
you know ... down beekman's ...
beekman's diner ... and I had
heard the radio ... I got a radio
in my truck

He wrenches at the second table leg ... it cracks loudly but does not come free. He moves to where his jack-handle lies on the floor.

TRUCKDRIVER

... This cas'line truck come
screamin' outta the diner lot onto
the road ... must be ten ...
fifteen of them things chasin'
it ... and it looks funny to me,
but I don't see the things runnin'
behind it right away ...

He picks up the jack-handle and hammers at the table leg. The second powerful swat frees the leg. He moves on to the third.

TRUCKDRIVER

I just see this big truck ... and it looks funny, you know, how slow trucks'll start ... and it's pullin' out onto the road ... and weavin' ... then I see them things ... and the truck's movin' so slow, they're catchin' up ... and grabbin' ... jumpin' on ...

Another table leg falls loose to the rug.

TRUCKDRIVER

And that truck just cut right 'cross the road ... through the guard rail, you know. i'm startin' to throw on my brakes, and the truck smashes into this big sign and into the pumps in the esso station down there ... I hear this crash ... and that big thing starts burnin' ... and it's still movin' ... right through the pump stand and on into the station ... and I'm stopped, stock still ... and I see them things ... and they all startin' to back off ... Some of em runnin' ... or at least it looks like they're runnin', but they move kinda like they're crippled ... but they keep backin off ... and it's like ... it's like they gotta get away from the fires ... And the guy drivin' the truck can't get out nohow ... he got the cab of the truck plowed halfway into the wall of the station ... that thing's fryin' him in there and he's screamin' ... screamin' like hell ...

Barbara's eyes deepen and her face wrinkles in anxiety. The continuing nightmare grows more and more complex. The man swats the last leg from the table, and the table-top starts to drop. He regains control of it and struggles, trying to move it into the next room. Barbara automatically moves to his assistance and they walk together, each burdened by the heavy table.

TRUCKDRIVER

I don't know what's gonna happen,
you know? I mean ... I don't
know what the whole place gonna
explode ... or fly to pieces ...
or what's gonna happen ... I
start drivin' for the gas
station ... and the cat in the
truck is screamin' and
screamin' ... and after a while
he just stops ...

The man sets down his end of the table, and wipes beads of
sweat from his forehead. His breathing is still heavy from
his previous exertion. He wipes his hand on his shirt.
His eyes are wide and angry ... it almost seems as though
he might weep.

TRUCKDRIVER

... And there's them things
 standin' back ... 'cross the
 road ... standin' lookin'
 like ... lookin like ... like
 they just come back from the grave
 or somethin' ... and they're over
 by the diner ... and there's cars
 and busses in the diner lot, and
 lots of windows is smashed. and
 it's for sure them things done the
 people in the diner in ... and
 more is outside, all over the
 place, just bidin' their time for
 a chance to move in. so I start
 my truck up, and I barrel it right
 at some of them things ... I'm
 steamin' down right on 'em ...

(His face grows more intense
 with the memory) and I get a
 good look at 'em ... I see
 them for the first time in my
 lights ... and then ... I
 just run right down on
 'em ... I just grind down,
 down hard as I can ... and I
 knock a couple of 'em about
 fifty feet, flailin' into the
 air ... and I just want to
 smash them ... crush them
 filthy things. And they're
 just standin' there. They
 ain't runnin', they ain't
 even tryin' to get outta the
 road. some of em is even
 reachin' out, as if they can
 grab me. But they're just
 standin' there, and the truck
 is runnin' them down ...
 like they was bugs or
 something' ... they ...

Barbara is wide-eyed, staring in disgust, her hands still
 clutched to the table-top. She says nothing. The man sees
 her fear and stops himself.

TRUCKDRIVER

... I I'm ...

He refocuses his attention on the table-top, and starts to
 lift it again. Barbara is practically motionless. As he
 tugs the table, her hands fall away and she slowly pulls
 them against herself. He drags the table away from her,
 and she walks numbly behind, having forgotten to assist.
 She just watches the man's face.

TRUCKDRIVER

... I'm just ... I got kids,
 you know ... and ... I guess
 they'll do all right ... they can
 take care of themselves ... but
 they're still only kids ... and
 I'm bein' away and all
 and ...

Perspiring heavily, he tugs the twists at the table-top,
 trying to fit it through the doorframe and into the living-
 room.

TRUCKDRIVER

I'm just gonna do what i can ...
 and I'm gonna get back ... and
 I'm gonna see my people ... and
 things is gonna be all
 right ... and ... I'm gonna get
 back

He has started to almost babble ... he sees the girl
 intently watching him, and he stops. He composes himself
 with some effort, and starts to speak a little more
 slowly. His voice is almost a monotone, with enforced
 calm, but he does, beneath his anger, seem as confident as
 could be expected of anyone under the circumstances.

TRUCKDRIVER

Now, you and me is gonna be all
 right, too. we can head them
 things off. I mean ... you can
 just ... just smash 'em. All you
 got to do is just keep your head
 and don't be too afraid. We move
 faster than they can. and they're
 awful weak ... and if you don't
 run and just keep swingin' ...
 you can smash 'em. We're smarter
 'n they are. and we're stronger
 'n they are. We're gonna stop
 'em, okay?

The girl stares.

TRUCKDRIVER

All we got to do is just keep our
 heads.

They look at each other for a moment, until the big man
 turns and picks up the table again. As he starts away with
 it, the girl speaks, quietly and weakly ...

BARBARA

Who are they?

The man stops in his tracks, still supporting the heavy table-top and looks with amazement at Barbara's anxious face. Slowly it dawns on him that the girl has never really been aware of the thing that has been happening. She had not heard the radio announcements, the bulletins ... she had been existing in a state of uninformed shock.

TRUCKDRIVER

(Incredulously)

You ain't heard nothin'?

She stares blankly, silently, her eyes fastening in his. Her reply is her silence.

TRUCKDRIVER

You mean you ain't got no idea about what's goin' on here?

Barbara starts to nod her answer ... she begins to tremble

BARBARA

I... I...

Her trembling increases, she begins to shake violently, and suddenly she flings up her arms and flails them about, sobbing wildly... she begins to walk in panic, wildly and aimlessly, in circles about the room...

BARBARA

no ... no ... no ... no ...
 I ... I can't ... what's
 happening ... what's happening to
 us ... why ... what's
 happening ... tell me ...
 tell ... me

The man grabs her, shakes her to bring her out of it, and her sobbing jerks to a halt, but she remains staring ... right through him, her eyes seemingly focused beyond him, at some far distant point Her speech, still nearly hysterical, becomes a little more coherent ...

BARBARA

We were in the cemetery ...
me ... and Johnnie ... my
brother, Johnnie ... we brought
flowers for ... this ...
man ... came after me ... and
Johnnie ... he ... he
fought ... and now ... he ...
he's ...

TRUCKDRIVER

... All right ... all right!

He tightens his grip. She wrenches against him.

BARBARA

Get your hands off me!

She flings herself away from him, beating him across the chest, taking him by surprise. But in her momentum, she stumbles over an end table, barely regains her balance, and stands facing the front door poised as if to run out into the night ...

BARBARA

We've go to help him ... got to
get Johnnie ... we've got to go
out and find him ... bring
him ...

She comes toward the man, pleading with tears, the desperate tears of a frightened child ...

BARBARA

... Bring him here ... we'll be
safe ... we can help him ...
we ...

The man steps toward her. She backs away, holding one hand toward him defensively, and the other toward her mouth ...

BARBARA

No ... no ... please ... we've
got to ... we ...

He takes one deliberate stride for her.

TRUCKDRIVER

Now ... now you calm down ...
you're safe here ... Now we can't
take no chances ...

BARBARA

We've go to get Johnnie ...

TRUCKDRIVER

Now ... come on, now ... you
settle down ... you don't know
what these things are ... It ain't
like no sunday school out
there

BARBARA

Please pleeeese ... no ...
no ... no

She is sobbing, violently ... her words become screams. She is verging toward complete hysteria. The man struggles to calm her, she wrenches from him but his grip remains, so that her arms jerk her whole body in the act of wrenching away. She stares at the man, their eyes meet in an instant of calm ... but only an instant, before she screams ... she kicks him again and again, as he struggles to pin her arms at her sides and shove her against a wall. At the same time, he does not want to hurt her. With brute force, he shoves her backwards, propelling her into a soft chair ... but she is up again, screaming and slapping at his face. He is forced to grab her again, and practically slam her into a corner. He brings up one powerful fist and punches the girl ... but her head recoils and the blow is misplaced, it does not put her out of commission. But it shocks her into dumb, wounded silence. He hits her again, squarely.. her eyes fall sorrowfully on his and she begins to crumple ... she falls limp against him, as he supports her weight, easing her into his arms. Holding her, he looks dumbly about the room. His eyes fall on the sofa. He does not carry, but almost walks her to the sofa, permits her dead weight to fold onto it, and eases her head onto a cushion.

Next to the couch is a cabinet-radio. The man stabs at a button, clicking it on; while the radio warms up, he looks around for the tin of nails, finds it where Barbara had dropped it, takes nails and slides them into his pocket. The radio hisses and crackles with static. He returns to it and searches with the tuning dial. At first, just static ... then it spins past what sounds like a voice, and he adjusts carefully, trying to find the spot. The tuner finds a metallic, monotone voice ...

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
 ..ergency radio network. Normal
 broadcast facilities have been
 temporarily discontinued. Stay
 tuned to this wave length for
 emergency information. Your law
 enforcement agencies urge you to
 remain in your homes. Keep all
 doors and windows locked or
 boarded shut. Use all food, water
 and medical supplies sparingly.
 Civil defense forces are
 attempting to gain control of the
 situation. Stay near your radio,
 and remain tuned to this
 frequency. Do not use your
 automobile. Remain in your homes.
 Keep all doors and windows locked.

A long pause. A crackle. The message repeats. It is
 obviously a recording.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
 Our live broadcasters will convey
 information as received from civil
 defense headquarters. This is
 your civil defense emergency radio
 network. normal broadcast
 facilities have been temporarily
 discontinued. Stay tuned to this
 wave length ...

The big man waves his hand in disgust at the repetition of
 the radio and moves away as it continues it's
 announcement. He resumes his efforts with the heavy wooden
 tabletop. This time he drags it to the living-room
 window. He leans it against the wall and pulls back the
 curtain to peer outside. There are now four figures
 standing in the yard. The voice of the distant radio
 recording continues. The figures stand very still, their
 arms dangling, aspects of their silhouettes revealing
 tattered clothing or shaggy hair. They are cold, dead
 things. Something in the distance suddenly startles the
 truck-driver.

From across the road, a figure is moving toward the house.
 The man spins himself away from the door and rushes to the
 fireplace. He reaches for his matches. In the little
 stand near the couch, where Barbara lies unconscious, there
 are old magazines. The man grabs them, rips pages loose,
 and crumples them into the fireplace. He piles kindling
 wood and larger logs, then touches the paper with a lighted
 match and a small fire takes hold.

There is charcoal-light on the mantle. He sprays the glowing fire and it whooshes into a larger blaze, almost singeing the big man's face as he works. The larger logs begin to burn. He returns to the window. The recorded message repeats itself continuously. The man hoists the table-top to the window-sill, and braces it there while he places a nail in position. He pounds with the jack-handle ... driven by desperation ... another nail ... and another. With the table secure, he checks it hastily and leaps to another window, where he can peer out between its nailed-up boards.

The new figure is just reaching the place where the others stand silently. The man rushes to the fire, where the biggest logs have now begun to blaze. He seizes the discarded table legs and saturates them with charcoal-light, then holds their largest ends into the fire until he has two good flaming torches. Then, a torch in each hand, he moves toward the door again. He nudges a big padded armchair ahead of him to the door and, taking both torches in one hand, pulls the curtain aside for another look at the yard. The figures still stand silently.

With charcoal-light, he drenches the padded armchair and touches it with a torch. It catches instantly, and flames lick and climb, casting flickering light throughout the house. The heat on the man is severe, but he has to fight it. He lunges for the door, unbolting it, and flinging it wide open. From the yard, as the door bangs open, the flaming chair is visible. It throws eerie, irregular illumination onto the lawn. The waiting figures step back slightly.

The man shoves the chair through the doorway, it slides across the front porch. It topples over the edge, and the flaming bulk tumbles down the steps onto the front lawn. In the rolling motion, flames lick and fly, and small particles of the chair's stuffing leap and glow in the night wind. The bonfire rages in the tall grass. The waiting figures back further away.

Inside the house, the front door bands shut, and the man fastens the bolt. He hurries again to the window, puts more nails into the table-top, fastening it securely, then surveys his surroundings, seeking out possible vulnerability.

(The camera moves with him seeing the task that lies ahead.)

There is a side window in the living room, a window in the dining room at the other side of the house, the front door and the flanking glass panels. He turns, still inspecting, and his eyes reflect surprise. The girl is sitting up on the couch. Her demeanor is startling.

(As we cut to her)

Her face is bruised, and she sits in silence staring at the floor. The radio drones on. The fire plays on her face, and reflects in her eyes. The man takes off his jacket and moves toward her. He fixes his jacket over her shoulders and looks sympathetically into her face. She just stares at the floor. The man feels dumb and helpless. Forlornly, he moves to the pile of lumber, chooses a table-board, and goes to the side window. The radio voice continues ...

The truck-driver boards up the two side windows, then moves to the front door. He gets an ironing board, and places it across the door horizontally. It extends over the flanking glass panels leaving cracks at the top and bottom, but they are too small for anything to get through. He drives nails through the board into the molding and tests the barricade for strength. Finding it sufficient, he leaves it and goes on to the next. In the dining-room there are two closed doors. He tries one, finds it locked, examines it and finds no latch. It has been apparently locked with a skeleton key. The other door is locked and leads into a den, which contains several windows. The man is disappointed at the added vulnerability. He thinks for a moment, then leaves the room, shutting the door behind him. It is clear that he has decided to board up the door rather than try to secure the bay windows.

He checks his remaining lumber. The supply is dwindling, but he selects the best piece for boarding the den door. He is about to start hammering when an idea strikes him. He opens the door again and enters the room. There are chairs, a desk, a bureau ... he steps to the desk and starts to rummage through the drawers. He pulls out paper, a stack of pencils and pens, a compass, a hundred little odds and ends. Another drawer ... A hundred more things ... he leaves it open. The bureau contains mostly clothing, he rips out the big drawers and hurls them through the doorway and into the dining area. One drawer ... two ... their contents spilling onto the floor ... he looks back at the bureau ... a final idea hits him. He shoves the great piece of furniture through the door, walking it through the tight opening until it clears the doorway. Then the desk, which warrants another struggle, as the man attempts to secure all things of possible value before he finally nails the door shut. In the closet, there is a lot of old clothing; the man finds a good warm coat and jacket and flings them over his shoulder. High on the shelves are piles of old boxes, suitcases, hatboxes, and old umbrella. He looks for an instant, debating their worth, or the possible worth of what they might contain. At his feet, he sees still more clutter, boxes, umbrellas, dust, shoes and slippers. He picks up a pair of ladies' flats, and examines them, thinking of the barefoot girl out on the couch, and tucks them under his arm.

As he pulls away, something catches his eye ... within the dark recess of the closet, something shiny, the sheen of a finished piece of wood, a familiar shape, lying under a pile of dirty clothing. He reaches eagerly, and his hand finds what he had hoped, a rifle. He sets everything down and rummages even more eagerly all over the floor of the closet through shoe boxes, under things, items come flying out of the closet. A shoebox contains old letters and postcards. But, in a cigar box, clattering around with pipe cleaners and cleaning fluid, there is a maintenance manual and a box of ammunition. He flips open the box and finds it half full. He shoves manual and cartridges into his pocket, then decides to take the whole cigar box full of material. He tucks it under his arm, gathers jackets and shoes, and leaves the room.

In the dining room, he drops the load of supplies on the bureau, and the sight of the girl in the living room stops him short. She is sitting as before, not moving.

TRUCKDRIVER

We're all right now ... this place is good and solid. And I found us a gun - a gun and some bullets.

He looks at Barbara from across the room. She doesn't seem to take any note of his talking. He turns to his work, but continues to speak

TRUCKDRIVER

So, we got us a radio ... and sooner or later somebody'll come and get us outta here.. we got food in there ... (he starts to board up the door to the den) Oh ... and I got you some shoes ... we'll see in a minute if they fit ... and some warm clothes for you ...

He pounds at the nails. The pounding and the repetition of the radio message are the only sounds. The last nail in, the check for sturdiness, the big man turns toward the girl again

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

... ernment to stay in your homes. Keep all doors and windows locked ...

Other than her upright position, the girl shows no sign of life. Her wide eyes just stare through the floor at some point beyond.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

... preferably boarded shut ...

TRUCKDRIVER

Well, that's us ... we're doin' all right ...

He can't smile, and with the girl not looking at him his attempt is half-hearted. He takes up the rifle, the cigar-box, a coat and her shoes in one clumsy armful.

(As he leaves the frame, the camera lingers for an instant. The alcove in the dining area is cluttered with things from the den, the large pieces of furniture obscuring the door that had been tried and found locked; The camera lingers long enough to make this door significant.)

The man kneels with his bundle in front of the girl; then drops the armful of materials at her feet. He holds the shoes that he found in the closet.

TRUCKDRIVER

Now, let's see ... how big your feet is ...

Looking up at her, he is unable to cope with her catatonia. Her stillness makes him as gentle as he can be, but he converses with her, still expecting her to reply and react. She does not.

TRUCKDRIVER

Come on ...

He holds one of the shoes near her foot, waiting for her to lift her leg and slip into the shoe. She is still. Finally, the man takes one of her ankles and fumbles to put the shoe on her foot. It does not go on easily, partly because it is too small, but mostly because of her limpness, but he gets it on, sets her foot down and takes up the other one. He succeeds in getting the second shoe on, and leans back on his haunches looking up at her. She is staring at her feet.

TRUCKDRIVER

Well.. that's er that's a real cinderella story, ain't it?

No response. The man reaches in reflex for his jacket pocket, but he has given Barbara his jacket.

TRUCKDRIVER

Hey you know you got my cigarettes.

He tries to smile again. Still no reaction. He reaches toward her and his hand enters the pocket of the jacket he has draped over her shoulders. His action makes the girl look directly at him, and her stare makes him uncomfortable.

TRUCKDRIVER

You got my cigarettes.

He tries a gentler tone, as one would try to explain some complex concept to a child. He pulls the cigarettes from the pocket and settles back from her again. He fumbles for a cigarette, puts it in his mouth and lights it, trying not to look at the girl. Her gaze is still fixed on his face.

TRUCKDRIVER (CONT'D)

(Inhaling the first puff of smoke and blowing it through his nose)

Ok ... now ... maybe you ought to lie down, you ...

(MORE)

TRUCKDRIVER (CONT'D)

(Fumbling with the cigarette,
a thought occurs to him and
he tries it)

You smoke?

He holds up the burning cigarette. Her stare drops from him back to the floor. He takes another drag and blows the smoke out quickly. Another idea ...

TRUCKDRIVER

Maybe you

(He stops, he is getting
nowhere, he decides that his
time had better be spent in
securing the defenses of the
old house)

Okay.

His okay is more definite than his other talk, and he scoops up the rifle and ammunition. He examines the gun, dumps the shells onto the floor and methodically loads them, one at a time.

TRUCKDRIVER

Now, I don't know if you're
hearin' me or not ... or if
you're out or somethin' ... but
I'm goin' upstairs now ...
okay? ... now, we're safe down
here. Ain't nothin' gettin' in
here at least not
easy ... I mean, they might be
able to bust through that, but
it's gonna be some sweat, and i
could hear 'em, and I think I
could keep 'em out. later on,
I'm gonna fix things good, so they
can't get in no how ... but it's
good for the time bein' ...
You're okay here ...

He continues to load the rifle as he speaks, his cigarette dangling from his lip, causing him to squint from the smoke that curls around his eyes.

TRUCKDRIVER

Now the upstairs is the only other
way somethin' can get in here, so
I'm gonna go up 'n fix that ...

He snaps the clip after the last shell, and is about to stand when his glance falls on the girl again and he tries to get through one last time

TRUCKDRIVER

Okay? You gonna be all right?

She remains silent. The man stands, tucks the rifle under his arm, grabs as much lumber as he can carry, and starts for the stairs, the girl looks up at him, and he is aware of it, but he keeps moving, and her stare follows.

TRUCKDRIVER

I'm gonna be right here. You're all right now. I'm right here, upstairs.

He starts up the stairs. At the top of the landing he is confronted once again with the body that lies there torn and defaced. He sets down his supplies, and the sight of the corpse is repulsive and he tries not to look at it. The body is lying half across a blood-soaked throw-rug, and a few feet away is another throw-rug, with oriental patterns and a fringe sewn around its edge. The man grabs the second rug and rips away one edge of the fringe. Once the initial tear is made, the rest of the fringe peels away easily. He frees it and, taking the rifle, ties on end of the fringe around the barrel and the other around the narrow part of the stock. This done, he slings the rifle over his shoulder. Then he leans over the corpse and takes hold of one end of the rug on which it lies, and begins dragging it across the floor.

On the landing is a long corridor with several closed doors. He deposits the ugly load at one of the doorways and throws open the door. Inside is a bedroom. He tries the other doors and finds two more bedrooms, one a child's room. He begins to remove furniture into the hallway; his plan is to afterwards board up the doors. The noise of his work fills the old house ... Downstairs, Barbara still sits dazed on the couch. The fire flickers on her face, and the burning wood pops loudly now and again. Objects in the room are silhouetted and the atmosphere is stark.

(The camera moves slowly in to her face.)

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

... facilities have been instructed to discontinue programming stay tuned to this ...

There is a sudden buzzing sound and crackling static. Then a hodgepodge of newsroom sounds (as heard earlier by John on the car radio): typewriters, ticker-tape machines, low voices talking in the background. The sounds holds for a long while. The girl does not seem to notice.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

... er ... ladies and gentlemen ... what? ... yeah, yeah ... la ... what? yeah, I got that one ... what? ... another one? put it through

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

(The voice sounds tired, but the man is able to read his reports unemotionally, with the air of a professional commentator who has been covering a major event for forty-eight hours and is no longer impressed with the latest developments)

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Up to the minute reports inform us that the ... siege ... first documented in the midwestern section of the country is indeed spread across the nation, and is in fact world-wide. Medical and scientific advisors have been summoned to the white house, and reporters on the scene in Washington inform us that the President is planning to make public the results of that conference in an address to the nation over your civil defense emergency network.

(A long pause by the announcer, the camera studies Barbara's face. She is inert.)

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

The strange beings, that have appeared in most parts of the nation, seem to have certain predictable patterns of behavior. in the few hours following initial reports of violence and death ... and apparently deranged attacks on the lives of people taken completely off guard, it has been established that the ... alien beings are human in many physical and behavioral aspects. Hypotheses as to their origin and their aims have to this point been so varied and so diverse that we must only report these factors to be unknown. teams of scientist and physicians presently have the corpses of several of the ...

(MORE)

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

aggressors, and these corpses are being studied for clues that might negate or confirm existing theories. the most ... overwhelming fact ... is that these ... beings are infiltrating through urban and rural areas throughout the nation, in forces of varying number, and if they have not as yet evidenced themselves in your area, please ... take every available precaution. Attack may come at any time, in any place, without warning. Repeating the important facts from our previous reports. There is an ... aggressive force ... army ... of unexplained, unidentified ... humanoid beings ... that has appeared In world-wide proportions and these beings are totally aggressive ... irrational in their violence civil defense efforts are underway ... and investigations as to the origin and purpose of the aggressors are being conducted. All citizens are urged to take utmost precautionary measures to defend against theinsidious ... alien ... force ... these beings are weak in physical strength ... are easily distinguishable from humans by their deformed appearance ... They are usually unarmed but appear capable of handling weapons ... They have appeared, not led and organized army, not with any apparent reason or plan ... indeed, they seem to be driven with the urges of entranced ... or or obsessed minds. they appear totally unthinking ... they can.. I repeat: they can be stopped by immobilization: that is, by blinding or dismembering. they are, on the average, weaker in strength than an adult human, but their strength is in numbers, in surprise, and in the sheer fact that they are beyond our normal realm of understanding. They appear to be irrational, non-communicative beings ... and they are definitely to be considered our enemies in what we must call a

At this, Barbara bolts from the couch in wild, screaming hysteria. She runs blindly toward the front door. The truck-driver appears at the top of the stairs. Startled, un-slinging the gun, he leaps down the stairs. The girl is clawing at the barricade, trying to break out of the house, she is sobbing in wild desperation. The man is almost upon her, but she writhes out his reach, runs across the room toward the maze of heaped-up furniture. Suddenly, from within the maze, strong hands grab her. She screams in terror. The truck-driver rushes toward her, and he is startled by the sight of the other man, who is trying to contain the hysterical girl. Behind him, an older man stands holding a length of pipe at his side. They have come through the door that the truck-driver had tried and found locked. The man holding Barbara is dressed in coveralls; he is probably a farmer, he is big and powerful-looking.

TOM

(Still trying to calm the girl)

It's all right ... we're from the gas station ... we're not ...

Barbara sags against him and sobs sporadically, in shock and semi-relief. She is still nearly catatonic. The older man rushes to the radio. The truck-driver just stares dumbly as Tom calms the girl and leads her to a chair where she sits very still, numb with expended emotion. The radio voice continues with its information about the emergency. The older man, Harry Tinsdale, crouches close to the radio, still holding his length of pipe.

HARRY

Listen.

RADIO VOICE:

... periodic reports, as information reaches this newsroom, as well as survival information and a listing of red cross rescue points, where pick-ups will be made as often as possible with the equipment and staff presently available ...

The big truck-driver stands staring at the two new men. He exudes an air of resentment, as though the strangers have intruded on his private little fortress.

TRUCKDRIVER

..Why ... Man, I ...

TOM

Looks like you got things pretty well locked in.

TRUCKDRIVER

(Almost in an aggressive tone)

Man, I could've used some help. How long you guys been in there?

HARRY

That's the cellar It's the safest place.

TRUCKDRIVER

Man, you mean you didn't hear the racket we was makin' up here?

HARRY

How were we supposed to know what was going on up here? It could have been those things, for all we know.

TRUCKDRIVER

That girl was screamin'. Now, you know what a girl sounds like. Them things don't make no noise. Anybody's got to know there's somebody up here could use some help.

TOM

You can't really tell what's goin' on from down there ...

HARRY

We thought we could hear screams, but that might have meant ... Those things were in the house after her.

TRUCKDRIVER

And you wouldn't come up 'n help?

TOM

(A little ashamed)

... Well, I.. if ... there was more of us ...

HARRY

That racket sounded like the place was being ripped apart ... How were we supposed ...

TRUCKDRIVER

You just said it was hard to hear down there. Now you say it sounded like the place was being ripped apart. You better get your story straight, mister

HARRY

All right! Now you tell me. I'm not going to take those kind of chances when we got a safe place ... We luck into a safe place, and you're tellin' us to risk our lives just because somebody needs help

TRUCKDRIVER:

Somethin' like that, yeah.

TOM

(Not knowing whose side to take)

All right ... why don't we settle

HARRY

(Ignoring everything but his own line of thought)

Look, mister ... (he shouts this, then calms his voice for the rest of the line) all right ... we came up, okay? We're here. Now I suggest we all go back downstairs before any of these things find out we're in here.

TRUCKDRIVER

They can't get in here.

TOM

You got the whole place boarded up?

TRUCKDRIVER

(His attitude softer toward Tom)

Most of it. all but upstairs ... It's weak in places, but it won't be hard to fix it up good ...

HARRY

You're insane. The cellars the safest place in the house.

TRUCKDRIVER

(Lashes out)

I'm tellin' you they can't get in here!

HARRY

And I'm tellin you ... those things turned over our car. We were damned lucky to get away at all. Now you tell me they can't get through a pile of wood.

TOM

His wife and kid's downstairs. The kid's pretty badly tore up.

This statement takes the truck-driver completely by surprise. His face softens, he exhales a deep breath. Nobody says anything for a long moment. Finally, the truck-driver swallows and makes his point again ...

TRUCKDRIVER:

Well, I ... I think we're better off up here.

TOM:

(Glancing about at the barricades)

We could strengthen all these up, Mr. Tinsdale.

TRUCKDRIVER:

Man, with all us workin' we could fix this up so nothin' can get in here ... and we got food ... the fire ... and we got the radio.

HARRY:

We can bring all those things downstairs with us. Man, you're crazy you got a million windows up here ... All these windows, you're gonna make strong enough to keep them out?

TRUCKDRIVER:

Them things ain't got no strength, man, I smashed three of 'em pushed another one out the door.

HARRY

I'm telling you they turned our car onto it's roof.

TRUCKDRIVER

Oh, hell, any good five men can do that.

HARRY

That's my point! ... only there's not going to be five ... there's not going to be ten ... twenty ... thirty ... a hundred. Maybe ... you know? Once they know we're in here, the place'll be crawlin' with 'em.

TRUCKDRIVER

Well, if there's that many, there gonna get us wherever we're at.

HARRY

Look, in the cellar, there's only one door, all right? Only one. that's the only place we have to protect. And Tom and I fixed it so it locks and boards from the inside. but all these doors and windows Why, we'd never know where they were going to hit us next.

TRUCKDRIVER

You got a point, Mr. Tinsdale, but down in the cellar there's no place to run ... I mean, if they do get in, there's no back exit. We'd be done for.

This stops Harry for an instant.

TOM

We could get out of here if we had to ... and we can see what's goin' on outside ... Down there, there ain't any windows.. If a rescue party does come we'd never know it ... windows ...

HARRY

But the cellar is the strongest place!

TRUCKDRIVER

The upstairs is just as much of a trap as the cellar ... There's three rooms up there, and they have to be boarded up like this stuff down here ... Then if they do get in the windows they can't get past the doors ... and they're weak, we can keep them out. I got this gun now, and I didn't have it before, and I still beat three of them off ... now, we might have to try and get out of here ourselves, 'cause there ain't no guarantee that anybody is gonna send help ... Suppose them things come in here ... We can't bust outta the cellar, cause we open that one door and they got us ...

TOM

I don't know. I think he's right. (he turns to the truck-driver) You know how many's out there?

TRUCKDRIVER

I figure maybe six, seven.

HARRY

Look, you two can do whatever you like. I'm going back down to the cellar, and you better decide, because I'm gonna board up that door and I'm not gonna be crazy enough to unlock it again, no matter what happens.

TOM

Wait a minute, Mr. Tinsdale, let's think about this for awhile ...

HARRY

Nope. I've made my decision. You make yours. And you can stew in your own juice.

TOM

(Flashing anger)

Now wait a minute dammit let's think about this awhile ... We can make it into the cellar if we have to ... and if we do decide to stay down there, we will need some things from up here ... Now let's at least consider this awhile ...

TRUCKDRIVER

Man, if you box yourself into that cellar, and if there is a lot of them things that get into the house, you had it. At least up here you can outrun the things.

Tom is gone to one of the windows and is peering out through an opening in the barricade.

TOM

Yeah, looks like six ... or about ... eight ...

His hand goes to his temple, and he rubs nervously, his demeanor a little shaken. The truck-driver joins him at the window.

TRUCKDRIVER

That's more than there was ... there's a bunch out the back, too ... (he pivots to check the kitchen) ... unless they're the same ones that was back here.

He bursts into the kitchen, as the fringed rifle sling snaps and the weapon starts to fall. He twists to keep it on his back, and tries to grab it, reaching behind. His attention on the gun, he does not see the door as he moves toward it. He regains control of the gun and looks up and stops cold. Hands are reaching through the broken glass behind the barricades ... graying, rotting hands, scratching, reaching, trying to grab ... and through aspects of the glass ... the inhuman faces behind the hands. The barrier is being strained, no doubt about that, but it is holding well enough.

The man smashes with the rifle butt against the ugly extremities, pounding ... once, twice. One of the grabbing hands is driven back with a shattering of the already broken glass it was reaching through. The rifle butt smashes one of the hands against the door molding solidly ... but the hand, unfeeling of pain, continues to claw after a hold. The man slides his finger to the trigger, and turns the rifle, smashing the barrel through another of the little broken glass areas, and two of the gray hands seize the protruding metal. A dead face appears behind the hands ... ugly ... expressionless. The man's face looks directly through the opening into the dead eyes beyond, the man struggling desperately to control the weapon and the zombie thing outside trying to pull it away by the barrel. A brief instant when the muzzle points directly at the hideous face ... BLAM ... the report shatters the air, the lifeless thing is thrown back, propelled by the blast, its head torn partially away, its still outstretched hands falling back with the crumpling body. The other hands continue to clutch and grab. Tom has rushed into the kitchen, and Harry is standing cautiously a few feet from the doorway, still in the dining area. A distant voice, that of Harry's wife, suddenly begins to cry out from the cellar:

HELEN

Harry Harry
Harry Are you all right?

HARRY

it's all right, Helen ... we're
all right ...

Tom immediately rushes to the door. The truck-driver is pounding at a hand that is trying to work at the barricade from the bottom. The blows seem ineffectual, as the hand, oblivious except for the physical jouncing about from impact, continues to grab. Tom leaps against the door and grabs the rotting wrist with both his hands, and tries to bend the wrist back in an effort to break it, but it seems limp and almost pliable. Disgust sweeps over the young man's face. He tries to scrape the cold thing against the edge of the broken glass, and the absence of blood is immediately evident as the sharp edge rips into what looks like rotting flesh.

Another hand grabs at Tom's wrist and tries to pull it through the glass. Tom yells, and the truck-driver tries to swing the barrel of the gun toward the thing struggling with Tom, but another hand clutches at him even as he is trying to help the younger man. A hand is clawing and ripping his shirt ... but he focuses his attention on aiming the gun. Another loud blast, and the hands Tom was fighting jerk back, and fall into darkness. Foot against the wall, the big man forces himself away from the door out of the grasp of the hand still clutching his shirt. The shirt tears away, and the thing backs off, still with the fragment in its hand. Badly shaken, Tom just stares, through another opening in the door. The truck-driver takes careful aim and pulls the trigger again; the blast rips through the thing's chest, leaving a gaping hole in its back ... but it remains on its feet, backing slowly away.

TOM
Oh ... Good God!

Panicked at the failure of the weapon, the big man levels off again ... another loud report. This time the shell rips through the things thigh, just below the pelvis. The thing still backs away, but as it tries to put weight on its right leg it falls to a heap. The two men just stare in disbelief. The thing is still moving away, dragging itself with its arms and pushing against the ground with its remaining leg.

TOM
Mother Of God ... What are these things?

The truck-driver wets his lips, takes a deep breath and holds it, carefully sights down the barrel of the rifle again. He pulls the trigger. The shell seems to blow open the skull of the crawling form, and it falls backwards.

TRUCKDRIVER
Damn ... damn thing from hell ...
(His voice trembles as he lets out his held breath)

Outside, the thing that has fallen limply, without the use of its eyes, moves its arms in groping, clutching motions, seemingly still trying to drag itself away.

HELEN
(From the cellar)
Harry Harry!

After a moment of silence, the truck-driver turns from the door.

TRUCKDRIVER

We gotta fix these boards.

He starts to move to gather supplies, when Harry speaks.

HARRY

You're crazy ... those things are gonna be at every door and window in the place. We've got to get into the cellar.

The big truck-driver turns to Harry with absolute fury in his eyes. His voice is deeper in his rage, and more commanding.

TRUCKDRIVER

Go ahead into your damn cellar!
Get outta here!

The shouting stops Harry for an instant, then his adamancy returns. He has decided that he will go into the cellar without the others if need be and is now prepared to gather his supplies.

HARRY

I'm taking the girl with me.

He moves toward the refrigerator in the kitchen, but the big man steps in front of him.

TRUCKDRIVER

You keep your hands off of her,
she's stayin' here with me.

Harry is stopped again for a moment. Then he moves toward the refrigerator again.

TRUCKDRIVER (CONT'D)

And you don't touch none of that
food.

(MORE)

TRUCKDRIVER (CONT'D)

(His grip is still on the gun, and though he doesn't point it at Harry, we are aware of the power it implies)

Now if I stay up here I'm gonna be fightin' for what's up here ... And that food and that radio and all this is what I'm fightin' for. And you are stone dead wrong ... you're just wrong, you understand ... Now, if you're makin' it to the cellar get your ass movin' ... go down these stairs ... and get out of here, man ... and ... and ... don't mess with me no more

HARRY

(Turning toward Tom)
The man is crazy ... he's crazy ... We've got to have food down there ... we have a right ...

TRUCKDRIVER

This is your house?
(He knows it isn't)

HARRY

We've go a right to..

TRUCKDRIVER

(Confronting Tom)
You goin' down there with him?

TOM

... Well ...

TRUCKDRIVER

No beatin' around the bush ... you goin' or ain't you? This is your last chance.

There is a long moment of silence. Tom then turns to the older man ...

TOM

Harry I think he's right.

HARRY

You're crazy.

TOM

I really think we're better off up here.

HARRY

You're crazy. I got a kid down there. He can't take all the racket, and those things reaching through the glass. We'll be lucky if he lives as it is now.

TRUCKDRIVER

(More impersonal than ever before)

Okay. Now you're his father. If you're dumb enough to go die in that trap, it's your business. But I ain't dumb enough to go with you. it's just bad luck for the kid that his old man's so dumb Now get the hell down the cellar ... you can be boss down there ... and I'm boss up here ... and you ain't takin' none of this food, and you ain't takin' nothin'.

TOM

Harry ... we can get food to you ... if you want to stay down there ... and ...

HARRY

You bastards!

HELEN

(From the cellar)

Harry ... Harry!

Harry looks toward the cellar door, looks back at the two men, then quickly moves toward the door.

HARRY

You know I won't open the door again. I mean it.

TOM

We can fix this up here. With your help, we could ...

HARRY

Yeah well I think you're both nuts ... with my help!

TRUCKDRIVER

(To Tom)

Let him go, man, his mind is made
up, now let him go.

Harry looks for a moment, then lunges for the cellar door, opens it, and slams it behind him ... sounds of his footsteps going down the steps

TOM

(Rushes to the door)

Harry, we'd be better off up here!

The truck-driver ties the broken fringe back onto the rifle, then begins to reload the gun, replacing the spent shells.

TOM

(Shouting through the door)

Harry, if we stick together, man,
we can fix it up real good ...
There are places we can run to up
here ...

We hear sounds of Harry boarding up the door. The truck-driver straps the gun to his shoulder again, then turns and moves toward the upstairs. In passing, his glance falls on Barbara. He steps backward off the stairs and looks at her. The radio has taken up again with the monotonous recorded message.

TOM

Harry ... we'd be better off if
all three of us was workin'
together ...

(Sounds of Harry's
barricading)

TOM

We'll let you have food when you
need it ...

(he glances warily at the
truck-driver, half-expecting
reprisal for this)

... and if we knock those things
might be chasin' us and you can
let us in ...

Barricading sounds stop. Footsteps can be heard as Harry walks down the cellar steps. Tom listens awhile, then retreats, disappointed and worried about the lack of Harry's efforts in the defensive measures that must lie ahead.

The truck-driver is with Barbara, stooping beside her chair; she stares into an unseeing void. The big man softens at seeing her.

TRUCKDRIVER

Hey ... hey, honey.

He brushes her hair back from her eyes. Tears well up and it almost seems as though she might acknowledge his tenderness, but she does not. The man feels very sorrowful, almost as he would feel for his child when it was sick. He massages his forehead and eyes, tired from fear and exertion of the past hours. He bends to cover the girl with a coat that he had brought from the den, then steps away and feeds the fire, and stirs it to keep the blaze good and warm, the primary concern in this effort is for the girl. Behind him, Tom walks up, truck-driver senses his presence ...

TRUCKDRIVER

He's wrong, man.

Tom is silent.

TRUCKDRIVER

I ain't boxin' myself in down there no how.

(he finishes with the fire and rises to go upstairs, to continue his work there)

We might be here several days ... we'll get it fixed up ... he'll come up ... He ain't gonna stay down there very long ... he'll wanta see what's goin' on ... or maybe if we get a chance to get out ... he'll come up.

He turns and goes up the stairs ...

The cellar, with its stark gray walls and dusty clutter, seems cold and damp. Cardboard cartons tied with cord and a hanging grid of pipe-work all look dirty in the subdued light of bare light bulbs. The cartons take up most of the space; they vary in size from grocery boxes with faded brand names to large packing crates that might have contained furniture. The washing machine, an old roller type, sits off in a corner of the cellar near a makeshift shower stall.

(MORE)

TRUCKDRIVER

Lines for drying clothes are strung over the pipe-work so low that Harry has to duck under them as he walks from the stairs to the other side of the confining quarters. There are stationary tubs and an old metallic cabinet against one of the walls. Harry's wife, Helen, is at the faucet over the tubs, wetting a cloth with cold water. She looks up as Harry enters, but is more interested in what she is doing at the moment. She wrings out the cloth and takes it to where a young boy, their son, lies motionlessly atop a homemade worktable. On a peg-board above the table are hanging tools and cables, and built into the table itself are drawers that probably contain smaller tools, screws and bolts, washers, etc. The woman moves a little stiffly in the coolness of the cellar. She is wearing a dress and sweater, while a warmer coat is spread on the table under the boy, its sides flopped up and over him, covering his legs and chest. The woman bends over her son and wipes his head with the cool cloth.

Harry quietly walks up behind her. She concentrates on caring for the boy and pulls the coat more securely around him.

HELEN

(Not looking up)
He has a bad fever.

HARRY

There's two more people upstairs.

HELEN

(Still primarily concerned
with the boy's comfort)
Two?

HARRY

Yeah ...

(a long pause, then half-defensively)

I wasn't about to take any unnecessary chances.

Helen is silent.

HARRY

How did we know what was going on up there?

Harry nervously reaches to his breast pocket for a cigarette. He produces an empty pack and, seeing that it is empty, crumples it in his hand and pitches it to the floor. He steps over to the worktable where there is another pack, snatches it up, and it too is empty. With the same crumpling action, he discards this pack, violently this time, the action spinning him into a position facing his wife and boy. She continues to quietly swab the boy's forehead. Harry stares at them for a moment.

HARRY

Does he seem to be all right?

Helen is silent. The boy is motionless. He is sweating to the point where beads of sweat are formed all over his face. Harry waits and, seeing no answer forthcoming, changes the subject.

HARRY

They're all staying upstairs
Idiots! We should stick
together ... it's safest down
here

He goes to his wife's purse and rummages through it's contents. He pulls out a pack of cigarettes, rips the pack open, and fumbles for a cigarette. He lights it and drags in the first puff deeply. It makes him cough slightly.

HARRY

They don't stand a chance up
there they can't hold those
things off forever ... There's
too many ways they can get into
the house up there ...

Helen remains silent. On the floor, next to the workbench, is a small transistor radio. Harry's glance falls on it and he stabs at it, scoops it up and clicks it on.

HARRY

They had a radio on upstairs ...
 must've been civil defense or ...
 I think it's not just us, this
 thing is happening all over.

The radio picks up nothing but static. Harry plays with the tuning dial, listening anxiously, but across the receiving band the transistor just hisses. Harry holds the radio up and turns it into various positions, trying it for reception, spinning the tuner as he goes. Still nothing but hiss. He walks around the room with still no results.

HARRY

This damned thing ...

Still just static.

Helen stops wiping the boy's forehead and neatly folds the cloth, and drapes it over her son's brow. She gently places her hand on the boy's chest and looks over toward her husband. He moves impatiently around the cellar, his cigarette dangling from his lip, waving the little radio around in the air. The radio just emits static at varying levels.

HELEN

Harry ...

He continues his fidgeting with the radio. He goes near the walls and stairs, holding it high and still spinning the dial.

HELEN

Harry ... that thing can't pick
 up anything in this stinking
 dungeon!

Her rising tone of voice stops him; he turns and looks at her. About to cry, she brings her hands to her face. She bites her lip, and just stares at the floor. Looking at her, Harry lets his anger take hold of him, but he cannot think of words. His face twitches, his emotion searching for some vehicle or expression, until he pivots violently and flings the radio across the room.

HARRY

(Shouting)

I hate you ... right? I hate the kid? I wanna see you die here, right? In this stinking place. my god, Helen, do you realize what's happening? Those things are all over the place ... they'll kill us all ... I enjoy watching my kid suffer like this? I enjoy seeing all this happen?

Helen's head jerks toward him. She looks at him with what is almost vengeance.

HELEN

He needs help ... he needs a doctor ... he's ... he's ... gonna maybe die here ... We have to get out of here, Harry. we have to.

HARRY

Oh, yeah ... let's just walk out. We can pack up right now and get ready to go, and i'll just say to those things, `Excuse me.. my wife and kid are uncomfortable here ... we're going into town.' For god's sake ... there's maybe twenty of those things out there. and there's more every minute

HELEN

There's people upstairs. We should stick together you said. Are we fighting with them? Upstairs, downstairs ... what's the difference? Maybe they can help us. Let's get out of here let's go upstairs ... let's do something let's get out of here ...

A pounding sound interrupts her. They listen. The sound is coming from the door, at the top of the stairs.

TOM

HARRY!

(From outside the door)

More pounding. Harry just stares up at the door, and does not answer the call. Tears well in Helen's eyes. More pounding. Helen looks at Harry. When he does not respond, she gets up and goes for the stairs.

HELEN

Yes ... yes, Tom!

Harry, running after her, grabs her shoulders from behind and stops her.

HELEN

Harry ... Harry ... it's Tom
Ryan.

TOM

(Through the door)

Harry ... we got food, and some
medicine and things from up
here ...

Harry stares up at the door speechlessly.

TOM

There's gonna be a thing on the
radio ... in ten minutes,
Harry ... a civil defense
thing ... to tell us what to do.

HELEN

(Looking up at the door,
shouts)

WE'RE COMING UP! WE'LL BE UP IN A
MINUTE!

HARRY

You're out of your mind, Helen.
All it takes is a minute ...
those things get in up there and
it's too late to change your
mind ... Don't you see that?
Can't you see that we're safe as
long as we keep that door sealed
up?

HELEN

I don't give a damn! I don't
care, Harry ... I don't care
anymore... I want to get out of
here ... go upstairs ... see if
someone will help us ... maybe
Karen will be okay ...

Her shouting stops and she takes control of herself. She steps toward Harry and speaks in a calmer tone, almost pleading.

HELEN

Harry ... please ... for just a minute ... we'll go up and see what's up there ... We'll hear the radio, and maybe we can figure some way to get out of here ... maybe with all of us we can make it, Harry.

Harry, his adamancy weakening somewhat, takes a cigarette from his mouth, exhaling the last puff, and drops it to the floor. He rubs it out with his foot. The smoke comes in a long stream through his pursed lips.

Startlingly, Tom's voice penetrates again.

TOM

Harry! ... Hey, Harry! ... Ben found a television upstairs! Come on up ... we'll see the civil defense broadcast on tv ...

HELEN

(Soothingly, to Harry, her tone in attempt to relieve the onus Harry must feel in going against his original decision)
Come on ... let's go up ... there'll be something on tv that tells us what to do. you can tell them I wanted to come up

HARRY

(Acquiescing, but with stolid misgivings, his eyes fasten on her; he pronounces his words with what is almost menace)
All right ... this is your decision ... we'll go up ... but don't blame me if we all get killed ...

Her eyes fall away from his, and she leads as they go up the stairs. The cellar door swings open. Helen and Harry step into the hallway. Faltering, they peer through the entranceway into the living-room. Harry, standing behind his wife, is hostile. Partially due to anger with himself because he has reneged on his decision about the cellar. Helen, too, is over-wrought, due to the emotional effect of the recent argument and to the fact that she is about to meet strange people in an anxious circumstance.

But only Tom and Barbara are in the living-room, and Barbara, overcome with nervous exhaustion, is sleeping fitfully on the couch.

TOM

We can see the broadcast, I think ... if the tv works. I have to go help ben.

Helen has gone immediately to Barbara, looks down at her sympathetically, brushes back her hair and pulls the overcoat around her shoulders.

HELEN

Poor thing ... she must have been through a lot.

Harry, during these moments, has been flitting anxiously all over the house ... from door to window to kitchen to living-room ... checking out the actual degree of security and worrying about imminence of attack at any second.

TOM

(To Helen)

I think her brother was killed out there.

BEN

(Yelling somewhat peeved, from upstairs)

Tom ... hey, Tom! Are you gonna give me a hand with this thing?

Tom startles, aware of his procrastination, and bolts for the upstairs to help Ben. Harry, pausing momentarily in his anxiety comes over to where his wife is looking after Barbara.

HELEN

Her brother was killed ...

HARRY

This place is ridiculous. there's
a million weak spots up here.

(We hear sounds from upstairs of Tom and Ben struggling
with the television set. They are making their way down
the steps)

HELEN

I don't care ... there's people
up here. why don't you do
something to help somebody?

Harry, not really hearing her, is staring once more into
the gloom outside.

HARRY

I can't see a damn thing out
there! there could be fifty
million of those things, I can't
see a thing that's how much good
these windows do us ...

The truck-driver, who with Tom has reached the landing with
the heavy television set, has heard the last part of
Harry's remark. He glowers even as he moves with his end
of the burden, but says nothing, as he and Tom gingerly
deposit the TV in the center of the room. They hunt for an
outlet, find it, then slide and walk the set until the cord
is close enough to be plugged in. Ben kneels behind the set
to plug in the cord.

HARRY

Wake that girl up. if there's
going to be a thing on the tube,
she might as well know where she
stands. i don't wand anybody's
life on my hands.

HELEN

Harry! ... stop acting like a
child!

BEN

(On his feet, finished with plugging in the set)
 I don't want to hear anymore from you, mister. if you stay up here, you'll take your orders from me ... and that includes leaving that girl alone. she needs rest ... she's just about out of her head as it is now ... now we're just going to let her sleep it off. and nobody's going to touch her unless i say so ...

Ben stares Harry down for at least a moment, to ascertain that he is at least temporarily silenced, then his hand plunges immediately to the television set. He snaps it on, the occupants of the room jockey for vantage points, and there are a baited few seconds of dead silence as they all wait to see if the set will actually warm up. All eyes are on the tube. A hiss begins, increases in volume, Ben cranks the volume all the way. A glowing band appears and spreads, filling the screen.

HELEN

It's on.. it's on!

There are murmurs of excitement and anticipation. But the tube only shows nothing. No picture, no sound. Just the glow and hiss of the tube. Ben's hand races the tuning dial through the clicks of the various stations.

HARRY

Play with the rabbit-ears ... we should be able to get something.

Ben fusses with horizontal and vertical, with brightness and contrast. On one station, he finally gets sound. He adjusts the volume, the picture tumbles, he plays with it and finally brings it in. Full-Screen is a commentator, in the middle of a news report ...

(The people in the room settle back to listen.)

TV COMMENTATOR

... assign little credibility to the theory that this onslaught is a product of mass hysteria. Authorities advise utmost caution until the menace can be brought under absolute control. Eyewitness accounts have been investigated and documented.

(MORE)

TV COMMENTATOR

Corpses of vanquished aggressors are presently being examined by medical pathologists, but autopsy efforts have been hampered by the mutilated condition of these corpses. Security measures instituted in metropolitan areas include enforced curfews and safety patrols by armed personnel. Citizens are urged to remain in their homes. Those who ignore this warning expose themselves to intense danger from the aggressors themselves, and from armed citizenry ... whose impulse may be to shoot first and ask questions later.

(During the telecast, there are mixed feelings and reactions, but these responses are sporadic and infrequent. Predominant mood of all involved is to learn as much as possible from the telecast.)

TV COMMENTATOR

Rural or otherwise-isolated dwellings have most frequently been the objective of frenzied, concerted attack. isolated families are in extreme danger. Escape attempts should be made in heavily-armed groups, and by motor vehicle if possible. appraise your situation carefully before deciding upon an escape tactic. Fire is an effective weapon. these beings are highly flammable. Escape groups should strike out for the nearest urban community. Manned defense outpost have been established on major arteries leading into all communities. These outposts are equipped to defend refugees and to offer medical and surgical assistance. Police and vigilante groups are in the process of combing remote areas in search and destroy missions against all aggressors. These patrols are attempting to evacuate isolated families.

(MORE)

TV COMMENTATOR

But rescue efforts are proceeding slowly, due to the increased danger of nightfall and the sheer enormity of the task. rescue, for those in isolated circumstances, is highly undependable. you should not wait for a rescue party unless there is no possibility of escape. If you are few against many, you will almost certainly be overcome. The aggressors are irrational and demented. their sole urge is the quest for human flesh. Sheriff Conan W. McClelland, of the county department of public protection, was interviewed minutes after he and his vigilante patrol had vanquished several of the aggressors. we bring you now the results of that interview.

(Fade and segue to video-tape interview)

Open on wide shot. A night scene. Dense woods. Posted guards maintain the periphery of a small clearing. Sporadic gunfire can be heard in the distance. Some of the men smoke, some talk in groups. The area is illumined by a large bonfire. Sheriff McClelland is the focal figure, MCU, so that as he talks we catch glimpses of activity in the background. He is shouting commands, supervising defense measures and the burning of the bodies, at the same time trying to answer reporter's questions. We cut or zoom closer. McClelland is pacing around, not straying too far, because a lavalier microphone is hanging on a cord around his neck. The crackle of the bonfire, the shouts and the bustle of activity can be constantly heard behind his commentary. As he talks, he frequently turns away, his primary concern being his efforts in dealing with the aggressors and controlling his search party.

MCCLELLAND

(Taking up with a previously-asked question)

... yeah ... well, this is rough country for an evening hike ...
(he smiles)

... but things ain't going too badly. the men are taking it pretty well. we killed nineteen of 'em today, right around this general area. these last three we found trying to claw their way into an abandoned mine shed ... nobody in there.. but these things just pounding and clawing, trying to bust their way in ...

(MORE)

MCCLELLAND

it's funny in a way ... must've thought there was people in there ... we heard the racket and came and blasted them down ...

REPORTER

What's your opinion, then? can we defeat these things?

MCCLELLAND

There ain't no problem.. only problem is whether we can get to 'em before they kill off all these people. but me and my men can handle 'em okay ... we ain't lost nobody, or suffered any casualties. all you gotta do is shoot for the eyes. you can tell anybody out there ... all you gotta do is draw a sharp bead and shoot for the eyes ... or beat 'em down 'n lop their heads off

REPORTER

Then I'd have a decent chance ... even if I was surrounded by two or three of them?

MCCLELLAND

If you had yourself a club ... or a good torch.. you could hold 'em off or burn 'em to death. they catch fire like nothin' ... go up like wax paper ... but the best thing is to shoot for the eyes ... don't wait for us to rescue you ... 'cause if they get you too far outnumbered you've had it ... We're doin' our best.. but we only got so many men and a whole lot of open country to comb

REPORTER

But you think you can bring things under control?

MCCLELLAND

We got things in our favor now. It's only a question of time. We ain't for certain how many there are of them things but we know that when we find 'em we're able to kill 'em. so it's a matter of time ... they're weak ... but there's pretty many of 'em ... don't wait for no rescue party. arm yourself to the teeth, get together in a group, and try and make it to a rescue station ... that's the best way ... but if you're alone you got to set stock still and wait for help and we'll try like hell to get there before they do

(Scene fades, segues back to live announcer)

MCCLELLAND

(Emphasizing his point, even as scene fades out)

tell 'em to shoot for the eyes ... that'll stop these bojobbers!

COMMENTATOR

You have heard Sheriff Conan W. McClelland, for the county department of public protection. this is your civil defense emergency network, with reports every hour on the hour for the duration of this emergency. Remain in your homes. Keep all doors and windows locked. Do not under any circ ...

(Ben reaches over and clicks off the television)

TOM

Why'd you click it off for?

BEN

The man said they only come on every hour we heard all we need to know. We gotta get out of here.

HELEN

he said the rescue stations have doctors and medical supplies ... If we could get there, they could help Karen.

HARRY

(Scoffing)

How're we gonna bust outta here? we got a sick kid, two women ... one of 'em outta her head and three men. And there's a million of them things outside.

TOM

Willard should have a checkpoint there ... about seventeen miles from here.

BEN

(Excited)

You from here ... you know this area?

TOM

Yeah ... I was workin' in the cemetery across the road ... I'm the caretaker ... two of them things attacked me and i hightailed it over here ... found everybody wiped out ... not too long after, these other people fought their way in here ... I was scared but I opened the basement door and let them in.

(Unbeknownst to everybody else, Barbara has been sitting up, listening; now she speaks, startling them and gathering their attention. She has come down from her hysteria, but is very weak.)

BARBARA

You work in the cemetery? ... My brother is over there.

HELEN

You poor thing ... (Rushes to Barbara, comforting) My boy is hurt too. we have to get to a rescue station ... the television told us ... we have to try and escape.

HARRY

Well, I think we ought to stick right here ... and wait for a rescue party. He said if you're few against many you don't have a chance ... We can't tramp seventeen miles through those things

BEN

We ain't got to tramp. My truck's right outside the door.

This stops Harry. There is a moment of silence.

BEN

... But i'm just about out of gas ... There's a pump near the shed outside, but it's locked.

TOM

(Becoming more enthused, seeing possibilities)
The key ought to be around somewhere there's a big key-ring in the basement

HARRY

(Jumps up)
I'm gonna go look ... the keys are labeled
(He bolts for the cellar)

BEN

Is there a fruit-cellar?

HARRY

Yeah ... why?

BEN

We're gonna need lots of jars ... We can make molotov cocktails ... scare those things back ... then fight our way to the pump and gas up the truck.

TOM

We're gonna need kerosene. There's a jug of that in the basement too.

HELEN

Barbara and i can help. We can rip up sheets and things.

HARRY

(Clomps up from the cellar)
Here's the key-ring. The pump key
is marked with a piece of tape.

BEN

Good ... that settles that
question ... but we should take a
crowbar anyway ... in case the
key doesn't work. The crowbar can
double as a weapon for whoever
goes with me. But I don't want to
get all the way out there and find
out the pump won't open

TOM

I'll go ... you and me can fight
our way to the pump ... The women
can stay in the cellar and take
care of the kid. We should have
a stretcher bBarbara and
Helen can do that ...

BEN

Harry, you're gonna have to guard
the upstairs. Once we inboard the
door, those things can get in here
easy. But me and tom have to get
in, too, after we get back here
with the truck. You've got to
guard the door, and unlock it for
us. Then we'll board it up as fast
as we can, 'cause those things are
gonna come fast on our heels ...
If we don't get back, well then
you'll be able to see from
upstairs, and you can barricade
the door again and go to the
basement ... You can sit down
there and wait for a rescue party.

HARRY

I want the gun, then. it's the
best thing for me to use. You're
not going to have time to stop and
aim.

BEN

(Adamantly)

I'm keeping this gun ... nobody
else lays a hand on it ... I found
it and it's mine.

HARRY

You don't care what happens to us How do we know you and Tom won't just take the truck and cut out?

BEN

(Glowering, with controlled anger)

That's the chance you have to take. If we cut out, you'll have your goddamn basement. Like you've been crying about all along.

HELEN

We're going to die here ... if we don't all work together.

BARBARA

My brother's out there ... maybe we can get him and bring him back. He's just wounded ... he'll be okay ...

HELEN

(Understanding)

That's okay, honey we'll be all right ... maybe your brother will be, too ...

BEN

Let's get busy. we've got a lot to do, if we're gonna bust out of here.

He is on his feet, taking command. We fade out of the scene

... fade into new scene, completion of escape preparations. Tom is pouring kerosene into fruit jars, Helen is dipping twisted rag fuses in kerosene in the bottom of a dish. Barbara comes from the kitchen with more jars, drying them on the outside and putting them on the table. She and Helen begin working the kerosene soaked fuses through holes which Tom has cut in the jar lids. Between them is a crude stretcher, made of broomsticks and torn sheets, this presumable for the wounded girl, Karen. The television is off, but the radio drones lowly, repeating the recorded message ... The radio is on as a monitor only, that they may work and still keep up with news that may affect their situation.

BARBARA

I don't know what to think about my brother ... We have to get out of here ... maybe we'll find him in Willard ... maybe he was able to crawl to the car ... and get away

HELEN

We have to think of ourselves now ... it's hard for you ... but it's all we can do ... my girl is getting worse too ... I have to get her to a doctor ...

HARRY

(Coming over, checking the stretcher, making sure the makeshift straps will hold) Broomsticks and belt-buckles ... and old sheets, it seems to hold okay ... I always hated the boy scouts ...

TOM

It'll be okay ... is there anything open upstairs?

HARRY

Some windows in the rooms. ben is unfastening the doors now.

TOM

We'll throw the cocktails from upstairs ... just splash the whole area with them ... That should keep most of them away ... while we make a break for the truck.

HELEN

We're ready ... here comes Ben now ...

(Hears him coming down the stairs)

Ben, the gun strapped around his back, is carrying a crowbar and claw-hammer. He walks around checking preparations, smiles at Barbara, glad to see she's a little better.

BEN

Things are ready up there. Now me and tom will un-board the front door ... Harry, you take the two women upstairs. Carry the molotov cocktails with you ... Soon as the door's unbarred, we can throw those things all over the place ... Make sure they catch fire good ... then the women bust down here and get in the cellar. don't forget the stretcher ... When we hear your footsteps on the stairs, me and tom'll be gone. It'll be up to you, Harry ... you've gotta watch this door ... Got yourself a good length of pipe?

HARRY

I have a pitchfork.

BEN

Good ... okay.

Tom and Ben go over to the door. The others gather fruit-jars, etc., and sneak quietly to the un-boarded room upstairs. Tom and Ben are left alone. Tom is soaking a table-leg in kerosene, ready to light it for use as a torch. They fall to work on the door ... the painstaking work of quietly undoing the barricade. They do not want to give alarm to the lurking things outside. With crowbar and claw-hammer, very carefully, both men working on each separate piece of lumber, they undo the barricade. Each nail-creak is a menace. They are alert to the constant danger.

They finish, and watch, posting themselves anxiously by the door. Shadowy figures lurk in the dark outside. Tom and Ben wait for the Molotov shower to begin ...

A cry is heard, a window flies open, the first fiery blaze light in the yard. More follow, some aimed for the creatures themselves. One of two catch fire.. the others start to back away ... the entire field is lit up ... bombs shower from upstairs.

HARRY

(Shouting, from upstairs,
slamming the door to the
room he was in)
That's all, Ben ... run for it!

His voice echoes, as Tom and Ben burst into the yard. They are armed with torches, and with the gun. They leap into the truck. Tom plunges a torch into the chest of an attacker, who immediately catches fire and goes down in a blaze, clutching the torch ...

The truck starts up, and careens, in a u-turn for the old shed. Attackers fall away as it starts out. Ben aims, fires several shots, most miss as the truck jounces toward the gas pump across the yard. But one creature goes down, at the front of the gas pump near the old shed. Tom and Ben leap out. Attackers are starting to make their way to them from across the yard. Tom fumbles with the key to the locked pump. Ben shoves him back, hurriedly aims the gun, the gun fires, blowing the lock to pieces ... Gas spurts all over the place ... creatures advance ... gas still spurting, Tom crams the nozzle into the mouth of the gas tank in the back of the truck. Ben crouches and level off with his weapon ... an approaching attacker goes down ... but more are coming on ... Tom's torch has inadvertently set fire to the doused truck ... the flames begin to lick and spread ... the attackers gather in force.. ever closer ... Tom leaps into the flaming truck, it skids and lurches across the yard ... Ben shouts, to no avail ... the flaming truck speeds away, driven by the panicked Tom ... several of the things are upon Ben ... he thrashes and pounds them with torch and gun ... ignoring Tom, he has to try and fight his way back to the house ...

From inside the house, the panicked and cowardly Harry, has seen only pieces of the action. He has been darting back and forth from door to window, trying to see what has been happening outside ... from his viewpoint, the escape attempt has met with total doom. He has seen the truck catch fire, driven away by Tom. Ben appears to be overwhelmed.

Harry runs again to the door. He sees the truck, completely in flames, speeding away from the house, toward a small rise. Back to the kitchen window ... Ben is about to be overcome ... things all around him ...

Harry does not see, as Tom jumps from the burning truck to be seized by attacking ghouls. The truck continues unmanned over the far rise ... and explodes violently.. the noise and flame shattering the night ... Several ghouls are at the front door, trying to beat their way into the house. From inside, Harry is in complete terror. He cannot hold out ... all is lost ... he panics and bolts for the cellar ...

But Ben has slugged his way through the attackers on the porch ... he is pounding for admission at the front door. He turns, and with a powerful lunge, kicks the last attacker off the porch. On the rebound, he plows his shoulder against the door. It crashes open, the lock broken, and Ben bursts through in time to catch Harry at the cellar door ... but there is no time. Ben frantically turns to re-boarding the door. His eyes meet Harry's for an instant ... then they both fall to work. They board up the door ... they are temporarily safe ... they turn and look at each other, sweat streaming from each face Harry knows what is coming.

Ben's fist crashes against Harry's face ... he is driven back, one punch following another, until Ben corners him, clenching his lapels, against the wall ... Ben's words spit out, each word punctuated by an additional slam of Harry against the wall

BEN

You ... rotten ... next..
time ... you try something ...
like that.. I'll kill you ...

Ben slams him one final time, and he slides down the wall, crumples on the floor. His face is swollen, he is streaming blood. Ben is already at the cellar door ...

BEN

(Pounding)

Come on up! it's us ... it's all
over ... Tom is dead!

Fade out.

The survivors are gathered in the living-room. Barbara and Helen are slumped on the sofa. Overwhelming mood of hopelessness and despair. Harry sulks in a corner, his head slung back, his face swollen, he is holding an ice-pack against his eye. His good eye follows Ben, who is pacing about the room, when Ben's pacing takes him to the kitchen, or to some area out of Harry's sight, the good eye nervously relaxes. Ben's movements make virtually the only sound, he is checking the defenses, by force of old habit rather than hope. The rifle is slung on his back. For a long time, we well on the scene, on the absolute dejectedness of the prisoners within the barricaded house ... Ben paces from door to kitchen to window, he starts to go upstairs, stops, checks himself, goes to the door again ... he looks at his watch ...

BEN

Ten minutes to three ... there'll
be another broadcast in ten
minutes

Nobody says anything. Ben pulls back the curtain, his eyes grow suddenly wide, but he watches for a long moment.

(We see his view of the outside)

There are many ghouls, lurking in the shadows of the hanging trees. Some of the things are in the open, much nearer to the house than they dared come before. Remains of charred bodies are dimly apparent in various parts of the lawn. But Ben's eyes are fastened on a more grisly scene at the edge of the lawn, in the moonlight, several ghouls are devouring what was once Tom They rip and tear into aspects of his body ghoulish teeth ... biting into Tom's arms and hands ... Ben stares ... fascinated ... and repulsed ...

With a convulsive movement his fingers release the curtain; he turns, shaken, and faces the others ... beads of perspiration dripping from his forehead.

BEN

Don't ... don't anyone of you
look out there... You won't like
what you see ...

Harry's good eye fastens on Ben, watches him, satisfies and contemptuous to see the big man weaken. Ben moves for the television, clicks it on. Barbara's scream pierces the room. Ben leaps back from the television She is on her feet, screaming, uncontrollably.

BARBARA

We'll never get out of here ...
none of us! ... we'll never get
out of her alive! Johneee!
Johneee! ... oh! ... oh! ...
god ... none of us ... none of
us ... help ... oh god ...
god!

Before anyone can move to her, she chokes up as suddenly as she began, and slumps, sobbing violently, to the couch. Her face buried in her hands. Helen tries to soothe her, but great sobs come wracking from deep within ... she grows gradually quiet, the sobs diminish, but she remains slumped on the couch, her face covered with her hands. Helen covers her with the overcoat but the action seems futile, Barbara makes no movement whatsoever.

Ben allows himself to sink very slowly into a chair in front of the TV. Harry's good eye goes from Barbara to Ben. His eye fastens on the gun, which Ben lowers butt first to the floor and leans across his legs. Ben threads his arm through the fringed sling, and maintains his grip on the fore-piece. Harry watches.

HELEN

(Getting up, announces)

I'm going to the cellar to take care of Karen.

(She bends over, places her hand on Barbara)

Come on honey ... come and talk to me ... it'll make you feel better

But Barbara makes no response. Helen turns and starts for the cellar door, she has to squeeze past Harry's chair. Furtively, his eye on Ben, Harry touches her and pulls her towards him. She, too, watches Ben, she knows something is up, Ben remains transfixed before the TV, he is lost in thought, his mind drifts somewhere ... There is nothing on the screen just a dull glow and low hiss over scanning lines and static. He has turned the set on too early.

HARRY

(Whispering, cautiously and quickly to Helen)

I've got to get that gun ... we can go to the cellar ... You have to help me

He has let the ice-pack come away from his eye. We see its swollen, blackened condition and the desperation in his face. Ben still gazes at the TV. Worried about the possibility that Ben might catch them in the act, and not really sympathizing with Harry, Helen pulls away, but she leans her face to Harry's and whispers quickly

HELEN

I'm not going to help you haven't you had enough ... he'd kill us both.

She goes to the cellar, and on the way has to pass behind Ben's chair, she hesitates, her eyes fall on the gun, the sling is wound around Ben's arm. We study her face, it is not clear whether she would have taken it or not. But she makes no attempt. She opens the door and goes down into the cellar. Harry's eye follows her as she leaves.

As Helen reaches the bottom of the cellar stairs, she looks up, and her face shows startlement ... a shaken smile ... her daughter is sitting up, propped on her elbows, on the workbench table.

HELEN

Karen ...

She starts for her, but stops ... there is something strange ... her face turns slowly toward her ... we see the ghoulish look in her eye ... She is DEAD. She begins to rise slowly, terrifyingly, her features grotesque ... the coat that was her blanket begins to fall away ... her eyes stare through Helen And beyond her ... slowly, agonizingly, she raises herself from the table ...

Helen, terrified, begins to back away, across the cellar, her hand falls on a knife, her child creeps toward her ... She moves a large packing crate, trying to block her path ... trying to stave the confrontation... but she is too late ... she springs. It appears as though the knife will be driven into her breast.

But, on the spring, we cut to the upstairs ... where, simultaneously, a scream pierces the room. An assault has begun, the things are beginning to break into the house. They have gotten into the den ... and are hammering at the barricaded door ... the walls are starting to come apart ...

Ben is on his feet, trying to reinforce the barricades; with hammer and crowbar, he works furiously ...

BEN

Harry! Harry! give me a hand over here!

Harry comes over, behind Ben, and instead of helping, rips the gun from Ben's back. Holding the gun on Ben, Harry backs toward the cellar. Ben turns around, panicked, the things are breaking into the house...

BEN

What are you up to man? We've got to keep those things out!

HARRY

(Backing away)

Now we'll see who's going to shoot who ... I'm going to the cellar ... and you can rot up here ... you crazy bastard ...

His hand goes behind him to the cellar door ... but at that moment the ghoulis Karen leaps upon him with great thud ... Karen is at Harry's throat. Ben is able to grab the gun ... he levels off, trying to hit the kid ... but a sudden wrench of the two struggling bodies ... and Ben misses ... Harry screams ... a great clot of blood appears at his chest ... clutching the wound, he begins to go down... he falls through the entranceway to the cellar stairs ... he reels, grabs the banister and begins to descend We see his view as he falls ... reeling ... head-first down the stairs Ben ... meantime ... has flung the kid, Karen with one heave against the wall ... but things have broken into the house Everywhere, the barricades are coming apart.

Barbara, with the hysteria of revenge, has flung herself into the attack. She smashes a chair against one of the aggressors... it goes down ... she smashes and smashes it ... on the floor ... until there is nothing left of the chair ... she comes up, still swinging, fighting with Ben against the things that have come into the house.

It is quite apparent that they cannot hold out ... The attack rages ... they are overwhelmed ... Ben grabs Barbara and pulls her after him toward the cellar ... she is lashing and swinging, beating at an attacker, even as he drags her away ...

Ben flings open the door to the cellar ... and Helen is at his throat ... he brings the gun up between their struggling bodies until the muzzle is against her throat, and squeezes the trigger she is blown halfway across the room ... Ben and Barbara run down the stairs.

But Harry is sprawled in a pool of blood on the floor He is dead ... but beginning to rise ... Ben pushed Barbara back ... she turns her head away ... Ben raises the gun and we study this as three evenly-spaced shots rip the room ... Ben is almost glad to kill Harry ... he turns to Barbara, breathing hard... she collapses against him, and begins to sob..

We hear faint pounding against the barricaded cellar door. But it is holding. The creatures cannot get in ...

The screen is black. There are the sounds of birds ... fainter sounds of dogs... human voices ... Fade up quickly sunrise The morning after the siege. The sky is clear ... the rising sun is bright and warm ... there is dew on the high grass of a meadow.

Men with dogs and guns reworking their way up from the woods that surround the meadow. We do not see the posse at first, we merely hear their sounds ... shouts ... muffled talk ... panting and straining of dogs against leashes ...

Sheriff McClelland's posse. A few men, some with German Shepherds on leashes, finally come up out of the woods and onto the edge of the sunlit, dewy meadow. The wet grass has dampened the boots and trouser-legs of the men.

McClelland is perhaps the third man up from the surrounding thicket. He is a heavy man, mustached, breathing hard because of his weight and the difficult job of leading the posse through the night. He is armed with shotgun and pistol, and a belt of ammunition strung over his shoulder. He pauses, looks back into the woods, and mops perspiration from his brow with a balled-up dirty handkerchief ...

MCCLELLAND

(Shouting back at the men
still working their way
toward the clearing)

Come on ... let's step lively
now ... never can tell what we'll
run into up here

He accosts a man just climbing out of the woods. The man wears an improvised sweat-band, carries a rifle and side-arm, and has a walkie-talkie strapped on his back.

MCCLELLAND

You keeping in touch with the
squad-cars, George?

GEORGE

(Breathing hard, adjusting
the straps and burden across
his back)

Yeah ... they know where we are.
They should be intercepting us at
the house ...

MCCLELLAND

Good ... these men is dog-
tired ... they can use some rest
and hot coffee ... (He looks
back, to the men moving up from
behind. He shouts) Let's push
along, now ... the squad cars'll
be waiting with coffee and
sandwiches at the house ...

The men push on across the field ... Inside the house, Ben and Barbara have been dozing on chairs in the basement. Ben wakes abruptly, thinking he has heard something, but he isn't sure ... He sits up and listens more closely ... from far off, there is the sound of a dog. Ben listens for a long time, but hears nothing more ...

Outside, the meadow has become the apron of a cemetery, the one Barbara and John had come to with the flowers for their father. The posse is advancing, threading its way among the grave-markers. A man finds John's skeletal remains near the spot where he had fallen. Down a dirt road, and up a short grade, is Barbara's car, with the smashed window.

MCCLELLAND

Looks like this guy's car ...
poor fellow ... never had a
chance

The men pass through the cemetery, and over the wall, where several squad cars are waiting on the road. There are also one or two motorcycle patrolmen. One of the men dismounts and hails McClelland.

PATROLMAN

Hi, Connie ... how's things
goin'?

McClelland advances and shakes hands, stops awhile, mops his brow again. The men begin to catch up and regroup. The posse fills the bend in the narrow road.

MCCLELLAND

Sure glad to see you fellas,
Charlie ... we been at it all
night ... but I don't want to
break 'til we get to the house
over there ... We might be
lollygaggin' around whole somebody
needs our help. we'll see first,
then stop and get some
coffee

PATROLMAN

Anything you say,
Connie

... Inside the house, Ben has sneaked up to the top of the cellar stairs. He listens there, very intently, not wanting to open the door because creatures may still be in the house. This time, for sure he hears gunshots ... and mumbled sound of what must be the voices of approaching men. There is even what sounds like a car engine ... Ben bolts excitedly down the stairs.

Ben wakes the girl.

BEN

Barbara ... Barb ... here,
honey ... there's men
outside ... I can hear them ...
they must be here to rescue
us ...

Outside, we see the cause of the gunshots. The posse is flushing out ghouls from the pump-house and surrounding area. The squad cars have driven up. The posse is advancing across the lawn, guardedly, toward the partially-destroyed old farmhouse. The men crouch and sneak up slowly, keeping their eyes fastened on the house.... A loud sudden noise stops them ... they watch, stopped in their tracks.

MCCLELLAND

Shoot for the eyes boys ... like
I told you before ... always aim
right for the eyes

Inside, ready to shoot or swing, Ben has slammed open the cellar door. The force of his shoulder against the door has carried him into the living-room Nothing ... Only the ramshackle and destruction form the recent siege. He edges his way through the twisted wreckage and overturned furniture toward the front door. There is no light in the place. His hand finds what is left of the curtain. He pulls it back and starts to peer out ... but ... a shot right out Ben reels, driven back ... a circle of blood on his forehead, right between his eyes

Barbara's scream is heard, from downstairs ... simultaneously, McClelland shouts, his face flushed with anger

MCCLELLAND

Damn it, what'd you shoot for? I
told you to be careful ... there
might be people in there

MAN WHO FIRED THE SHOT

Naw, this place is demolished,
there ain't nobody in there

PATROLMAN

I'm sure I heard a girl's
scream ... from the basement,
maybe

Several men have advanced to kick in the front door. They step back and peer cautiously inside. Their faces search the room ... A patch of sunlight from the opened door falls partially on Ben. He is dead. The men look down at him, but step past him toward the cellar. They do not know he was a man. From the cellar, they hear muffled sobs. McClelland enters and begins to inch his way down the stairs.

MCCLELLAND

Anybody down there?
(He shouts)

He draws his pistol, inches his way down the stairs. At the bottom, he confronts Barbara, sitting wide-eyed in a chair. McClelland raised his pistol, aims it for her head ... but something stops him ... a tear in her eye ... he lowers the weapon

MCCLELLAND

It's all right men ... come on
down ... it's just a girl down
here!

He goes to Barbara, bends over her, looks at her, begins to help her up ...

Closing scene, with titles and credits. Burning of bodies in the yard of the old house. Perhaps the burning of the house itself. In the background, against scene of McClelland draping his jacket around Barbara and bringing coffee to her lips, we see Ben's body on a stretcher, carried by two men ... they lift it into the rear of a station-wagon

MCCLELLAND

It's too bad ... an accident ...
the only loss we had, the whole
night.

Titles and Credits

(<http://home.comcast.net/~axlish/NOTLD68scriptframes.htm>)