

THEM

Written by

M. Light

OVER BLACK:

"To live is to suffer, to survive is to find some meaning in the suffering". - Friedrich Nietzsche.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - DAY

The door opens and a FARMER (52) steps out of the house, walks into the front yard and into the cornfield, the sky grizzled, shrouded in a dense fog that makes the plantation barely visible. The farmer rubs his hands together for warmth and walks down the corridor between the...

EXT. CORNFIELD - DAY

...corn rows. Suddenly, a noise from the left side alerts him, he sees the tip of the corn moving, stops to listen. Silence. The farmer prepares to move forward, when a new noise stops him.

The farmer goes through the corns on the left, moving them with his hands to make his way, stops and looks to both sides, nothing. He returns to the corridor between the corn, looks to the house. Suddenly, a person comes out from behind the farmer, who turns around, surprised. It's JULIA (29) who walks towards the house, her look expressionless, her eyes half closed, her clothes covered in blood.

FARMER

Hey!

The farmer grabs Julia by her shoulder, but she moves to let go and continues moving forward.

FARMER

Stop!

The farmer grabs Julia again, turns her around to face him, Julia's gaze doesn't change.

FARMER

Hey, wake up!

The farmer moves Julia to wake her up. Julia blinks her eyes and opens them wide.

JULIA

(screaming desperately)

Aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaah!!!

CUT TO:

TITLE: "THEM"

Black screen.

CLAIRE (V.O.)
What is the last thing you
remember?

EXT. HOSPITAL EXIT - DAY

Julia exits the hospital and walks down the sidewalk.

JULIA (V.O.)
I remember I went to the hospital
for my pregnancy checkups. I had
this feeling, you know...like
someone was watching me.

As she does so, she looks back, looks for something...

JULIA (V.O.)
I've felt that way ever since.

...someone, sees nothing, continues walking.

INT. JULIA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Julia closes the door and faces the foyer, she looks into
the living room, it's empty.

JULIA (V.O.)
When I got home my boyfriend wasn't
there. I wanted to tell him about
the checkups, that everything was
fine.

Julia walks upstairs, to her room and...

INT. JULIA'S ROOM - NIGHT

...turns on the light of the lamp on the bedside table. She
leaves her phone and keys on top of it...

JULIA
I was tired, I thought I would rest
until he arrived.

...and lies down on the bed, closes her eyes.

CUT TO:

DARKNESS

(Someone knocking on the door)

INT. JULIA'S ROOM - NIGHT

The room is pitch black.

JULIA
When I woke up I couldn't move...
no... I hadn't woken up.

Julia's body tense, her eyes slightly open.

JULIA
There was someone standing in the
doorway.

A silhouette in the doorway, Julia blinks her eyes, then...

CUT TO:

INT. JULIA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Julia opens her eyes, the room is illuminated by the lamp.

JULIA
I got up and went to the door.

New knocks are heard, Julia leaves the room and goes to...

INT. JULIA'S HOUSE ENTRANCE - NIGHT

...the entrance, where the door is open. Suddenly, an
intense light illuminates from outside...

JULIA
My boyfriend was at the door, and
this intense light, like from a car
outside.

...revealing the silhouette of a person in the doorway.

CUT TO:

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT

HARRY MASON (32), sitting in the chair, handcuffed to the
table, his expressionless gaze fixed on the ceramic floor.

From the other side of the one-way mirror, CLAIRE (36) looks
at him in concentration.

BROOKS
The suspect is Harry Mason, found
approximately 300 feet from the
survivor.

(MORE)

BROOKS (CONT'D)
 Police officers found an abandoned
 car in the middle of the road, they
 searched the area...

Officer BROOKS (39) reads the file in his hands.

CUT TO:

(FLASHBACK)

EXT. OPEN FIELD NEAR THE ROAD - DAY

The space is surrounded by a thick fog, Two policemen approach Mason, with his back turned pouring dirt into a hole in the ground with a shovel.

POLICEMAN I

Sir?

Mason does not respond, continues with the shovel.

POLICEMAN II

Sir, turn around, please.

Nothing, the policemen keep approaching Mason, they look at each other, Policeman I raises his shoulders. The policemen continue to approach, arriving next to Mason.

POLICEMAN II

Sir?

MASON

(turning around)

Someone had to clean up after them.

Looking into the hole in the ground, the policemen manage to see the face of a person partially covered with dirt.

CUT TO:

(BACK TO PRESENT)

EXT. HOT DOG CART ON THE STREET - DAY

Brooks eats a hot dog, Claire drinks coffee. People walking in the street.

CLAIRE

Them?

Brooks nods as he finishes swallowing a piece of hot dog.

BROOKS
Mason is a patient at the
psychiatric hospital. Reported
missing a year ago.

CLAIRE
Missing?

BROOKS
(raising his eyebrows)
They say he suffered from
hallucinations, a severe form of
sleep paralysis.

CLAIRE
Mmm... What kind of hallucinations?

BROOKS
You tell me, you are the
psychologist.

Claire looks down the street. Brooks finishes the hot dog.

BROOKS
That's not all.

Claire returns her gaze to Brooks.

CUT TO:

(FLASHBACK)

EXT. OPEN FIELD NEAR THE ROAD - DAY

A forensic expert cleans the face buried in the ground.
Police officers walk on the site that has been sealed with
police tape, other forensic experts clean other places near
the face.

BROOKS (V.O.)
So far they have found parts of
more than 50 different people,
including bones of babies.

An aerial view allows to see hands, legs and torsos buried
in the ground.

(END OF FLASHBACK)

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL DELIVERY ROOM - DAY

The doctor picks up the baby and slaps him, the baby starts to cry. (no audio).

JULIA (V.O.)
I wish you could have been there to
see this. Our daughter.

Julia looks at the baby, smiling, exhausted on the birthing bed. (no audio).

CUT TO:

INT. CLAIRE'S OFFICE - DAY

Julia faces Claire , who's taking notes, both in the center of the white-walled, large-windowed office.

JULIA
I still can't remember his name,
his face....

CLAIRE
What can you remember?

Julia looks away.

INSERT: Image of Julia's arms caressing her boyfriend's arms, both framed in a golden light.

JULIA (V.O.)
His smell, his skin. His hands.

END OF INSERT.

Julia brings her hand to her forehead, looks disturbed.

CLAIRE
These things take time, Julia. You
have been through a lot.

JULIA
I wish I could remember...

CLAIRE
You will. I promise.

Julia gets up from her chair, walks to the window and looks down to the cars cruising the streets below. Then she turns to Claire.

JULIA
I think I'm ready.

CLAIRE
I understand, but let's take it
easy. We'll start next week, ok?

Julia nods.

EXT. OUTSIDE JULIA'S HOUSE - DAY

Julia parks the car in the driveway and gets out, carrying LISA (0) in her arms. As she walks to the door, she notices a woman watching her from the neighboring house.

NEIGHBOR
Excuse me.

The woman approaches Julia.

NEIGHBOR
It's you, isn't it? I saw you on
TV.

JULIA
(distant)
I guess it is me.

NEIGHBOR
I didn't know whether to approach
you, it's so terrible what happened
to you.

JULIA
It's ok.

Julia smiles faintly.

NEIGHBOR
I hope that bastard rots in jail
for what he did.

JULIA
That's the idea.

There is an awkward silence between the two. Lisa starts moaning.

JULIA
We'd better go inside.

NEIGHBOR
If you need anything...

Julia approaches the Neighbor again.

JULIA

This may sound strange...my
boyfriend...they say it's because
of the trauma. I can't remember his
name.

NEIGHBOR

Oh... no, I'm sorry, I had only
seen you.

JULIA

Don't worry.

NEIGHBOR

Maybe your family...

JULIA

(interrupting)

No... we haven't spoken in...
excuse me, thank you.

Julia waves goodbye and enters the house.

INT. JULIA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Julia sits on the couch with Lisa on her arms...

JULIA

Here you go, beautiful.

...feeding her milk from the bottle. The reporter on the TV
comments on Harry Mason's case.

REPORTER

... the police have not yet been
able to prove, beyond a reasonable
doubt, Harry Mason's culpability.

Julia looks at the TV.

REPORTER

How could he cut up the bodies with
what has been described as surgical
skill? where did he do it? are some
of the questions that...

Angry, Julia turns off the TV.

INT. CLAIRE'S OFFICE - DAY

Julia enters the office, Claire greets her at the entrance.

CLAIRE

Hi Julia, how have you been?

They both walk to the armchairs in the center of the office.

JULIA
(sitting down)
Good... I've been better.

Claire nods as she sits across from Julia.

CLAIRE
As I explained before, when
experiencing a traumatic event,
it's possible for a person to
produce what are known as false
memories.

JULIA
And you think what I remember...

CLAIRE
Exactly, that's why I feel hypnosis
can help us unlock the real ones.

JULIA
I just want to help get that
bastard convicted.

CLAIRE
That' s why we are here.

Claire gets up from her seat, approaches Julia.

CLAIRE
I'm going to ask you to relax, find
a comfortable position on the seat.

Julia settles into the armchair, Claire stops in front of
her and raises her index finger.

CLAIRE
Now, please keep your attention on
the tip of my finger.

Julia fixes her eyes on Claire's finger.

CLAIRE
You'll start to feel tired, your
eyes will slowly close and...

CUT TO BLACK:

DARKNESS

CLAIRE
...you are asleep.

The darkness persists, little by little a faint noise is heard, closer and closer, they're the screams of a woman, the screams are heard louder and louder until...

INT. CLAIRE'S OFFICE - DAY

The screaming stops, Julia opens her eyes, touches her face, tears have fallen from her eyes. Claire is in front of her, paralyzed.

JULIA
Claire?

Claire doesn't answer.

JULIA
Claire, what happened?

Suddenly, Claire's assistant enters the office, carrying Lisa, she approaches the TV.

ASSISTANT
You need to see this.

The assistant turns on the TV. The image shows the police outside of jail, the graphics read "Harry Mason has disappeared from prison".

JULIA
What!?

Brooks enters the office.

BROOKS
Excuse me Julia, I have orders to escort you home.

Brooks takes Julia by the arm, helps her up.

JULIA
Claire, tell me...

CLAIRE
I'm sorry Julia, I... I can't...

The assistant delivers Lisa to Julia. Brooks escorts them out of the office.

EXT. OUTSIDE JULIA'S HOUSE

The beacons of the police cars illuminate the street. They stop outside Julia's house. Julia gets out along with Brooks and a senior officer.

SENIOR OFFICER

We'll keep a patrol car out all night and Officer Brooks will be staying with you, you'll be safe.

The neighbor appears from the next house.

NEIGHBOR

Julia, is everything ok?

Julia nods as she and Brooks enter the house.

INT. JULIA'S HOME OFFICE - NIGHT

Brooks checks the names of the books on the shelves while Julia lulls Lisa to sleep in her arms.

JULIA

Rest, beautiful.

BROOKS

So many books, are you a writer?

JULIA

Editor, actually. Mostly fantasy books.

Brooks nods and continues to look through the books, stopping at a visibly worn one, the title is "The terror that comes in the night".

BROOKS

I know this book, it's about sleep paralysis, right?

JULIA

(nodding)

I've had it since high school.

BROOKS

Odd, maybe that's why...

Brooks is interrupted by Julia's phone ringing.

JULIA

Can you?

Julia hands Lisa to Brooks, picks up the phone and answers.

CLAIRE

Julia...

JULIA

Claire, what the hell happened?

CLAIRE
I' m sorry, I needed a little time
to process.

JULIA
Process what?

CLAIRE
Listen, do you have a computer
nearby?

Julia looks up, Brooks fiddles with Lisa.

BROOKS
We'll be outside.

Brooks leaves the room, Julia opens the laptop on the desk,
enters Claire's video call.

CLAIRE
What you hear may disturb you, but
remember that I am here and that
it's very important that you listen
to this.

JULIA
I want to know what happened to my
boyfriend, Claire.

Claire nods and closes her eyes as she does so. She presses
play on the audio player.

(recording of the hypnosis session start)

CLAIRE
You'll start to feel tired, your
eyes will slowly close and...
you're asleep.

Silence... noise of recording device.

CLAIRE
Okay Julia, I want you to remember
what you were doing on November 9.

JULIA
Mmm... I remember coming home in
the afternoon, I was tired.

CLAIRE
You came from the hospital, right?

JULIA
Hospital... no.

CLAIRE
You didn't go to the hospital?

JULIA
(nervous voice)
No... wait... there's someone in
the house.

CLAIRE
What do you see Julia, tell me.

JULIA
(Fear intensifies)
Why... I don't want to be here.

CLAIRE
Julia...

JULIA
At the door, wants to come in...

CLAIRE
Who wants to come in? Julia I need
you to tell me...

JULIA
The light, I can't see... there's
someone in the light....

CLAIRE
Is he your boyfriend? Julia can you
see his...

Julia starts screaming in desperation! the screams getting
louder and louder!

CLAIRE
Listen to my voice Julia!

JULIA
One, two, three, four... where are
you taking me!?

CLAIRE
Julia, wake up!

JULIA
(crying desperately)
What did they do to my baby... no,
please, no... not again.

CLAIRE
Julia, Julia!

The screaming stops. The recording stops. Julia covers her mouth with her hand, frightened. On the screen, Claire sighs.

CLAIRE
Julia, listen...

Claire's voice is interrupted by a power outage, the video call interrupted. Julia in complete darkness.

JULIA
What...

Brooks appears in the doorway.

BROOKS
The baby is in her cradle, stay
here until I get back.

Brooks walks away from the door. Silence, Julia keeps her eyes open in the middle of darkness. Suddenly, Brook's scream is heard, banging coming from the living room. The noise stops, silence again.

JULIA
Damn it.

Julia walks carefully to the door and exits the room to the...

INT. HALLWAY TO THE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

...hallway, continues walking until reaching the living room, on the floor she finds Brooks, leaning against the wall with both hands on his neck, blood gushing from it.

JULIA
Brooks! Brooks, hang on!

Julia tries to put her hands on Brooks' throat, but he stops moving. Suddenly, Lisa starts crying, Julia leaves Brooks and runs to the stairs and to Lisa's room, where...

INT. LISA'S ROOM - NIGHT

She finds her awake in the crib. Julia approaches the baby to take her in her arms, but then, someone puts a hood over her head.

CUT TO:

EXT. OPEN FIELD NEAR THE ROAD - NIGHT

Julia's hood is removed, it's Mason, who drags her out of the car with her hands tied up, cutting the police tape as he drags her into the open field with the holes where the police found the bodies.

JULIA
(struggling)
Let me go!

Mason doesn't respond, his gaze, expressionless. He throws Julia to the ground when hearing Lisa crying inside the car. He returns to the car, turning his back to Julia.

JULIA
What are you going to do? you
bastard!

Mason almost reaches the car, Julia manages to get up from the ground and runs towards Mason, she rams him with her whole body, pushing him against the car. Mason hits his head on the door frame and falls to the ground. Julia looks inside the car and sees Lisa in the passenger seat.

JULIA
My baby...

Mason moves semi-conscious on the floor. Julia gets down on the ground and runs her bound hands between her legs, from her back and forward, succeeds.

She tries to open the car door, but Mason grabs her by the hair and pushes her back. Julia falls between the holes in the ground. Mason lunges at her and tries to choke her, but Julia hits him in the crotch.

Julia coughs and catches her breath, picks up a rock. Mason tries to get up, but Julia hits him in the head, the rock splits on impact.

Enraged, Julia climbs on top of Mason and starts choking him. Mason tries to move away but Julia pushes him to the ground, still squeezing his neck.

JULIA
Why? why did you kill him!?

INSERT: Image of Julia's arms caressing her boyfriend's arms, both framed in a golden light. END OF INSERT.

Mason begins to lose strength in his arms, his movements becoming slower and slower.

INSERT: Image of Julia's arms caressing her boyfriend's arms, both framed in a golden light. END OF INSERT.

Julia shakes her head, disoriented.

INSERT: Image of Julia's arms caressing her boyfriend's arms, both framed in a golden light. She manages to see her boyfriend's face in the light, it's Mason, he has sex with Julia, his gaze lost. END OF INSERT.

Julia stops, she looks at Mason, who is staring at her with a bleeding forehead.

MASON

You... I know you.

Julia lets go of Mason's neck and gets up from the floor, confused.

JULIA

What...

Mason breathes a sigh of relief and then coughs, getting up with difficulty. His forehead is bleeding.

JULIA

I don't understand...

MASON

Listen, you have to go now. Take the car...

JULIA

What?

MASON

They are going to take us away, you have to go now!

Suddenly, Mason's body tenses completely, with sudden movements he points his face to the sky. Then, an intense light from the sky illuminates the whole place, it almost seems like daytime.

Julia looks up, but can see nothing but light. Lisa starts crying again, Julia runs desperately to the car, she has a hard time opening the door but manages to do so, she gets into the...

INT. MASON'S CAR - NIGHT

...car, starts the engine and presses the accelerator, holding the steering wheel with both hands tied.

JULIA
 (nervous)
 We're going to be fine, beautiful.

Lisa continues crying, the car speeds along the road, however, a few feet further, the engine stops, the car continues to move forward before stopping.

JULIA
 No... no, no, no!

And then, ahead of the car, the intense light appears again, enveloping the whole place. Julia stares into the light, paralyzed. From there, dark silhouettes appear, they walk towards the car.

Julia screams but no voice comes out of her. She looks at Lisa, sees one of the silhouettes next to the passenger door window...

JULIA
 Noooo!

Julia covers Lisa with her body and closes her eyes tightly.

CUT TO:

INT. VAST SQUARE SPACE - ???

When Julia opens her eyes, she is on the floor of an empty place, the walls radiate light, the place looks like a giant cube. She has her hands untied and is holding Lisa, who is sleeping silently.

Then, one of the dark silhouettes approaches and, without Julia being able to resist, takes Lisa out of her hands. The shadow holds Lisa by the legs, as a doctor would.

JULIA
 (unable to stand)
 What are you doing to my baby?

The shadow watches Lisa a little longer and then returns her to Julia's hands.

SHADOW FIGURE
 (distorted voice)
 Failure.

The dark figure puts his long-fingered hand on Lisa's head, she explodes and disintegrates in Julia's arms, staining her with blood. Pieces of her flesh fall on the floor. Julia stands still, shocked.

The dark figure moves away from Julia and approaches other silhouettes that are watching.

JULIA
(sobbing)
Why...

SHADOW FIGURE
(distorted voice)
Ashes and blood, things.

JULIA
(sobbing)
No...

SHADOW FIGURE
(distorted voice)
Repeat experiment.

Julia feels her body tense completely as she stretches out forcibly on the floor. She sees Mason standing next to the shadowy silhouettes, one of those figures injects something into Mason's neck. Julia closes her eyes.

CUT TO:

INT. VAST SQUARE SPACE - ???

Julia opens her eyes, a tear rolls down her cheek. Still paralyzed and with Mason on top of her, raping her with a blank, lifeless stare. She closes her eyes once again.

CUT TO:

I/E VAST SQUARE SPACE AND BEYOND - ???

Julia opens her eyes, walking disoriented through the vast space bathed in light. However, the light begins to fade until it disappears, revealing the cornfield around her. Julia walks through the rows of corn and manages to emerge into a corridor between the cornfields, ahead she can see a farmhouse.

FADE TO BLACK.