

ZARAH

Written by

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FADE IN.

EXT. PLAYGROUND, 1995 - DAY

OVERCAST SKIES. The WIND swirls dead leaves around the feet of CHILDREN as they run about the PLAYGROUND. Swinging. Going down slides. Playing tag.

One child sits away from all the others.

This is YOUNG SARAH (almost 6). Her tacky clothes are stained, her hair matted. She's the kind of kid the others kids ignore.

A BOX OF CRAYONS with several of the crayons missing sits beside her. She lazily colors.

THE STATIC OF A VIDEO TAPE CAN BE HEARD.

MAN (V.O.)

(on tape)

Do you have a lot of friends?

YOUNG SARAH

(on tape)

Just one.

MAN

(on tape)

What is their name? Are they in your class?

YOUNG SARAH

(on tape)

Sarah. She doesn't go to school.

AN OLD DOLL with a neutral expression sits across from her. The friend.

CLICK. END STATIC.

Sarah reaches for another crayon and when she turns back, the PICTURE she was drawing is covered with SLIMY DISGUSTING WORMS.

Sarah SCREAMS, scrambling backwards and knocking over her crayon box.

A GROUP OF YOUNG BOYS laugh at her. One has a MUDDY BUCKET. Obviously the culprits of the prank.

Sarah glares at them.

One LITTLE BOY looks at her, sympathetic. The BELL rings. He and the other kids shuffle back into a SMALL BRICK SCHOOL.

Sarah picks up The Doll, cradling it to her belly. Hugs it tight.

She watches the kids file one by one into the school, obviously uneasy. Or scared. Hesitates a LONG moment before following.

She leaves the soiled drawing behind.

ON THE PICTURE: Worms crawls across a child's crude drawing of the school. Stick figures wearing the clothes of the pranksters are standing in the window.

The school is on fire.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

PHOTOS OF CHILDREN decorate a beautifully-made ALTER. MEN AND WOMEN, dressed in funeral attire, hold CANDLES.

As we stare at the arrangement, a man's voice can be heard.

MAN #2 (V.O.)

Today, we remember those we lost in
the fire at Greenflower Elementary
School exactly 20 years ago.

A PRIEST stands beside the alter, presiding over a large bible. He is the man speaking.

PRIEST

Ours is a wonderful community. We
have, each of us, done our part to
try to mend this wound that has
left an indelible scar on all of
us. Let us take this time today to
remember those we have lost-

A DOOR at the back of the church CRACKS open, distracting the priest from his service.

All eyes turn to the back of the church.

A young woman emerges. This is SARAH MONTGOMERY (now in her mid-20s). Too thin, with pale features and dark circles that make her eyes seem almost disconnected from the rest of her face.

She scans the crowd, her gaze landing on no one in particular. She takes careful steps to an EMPTY pew towards the back and sits down.

The priest stares at her for another few moments before coughing, scanning his LARGE BIBLE.

Slowly, people turn back around in their pews. The service continues.

INT. DISPLAY ROOM - DAY

In place of a casket, there are FLOWERS and TOYS beside yet more PHOTOS of the kids. Some we recognize as the pranksters.

The little boy is there as well.

Men and women talk amongst themselves.

Sarah sits alone.

She pulls a BOTTLE OF PILLS out of her purse, unscrews the cap, pops two or three PILLS in her mouth. She struggles to swallow them, but manages.

OFFICER BILL IRVIN (late 50s), a veteran cop who embodies the phrase 'protect and serve', approaches her. From Sarah's look of surprise, we realize he is the first to do so.

OFFICER IRVIN

Sarah Montgomery. You look a little different from the last time I saw you, but I'd know those eyes anywhere.

Sarah manages a smile.

SARAH

Officer Irvin. I was hoping you'd be here.

OFFICER IRVIN

How you holding?

Sarah nods over to a a few COUPLES stealing glances at her. None of them friendly.

SARAH

They're all thinking that it should be their child sitting here. Not the daughter of the town crack-whore.

OFFICER IRVIN
You don't know that. It's hard on
them, sure. All of those kids
should be here.

He nudges her shoulder.

OFFICER IRVIN (CONT'D)
It's a miracle you're still here,
Sarah.

SARAH
I wish I could apologize.

OFFICER IRVIN
For being in the right place at the
right time? Sarah-

SARAH
For coming back here. Those
families don't need any more
reminders of how old their kids
would have been, what they could
have been doing with their lives.

Sarah breathes in too fast.

OFFICER IRVIN
I think the ceremony's over. Why
don't I take you home?

Sarah nods. Officer Irvin wraps an arm around her and leads
her out the back door.

The unfriendly stares follow them out.

EXT. SARAH'S HOUSE - DAY

Officer Irvin's police car pulls up to a SMALL BUNGALOW, the
front door slightly off its hinges.

Sarah steps out of the car and starts up the curved STEPS
that lead to the house. Officer Irvin rolls down his window
and catches her attention.

OFFICER IRVIN
Don't run off quite yet. I've got
something for ya.

EXT. SARAH'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Officer Irvin rifles through the trunk of his car and pulls out a CARDBOARD BOX, covered in dust and what looks like paint drippings. A box you might expect to find buried in a basement.

He hands the box to Sarah.

OFFICER IRVIN

Just some stuff I found in your mom's house after your grandma came and took you. Never did get a forwarding address. Thought you might want it.

Sarah opens the lid of the box and smiles warmly at what she sees. She pulls out...

The Doll.

We see Sarah's reflection in its eyes.

SARAH

Zarah. Wow, I completely forgot about her.

Officer Irvin nods.

OFFICER IRVIN

You never went anywhere without that doll, if I'm remembering right.

SARAH

I thought I lost her in the fire.

She stares at The Doll, perplexed. But happy.

SARAH (CONT'D)

She was my first and only real friend.

She looks at Officer Irvin and we sense she may have just made a new one.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Thank you.

OFFICER IRVIN

Have a good one, Miss Sarah.

INT. SARAH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sarah is asleep, curled up on a BARE MATTRESS, a SLEEPING BAG pushed to the side. CLOTHES are scattered here and there, along with TRASH.

The Doll is propped upright on the floor beside her. The box of her old things nearby.

MAN (V.O.)
 (on tape)
*Can you remember what you heard?
 Just before the fire started.*

We hear Young Sarah's breathing. It's unclear if she's crying.

MAN (V.O.)
 (on tape)
I know this is hard. You're doing great.

Sarah tosses and turns in her sleep. Her forehead wrinkles. Sweating. Breathing uneven like the little girl's on the tape.

PRE-LAP: THE CRACKLING OF A FIRE

INT. DARK ROOM - DAY

ORANGE LIGHT illuminates the face of The Doll in the darkness. The crackling of the flames grows louder.

FIRE slowly engulfs The Doll.

We hear muffled, panicked voices. Distant, as though from another room.

WOMAN
 (coughing)
 Yes, we're at Greenflower
 Elementary on Morely Ave. There's a
 fire and we're trapped. Oh God. Oh
 God, please hurry! I've got
 children in here with me!

INT. SARAH'S ROOM - EARLY MORNING

Sarah's eyes shoot open.

She sits up slowly.

LIGHT filters through a SMALL WINDOW nearby. The sky is a mid-tone shade of blue. The sun not yet up.

Sarah looks at The Doll.

It seems to look back at her.

INT. SARAH'S KITCHEN - MORNING

COFFEE pours into a STAINED MUG.

The kitchen is old, but usable. Some missing cabinets. A leaky faucet.

Sarah twirls a spoon in her drink and leans against the counter. Lost in thought.

She goes to take a sip of her coffee but stops. Listens.

WHISPERING. A voice.

Sarah sets her cup down and follows the whispering out of the kitchen...

INT. HALLWAY -- MORNING

...and into the hallway.

The door to her bedroom is cracked open slightly. The whispering continues.

Sarah inches forward, frowning.

SARAH

Hello?

She puts her palm on the door and peeks into the room.

The Doll can just be seen. Whoever is whispering is obscured by the door.

The whispering stops.

AN EMACIATED WHITE HAND reaches out and grabs The Doll.

Sarah swings open the door, gasping.

No one there.

The Doll sits. Unmoved.

MAN
 (on tape)
 Was anyone with you?

YOUNG SARAH
 (on tape)
 Zarah.

MAN
 (on tape)
 Your doll?

YOUNG SARAH
 (on tape)
 Uh-huh. She told me to hide, or
 else I was gonna get hurt.

MAN
 (on tape)
 She tells you things?

YOUNG SARAH
 (on tape)
 Sometimes.

Sarah looks around the room, shaken.

INT. THERAPIST'S OFFICE - DAY

GOLD LETTERS are bolted onto a LARGE WOODEN DOOR.

They read: JANET GREY, PH.D. -- LICENSED THERAPIST

Sarah sits in an old RECLINER. Head bent, hair an utter mess.
 Taking deep breathes.

Sarah's therapist, DR. GREY (woman, early 50s), watches her.
 Pointed face. Thin-rimmed glasses. Blazer. She writes a few
 things down in her NOTEBOOK, then fold her hands in front of
 her.

DR. GREY
 You said you're here because you're
 having nightmares?

Sarah's voice is barely above a whisper.

SARAH
 Yes. Something like that.

DR. GREY
 When did these start?

SARAH

Ever since I came back. I would get them occasionally before, but not like this. Not every night.

Dr. Grey writes a few lines in her notebook.

DR. GREY

So about two months, yes?

Sarah nods.

DR. GREY (CONT'D)

These nightmares. Are they about the fire?

Sarah nods again.

SARAH

They've been getting worse.

INT. SARAH'S ROOM - NIGHT

Sarah wakes with a start. She stares up at the ceiling for a long moment, paralyzed. Eyes wide.

She turns over.

SCREAMS.

The Doll hasn't moved.

But the box it came in has been overturned. A mess.

Broken kids' crafts. Ripped up drawings. Bits of stuffed animals.

Scattered everywhere.

DR. GREY (V.O.)

Worse how?

Sarah gets up from bed and quickly throws everything back into the box. The Doll goes in last. She seals it shut.

Slides the box into the darkest corner of her closet.

INT. THERAPIST'S OFFICE - DAY

Sarah looks up at her therapist, eyes stinging with tears. Afraid.

SARAH
 (whispered)
 I feel like I'm being haunted.

EXT. SCHOOL GROUNDS - DAY

Sarah walks quickly down the sidewalk, arms across her chest, face to the ground.

Out of the corner of her eye, she sees:

THE BURNT REMAINS OF THE SCHOOL.

She stops. Sarah's eyes take in everything. The broken windows. The charred bricks.

A PLAQUE MEMORIAL sits in front of the building, listing the names of those lost in the fire. Sarah brushes her hand over them.

WIND BLOWS across her face, causing her to look up.

In the window: THE GHOST OF THE LITTLE BOY watches her. Ashy skin. White pupils.

Sarah closes her eyes.

SARAH
 You aren't real. You aren't real.

It works. When she opens her eyes again, the little boy is no longer there.

A sigh of relief.

Sarah keeps walking, only to collide with an ELDERLY WOMAN carrying some BAGS. The CONTENTS of which spill everywhere.

SARAH (CONT'D)
 Oh my God, I'm so sorry. Let me help.

She picks up some GROCERIES, placing them back into the bags. Her hand lands on a ROSE. She hesitates, looking up.

ELDERLY WOMAN
 It's quite alright, dear. Happens to the best of us.

The woman meets Sarah's eyes and frowns. Obviously recognizing her.

Sarah braces for the worst.

ELDERLY WOMAN (CONT'D)
Sarah Montgomery. Is that you?

Sarah nods, still on guard.

ELDERLY WOMAN (CONT'D)
I don't expect you to remember me.
Carol Newman. My son Will went to
school with you.

SARAH
Oh. Oh, I'm so sorry.

Ms. Newman picks up the rose, smiling sadly. She stands up with her things and takes another minute to compose herself.

MS. NEWMAN
Dear, would you help me carry these
things back to my house? If you
have the time, of course.

Sarah nods.

INT. NEWMAN'S HOUSE - DAY

Sarah sits with good posture on an uncomfortable looking COUCH, hands folded in front of her.

Ms. Newman's house is a trinket-collector's dream. Almost everything in it is an ugly shade of pink, or else made of plaster.

Pictures of WILL NEWMAN (5) adorn the mantle. The little boy from the playground. The ghost in the window.

Sarah examines the pictures from afar.

Ms. Newman talks to her from the kitchen.

MS. NEWMAN (O.S.)
So, what brought you back to
Greenflower?

SARAH
Oh, uh. I came back for the
memorial, initially. But then a
teaching job opened up at the
school here, so...

Ms. Newman walks into the living room, carrying TWO CUPS OF TEA. She hands one to Sarah.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Thank you.

MS. NEWMAN

It must have been hard to come back here after all this time, after what happened.

SARAH

Oh, um. My memories of the fire are all a blur. I was little.

MS. NEWMAN

Thank God for that.

They both sip their tea.

MS. NEWMAN (CONT'D)

Would you do something else for me, dear?

Sarah nods.

MS. NEWMAN (CONT'D)

There's a photo album up in Will's room. On the desk. Would you bring it down for me?

Sarah looks up the STAIRS, frowning. She hesitates a moment before nodding again.

SARAH

Which room is his?

INT. WILL NEWMAN'S ROOM - DAY

Sarah closes the door behind her, eyes surveying the small space. STUFFED DINOSAURS and ROCKET SHIPS line the walls. Everything is clean, well-preserved. Untouched.

Just below an old mirror on one wall is THE DESK. Covered in sympathy CARDS, service PAMPHLETS, PICTURES of Will.

Sarah picks up the only BOOK on the desk. Its cover reads: GREENFLOWER ELEMENTARY, 1994.

She cracks open the stiff pages, flipping through them. There's pictures of class field trips, plays, art shows.

Sarah smiles at the innocence of it all. Flips the page again. Stops.

A class photo. The kids all lined up. Will is in front. Sarah towards the back.

She's holding The Doll.

YOUNG SARAH
(on tape)
Please don't be mad at me.

MAN
(on tape)
No one's mad at you, Sarah. You can
tell me the truth.

Sarah examines the image curiously. Something about it unsettles her.

WIND RUSTLES THE PAPER. Even though we're inside.

Sarah looks up into the mirror. Behind her reflection...

THE BURNT FACE OF A CHILD STARES BACK AT HER.

Sarah's whole face contorts in terror. She drops the yearbook.

SARAH
You're not real. You can't be real.

She turns around. Recoils.

Standing only feet from her is Will's ghost. The blisters and charred skin are gone. He is easily recognizable now, but the warmth of life has left him.

Glazed white eyes. Cold-looking skin. As dead as dead can be.

Sarah struggles to breath.

SARAH (CONT'D)
What do you want?

INT. NEWMAN'S HOUSE - DAY

Sarah rushes down the stairs, much to the surprise of the waiting Ms. Newman.

MS. NEWMAN
Are you alright, dear?

Sarah shoves the yearbook into the older woman's hands.

SARAH

Here. I have to go.

She's out the door before Ms. Newman has a chance to reply.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

POLICE OFFICERS rush around the station, taking calls, reviewing case work FILES, escorting SUSPECTS in handcuffs.

We see the door to a private office. A sign outside it reads:
OFFICER BRUCE IRVIN

INT. OFFICER IRVIN'S OFFICE - DAY

OFFICER IRVIN'S OFFICE is cramped, and the dated wood paneling only adds to the claustrophobia. Sarah sits in a CHAIR that's surrounded by MANILA FOLDERS.

Officer Irvin enters, looks surprised to see her.

OFFICER IRVIN

Miss Sarah? What brings you here?

SARAH

I want you to give me all the information you have about the fire.

Officer Irvin's expression gives nothing away. He circles Sarah and takes a seat at his desk.

OFFICER IRVIN

To what purpose?

Sarah and him stare at each other for several moments. She seems to consider telling him the truth.

SARAH

Closure. There's something about what happened that day that I'm missing.

OFFICER IRVIN

Missing? What's there to miss?

SARAH

How I survived. I don't remember.

Officer Irvin examines her for a long moment.

OFFICER IRVIN
I'm gonna give Dr. Grey a call.
Have you talk to her about this.

Sarah shakes her head.

OFFICER IRVIN (CONT'D)
Look. I know this must be stressful
for you, but that's why I don't
want to risk upsetting you further.
(pause)
At least not until I have a mental
health professional weigh in on
this.
(pause)
Set up an appointment with Dr. Grey
and we'll go from there.

Sarah takes a deep breath, disappointed. But not surprised.

There is a knock on the door.

OFFICER IRVIN (CONT'D)
Yeah?

A SECRETARY enters the room.

SECRETARY
Bruce, the witness in the Walters
case is here.

Officer Irvin casts a glance at Sarah.

OFFICER IRVIN
Would you excuse me for a moment?

He follows the secretary out, leaving Sarah alone in the
room.

Sarah watches his back for a few moments to make sure he's
distracted before rounding the officer's desk.

She opens DRAWERS, fingers dancing across the endless
FOLDERS. Glances up every now and then to make sure no one
sees her.

One drawer. Two drawers. Three. Nothing. Sarah sits in the
officer's chair, exasperated.

Then she sees it: A LARGE BOX under the desk. It reads:
GREENFLOWER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL -- FIRE.

Sarah bends down, takes off the lid. Rifles through what's
inside. More files. Bags of charred EVIDENCE. PHOTOS. Then--

A SERIES OF TAPES.

She picks one up. It reads: Sarah Montgomery, age 5. November 15th, 1995. Tape one.

Sarah smiles. She pockets the tape.

Tapes two, three, and four are also littered about the box. She pockets those as well.

She replaces the top of the box and scoots it back under the desk. She glances out the door again. No one has noticed a thing.

Sarah passes by Officer Irvin on her way out of the station. They nod goodbye to each other.

EXT. SCHOOL GROUNDS - NIGHT

Sarah stands just outside the entrance of her old school, looking small in its shadow. A low, ominous groan can be heard coming from its walls as the wind picks up.

She slides the first tape into the player and hits play. At first, only static is heard. Then the rustling of chairs.

MAN

(on tape)

Hello, Sarah. My name is Officer Irvin.

YOUNG SARAH

(on tape)

Hello.

OFFICER IRVIN

(on tape)

If you don't mind, I'm just gonna ask you a few questions.

Sarah swallows and clicks on her FLASHLIGHT. She walks up the steps towards the front entrance of the building. Stepping over debris.

INT. SCHOOL RUINS - MINUTES LATER

We catch glimpses of Sarah as she walks through the wreckage of the school. Something is watching her.

The recorded voices of Officer Irvin and Young Sarah drift through the eerie halls. Barely indistinguishable from the static. We can't make out their words.

INT. SCHOOL RUINS - SAME TIME

Sarah makes her way into an old CLASSROOM. The desks are rotting away. Pieces of the chalkboard have crumbled into a pile on the ground.

A gaping HOLE, where once there was a window, lets in moonlight.

Sarah stands in front of the hole, gazing outside to the dilapidated PLAYGROUND.

OFFICER IRVIN

(on tape)

The bell rang. You went inside with your classmates?

The transparent form of Young Sarah materializes on the playground. A vision. A memory.

YOUNG SARAH

(on tape)

No. Zarah and I wanted to play some more.

The vision of Young Sarah starts walking towards the school before she stops. After a moment, she runs off and disappears.

Sarah lets out an intense sigh of relief. The mystery is solved. She's about to press the 'stop' button when-

YOUNG SARAH (CONT'D)

(on tape)

But...Ms. Kinning found us.

Sarah frowns, and watches as the transparent form of a YOUNG TEACHER finds Young Sarah. We hear the teacher scold her.

YOUNG SARAH (CONT'D)

She was so mad...

SLAP! The vision of the teacher hits Young Sarah across the cheek.

YOUNG SARAH (CONT'D)

(on tape)

And she took Zarah...

Sure enough, the vision of the teacher wrestles The Doll away from a crying Young Sarah. She puts the Doll into her CARE BAG then carts the child away.

The vision fades.

CLICK. The tape ends.

Sarah puts in the next one, hits 'play'.

Nothing. The button's jammed. Sarah hits it a few more times before giving up and pocketing the player.

INT. SCHOOL RUINS - MOMENTS LATER

As Sarah moves through the hallways, the walls and floor begin to turn black with ASH. Step by step, she's closer to the source of the fire.

An empty doorway leads into another classroom. This one burnt inside out.

Sarah hesitates outside. Deciding. She knows which room this is.

After an excruciatingly long moment, she goes inside.

As she enters the room, the light catches the rubble just right.

Humanoid forms appear. Children.

Sitting at their desks, staring straight ahead into the nothingness. Eyes glazed over. Frozen and unmoving.

We recognize Will Newman among them.

Sarah backpedals in horror and trips over a bit of rubble. Her heart is thumping loudly. BUM-PA-BUM-PA-BUM-PA-BUM-PA...

SARAH
(screams)
What do you want from me?! Just
tell me!

All at once, like a macabre puppet show, the dead children TURN TO LOOK AT HER.

Sarah sobs. Paralyzed by fear.

The child closest to her stands. Points behind her.

Sarah shakes her head. Can't make herself turn around.

She scramble-crawls towards the doorway. Almost there. When all of a sudden, her hand hits on something. She freezes.

Sarah picks up the object. It's the charred remains of Ms. Kinning's care bag. The one that held The Doll.

She reaches inside and pulls out a completely blackened carton of cigarettes. It's just recognizable as what it is before the whole thing disintegrates in her hand.

Sarah looks up. The children have gone.

She drops the care bag and struggles to her feet. Inches back towards the door, cautious.

A chilling wind blows past her in the direction the child was pointing. Sarah shivers violently. This cold goes straight to her bones.

She pivots slowly, forcing her eyes to look behind her.

Complete darkness.

The outline of a doorway. An old janitor's closet.

Something rustling inside its depths.

Sarah swallows, turns.

THE DEAD CHILDREN ARE STANDING RIGHT BEHIND HER.

One steps closer and pushes Sarah into the inky blackness.

INT. JANITOR'S CLOSET - NIGHT

Sarah hits the ground hard. The tape player falls from her pocket. It skids across the floor before coming to a stop.

CLICK.

The tape starts playing.

MAN

(on tape)

Can you remember what you heard?

Just before the fire started.

(pause)

I know this is hard. You're doing great.

Sarah lifts her head. A gash on her forehead is bleeding. She squints as her eyes struggle to adjust to the darkness.

The rustling continues. Louder this time.

SARAH

Who are you?

She grabs her flashlight and swings it around wildly.

The light lands on a PALE, SMOOTH FACE.

The Doll.

Laying abandoned in the middle of the floor.

Enraged, Sarah grabs it. Her grip unyielding, as though she were trying to cause it pain.

SARAH (CONT'D)
It's you, isn't it? Whatever you
are! You killed them, didn't you?
DIDN'T YOU?!

She throws The Doll HARD against the nearest wall.

It's porcelain face CRACKS as it hits the ground.

The only sound is Sarah's labored breathing and the static of the tape.

Then, Young Sarah's crying.

YOUNG SARAH
(on tape)
*I couldn't let Ms. Kinning have
her. She's all I had. I had to
steal her back. I had to! Please
don't be mad at me.*

OFFICER IRVIN
(on tape)
*No one's mad at you, Sarah. You can
tell me the truth.*

Young Sarah is sobbing harder now.

OFFICER IRVIN (CONT'D)
*Where were you just before the
fire? Was anyone with you?*

YOUNG SARAH
(on tape)
Zarah.

OFFICER IRVIN
(on tape)
Your doll?

YOUNG SARAH
(on tape)
*Uh-huh. She told me to hide, or
else I was gonna get hurt.*

MAN
(on tape)
She tells you things?

YOUNG SARAH
(on tape)
Sometimes.

The light from Sarah's flashlight swings this way and that as she searches for the tape player.

The static grows louder. Young's Sarah's crying is all around her, it's source impossible to locate.

YOUNG SARAH (CONT'D)
(on tape)
Please don't be mad. I was hiding from Ms. Kinning. I didn't mean to hurt Sarah.

OFFICER IRVIN
(on tape)
What do you mean you hurt her? It's alright, Sarah. Where were you hiding?

Sarah gives up looking for the tape player. Starts listening.

YOUNG SARAH
(on tape)
In the closet behind Ms. Kinning's desk where they keep the beds. It was really dark. I'm so scared of the dark...

Sarah closes her eyes, lost in a memory...

INT. JANITOR'S CLOSET, NOVEMBER 1995 - DAY

Young Sarah hugs The Doll close to her belly. The muffled voices of Ms. Kinning and the children can be heard on the other side of the door.

The little girl's breathing is uneven.

Tik. Tik.

A spark cuts through the darkness.

Young Sarah's little hands struggle to make the lighter start.

Tik. Tik.

A small flame flickers to life.

MS. KINNING
 (from outside the door)
 Where is Sarah? Has anyone seen
 her?

Young Sarah listens intently. She isn't paying attention to how she holds the lighter.

The flame catches onto The Doll's hair and starts to grow...

Young Sarah squeals as the fire licks her hand and throws The Doll away from her. It's slowly engulfed in flames.

Realizing her mistake, Sarah tries to recover The Doll but it's too late. The flames have grown to large.

YOUNG SARAH
 Sarah!

With The Doll totally ablaze, the fire spreads to other items in the closet.

Terrified, Young Sarah crawls to the back of the closet.

There's another door. Young Sarah's hand struggles with the doorknob but she works it open.

She tumbles into an empty classroom. Looks back into the growing fire. The door to the other classroom can just be seen.

MS. KINNING
 Do you smell that? Kids, away from
 that wall! I said, away from that
 wall!

Young Sarah runs, escaping down the hallway.

INT. JANITOR'S CLOSET, PRESENT - NIGHT

Young Sarah's sobbing can still be heard on the tape player.

OFFICER IRVIN
 (on tape)
 No more questions. Let's get you
 home, Miss Sarah.

Sarah re-opens her eyes. Tears fall down as her cheeks as the horrible realization of what she's done overtakes her.

The light of the flashlight finally passes over the tape player. The recording fades to static. Then ends.

CLICK.

FADE TO BLACK.