

A PINK AND GLITTER, BUTTERFLY BARRETTE:

slips through strands of long blonde hair, gracefully tumbling in slow-motion as it falls...

Down...

down...

down...

...coming to rest in a child's sandbox.

FADE IN:

CHILD'S DREAM GARDEN - IN A DREAMSTATE

It is neither day nor night. A point in time existing only in a dream.

A child's dream garden appears from out of a dark void - like an island torn from the Earth - floating in the emptiness of nothing. There is a swing set and a large sandbox, but there are no children or anyone else in sight. The garden is well-kept and filled with colorful flowers; more brighter and beautiful than any spring day. The sun shines brightly in a cloudless sky which constantly changes hue.

KATHRYN, an young woman (25) appears barefoot in the middle of the 'dream garden' wearing only a simple flannel nightgown. An eerie silence hangs in the air. Except for the squeaking of a swing which seems to move mysteriously on it's own, there is only dream silence.

She pushes her feet skyward, squinting up at the sun - The chain creaks with each pass of the swing - A strange breeze blows through her mousy blonde hair.

A BICYCLE WITH STREAMERS AND A BRIGHT RED BOW rolls slowly across the ground on it's own as if pushed by an unseen hand. Moving in dreamtime it falls to the ground - its rear wheel spins - the spokes clicking against a 'Bicycle Brand' playing card;

click,

click,

click,

click,

click,

click,

Slowly winding to a stop with a final - *click!*

Staring at the bike with familiarity, she lingers...

A FAINT WHISPER carries into the voice of a small child reciting the words of what sounds like a nursery rhyme.

CASEY (O.S.)

*One for sorrow
Two for joy
Three for a little girl
Four for a boy
Five for silver
Six for gold
Seven for a secret
Never to be told.*

CASEY, a pretty little girl approximately eight years of age, sits on the edge of a sandbox where no one sat before. Her frilly white dress, ankle socks, and black strapped shoes suggests she has been to a party. A pink and glitter butterfly barrette pulls back her long blond hair which softly frames her face. A simple gold chain and tiny cross sparkle around her neck.

CASEY (CONT'D)

*One for sorrow
Two for joy
Three for a little girl
Four for a boy
Five for silver
Six for gold
Seven for a secret
Never to be told.*

Kathryn slides off the swing and approaches the little girl.

CASEY (CONT'D)

*One for sorrow
Two for joy
Three for a little girl...*

Casey looks up at Kathryn and smiles.

CASEY (CONT'D)

Hello.

A shy little girl, Casey seems comfortable with Kathryn's presence.

KATHRYN

Hello... And what's your name?

CASEY

Casey.

KATHRYN

Nice to meet you Casey. My name is Kathryn.

Kathryn looks but there is no one else in sight or anyplace where she could have come from.

KATHRYN (CONT'D)

Are you here alone?

Casey nods, yes.

KATHRYN (CONT'D)

Where are your parents?

Casey shrugs.

KATHRYN (CONT'D)

Are you lost?

Casey shakes her head, no - and continues reciting.

CASEY

*One for sorrow
Two for joy
Three for a little girl
Four for a boy
Five for silver*

Casey looks to Kathryn.

CASEY (CONT'D)

It's my birthday.

KATHRYN

It's my birthday too..!

Kathryn's eyes pan the dream garden.

KATHRYN (CONT'D)

Where is everyone?

Casey shrugs - looks up at Kathryn.

CASEY

Do you like my bike?

KATHRYN

Yes, it's very beautiful. I used to have one just like it -- So, why are you here all by yourself?

CASEY

Because...

KATHRYN
Because why?

CASEY
Because he won't let me go.

Kathryn looks around seeing no one.

KATHRYN
Who won't let you go?
The darkness creeps ever closer.

Casey looks to Kathryn.

CASEY
The bogeyman...

KATHRYN
The bogeyman?

CASEY
A-ha... The bogeyman..!

The sky turns instantly from pale blue to black - but the sun still shines brightly high above.

The air turns to a chilly frost.

CASEY (CONT'D)
(scolding tone)
See! I told you..!

Kathryn wraps her arms around herself chilled by the cold air. She looks up at the black starless sky.

Casey picks up her bike.

KATHRYN
Wait! Where are you going?

The words leave Kathryn's lips like a cold winter's breath.

CASEY
I have to go now.

Casey walks away.

KATHRYN
Go? Go where?

CASEY
I'm not really supposed to be here!

KATHRYN
Why aren't you supposed to be here?

CASEY
Because he'll be coming soon.

KATHRYN
Coming soon?

CASEY
And you don't want to make him mad!

KATHRYN
(frightened)
Who? Who's coming?!

A cold wind begins to blow.

CASEY
I wouldn't stay here if I were you!

KATHRYN
Wait! Wait! Please don't go..!

CASEY
*One for sorrow,
Two for joy,
Three for a little girl,
Four for a boy*

The wind churns into a blinding dust.

KATHRYN
(calls out)
Come back. Come back!

The rhyme follows Casey away.

CASEY
*Five for silver
Six for gold
Seven for a secret
Never to be told.*

Kathryn shields her eyes from the bright (sun) light shining down through the blackness like a beam. Her nightgown flaps like a flag in the wind. Fear takes over. Her heart races, beating with the deafening sound of...

INTO:

EXT. PLAYGROUND - NIGHT

...spinning helicopter rotor blades.

A SEARCHLIGHT SCANS through the darkness from high above. Bright yellow reflective POLICE - DO NOT CROSS tape and the chaotic flashing of red and blue lights cordon off the perimeter. A wave of POLICE activity unfolds. Approaching sirens wail.

KATHRYN JOHNSTON (same Kathryn), a plain clothed FBI AGENT stands beside an unmarked police sedan. She pulls her reflective F.B.I. jacket tightly around herself.

Through the confusion, a MOTHER is led away in uncontrollable tears by a uniformed POLICE OFFICER.

Kathryn walks across the open playing field. She stops, staring down at the blanket wrapped small BODY lying on the ground. The backwash from the helicopter hovering above scatters the dead child's clothing across the open field like...

DISSOLVE INTO:

EXT. A RESIDENTIAL STREET - DAY

...dry autumn leaves in a breeze on a crisp fall day - They crackle beneath the bicycle tires as it rolls across the sidewalk. Jumping the curb the CYCLIST (Kathryn) heads down the quiet residential street merging with...

INTO:

EXT. DOWNTOWN CITY CORE - CONTINUOUS

...the hustle, bustle and noise of big city morning rush hour traffic.

Kathryn, wearing a small backpack and a music headset, rides her twenty-speed bike. Speeding along with seemingly reckless abandon she swerves in and out of traffic. A city-scape of skyscrapers tower above her.

Approaching the downtown police station, she dismounts her bike, locking it to the rack. She pulls open the front door and walks into:

INT. POLICE PRECINCT - OFFICE OF 'MISSING PERSONS' UNIT -

A police identification badge hangs like a leash around her neck.

The office is cramped with PEOPLE and desks.

A plain clothed POLICE OFFICER (COP #1) - with his feet on the desk, leans back in the chair - a telephone receiver pressed between his shoulder and his ear - sips on a Starbucks.

COP #1

(mutters)

Seen any ghosts lately?!

Kathryn ignores his remark and continues.

KATHRYN'S P.O.V.:

Through a glass partitioning wall at a small conference room cluttered and stacked high with file boxes, old computer terminals and worn-out, mismatched office furniture.

Kathryn hesitates - then enters.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Two plain clothed POLICE OFFICERS are already seated at the large conference table.

POLICE CAPTAIN SPANNER reviews his notes.

A television monitor hangs suspended from the ceiling. On the screen a NEWS ELEVEN-11 ANCHORMAN - There is no audio.

TELEVISION:

A FIELD NEWS REPORTER interviews last night's distraught mother - closed caption.

WHITEBOARD:

Three different photographs of three different little girls. Below each photo, their names:

AMBER HURLEY
HEATHER CHATANACH
RACHEL SANCHEZ

Kathryn pulls up a chair.

Captain Spanner looks up from his notes. He looks to the three photographs pegged to the whiteboard.

CAPTAIN SPANNER

Each one smiling.
Each of them approximately the same age.
Each with loving families.
And each one of them missing.

His eyes go to a fourth photograph on the whiteboard a CHILD lying in the morgue - unnamed.

CAPTAIN SPANNER (CONT'D)

The fourth girl was found last night approximately 10:30 PM by a passer-by in the park.

COP #2

Do we know cause of death?

CAPTAIN SPANNER

We're still waiting for official word from the Medical Examiner.

(looks down at file)

Preliminary report:

Fingerprints - Negative.

Blood - Negative.

Semen - Negative.

(looks up)

But we do know she was sexually assaulted.

Everyone takes down notes.

COP #3

Do we know how she got there?

CAPTAIN SPANNER

Her mother reported her missing when she didn't come home from school.

COP #3

Do we have any suspects?

Captain Spanner shakes his head, no.

COP #2

What else do we know?

KATHRYN
 (blurts out)
 We know he's a sick fucking
 bastard!

Captain Spanner looks at Kathryn, clearing his throat.

CAPTAIN SPANNER
 On that note... I'd like to
 introduce Special Agent Kathryn
 Johnston with the FBI.

Kathryn eyes are fixed on a nowhere point.

KATHRYN
 Child abuse!
 Child sexual abuse!
 Assault!
 Rape!
 Inappropriate observation!
 Inappropriate touching!
 Abduction! All have as much to do
 about sex as being hit with a
 rolling pin and calling it baking!

Her eyes briefly make contact, then back at her notes.

KATHRYN (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
 Control and manipulation.
 Isolation and secrecy.
 Power and trust. Or more precisely,
 the abuse of power and trust...
 It steals childhood!
 It destroys lives. And the affects
 are profound and pervasive.
 And it changes everything...
 (beat)
 Forever!

Her eyes look to the photographs on the whiteboard.

COP #2
 What can you tell us about who we
 are looking for? - And how do we
 find him?

KATHRYN
 (look directly to Cop #2)
 Who we're looking for is probably a
 male...
 (eyes back)
 (MORE)

KATHRYN (CONT'D)

He could be married or single,
professional or blue collar, young
or retired, brother, father, uncle,
or friend.

COP #3

Well, that narrows it down..!

A tone of sarcasm as he repeatedly clicks his pen,
annoyingly.

Kathryn's eyes focus on the clicking pen.

Click
Click
Click
Click

CLOSE ON - clicking pen.

Click
Click..!

He stops. Kathryn continues...

KATHRYN

But what makes him stand out is
that he is attracted to children,
often taking jobs where children
are easily approached. A position
that puts him in authority; such as
a teacher, coach, camp counselor,
Minister - Even police.

(eyes to Cop #2)

They prey on the young and the
innocent. They are manipulative,
and truly seem to love children,
and children seem to be drawn to
them. They may seem rigid, moral
and even pillars of the community.
And finally -- most child abductors
know the children that they abduct.

COP #2

How do we catch him?

INT. CENTRAL OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Looking through the glass partition into the conference room -
COP #1 pushes his chair backward, swivels it around, nudging
COP #4