

A QUIET PLACE

Screenplay by

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Story by

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BLACK

We hear, very clearly, the sound of light wind.

1 EXT. TOWN - MAIN ST. - LATE AFTERNOON

1

We come up on... a streetlight. There is no illumination... and no movement. We hold on it for a long moment when suddenly... The streetlight bobs... and then begins to sway. We slowly begin to rise up on the streetlight to reveal... a small bird has landed on it. We continue to rise to reveal, behind the bird...

Wind blows through the gargantuan evergreens that seem to engulf the narrow main street of a small town in upstate New York. Shop windows and cars on either side covered in dust, the place seems frozen in time. There is no movement.

In the very middle of the road one can see... sand. A bizarre incongruity, a long pathway about a shovels width runs the full length of the street with offshoots into open doorways of some of the shops.

We hold for a long moment:

2 INT. GENERAL STORE - FRONT - LATE AFTERNOON

2

Slowly pushing through the doorway of a large general store, also covered in dust. To the left, a cash register with small shelves of nearly empty candy boxes below. To the right, a towering shelf full of bags of potato chips, nacho chips and pretzels... None are missing.

3 INT. GENERAL STORE AISLES - LATE AFTERNOON

3

WE MOVE SLOWLY across the floor, down the middle of a general store. Amid the towering shelves of goods on either side, one may recognize a barely perceptible pattern of which shelves are bare and which are not. There is no movement. No sound.

Suddenly... TINY FEET JUMP INTO OUR MOVING FRAME! Then, as fast as they appeared... They're gone.

WE NOW MOVE UP the side of the store, looking down one aisle... and the next. As we arrive at the next aisle we catch a glimpse of... A SMALL DARK FIGURE!!! And then its gone.

WE CONTINUE along the side of the store until we arrive at the last aisle. At the far end of the store we see...

2.

a counter. With a window. And shelves. Suddenly... A WOMAN
APPEARS IN THE WINDOW!

WE GO CLOSE ON THE WOMAN as she scans the shelves, slowly lowering herself to the ground until behind her we see... an 8 year old boy sitting slumped against the wall... HE IS BAREFOOT. On closer inspection we see sweat on the boy's brow, his skin pale from fever. The woman's knee touches down on the ground next to the boy as... she sees what she's been looking for. She reaches out her hand.

WE GO CLOSE ON HER HAND as it reaches toward a shelf... of orange prescription drug bottles. Her hand suddenly begins to shift certain bottles ever so slightly... AT A BIZARRELY SLOW PACE... she does not make a sound. As she does this, we get our first glimpse... of names. Names of drugs. Names... of people.

HER HAND finally arrives at the very back of the shelf as she gently twists a bottle that reads... AMOXICILLIN.

ON THE MOTHER... as she inhales slowly? And then, as if doing surgery, she slowly closes her hand around the bottle and GENTLY begins to move it through the shelf toward her. Her hand, once again moves incredibly slowly, her now wider closed hand shifts even more bottles as it passes. JUST as she gets to the end of the shelf a bottle shifts... with a RATTLE of pills. This is the first, deliberate sound we've heard. The mother... FREEZES!!!!

WE RACK FOCUS to the boy on the ground, who now looks up... with panic. The mother's eyes look all around the room... The way one does when they are waiting for something... LISTENING for something. After a long moment... she pulls the bottle in her hand the final few inches... and off the shelf.

The mother draws a huge breath of relief. As she stands up, we reveal, just over the counter... TWO EYES LOOKING UP AT HER!!!

4 INT. AISLE - LATE AFTERNOON

4

A 10 year old girl stands on her toes, barely able to see over the wooden counter to... her mother. She smiles at her mother... and gives her a thumbs up. With that... she's off.

WE FOLLOW HER as she runs lightly through the store... she is also barefoot.

The GIRL turns down an aisle to reveal... a small boy sitting on the floor... He too is barefoot.

3.

As the girl approaches we see, in the thick dust on the floor he has drawn... a rocket ship. She sits with him.

He silently puts his hand to his chest, palm to the side... crosses his first two fingers of his other hand with deliberate focus... and then slowly puts his two hands together. He then looks up at her... and quickly shoots his crossed fingers into the air... like a rocket. She beams with pride for a moment and then... Signs back to him.

DAUGHTER (SIGNING)

Very good job!

BOY (SIGNING AS BEST WE CAN)

....That's how... we get away.

The girl's smile falls ever so slightly. Then the boy suddenly... TAPS her on the shoulder and scurries away... She's "it".

As the girl slowly gets up to follow him, we see for the first time... A HEARING AID...

The boy disappears around a corner...

5 INT. NEXT AISLE - LATE AFTERNOON

5

The girl comes around the tall shelf into the next aisle when suddenly... her eyes go wide!!! What she sees is the boy standing on a small box, STRETCHING to reach a toy on a high shelf. She walks quickly to him when suddenly... the toy **FALLS**.

The girl instinctively SLIDES to the ground and catches the toy JUST as it's about to hit the ground! On her face we can see she is TERRIFIED! She closes her eyes, taking a breath with relief. When she opens them, in the foreground, we see the toy she is holding... a small TOY SPACE SHUTTLE. Then in the distance past the toy we see... a FIGURE.

She sits up to see a man standing outside the door of the general store, holding a large box with what looks like a quilt hanging out of it. A look of fear on his face... softens, as he mimes wiping his brow with relief. She smiles, puts the toy back on a shelf and runs to him.

6 INT. GENERAL STORE - FRONT - LATE AFTERNOON

6

The father gently puts the box on the ground and pulls back the pieces of thick quilt to reveal that all the contents are actually wrapped in it.

4.

He then reaches for a LARGE HIKING BACK PACK, and begins transferring the contents of the box into the bag. As he does, we see... cans of food, a variety of prescription pills, bandages and wrapped syringes.

The girl arrives at his side and excitedly starts rummaging through the box as well. As she does, we see... thick paintbrushes, bottles of glue, bottles of lighter fluid and a stack of old newspapers. Then... her face lights up. From the box, she pulls out a SALVAGED SECURITY CAMERA with wires exposed. The girl gives it a brief once over and then removes... two exposed CIRCUIT BOARDS, very obviously only recently removed from whatever appliance they belonged to. The girl scans the boards with a voracity, pointing out to the father particular areas of interest. Her father can't help but smile.

Suddenly, the box of Amoxicillin comes into frame and is placed on top... along with two boxes of sugar. The father looks up at his wife. After a beat... she signs:

MOTHER (SIGNING)

For my tea.

He just keeps looking at her.

MOTHER (SIGNING) (CONT'D)

Fine. I have a sweet tooth.

The father smiles and is about to close the bag when... a candy bar is placed on top.

DAUGHTER (SIGNING)

Me too!

The father looks up at her with fake incredulity. Suddenly the sick son in his mother's arms weakly signs:

OLDER SON (SIGNING)

Me too.

The whole family laughs silently as the daughter GENTLY takes another candy bar from a box below the cash register... We can now see why the boxes are almost empty.

The father looks back to his arriving four year old son, expecting the same, but from behind his back the young boy reveals... the toy space shuttle.

With a sweet empathy the father reaches for the toy... and shakes his head no. He turns the toy over and silently explains it has batteries... this toy can make noise.

5.

The little boy watches, confused... hurt, as his father gently places the space shuttle on the counter. And then gently grabs a big lollipop and puts it in the bag for the boy.

The mother hands their sick son to the father who picks him up and walks out. The mother kisses her 4 year old on the head, shuffles the hiking bag onto her back and walks out too.

The daughter looks at the boy as tears begin to fill his eyes. She smiles and signs:

DAUGHTER (SIGNING)

It's ok.

The boy shakes his head no.

After a moment... the girl looks back to see if her parents are there. She then reaches up and takes the shuttle down from the counter. With wide eyes her little brother watches as she surgically removes the batteries... and places the shuttle in the hood of her brother's sweatshirt. Covering it from view, she holds a finger up to her lips in the obligatory big sister way of telling him not to get her in trouble... He beams!

She then stands up and places the batteries back on the counter, smiles at her brother and gestures "let's go".

7 EXT. MAIN STREET - LATE AFTERNOON

7

The daughter exits the General Store and follows her mother and father, who are walking down the street only stepping on the sand path. Their steps are almost silent.

After a moment... her four year old brother follows behind her. We watch everyone walk in total silence.

Then...

8 INT. GENERAL STORE - LATE AFTERNOON

8

We slowly push in to the counter of the store and then realize... THE BATTERIES ARE GONE!

A long road slices its way through a heavily wooded area, which further blocks the already fading sun.

6.

In WIDE PROFILE we see the family walking in a line, continuing only on a sand path. The father is in front carrying their sick son, then the mother with the backpack, then their blonde daughter... and trailing a bit behind rumbles their robust 4 year old.

From the ground we look up at an old and rusted bridge towering over us eerily... the sand path continues across it.

WE TRACK WITH THE FAMILY as they walk across the bridge... There are minor creaks underneath the sand.

Suddenly we see... the four year old stops just before the entrance of bridge. The family continues... not seeing him.

WE FOLLOW THE BOY'S HANDS as he fishes around in his hood and pulls out... THE TOY SHUTTLE.

HEAD ON, we walk with the father, each member of his proud brood can be seen walking behind him. We can hear his strained breath... and the tiniest swish of the footsteps in sand.

HEAD ON, walking with the daughter... we now suddenly hear nothing. As she looks to be in her own world... So we are in hers. A smile breaks on her face as she walks and breathes in total silence. We walk with her for a long moment, when suddenly behind her...

A FLICKERING RED AND BLUE LIGHT.

The girl does not turn. She just keeps walking. Still smiling. As she looks up to her mother, we go into:

SLOW MOTION

- FROM THE GIRLS'S POV, we see her mother and father spin around with a frantic shock on their faces.

- BACK ON THE GIRL. She looks confused at her parents behavior... LIGHTS AGAIN FLASH EERILY BEHIND HER.

- ON THE FATHER rushing to put the boy on the ground and turning to run.

- ON THE MOTHER, spinning around with terror in her eyes... she looks to be holding in a SCREAM.

- BACK ON THE GIRL slowly beginning to turn around at what her parents could be looking at as we:

7.

SPEED BACK UP TO NORMAL

A loud playful beeping rushes in... from the blinking shuttle.

Then, from the woods we hear... THE MOST UNMISTAKEABLE
HORRIFYING.... SCREEEEEEEECH!!!

- ON THE MOTHER as she slowly lowers the backpack to the ground... and her legs begin to fail her.

- ON THE FATHER running, violently shaking his head... It looks like he's HOLDING IN A SCREAM.

- THE TREES BEHIND THEM... RUSTLE AND SNAP as something barrels through.

- ON THE BOY... holding up his space ship proudly to his incoming father... an enormous smile on his face.

- ON THE FATHER... 20 feet away... his face is a still frame of pure fear as he runs to camera. Then:

THE MOST IMMEDIATE AND TERRIFYING COMBINATION OF SOUND ONE COULD EVER IMAGINE.

... A SHRIEK?... A SCREAM? ... A CRUNCH? Then...

ON THE FATHER as... a thin line of blood splatters on his face.

- Mid run, the father's body immediately goes limp... failing him as he comes to a halt just in front of camera.

- Then, as quickly as it came... THE SOUND IS GONE.

- IN WIDE PROFILE, The father stands lifeless... The two children stand frozen with fear... the MOTHER drops to her knees and... a space shuttle blinks silently in the sand.

The four year old... IS GONE.

Once again... only the wind can be heard.

BLACK.

8.

SILENCE.

FADE IN: TITLE

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