

All The Dead Things Run Away

By

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FADE IN ON:

INT. RUNDOWN SHACK - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

NAOMI (6) stands vigil at the window; a small girl with fluffy pigtails.

Outside, a bonfire CRACKLES and POPS. The light of it glows intensely in her eyes.

Naomi watches as SHADOWY PEOPLE lug heavy garbage bags across the yard outside, throwing their trash into the flames.

She holds out a hand to the window pane, touches the glass. Something POPS behind her. More fire.

And a crusty CHUCKLE as well.

Naomi turns to face GRANDPA (70s). A grizzled man with a tangled beard. He sits in his chair, stiff and still. A handmade blanket covers his lap. He pokes the fireplace with a steel iron.

GRANDPA

There's plenty of flames in here, Naomi.
Git away from the window.

NAOMI

No.

Naomi holds her ground. Keeps looking.

TOWNSFOLK gather, throwing more bags into the fire. A TEENAGED BOY drops one at his feet.

Something inside that bag squirms and moves!

Naomi YELPS and points it out to Grandpa. The old man GRUNTS, shakes his head.

GRANDPA

Trick of the light.

More people approach the inferno. Yet more bags. Some of the townsfolk carry SKELETAL CORPSES openly. Bones that twitch and move as well.

Naomi points at one again.

NAOMI

Look there, Grandpa. That one moved! That ain't no trick of the light.

Grandpa wags his finger.

GRANDPA

Tsssk. You're a girl with eyes too big
for your head. And the word is "isn't."
Never ain't.

He beckons to her to come over. His blanket tumbles to
the ground. Revealing: *his missing left leg*.

Grandpa reaches for the blanket on the floor. He's
arthritic, and too far away.

Naomi runs over, and picks it up herself.

The bonfire burns brilliantly at the window. The glass
lights up even more.

Grandpa smiles, satisfied. He's glad the girl's moved
away. Naomi holds the blanket out to him. The townsfolk
CHEER outside.

Grandpa pulls the girl close for a cuddle. He hides her
from the sound and sights.

NAOMI

Grandpa. Why do they do that? All the
time?

Grandpa rocks her gently.

GRANDPA

Shhh. You know the answer. I told you
three whole times last week. And five
times the month before. Why ask questions
again?

NAOMI

(mutters)

I wanna hear the story.

Grandpa SIGHS, starts the ritual - explaining in a
rehearsed tone:

GRANDPA

They can't put them in the ground. Ever
since the troubles started, the soil is
very bad that way. And it ain't
respectful to leave them outside. Even
once they pass away.

NAOMI

You mean, like what happened to Mom and
Dad?

GRANDPA
I said Ssssh. And listen.

He rocks his granddaughter. Smooths her hair.

GRANDPA
Yes, like your parents. But we agreed we
wouldn't speak of that. Little girls
should concentrate on chores.

He hands her his dirty plate.

GRANDPA
For starters, please wash this clean.

Naomi reaches for the dish. Grandpa thinks. Hesitates.

GRANDPA
Don't forget, you have to take out Sam.

NAOMI
But -

GRANDPA
No "Buts". You know what happened the
last time you left him alone.

NAOMI
(nods)
He ran away...

Naomi SNIFFLES.

NAOMI
Momma gave me Sam. She said we'd grow up
together. Forever.

GRANDPA
Forever's not always the best thing for
folks. And Mommies - every so often,
they're wrong.

He pulls Naomi close and kisses her forehead.

GRANDPA
I know this is hard. If I could stand on
my two feet, I'd move Sam myself. But
you need to be a grown-up for Grandpa.
And do the same for me. When it's *my*
time.

NAOMI
I guess.

GRANDPA

You sure? You understand what to do?

NAOMI

Yes, Grandpa. I promise.

She takes the plate and shuffles towards the kitchen.

NAOMI

I'll take out Sam. By myself.

INT. RUNDOWN SHACK - BACK ROOM - NIGHT

Naomi stands over a small, quiet form. It's covered by a soiled cotton blanket.

She peels back a corner.

A Beagle (SAM) lies underneath. He's very small. Still and dead. A strange bite mark stands out on his side. Matching the shape and size of human teeth.

Naomi pets Sam's head. Blinks back tears.

EXT. RURAL YARD - MOMENTS LATER

Naomi stumbles across the dusty yard - Sam and the blanket heavy in her arms.

She passes the bonfire. It still CRACKLES.

A SKELETAL CORPSE ARM reaches out of the flames for her. Misses by an inch - breaks in half.

Naomi ignores it - keeps going. Until she reaches a garden filled with wildflowers. She lays Sam down, and scratches one furry ear.

NAOMI

You always like when I do that.

A small, strange twitch from Sam... Almost too subtle to register. Naomi SIGHS, stands up on wobbly legs.

NAOMI

Don't be scared. I'll be back.

INT. RUNDOWN SHACK - BACK ROOM - NIGHT

Naomi picks through tools in the dark. She finds a shovel and slings it over her shoulder.

EXT. RURAL YARD - MOMENTS LATER

Then drags it back through the yard. Past the bonfire - filled with the shadows of flaming CORPSES. They still twitch - albeit weakly.

Eventually, she reaches Sam's side.

Naomi finds a spot between flowers, and starts to dig. Soon, she's created a shallow hole.

She kisses Sam's head, exactly like Grandpa kissed hers. Then cradles her pet in her arms.

NAOMI

Grandpa wants you in the fire. But Momma said we'd be together forever. So, I'm gonna treat you right.

She lowers Sam into the hole. And covers his matted corpse with dirt.

LATER

Naomi sits cross legged, playing with a plucked flower. Sam's grave is filled and patted down. The bonfire CRACKLES behind her.

Naomi glances towards her house. CLICK. Grandpa's shut off the living room light.

Naomi raises her head: she hears a sound!

Soil trembles at Sam's resting place. Something's digging up - *from inside*. Naomi puts an ear to the ground, and listens. Something's clawing its way out.

NAOMI

You're back. The soil helped!

She smiles, and lays the flower at Sam's grave.

NAOMI

I promise I'll take care of you, Sam. No matter what Grandpa says...

She quickly starts digging. Accompanied by the sound of WHIMPERING and RASPY CANINE BREATH.

FINAL FADE OUT: