

# LAUGHTER.

Written by

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INT. ABANDONED APARTMENT - DAY

The front door shoves a propped-up mattress out of its way.

RYAN SKARPY (early 20s), dirty with a scraggly beard, maneuvers around the barricaded entryway.

Carrying an AR-15, he creeps down towards the two doors in the hallway -- one by one, he pushes them open.

Nothing.

Ryan WHISTLES.

DAVID SKARPY (late 20s), equally dirty, but with an even more scraggly beard, walks in carrying a bolt-action rifle in one hand and a 5-gallon gas can in the other.

David's nephew, SIMEON (2), sits in a hiking baby backpack carrier and sucks on a binky.

David gives Ryan a big, toothy smile and closes the door quietly.

INT. ABANDONED APARTMENT - STAIRS - DAY

A baby gate sits open at the top of the stairs.

Ryan leads the way up. David, with Simeon secured on his back, takes a knee in the middle.

Ryan WHISTLES.

David and Simeon walk up the stairs. They see a big couch, with pillows and throw blankets.

DAVID

Oh, yeah, this is very nice,  
Simeon. Pristine, if I may use that  
word.

Simeon grunts in agreement

Ryan turns the blinds and sees two cars parked outside. He hits David in the shoulder.

DAVID (CONT'D)

What do we got?

David pulls down the blinds, too.

RYAN

Gas.

David hands him the gas can.

Ryan sets down his pack and starts back down the stairs -- gas can and rifle in hand.

DAVID

C'mon, Sim. Let's see what kind of trouble we can get ourselves into.

David collects some dust on the railing with his finger.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

The apartments, the cars, the roads -- everything lies motionless, except the tress.

Ryan reaches the two parked cars facing the apartment.

He looks back towards the balcony. He sets the gas can down on the asphalt and the rifle on the hood.

Ryan tries the doors. Both locked.

He peers through the windows. Security indicators flash on both.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

A thick layer of dust covers the otherwise clean kitchen.

Simeon, with binky in mouth, looks around from up top. David flips the light switch.

Nothing.

He places his rifle in a corner and starts opening cabinets.

David turns on the faucet.

Nothing.

DAVID

Course not. That'd be too simple, huh Sim?

SIMEON

Hmm.

He turns his attention to the largest cabinet and opens it.

Cans of food stack up high.

David stares at it in disbelief. Immediately, he takes Simeon down.

The odd man grabs and opens a can of peaches excitedly.

Using his dirty fingers, David stuffs a peach into his smiling mouth.

SIMEON (CONT'D)

Hmm.

Barely containing himself, he gives one to the child. David puts his index finger to his lips and watches as Sim takes a bite.

David lets loose after watching the toddler's reaction.

DAVID

(whispering)

Want so-- want some more?

David signals 'more' with his fingers. Sim copies and smiles.

SIMEON

Hmm.

David stifles a cough and continues to feed Simeon.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Ryan jams a screwdriver into the bottom of the gas tank. Gas drizzles into the empty, five gallon can.

Ryan gets up and dusts himself off. He grabs his rifle and waits.

To his left, Ryan sees another parking lot with more cars.

INT. CHILD'S BEDROOM - DAY

Besides the layer of dust and the broken closet door, the room sits impeccably clean.

David holds Sim.

DAVID

Ignore the crib, mah boy.

SIMEON

Hmm.

David opens the closet and finds baby clothes.

DAVID  
Oh, very nice.

David rummages through the clothes.

DAVID (CONT'D)  
Oh, very, very nice. What you  
think? Frankenstein or tiger?

SIMEON  
Hmm.

DAVID  
That's what I was thinkin', too.

David grabs an outfit.

INT./EXT. NEW PARKING LOT - DAY

Ryan searches the inside of one of the cars and peers out the windshield.

He grabs his rifle and squats behind the car. Quick flashes of clothing appears in the distance next to a parked car.

Ryan peers out from behind the bumper. He slowly pulls up his rifle, looking through the scope.

Fog accumulating in the distance.

Ryan sits back against the car and throws out the dip in his lip.

He peers underneath the car and sits back up.

RYAN  
(whispers)  
Fuck.

He takes off his boots.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Sim wanders in before David and tries lifting up the toilet seat. David enters and flips on the light.

It flickers for a second, then nothing.

He tries the faucet.

Nothing.

David notices three toothbrushes. Simeon pulls on his leg and gives him an imaginary object.

DAVID

Oh, for me? Thank you. Good job.  
Two time, two time.

Sim gives David two high fives.

David turns his attention to the tub and turns the faucet.

Water pours out.

David laughs hysterically.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Wha-- What! Simeon, look. It's  
water. It's water!

David picks up Simeon and shows him the water. They both laugh.

EXT. NEW PARKING LOT - DAY

Rifle at the ready, Ryan heads down the parking lot towards the flash.

Creeping around the vehicle, he freezes.

At the other end of his rifle stares back two women.

One -- breathing heavily -- has her handgun aimed back.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

David and Simeon sit in the tub full of bubbles.

DAVID

Can you say Dada? Dada?

SIMEON

Hmm.

DAVID

Can you say Uncle David?

Sim smiles.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Want some more bubbles?

SIMEON

Hmm.

Sim stands up showing his swim trunks.

EXT. NEW PARKING LOT - DAY

A plastic bag blows into one of the parked cars. Ryan and the two women are nowhere to be seen.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Simeon intently plays with the toilet seat again, wearing his new Frankenstein T-shirt.

David looks at the mirror in his own swim trunks, water dripping everywhere, with a new haircut -- a grey-scaled patch sits on his upper shoulder.

Shaving cream covers his face. Hair covers the sink.

DAVID

What you think? Mustache or no  
mustache?

David looks intently at himself in the mirror and shrugs.

He starts shaving.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

David, dressed in clean jeans, a flannel and suspenders, nicely folds clothes on the bed.

Simeon runs from the bathroom into the hallway. He stops, looks at David, and runs back.

David leaves a can of peaches on the folded clothes.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

A bottle of bleach sits next to many pots of water on the hardwood floor.

Simeon plays with an empty pot and spoon, while David sits on his knees with a pot of water in front of him, stirring.

DAVID

That's right, gotta stir it right  
up. Stir, stir, stir--

A door opens and closes downstairs.

DAVID (CONT'D)  
Sodium hypochlorite, although a powerful disinfectant, needs to properly dissipate for it to work its magic.

Ryan WHISTLES at the bottom of the stairs. The soft steps of his feet noticeable as he climbs to the top.

DAVID (CONT'D)  
(without looking up)  
Where ya been?

RYAN  
Stragglers.

The two women reveal themselves. David gives them a nod.

DAVID  
Canned food on the table. Help yourselves.

JASMINE (20s), dirty, grabs one of the cans immediately. She opens it and starts devouring the food inside, not taking her eyes off of the two men.

Ryan heads to the window behind David. David shoves a cup of coffee into his hands.

LEAH (20s) stands in front of Jasmine, shielding her from view. She holds the handgun at her side.

RYAN  
Saw fog 3 klicks east.

David briefly stops stirring.

DAVID  
Interesting.

Jasmine secretly takes another can. Her and David catch eyes. David gives her a sympathetic smile.

LEAH  
Why is that interesting?

Simeon walks over and hands Jasmine a napkin.

JASMINE  
(quietly)  
Thank you.

Sim puts his thumb to his chest, signing you're welcome.

SIMEON

Hmm.

RYAN

It's one of the signs of the Reaps.

Ryan turns on the faucet. Nothing.

JASMINE

Reaps?

DAVID

It's what we call the winged creatures. Laughters on the ground. Reaps in the sky.

JASMINE

Oh. We just call them Flyers.

DAVID

That's a good name for them, too.

RYAN

How'd you turn on the water?

David smiles at Jasmine and Leah as he replies to Ryan.

DAVID

Now, that is the most interesting question. This campus was built during the height of the cold war, which technically speaking is a misnomer. Every year could be considered the height of the cold war for every year had some potentially escalating tension events. The construction during this time period reflected that in certain parts of the country. Namely, the plumbing industry. No one lives very long without water, you see. So, they would often have a separate system just for the bath tub running off of a separate water source.

Leah and Jasmine glance at each other.

DAVID (CONT'D)

The power of seeing the unknown and communicating that to the masses. Truly remarkable.

David laughs to himself.

DAVID (CONT'D)  
 (to SIMEON)  
 C'mon, bud. Time for night night.

David picks Sim up away from his pot and brings him to Ryan.

RYAN  
 Goodnight. I love you.

SIMEON  
 Hmm.

Ryan hesitatingly grabs Simeon's face.

INT. KITCHEN - SUNSET

With the blinds closed, two lanterns light up the kitchen.

Another lantern set to low, sits next to a sleeping Simeon.  
 Jasmine sleeps on the other side of the couch.

Clean water sits in gallon jugs. Canned food sits in a  
 duffle.

David looks out one of the upstairs windows, eating and  
 talking to himself -- a small map in his hands.

DAVID  
 Two miles south to the gas station.  
 Nothing. Went northwest probably a  
 half mile and then west about a  
 mile--

Leah and Ryan sit on opposite sides of the child's playroom.  
 Leah closest to Jasmine.

LEAH  
 Why Reaps?

Ryan raises an eyebrow.

RYAN  
 It's the noise they make before  
 their descent.

LEAH  
 Oh.

DAVID  
(to himself)  
Following this tree line, we're probably two miles away from the van.

RYAN  
I thought you guys have seen 'em.

DAVID  
But, if we cut through whatever this cluster of buildings, it's probably half mile. Stairs.  
(to the other two)  
Remember stairs.

David looks at the two through his bifocals.

LEAH  
On the news back in the beginning. We thought they were a myth. Maybe even CGI.

RYAN  
And the Laughters? You think they were CGI, too?

David looks back at Ryan.

DAVID  
Be nice.

Rain starts to PATTER on the roof.

LEAH  
Have you guys seen them? The Reaps?

Ryan doesn't acknowledge her. David looks up briefly from his map towards Leah and gives a small smile.

DAVID  
Just one.

Ryan looks down at the rifle in his hands.

DAVID (CONT'D)  
Anyways, I'll take the downstairs. Love you.

RYAN  
Love you, too, brother.

DAVID

(to LEAH)

And you. I love you, too. I can't begin to fathom the horrors you and your partner have been through. But when you're with us, you don't have to worry ab-- well, you don't have to worry. We're all in this together.

David carefully puts his hands on her shoulders.

DAVID (CONT'D)

You should get some rest. You're going to need it if you're coming with us tomorrow.

LEAH

We'll do what we want.

DAVID

I wouldn't have it any other way.

(to Ryan)

Gas. Van. Supplies. Sunrise at 6:20.

RYAN

Got it, brother.

DAVID

You want me to take Simeon downstairs or--

RYAN

Up here is fine.

DAVID

Okie doke.

David heads downstairs.

Leah looks at Simeon and Jasmine asleep on the couch.

LEAH

Why'd he think it was interesting that the Reaps were close by?

RYAN

He didn't.

LEAH

That's exactly what he said.

RYAN

He thought it was interesting that the Reaps are coming from the east and that the Cal Guard--

Ryan starts taking out the window screen.

RYAN (CONT'D)

--or what's left of it, is coming from the west.

LEAH

So, you guys are heading to the National Guard?

RYAN

We are heading in the exact opposite direction.

LEAH

Why w--

RYAN

You been living under a rock, ain't cha?

The two stare at each other intensely.

RYAN (CONT'D)

The California State National Guard, especially for you two, is worse than a pack of Laughers.

LEAH

What if we-- what if you run into a Reap tomorrow?

RYAN

If it's in the air, then we're dead.

LEAH

Why is that?

RYAN

Gut feeling.

Ryan puts a big dip in his mouth.

A long, drawn-out silence as the Ryan keeps an eye out the window, and Leah keeps an eye on Ryan.

LEAH

Back in the beginning, they said it originated in the Middle East. They said we opened a portal to hell.

Ryan puts the screen behind him.

RYAN

Oh, yeah? How'd we do that?

LEAH

Through the large Halidron Calidor or whatever.

RYAN

The Large Hadron Collider.

Ryan goes and grabs a table chair.

LEAH

Yeah.

RYAN

The Large Hadron Collider is in Switzerland.

Ryan places the chair next to the window.

LEAH

Yeah, but it opened another dimension in Saudi Arabia.

Ryan sits.

RYAN

Anything's possible, I guess.

LEAH

Where do you think they came from?

RYAN

Don't know.

He checks his ammo.

LEAH

Do you think this is hell?

RYAN

In what sense?

LEAH

Actual.

RYAN

Don't know.

LEAH

Do you know anything?

Ryan gives her a hard look.

RYAN

I know that with Reaps, everyone,  
no matter the individual, freezes.  
That in the moment, you'll feel  
your muscles literally lock up.  
You'll feel your pupils contract.  
You'll feel your stomach drop. And  
in those brief seconds, you'll  
realize that time ceases to exist  
for it will feel like an eternity.  
Laughs in packs are vicious, yes.  
But, Reaps? By the time you hear  
their screams, you're already dead.

Ryan spits in a cup.

RYAN (CONT'D)

Now, get out of my face and leave  
me be.

Ryan lays his rifle on top of the window sill. The last  
minutes of light appear on the horizon.

LEAH slowly gets up and leaves.

INT. ABANDONED APARTMENT - NIGHT

David sleeps on the bed downstairs, fully clothed. The two  
girls sleep in the other room.

UPSTAIRS

Ryan rubs his eyes over the kitchen sink.

He checks on Simeon in the process, as he walks into the play  
room.

Ryan sits and looks down at his watch. He grabs his last  
cigarette and lights it.

INT. ABANDONED APARTMENT - UPSTAIRS - NIGHT

A long CREAK from the floorboards wakes SIMEON.

SIMEON sits up. He stares at the stairs.

A long, slender, grey arm pokes through the baby gate and grabs a ball.

Sim looks to Ryan, then back at the arm. It retracts. The ball drops and rolls away.

Sim walks over to the ball and picks it up.

He looks down through the baby gate at the

BOTTOM OF THE STAIRS

The front door sits open -- slender fingers grasp the doorframe. Eyes poke out above them and stare at Simeon.

Simeon unlatches the baby gate.

He slowly descends down the dark stairwell.

INT. PLAY ROOM - SAME TIME

Ryan takes a long drag from the cig.

INT. DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Simeon attempts to close the door. He runs around the corner towards the bathroom -- ball in hand.

The front door slowly swings open.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

The FOOTSTEPS of SIMEON stir David awake.

Sim runs inside the bathroom, a smile peaking out through his binky.

David gets up tiredly and walks toward the hallway.

DAVID

Hey, bud. What cha doin' awake?

The ball rolls forward from the bathroom. Simeon follows it.

David goes to pick up Sim. He sees a Laughter out of the corner of his eye stomping towards him.

David grabs Sim and embraces the wall as it passes them and heads into the bathroom.

David creeps back into the bedroom and closes the door.

LEAH (O.S.)  
Simeon?

David bites his lip, as he hears the other door open.

INT. DOWNSTAIRS - NIGHT

Leah walks into the hallway, handgun at her side. She flashes a flashlight on and off towards the front door.

Nothing.

LEAH  
Ryan?

Footsteps from up above.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

David, wide-eyed, looks at his rifle on the bed.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Leah flashes the light down the hallway to the bathroom.

Nothing.

She walks towards the stairs and looks up. She sees nothing and turns back. Ryan peeks around at the top -- rifle in hand.

Relaxed, Leah pushes open her bedroom door.

RYAN  
Leah?

She hears Ryan's FOOTSTEPS coming down and turns. She notices the bathroom door swing open.

IN THE BEDROOM

Jasmine watches her from the bed. She sees LEAH light the hallway again and freeze.

The flashlight turns off.

JASMINE  
What is it?

Multiple FLASHES and GUNSHOTS come from LEAH.

Jasmine sees a Laugher attack and drag her friend out of view.

Ryan sees the Laugher drag her onto the porch. He runs down and closes the door.

Jasmine freezes.

IN A CATATONIC STATE

Jasmine sees Ryan run back and forth through the doorway.

Ryan comes up to her and mouths something. She doesn't hear.

Ryan leaves and grabs the baby carrier back pack. He comes back and grabs her by the shirt.

Ryan drags her to the other bedroom. She sees the Laugher on the porch devouring LEAH's body.

Ryan forces her out the window where David and Simeon are waiting.

EXT. ABANDONED APARTMENT - NIGHT

The group crawls over to a sidewalk -- a battered tricycle sits in the middle.

Ryan sits Jasmine against the wall. He flashes his flashlight in her eyes.

RYAN  
(mouthing)  
Jasmine? Can you hear me?

JASMINE  
My-- my backpack.

RYAN  
We'll get your backpack later,  
okay? Look at me. I need you to  
breathe for me. Okay?

Jasmine takes some deep breaths.

JASMINE  
The-- there's fog.

DAVID  
Approximately thirty minutes until  
sunset.

RYAN

This place is going to be crawling  
with Laughters in three.

DAVID

Let's not be here when that  
happens.

RYAN

Agreed.

(to Jasmine)

Look at me, look at me. Can you  
move?

Jasmine nods.

DAVID

Let's go.

The group heads down one of the sidewalks.

EXT. APARTMENT COURTYARD - NIGHT

A light blue sky -- not quite red -- appears on the horizon.

The apartment complex sits like a complicated maze. Paths  
lead in many directions.

The group stops in the middle of a courtyard. David sits with  
his tattered map out.

RYAN

Where to, Dave?

David talks to himself, as he looks at the map.

Ryan scans the buildings and sees various movement inside.

RYAN (CONT'D)

Brother, we need to move.

David doesn't acknowledge.

RYAN (CONT'D)

David.

DAVID

Down the hill and take a left.

RYAN

(to jasmine)

Ready?

Jasmine -- in shock -- nods.

The group runs past some apartments, down some steps. A path is blocked off to their left, so they head right.

A Laugher walks out onto a porch in the distance.

Jasmine lets out a small gasp.

RYAN (CONT'D)

Fuck.

David grabs her by the mouth and pulls her behind a wall.

DAVID

Shh. Shh.

Ryan takes SIMEON off his back and peeks behind the wall. He sees the creature jump onto the railing.

Ryan switches rifles with David and takes aim.

BANG.

The Laugher falls.

Ryan switches rifles again. David helps put SIMEON back on. The group moves forward.

Lampposts flicker on and off in the distance.

EXT. BRIDGE - NIGHT

A long bridge -- surrounded by fog and trees -- is barely illuminated by the night sky.

The group stops at the mouth.

RYAN

This the way?

David lets out a small cough.

DAVID

Over the bridge. Through the parking lot. Up the stairs.

Ryan leads them across. He stops in the middle.

The group separates to the sides.

A lamppost flickers on up ahead. Underneath it stands a tall, dark figure -- its head violently shaking back and forth.

The light goes off.

Movement heads in the opposite direction.

INSANE LAUGHTER.

Ryan lets out a deep breath.

DAVID (CONT'D)

The back-up generators must finally  
be failing.

RYAN

C'mon.

The group moves forward.

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Dozens of vehicles litter the school parking lot. The group  
maneuvers between them.

Jasmine stops.

She sees something move inside one of the cars. She shakily  
aims her gun at the window.

Ryan grabs the gun the same time a Laugher places its hand  
and face on the glass.

Ryan pulls her behind one of the cars and puts his finger to  
his lips.

JASMINE

Wha--

RYAN

Laughers.

Laughers jump around one of the cars in the distance.

RYAN (CONT'D)

Keep low. Follow us.

Jasmine nods her head and wipes away her tears.

Ryan runs the opposite way of the Laughers.

A DARK STAIRWELL

looms in the distance. The group passes a trail to their left  
on their way to it and drop to their bellies.

Laughs scurry past.

More INSANE LAUGHTER

The group gets up and stops at the bottom of the steps.

Lampposts light up the dimly lit stairwell -- each one flickering on and off.

Ryan, with assault rifle at the ready, looks up.

JASMINE

I-- is there no other way?

Ryan looks to his brother.

DAVID

Van. Just got to get to the van.

Ryan grasps the barrel of Jasmine's handgun.

RYAN

Finger off the trigger. Only fire when you absolutely have to, yeah?

Jasmine nods her head.

RYAN (CONT'D)

Deep breaths. Gunfire attracts 'em.

Jasmine nods again.

RYAN (CONT'D)

Silence going up. Stay close.

Ryan looks at both David and Jasmine. He begins the ascent.

The group creeps up slowly -- Ryan and SIMEON in front, Jasmine in the middle, David bringing up the rear.

A quarter of the way up, Ryan scans the trees. He stops the group.

JASMINE

What's up?

David sees Laughers moving in the distance at the bottom.

RYAN

Something's off.

SIMEON

Hmm.

Ryan looks up and sees a Laugher squatting at the top.

RYAN  
Nobody move.

JASMINE  
(whispers)  
Oh, my god.

RYAN  
Slowly, slowly back down.

A noise attracts Jasmine's attention to the right. Jasmine loses her footing, but catches herself.

JASMINE  
(whispers)  
Ryan.

Ryan, focused at the top, doesn't respond.

JASMINE (CONT'D)  
Ryan.

A Laugher launches at Jasmine off the railing.

She shoots it.

RYAN  
Go! Run. Run!

The group descends back down. Laughters lurk right behind.

AT THE BOTTOM

Laughters from the parking lot force the group to cut right onto a trail that leads through a dark forest -- hardly any light peers through.

BOMBS go off in the distance.

EXT. TRAIL - NIGHT

The group rushes through the trail. Laughters follow behind.

INSANE LAUGHTER.

EXT. HILL - SUNSET

An orange sliver peeks out from the horizon.

Ryan, with Simeon on his back, leads Jasmine and David out of the trail and up the long, grass-covered hill.

The Laughters continue behind, sounding off like a pack of hyenas.

Bombs start bursting in the cloudy sky miles away.

Jasmine slows to watch.

JASMINE

Oh, my God--

DAVID

Cal Guard. Reapers in the sky.  
Don't stop, keep moving!

David pushes Jasmine from behind.

She begins to cry.

JASMINE

(out of breath)

I-- I can't make it.

More Laughters join the pack from the sides -- each new addition becoming more and more aggressive.

David starts violently coughing and drops to one knee.

Jasmine stops. David waves her off.

DAVID

Kee-- keep going!

David aims at one of the rapidly moving creatures coming towards him.

BANG.

Ryan turns.

RYAN

David!

David re-cocks the rifle and fires.

Ryan begins running back.

RYAN (CONT'D)

Davi--

DAVID

Go!

Ryan fires his AR-15 at the incoming group of ghouls.

David fires multiple rounds. Ryan witnesses David get consumed by the pack of Laughers.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Go! Save your son!

The Laughers tear off the limbs and head of the struggling David and scurry off in random directions.

RYAN

Come on.

Ryan grabs the frozen Jasmine by the strap of her backpack.

EXT. HILLTOP PARKING LOT - SUNSET

A lone van sits atop the overlooking parking lot.

Ryan, holding Sim, and Jasmine climb up the steep hill and see it.

Both out of breath, they look over the valley of trees and fog.

Jasmine grabs Ryan's hand and holds onto it.

CUT TO BLACK: