

HOBGOBLINS

Screenplay by James Hancock

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FADE IN:

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT.

The front hallway to a typical three-bedroom house.

HANNAH, a woman in her mid twenties, steps through the front door and into the hallway. She holds a cardboard box, and closes the front door with her foot.

DEREK, a man in his mid twenties, stands in the kitchen doorway at the other end of the hallway. He is in his pyjamas and holds a glass of water.

DEREK
Can't it wait until morning?

Hannah smiles as she turns for the living room doorway.

HANNAH
Last one!

Hannah walks into the living room.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT.

A typical living room, with sofa, TV, coffee table, etc.

Hannah walks over to the sofa and puts the box on the floor next to three similar boxes. The boxes are full of odds and ends... Pictures, books, ornaments, etc.

Hannah sits down on the sofa and starts to rummage through the boxes.

She shows interest in an object wrapped in cloth, and pulls it from the surrounding junk. She unwraps the cloth to reveal an old book with a plain black cover.

Opening the book, Hannah smiles as she turns the pages. She stops halfway through the book and begins to read (to herself).

A few seconds pass and Derek steps into the living room doorway.

DEREK
I'm going to bed, are you coming?

Hannah looks up from her book.

HANNAH

I remember this. Nan used to read it to me when I was little. The Book Of Forgotten Fables.

Hannah returns to the book. Derek glances at a clock over the fireplace. 10:50pm.

DEREK

It's nearly eleven.

HANNAH

Hobgoblins! Oh wow! I remember her reading it to me.

DEREK

Well I'm heading up.

Unimpressed, Derek turns and heads upstairs.

Hannah makes herself more comfortable, and with a smile on her face, continues to read her book.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT.

The typical bedroom of a young girl.

A six-year-old girl (YOUNG HANNAH) lies in her bed. Sitting beside her, within the light of a bedside lamp, is a sixty-year-old woman (NAN).

There is a storm outside, with rain pattering against the window and the occasional flicker of lightning flashing through the gap in the curtains.

Nan has a book on her lap (THE Book) and she is reading Young Hannah a bedtime story from it... Hobgoblins! Young Hannah is engrossed in the story.

NAN

(Reading)

Barhog wrung his hands with glee and cackled to himself as Hogbar stepped up to Jack. Jack, who remained helpless, tied fast to the tree and completely at their mercy. Hogbar leaned in close, and carried his cold words upon rancid breath, "But we gots to feeeeed."

Thunder RUMBLES, and Young Hannah sits up with a start.

YOUNG HANNAH
(Excited)
THE RIDDLE!

Nan gives Young Hannah a smile and returns to the book.

NAN
(Reading)
"The riddle!" Jack cried out.
Hogbar leaned to one side and stared
into Jack's eyes. "WHAT RIDDLE?"...

...Nan's words are interrupted by another RUMBLE of thunder and flash of lightning. Young Hannah looks terrified.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT.

We are back in the living room, where Hannah has obviously dozed off. Thunder RUMBLES, waking Hannah with a start. The book falls from her lap and onto the floor.

Hannah takes a deep breath and rubs the sweat from her forehead. She buries her face in her hands for a few seconds, trying to calm down.

There is a flash of lightning.

Hannah slowly removes her hands from her face and looks down at the book on the floor. As she does, we see a grubby hand take hold of the book and pick it up.

Hannah quickly backs away and looks up at the figures before her. HOGBAR and BARHOG (The two HOBGOBLINS) stand before her. They are similar to large men, yet they have sharp teeth and piercing white eyes - The mix of Neanderthal man and a Goblin. Their skin is dirty, as are their clothes. Hogbar holds a wooden club, and Barhog holds a sword.

In the corner of the room behind them is a shimmering black door (A portal). They stare down at Hannah, and then Hogbar smiles.

HOGBAR
(Guttural voice)
Allo Jack!

With that, Hogbar leans forward and hits Hannah on the head with his club.

DARKNESS...

HOGBAR
(Echoed)
So nice to see you again.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT.

A woodland clearing, lit by a full moon and the flickering light from a nearby campfire.

Hannah is unconscious and tied to a tree. A bucket full of greasy liquid is on the ground near to her, and Barhog dips a large brush into it and paints it onto Hannah. A clear substance - Oiling her up.

Hogbar sits near the fire, sharpening a long skinning knife with a whetstone. An assortment of hatchets and knives are on a blanket in front of him.

Hogbar makes a couple of LOUD grunting noises and points his knife at Hannah's head. Barhog paints a brushload over the side of Hannah's face and neck.

Hannah slowly wakes up. She grimaces from the pain of her head wound. She sees the Hobgoblins and looks terrified.

BARHOG
(Witch-like voice)
Allo Jack! Welcome back!

Hogbar grunts and twitches. Barhog CACKLES with joy.

HANNAH
I'm not Jack... You've got the wrong person.

Hogbar smiles and stands up.

HOGBAR
That ain't what my belly tells me.

Barhog CACKLES manically and hops up and down with excitement. Hannah spits out some grease.

HANNAH
I know who you are. The book!
You're from the book.

Hogbar picks up a wooden pole with a sharpened end, steps closer to Hannah, and sniffs the air. He smiles and licks his lips.

HOGBAR
Stick a dabble on this...

...Hogbar holds the sharp end of the pole towards Barhog. Hannah watches, nervously.

Barhog brushes a generous dollop of grease onto the end of the pole.

HANNAH
You don't want to eat me... I'm not
Jack!

Hogbar leans in close, bringing his mouth inches from Hannah's ear.

HOGBAR
But we gots to feeeeed.

Barhog throws the brush aside, slurps and licks his lips.

Hogbar brings up his skinning knife, lifting it towards Hannah's throat. Hannah sees the knife...

HANNAH
(Terrified)
...THE RIDDLE!

Hogbar leans back and lowers the knife.

HOGBAR
What Riddle?

HANNAH
If you're going to treat me like Jack, then I'm going to act like him. Eat me and you'll both die.

Barhog steps forward.

BARHOG
He's bluffin'!

Hannah forces out a fake confident LAUGH.

HANNAH
Am I? I know you know the riddle, and if I'm right then you know what will happen.

Hogbar looks at Barhog and then back at Hannah.

HOGBAR
You're bluffin'! You don't know the
Hobgoblin riddle...

HANNAH
(Interrupting)
...Snatch them on the midnight hour.
Eat them whole, from toe to head.
But beware the man with poisoned
blood. Feast on him and wind up
dead.

Hogbar and Barhog's eyes widen. They are shocked. They look at each other, unsure. Hannah spits out some more grease.

HOGBAR
How do you know the riddle?

HANNAH
Because I am THAT MAN. Eat me and
you'll die.

Hogbar and Barhog exchange glances.

HOGBAR
You're lyin'!

HANNAH
Am I? Well, you better be sure if
you're going to eat me.

Hogbar grunts and twitches whilst he thinks on Hannah's words. He looks up with a grin.

HOGBAR
Prove it!

Hannah smiles.

HANNAH
That's easy. You believe that you
gain the strength of the men you
eat...

BARHOG
(Interrupting)
...We KNOWS it!

Hannah nods in agreement.

HANNAH

Err... And the man with poisoned blood has no strength. And that's why you'll die if you eat him, Right?

HOGBAR

SO? What you sayin'?

HANNAH

So, all I have to do is prove that I've got no strength and therefore I must be the man with poisoned blood.

HOGBAR

And how are you gonna prove it?

Hannah looks around the clearing and then over to Barhog.

HANNAH

Okay, if I am who I say I am, then I wouldn't be able to lift something as heavy as say... that sword!

Hannah nods at the sword in Barhog's belt. Hogbar looks at Barhog and then the sword.

HOGBAR

It ain't that heavy.

HANNAH

Not for strong and intelligent Hobgoblins it isn't. But for me...

...Hannah frowns and shakes her head.

Hogbar thinks for a second, then grunts and nods Barhog over to him. Barhog steps closer.

HOGBAR

Givus the sword!

BARHOG

But it's mine...

HOGBAR

(Interrupting)

...GIVIT!

Barhog hisses angrily and holds out the sword. Hogbar drops his pole, takes the sword, turns and starts to cut the rope that is tied around Hannah.

HOGBAR
 (As he cuts the rope)
 Any funny stuff and I'll slit your
 belly.

Hogbar finishes cutting the rope and steps back. Hannah rubs her wrists and gives the Hobgoblins a nervous smile.

Hogbar sticks the point of the sword into the ground. He nods at the sword and takes a step back.

Hannah steps forward and wipes her greasy hands on her trousers. Both Hobgoblins stare at her menacingly.

Hannah takes hold of the sword. She groans and moans for a few seconds, attempting to lift the sword, yet failing.

BARHOG
 He is the one. The weakling with
 poisoned blood. The one that would
 kill us.

Hogbar turns and looks at Barhog...

...As he does, Hannah lifts the sword and swings it at Hogbar's neck. Hogbar's head is cut from him and sent bouncing across the woodland clearing.

Barhog SCREAMS in shock and terror, backing off as Hannah advances on him.

He turns to run, but Hannah is too quick. She thrusts the sword into Barhog's back and straight through him. Barhog CRIES out and slumps to the floor (Sword still in him).

Ordeal over, Hannah SIGHS. She looks at the corpses, and around the clearing.

HANNAH
 (To herself)
 Now, how do I get home?

Staring at the fire, she notices The Book Of Forgotten Fables. It is on the edge of the fire and slightly burnt.

She runs over to it and rescues it from further damage. She pats out the burning area as best as he can, MOANING at the heat on her hands.

She looks at the book, thinking on what to do next, and then realises...

HANNAH
(To herself)
...The end! Change the end.

Hannah quickly skips through the pages to find the story. She frantically mumbles/reads through the pages and stops. She relaxes and gives a smile.

HANNAH
(Reading out loud)
Barhog's lifeless body twitched at
Jack's feet...

Hannah steps closer to Barhog so that his dead body is by her feet. Barhog's body twitches. Hannah looks up from the book, thinking, and making up a new ending.

HANNAH
Err... Jack turned and made her...
His... way to the fire.

Hannah walks over to the fire.

HANNAH
With the Hobgoblins dead, Jack's surroundings began to fade. Fade and...

...The trees begin to dim around Hannah and the surroundings fade to a blur...

HANNAH
...And return Jack to the safety of his home once more.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT.

We are back in the living room, where Hannah has obviously dozed off (as she had before).

Thunder RUMBLES, waking Hannah with a start. Once again, the book falls from her lap and onto the floor.

Hannah takes a deep breath and rubs the sweat from her forehead. She grimaces at a bad taste in her mouth.

She leans down and picks up the book. Looking at it for a second, she snaps it shut and puts it back into the box she had originally pulled it from.

She stands up, and with a SIGH, turns for the door.

HANNAH

That's enough of that. It's way past my bedtime.

Hannah turns off the light and steps out of the living room.

The hallway/landing light clicks on and a shaft of light from the living room doorway illuminates the box and book.

A strange breeze blows the heavy cover open, and the breeze flicks through the pages of the book. They stop on a titled page...

BED BUGS

As the hallway/landing light turns off, and the living room falls into darkness, the title begins to glow. A few seconds later we can hear the sound of insect-like feet SCUTTLING from somewhere nearby.

FADE OUT:

THE END