

THE GAME

Written by

Tristan Dochterman

OVER BLACK:

The sound of a distinct, sharp WHISTLE.

EXT. UPSCALE SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD - DUSK

A chubby-cheeked DANIEL (12) whips his head around his shoulder at the end of the cul-de-sac.

Suddenly, three small silhouettes barrel down the street, smacking their bare feet on pavement in rapid succession.

Two of the boys race neck to neck while the largest lags behind by a house or two.

One of the boys takes the lead and crosses a particular mailbox. They all stop running.

The winner throws his skinny arms high in the air like an olympic gold medalist. This is DYLAN (13). He pushes back his flowing mane and fans out his baseball t-shirt.

DYLAN

That's right... Suck it losers!

The brace-faced runt, KYLE (11), stands next to Dylan with his hands holding onto the back of his head.

KYLE

Dude, come on... That's gross.

Daniel removes his sweat-drenched shirt and carries it as he walks towards the other boys. His plump tummy jiggles like a tub of gelatin with every panting breath.

DANIEL

Nice head start you FREAKIN' cheater!

DYLAN

Ok, well maybe next time we'll make KFC the finish line you FAT-ASS!

Dylan and Kyle giggle as they watch Daniel.

Daniel finally catches up to the boys. He raises two middle fingers, one for each of his friends.

Dylan and Kyle try not to laugh.

KYLE

You good man?

DANIEL
Shut up, Kyle.

Dylan scoops Daniel's sweaty titty.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
The frick!

DYLAN
Just wondering if they were real.

DANIEL
Realer than your Mom's, Dildo - I
would know.

OHHHH! DYLAN OHHHH! KYLE

DANIEL
Yeah, you boys are just jealous you
don't have this kind of muscle.

KYLE
Yeah, "muscle."

Daniel flexes.

DANIEL
Damn straight.

DYLAN
If that's what you want to call it.

DANIEL
Yeah, yeah. Very frigin funny. Are
you douchebags going to be on
later?

DYLAN
(to Kyle)
Well, that depends. Are we going to
be on later Kyle?

Kyle rolls his eyes.

KYLE
It's not my fault she doesn't let
me play M games!

Dude. DYLAN Dude. DANIEL

KYLE
The eff am I supposed to do?!

DYLAN
Man up pussy!

DANIEL
Yeah, Kyle. I'm worried...

Daniel peers over to Dylan in complete seriousness.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
We're both worried.

KYLE
About what?

DANIEL
Well... We're starting to think you
might have a vagina, Kyle.

Kyle charlie horses Daniel's arm. Daniel and Dylan laugh.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
Look, all I'm trying to say is if
you just tried a little harder,
that bitch would definitely cave.

KYLE
"That bitch" is my *mom*, asshole.

DANIEL
Probably explains why you're such a
bitch then.

KYLE
At least I get bitches, *Daniel*.

DANIEL
Katherine's paid to hang out with
your ass. That doesn't count.

DYLAN
Wait... doesn't that make her your
babysitter?

KYLE
Whatever man. Look, I'll ask my mom
again. All-right? You douchers
happy?

Kyle takes in a deep breath and sighs.

KYLE (CONT'D)
But no promises, all-right?

Kyle high fives and fist bumps Dylan and Daniel and runs up to the open garage of the house they stopped at. As Dylan and Daniel walk away, Kyle enters the garage.

Daniel and Dylan walk further down the street. Daniel puts his shirt back on.

DANIEL

Dude, I swear. Kyle's gonna pussy out on us again like he-

Dylan whips his head up at something in front of them.

DYLAN

Yo wait, is that uh... Mrs. Green... At your door?

Daniel looks over in the same direction, unamused.

DANIEL

Yeah, so what?

DYLAN

...Nothin.

DANIEL

Have you been riding the short bus? We just passed your house idiot.

Dylan nervously laughs. The color rushes from his face.

DYLAN

Oh shit, yeah I need to start wearing a helmet around or something.

DANIEL

Have you actually seen one with a helmet on before? I feel like that's a myth or something.

DYLAN

I don't know man. See ya.

Dylan speed walks back to the house they just passed, looking over his shoulder the entire way.

DANIEL

Later weird-ass!

Daniel shakes his head back and forth in confusion.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
 (under his breath)
 The frick.

EXT. FRONT PORCH - NIGHT

MRS. GREEN (75), a rather stocky, old woman with spectacles seemingly thicker than the bottoms of shot glasses stands underneath the cracked porch light near the front door.

She clenches the leash of her squirming rat dog a little too tightly. His bone-shaped name tag reads WILLY.

Willy barks like he has Tourettes. Mrs. Green clenches her teeth together as she barks back in a raspy, decrepit tone.

MRS. GREEN
 Shut up, Willy. *Shut up!*

She kicks Willy in the ribs. He stops barking and whimpers.

DANIEL (O.S.)
 Mrs. Green?

Mrs. Green whips her head over to Daniel who walks up the steps to the front porch.

MRS. GREEN
 Where is your mother? I've been waiting for twenty minutes!

DANIEL
 Uh... I'm not sure, but uh-

MRS. GREEN
 But what, *boy?*

DANIEL
 But, you can come inside and wait if you'd like... I'm sure she'll be back pretty soon.

She nods as she turns around and pushes towards the front door. Her foot gets caught on the edge of the doormat.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
 Watch out, everyone trips on that.

Mrs. Green squints her eyes at Daniel.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
 Just saying.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

In excruciating silence, Daniel and Mrs. Green sit on opposite couches.

The only audible presence emanates from the swinging pendulum of the grandfather clock in the corner of the room.

She slowly pets Willy in her lap as she stares at Daniel, who looks visibly uncomfortable.

DANIEL

Well, can I get you something to drink Mrs. Green? ... Uh, water?

Yet she remains eerily still in the darkening room, staring through the thick lenses of her bifocals, petting Willy.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

All-right, well, it's been nice seeing you. I'm actually going to play Xbox up-

MRS. GREEN

Have you ever met my son?

Mrs. Green pulls the drawstring of the lamp next to the couch and leans closer to Daniel. *Click*. The dim light accentuates trenches of wrinkles that run across her pale face.

Before Daniel can answer, she scrambles for something in her handbag. Daniel rolls his eyes and checks the time on the grandfather clock: 6:50.

DANIEL

(uninterested)

No...

She stops digging and raises an old school photo from the purse. She stares at the photograph lovingly.

MRS. GREEN

You see... Today's his birthday.

Daniel shakes his head while yawning.

MRS. GREEN (CONT'D)

Yes, my little Billy... Well... See for yourself.

She hands Daniel the decaying picture. He looks at it.

MRS. GREEN (CONT'D)
Such a good boy, my *Billy*-

Her words begin to drown out as Daniel notices the uncanny resemblance between the boy in the photograph and himself.

He flips over the picture over and finds a written date: *September 7th, 1970*. Daniel's hand begins to shake.

Hiding behind a forced smile, Daniel hands the picture back.

DANIEL
That's real nice, Mrs. Green.

Daniel swallows hard. A smile, pencil thin, curls up at the edge of Mrs. Green's lip.

MRS. GREEN
You know, I think I'll have that glass of water now.

DANIEL
Sure, I'll be right ba-

MRS. GREEN
Don't worry sweetie, I'll help myself. You stay right here.

Mrs. Green rises unsteadily from the couch, tossing Willy aside on the carpet in the process.

She slowly makes her way to the kitchen. When passing Daniel, she runs her bony, pallid fingers across his shoulder.

Willy stares up at Daniel, shaking underneath the coffee table in-between the two couches.

We hear Mrs. Green rifling through the cabinets in the kitchen. Daniel worriedly looks up at the clock again: *7:10*.

In a cold sweat, Daniel rises and runs up the staircase.

Willy's Tourettes start to act up again.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Daniel creeps into a dark room while looking over his shoulder. A landline rests upon a nightstand.

He approaches it and extends his hand onto the receiver.

A familiar hand abruptly latches onto the boy's shoulder. A raspy voice emerges from the darkness.

MRS. GREEN
Dinner will be ready in a minute,
my sweet boy.

Daniel grunts in pain as the old woman's grip tightens.

MRS. GREEN (CONT'D)
Put it down. Now.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Mrs. Green escorts Daniel down the stairs by his neck. Daniel breaks into tears.

DANIEL
M...Mrs. Green, my mom will be back
any minute. You probably won't even
hear her because she drives a
Prius, so she could be-

Mrs. Green leans in close to his ear and grits her teeth.

MRS. GREEN
Shut up, *Billy.*

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Folky 1970s rock plays.

Daniel sits with duct tape restraints wound tightly around his wrists to the arms of the chair at a large dining table, bawling like a baby. A clean plate sits in front of him.

An overwhelming pollution of raw meats, cracked eggs, and boxes of cooking ingredients are littered all over the floor.

Willy's tail wags as he feasts on the scraps.

Mrs. Green stands near the burner, scrambling a full pan of congealed eggs.

She plops the entire pan onto Daniel's plate.

MRS. GREEN
I don't care what the doctors say
Billy, you're a healthy young boy.
*They don't know what they're
talking about.*

She picks up the spoon next to his plate and force feeds him.

Daniel grimaces as he spits out the eggs onto the table.

MRS. GREEN (CONT'D)
 GOD DAMNIT BILLY, YOU NEED TO EAT!

She chucks the spoon across the kitchen and grunts loudly in frustration. She begins to pace around the room.

DANIEL
W...Why are you doing this?

Mrs. Green pulls the chair out next to Daniel and leans in close, her face shaking in anger.

MRS. GREEN
 Because you need to get better.
 This isn't easy for me either, ok
 sweetie?

She wipes away her tears and stares down at the ground.

MRS. GREEN (CONT'D)
 Ever since your father left, you're
 the only thing that I have left in
 this world... Don't leave me Billy,
please, don't leave like him.

Mrs. Green runs her fingers across Daniel's puffy face, wiping away his rushing tears.

DANIEL
 I...I...

MRS. GREEN
 Shhh, shhh, my sweet boy. Save your
 strength. You're going to need it.

Mrs. Green shoots back up to her feet and walks over to the counter. She unsheathes a large kitchen knife and begins chopping up vegetables.

Daniel's wrists squirm underneath the table in attempts to break free. It's no use.

DANIEL
 My mom's gonna be back soo-

Mrs. Green swarms back over to the table, knife raised.

MRS. GREEN
 Your mother is right here, *Billy*.
 And if anyone were to tell me any
 different...

She SIGHS.

MRS. GREEN (CONT'D)

I just love you so much. You know
that's why I get so angry, right?

She places the knife on the table, inches away from Daniel's grasp, and hugs him. She kisses the top of his head repeatedly and smiles.

Daniel shakes in absolute terror.

Mrs. Green returns back to the kitchen, leaving the knife.

Daniel's eyes shift between the knife and Mrs. Green's back.

MRS. GREEN (CONT'D)

So Billy, are you having a good
birthd-

Suddenly, several deafening KNOCKS emerge from the front door.

She turns to an empty seat at the dinner table. Then to Daniel who stands petrified like a statue near the hallway.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The folky 1970s rock music returns.

Mrs. Green runs after Daniel with the knife in SLOW MOTION. Willy follows with scraps all over his face.

DANIEL'S POV: Kyle exuberantly jumps up and down in the air, proudly displaying his brand new copy of Grand Theft Auto in the glass of the front door.

Daniel screams inaudibly at Kyle while flailing his arms in the air and shaking his head.

Kyle stops celebrating and his eyes go wide in panic. He pushes the door open for Daniel and backs up.

EXT. FRONT PORCH - NIGHT

Mrs. Green swipes and misses Daniel with the knife as he ungracefully leaps from the doorway with terror in his eyes.

Kyle and Daniel scream as they run down the porch together.

Mrs. Green runs out the doorway with her knife raised, but she trips on the doormat on the way out.

The boys turn their heads over their shoulders as they run.

The knife plunges through Mrs. Green's eye on the way down, and the ground hammers the blade through her skull.

The boys stand in the middle of the street, staring at the fresh corpse.

The handle protrudes from her face as a pool of blood puddles around her head. Willy stands in the blood, barking.

Kyle loses the grip on his game. It plummets to the pavement.

Suddenly, a loud HONK. The boys jump.

There's a Prius a few feet away in the middle of the street. The boys peer over to the car, jaw dropped.

DANIEL'S MOM (35) pops her head out the window.

DANIEL'S MOM
Hey knuckleheads what are you
doing?! Get out of the street!

They just stand there, shifting their heads between the body and the car in complete shock.

DANIEL'S MOM (CONT'D)
Daniel knock it off! I gotta park!

BLACK