

Noise Complaint
By Lauren Fourcade

FADE IN:

INT. KAITLYN'S APARTMENT - EVENING

KAITLYN (20), a stubborn and independent realist, and RYLIE (21), a perpetually tired person, lay sprawled on the couch as they watch TV and eat ramen noodles. Stacks of boxes surround them. The TV sits on a crate.

Kaitlyn's phone vibrates on the arm of the couch. It reads "Mom." Before she answers, she notices that Rylie sleeps, the empty noodle bowl still in her hands.

EXT. APARTMENT BALCONY - EVENING

Kaitlyn steps out to the balcony and answers the call.

KAITLYN

Hey, mom.

(beat)

Yeah, we're not quite done moving in. Big surprise, Rylie's already passed out. So I guess we'll finish tomorrow.

Kaitlyn looks down at her feet as her mom talks and notices a STUFFED BUNNY lying near the railing of the balcony. She picks it up and inspects it.

Through the glass balcony doors, Rylie wakes up and glares at the ceiling. She puts down her bowl and approaches the balcony. She opens the doors.

RYLIE

(irritated)

Kaitlyn. Come inside a sec.

Kaitlyn gives her an irritated look.

KAITLYN

Alright, sorry mom, I gotta go.
Call you tomorrow. Bye.

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Kaitlyn follows Rylie inside.

KAITLYN

What is it?

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RYLIE

The people upstairs woke me up.
Sounds like a damn giant lives up
there.

KAITLYN

Wow, that's impressive. You'd
sleep through a...

A loud banging cuts her off. Rylie motions to it in a I-told-you-so way.

KAITLYN

What do you want me to do
about it?

RYLIE

You're the confrontational one. Go
tell them to shut up.

(beat)

What's that?

Kaitlyn holds up the stuffed bunny.

KAITLYN

I found it on the balcony.
Weird, right?

Rylie loses interest. Kaitlyn tosses the bunny into a pile of
boxes. She grabs a broom.

KAITLYN

Whatever.

She bangs on the ceiling with the end of the broom. The banging
upstairs starts again in response. She does it again. Same
response.

Kaitlyn and Rylie look at each other. Game on. They bounce
tennis balls off the walls, vacuum the ceiling, sing at the top
of their lungs, and have fun with it.

The noise eventually stops. The two go to bed victorious.

INT. KAITLYN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Kaitlyn wakes to a deep screeching and rumbling from upstairs.
She tries to ignore it, but can't get back to sleep. She leaves
the room.

INT. RYLIE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Kaitlyn knocks then opens the door to Rylie's room. Rylie sleeps in her bed, unfazed by the noise. Kaitlyn closes the door.

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Kaitlyn paces around as the noise continues. She grabs the broom and bangs on the ceiling. The noise stops, but just as Kaitlyn returns to her room, it starts up again. Kaitlyn sighs and storms out of the apartment.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Kaitlyn knocks on the door of the now quiet upstairs apartment. Nothing. She knocks again. Nothing. Frustrated, she goes back to her apartment.

INT. KAITLYN'S ROOM - DAY

The next day, Kaitlyn sits in her room folding clothes. A screeching noise sounds from upstairs. Kaitlyn tries to block it out, but can't. She leaves the apartment.

INT. APARTMENT MANAGER'S OFFICE - DAY

Kaitlyn approaches the APARTMENT MANAGER (35) at his desk.

KAITLYN

Hi, I'd like to file a complaint.

The Apartment Manager grabs a form and a pencil and waits for Kaitlyn to start talking.

APARTMENT MANAGER

(sighing)

Go ahead.

KAITLYN

The apartment above me, 24B, won't stop making noise. I've tried to confront them but they won't answer their door. It's nonstop and I can't get any sleep or focus at all.

The Apartment Manager pauses as he writes.

APARTMENT MANAGER

You said 24B?

KAITLYN

Yes.

APARTMENT MANAGER

That apartment's empty.

KAITLYN

Um, no. There's clearly someone living up there.

The apartment manager puts the pencil and paper down and takes a deep breath.

APARTMENT MANAGER

Okay. Several months ago, a little girl fell from the balcony in that apartment - 24B - and died. I'll never forget that apartment number.

Kaitlyn looks shocked.

INT. APARTMENT KITCHEN - EVENING

Rylie puts a box down on the kitchen cabinet and whips out her phone. Kaitlyn follows behind her.

RYLIE

I'm calling the police.

KAITLYN

I don't think that's necessary -

RYLIE

Kaitlyn! Clearly there's some squatters up there or something! And more than one!

Kaitlyn looks up at the noise.

KAITLYN

Just let me go up there and -

RYLIE

No! Are you crazy? You're lucky I'm not moving out right now - no wonder our rent is so low! A kid fucking died right above where we live, and now there's squatters in it! I'm calling the police!

Rylie hold the phone up to her ear. The noise continues above their heads. Kaitlyn, defeated, goes to sit on the couch.

KAITLYN
Okay, fine! Whatever.

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Rylie shuts the front door and turns around. Kaitlyn eats cereal and doesn't take her eyes off the TV.

KAITLYN
(through a mouthful)
Well, what did the police say?

Rylie pauses and stares ahead blankly.

RYLIE
(quietly)
They said nobody was up there.

Kaitlyn looks away from the TV and at Rylie.

KAITLYN
What?

INT. RYLIE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Rylie rushes to her room and throws clothes in a bag. Kaitlyn follows her and stops in her doorway.

RYLIE
Something's up. I'm going to stay with Molly tonight and you should come too.

KAITLYN
What, you think the place is haunted or something?

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Rylie grabs her things and shoves past Kaitlyn in the doorway. She approaches the front door.

RYLIE
Do you have a better explanation?

KAITLYN
There has to be a logical reason.

Rylie opens the front door.

RYLIE
So you're staying here? Alone?

KAITLYN

Yes.

RYLIE

Good luck. You baffle me
sometimes.

Rylie leaves and slams the door behind her. Kaitlyn sighs and throws her cereal bowl in the sink.

INT. KAITLYN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Kaitlyn lies awake in her bed. It is quiet. She eventually closes her eyes. They jolt open when the noise starts up - a deep, trembling rumble. Kaitlyn closes her eyes, pulls her sheets up, and tries to ignore it.

The noise escalates.

Kaitlyn clenches her jaw. She rises from bed.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Kaitlyn approaches the now quiet 24B. She tries the doorknob. It opens with a creak.

INT. APARTMENT 24B - NIGHT

She cautiously walks into the apartment. She tries the light - no power. As she walks inside, the cabinets begin to shake. The rumbling noise returns. The door slams shut behind her.

The ghost of CLARA LYNN (7), an innocent little girl dressed like a doll, appears several feet in front of Kaitlyn. Kaitlyn freezes. Clara Lynn looks directly at her.

CLARA LYNN

Are you my friend from downstairs?

Kaitlyn is dumbstruck and says nothing.

CLARA LYNN

I don't usually let people in
here, but you're fun. Wanna play?

Clara Lynn smiles and motions to a stuffed bunny in her hands. Kaitlyn's eyes go wide. It's the same stuffed bunny she found on her balcony. She remains frozen. Clara giggles.

CLARA LYNN

That's okay. You can watch.

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Kaitlyn watches in horror as Clara Lynn walks out onto the balcony. She crawls up the railing and sits on the edge. She makes the bunny hop along the railing, then hop through the air. Clara Lynn leans dangerously over the edge.

KAITLYN

Stop!

Clara drops her bunny over the edge in shock.

Clara Lynn freezes. The cabinets stop shaking. She turns to face Kaitlyn.

A moment of chilling silence as they look at each other. Then Clara Lynn opens her mouth and lets out a scream.

CLARA LYNN

You made me drop bunny!

KAITLYN

No, no!

CLARA LYNN

Bunny's gone!

Clara walks towards Kaitlyn. The walls shake violently. A loud ringing pierces the air.

KAITLYN

No, no, I have your bunny! I can get it for you! Just- just give me a second!

CLARA LYNN

No! You can't save bunny!

Clara lunges after Kaitlyn. Kaitlyn turns and runs.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Kaitlyn barges through the door and runs through the hallway. Clara follows. The ground rumbles and walls shake with each step.

INT. STAIRS - NIGHT

Kaitlyn jumps down the flight of stairs and lands awkwardly on her ankle. She gets up and limps to her apartment. Clara floats down the stairs after her. The noise grows louder the closer she gets.

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Kaitlyn lunges at the pile of boxes. Clara calmly walks through the door. Kaitlyn frantically rummages through the boxes.

CLARA LYNN
I thought you were my friend!

The apartment shakes violently.

CLARA LYNN
You were nice to me! You played
with me!

A pile of boxes fly across the room.

CLARA LYNN
But bunny is dead! And so are you!

Through the cacophony of noise and the violent shaking, Clara makes doors rip off the cabinets, and throws them at Kaitlyn. She whirls to face Clara and shows her the bunny.

Clara freezes. The cabinet doors fall just in front of Kaitlyn. The noise and shaking stop.

CLARA LYNN
Bunny!

She grabs the stuffed animal and hugs it. Kaitlyn lets out a shaky sigh.

Clara plays with the bunny. She laughs as she fills the bunny with her soul and disappears inside it, then emerges from it.

Clara faces Kaitlyn and hugs the bunny.

CLARA LYNN
Thank you, friend!

KAITLYN
You're... you're welcome.

Clara smiles and plays with the bunny again.

KAITLYN
Um, Clara?

Clara pauses and looks at Kaitlyn as she shakily speaks.

KAITLYN
Why do you stay in that apartment?
What do you do up there?

Clara looks at the bunny and frowns.

CLARA LYNN
I can't leave. I hide up there so
I don't scare anyone.

KAITLYN
Why can't you leave?

Clara Lynn pets the bunny.

CLARA LYNN
I don't know. I tried following
mommy and daddy when they moved
out, but I couldn't. They were so
sad. I don't know why. But they
left me there. I don't know what I
did wrong.

KAITLYN
You didn't do anything wrong.

Clara frowns and looks down.

CLARA LYNN
I just want to be with them again.
Then I'll be happy.

Kaitlyn looks at the bunny.

KAITLYN
I think I can help you.

Clara looks at her, hopeful.

KAITLYN
You know that thing you do where
you go inside the bunny? Can you
do that again?

INT. KAITLYN'S CAR - MORNING

Kaitlyn drives slowly through a higher-end suburban neighborhood. She looks out her window and squints at the mailbox numbers. She holds her phone, which displays a navigation app. The bunny lies in the passenger seat.

EXT. THE LYNN'S HOUSE - MORNING

Kaitlyn's car screeches to a halt in front of a large house.

She looks at the grand home, at her phone, and back. She furrows her brow. She exits her car and walks up to the porch, the bunny in her hand.

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EXT. THE LYNN'S FRONT PORCH - MORNING

Kaitlyn rings the doorbell. MRS. LYNN (38), answers. She looks at the bunny and her eyes go wide. She looks at Kaitlyn.

We watch from long shot of the house as MR. LYNN (36) joins them. The three exchange words. Kaitlyn hands the bunny to Mrs. Lynn. Mrs. Lynn hugs her and cries.

INT. KAITLYN'S CAR - DAY

Kaitlyn gets into her car and drives away. Mr. and Mrs. Lynn wave goodbye from their porch. Mrs. Lynn holds the bunny.

INT. KAITLYN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Kaitlyn tidies up her destroyed living room. On the TV, "BREAKING NEWS" flashes across the screen. A News Reporter (29) addresses the audience. An OTS shows a picture of the Lynn family before Clara died.

NEWS REPORTER

We interrupt your programming to bring you breaking news in the Clara Lynn case.

Clara's name makes Kaitlyn stop in her tracks and watch the TV.

NEWS REPORTER

Missy and George Lynn, parents of a 5-year-old girl that died from falling off a balcony last spring, were found murdered in their home.

Kaitlyn's eyes go wide.

NEWS REPORTER

The case has also been reopened, as investigators found evidence of foul play on the parent's behalf concerning their daughter's death.

Kaitlyn drops the box in her hands. Shock washes over her face.

NEWS REPORTER (O.S.)

The Lynn's unusually hefty life insurance policy is suspected to have motivated the couple to lure their daughter off of their apartment balcony.

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INT. THE LYNN'S BEDROOM - DAY

Mr. and Mrs. Lynns's bodies lie bloodied and mutilated in their bed as investigators and police rush about. The stuffed bunny sits on a chair in the corner of the room. It shakes ever so slightly.

FADE TO BLACK.