

APPENDICES

SYNOPSIS OF *ORPHAN*

Kate Coleman (Vera Farmiga) and John Coleman (Peter Sarsgaard) are experiencing strains in their marriage after Kate's third child - "Jessica" - was stillborn. The loss is particularly hard on Kate. As a coping mechanism she has scattered Jessica's ashes in their garden around a white rose bush, with a plaque to remember her by. They adopt Esther (Isabelle Fuhrman), a 9-year-old Russian girl they had met, from the local orphanage. While Kate and John's deaf-mute daughter Max (Aryana Engineer) embraces Esther almost immediately, their son Daniel (Jimmy Bennett) is less welcoming.

Not long after Esther arrives, she pushes a schoolmate down a playground slide, who had picked on her, breaking her ankle. Max saw Esther shove the girl, but covers for Esther by saying that the girl "slipped". However, she is further alarmed when Sister Abigail (C.C.H. Pounder), the head of the orphanage, warns her and John about Esther's tendency to be around when things go wrong. Esther overhears this and later kills Sister Abigail with a hammer to the head. She convinces Max (puts a gun to her head) to help her hide the body and the hammer. Daniel sees Esther and Max descending from his treehouse from behind a rock, not knowing they hid the hammer there. Later that night, Esther threatens Daniel if he tells anyone what he saw.

Kate is told by the orphanage that they cannot find any record of the Russian orphanage Esther came from. However, John does not believe her, despite continued ominous behavior by Esther. That night, Esther deliberately picks flowers for Kate that is from Jessica's plant and Kate pushes her to the ground. Later, Esther breaks

her own arm in John's vice and convinces John that Kate broke it in the scuffle from earlier. On Esther's first day back at school, she slips Kate's SUV into neutral, nearly killing Max. Badly shaken, Kate buys two bottles of wine, but at the last minute pours one of them down the drain and leaves the other full.

Kate learns that Esther was housed at a mental institution in Estonia called the Saarne Institute, but when she expresses misgivings to John, he and her counselor think that Kate is relapsing into her drinking habit. After John produces the other bottle Kate bought the night before, he threatens to leave her unless she gets help.

Daniel learns of the hammer from Max and decides to get it and go to the police. However, Esther sets the treehouse on fire, intending to get rid of the evidence and kill Daniel. Daniel escapes by falling out of the tree, and gets a severe neck injury. Esther tries to finish him off by smashing a brick over his head, but Max shoves her out of the way just in time. Esther again tries to kill him at the hospital by smothering him with a pillow and briefly unhooking his respirator. Doctors rush into the room and manage to save Daniel. Kate, knowing what happened, furiously slaps Esther and knocks her down. Kate is immediately subdued and sedated by doctors.

That night, Esther tries to seduce a drunk and sad John. John realizes Kate was telling the truth all along and threatens to call the orphanage. Esther, angry and hurt at being spurned, ransacks her room and later stabs John. Max witnesses this and hides in her laundry hamper.

As Kate is coming out of sedation, she gets a call from the Saarne Institute's director, Dr. Värava (Karel Roden), who reveals that Esther isn't a 9-year-old girl at all, but a 33-year-old woman named Leena Klammer. She has hypopituitarism, a

disorder that stunted her physical growth, and has spent most of her life posing as a little girl. The doctor tells Kate that Leena is dangerously psychotic, so Kate must protect her family. Kate rushes home, only to find John dead on the floor. Leena shoots Kate in the arm before she goes to search for Max.

Their chase takes them outside to a frozen pond, where Kate and Leena struggle as Esther attempts to stab Kate. Max is watching the struggle from above the pond. She maneuvers herself down the hill to grab the gun that was dropped during the chase, with the intent of shooting Leena. She misfires and shoots the ice instead, which cracks and both Kate and Leena fall in. Kate crawls out of the hole, followed by Leena, who begs for her life, addressing Kate as "Mommy" while hiding a knife behind her back. Kate angrily responds that she is not her mother and kicks Leena in the face, possibly breaking her neck and sending her back into the pond.