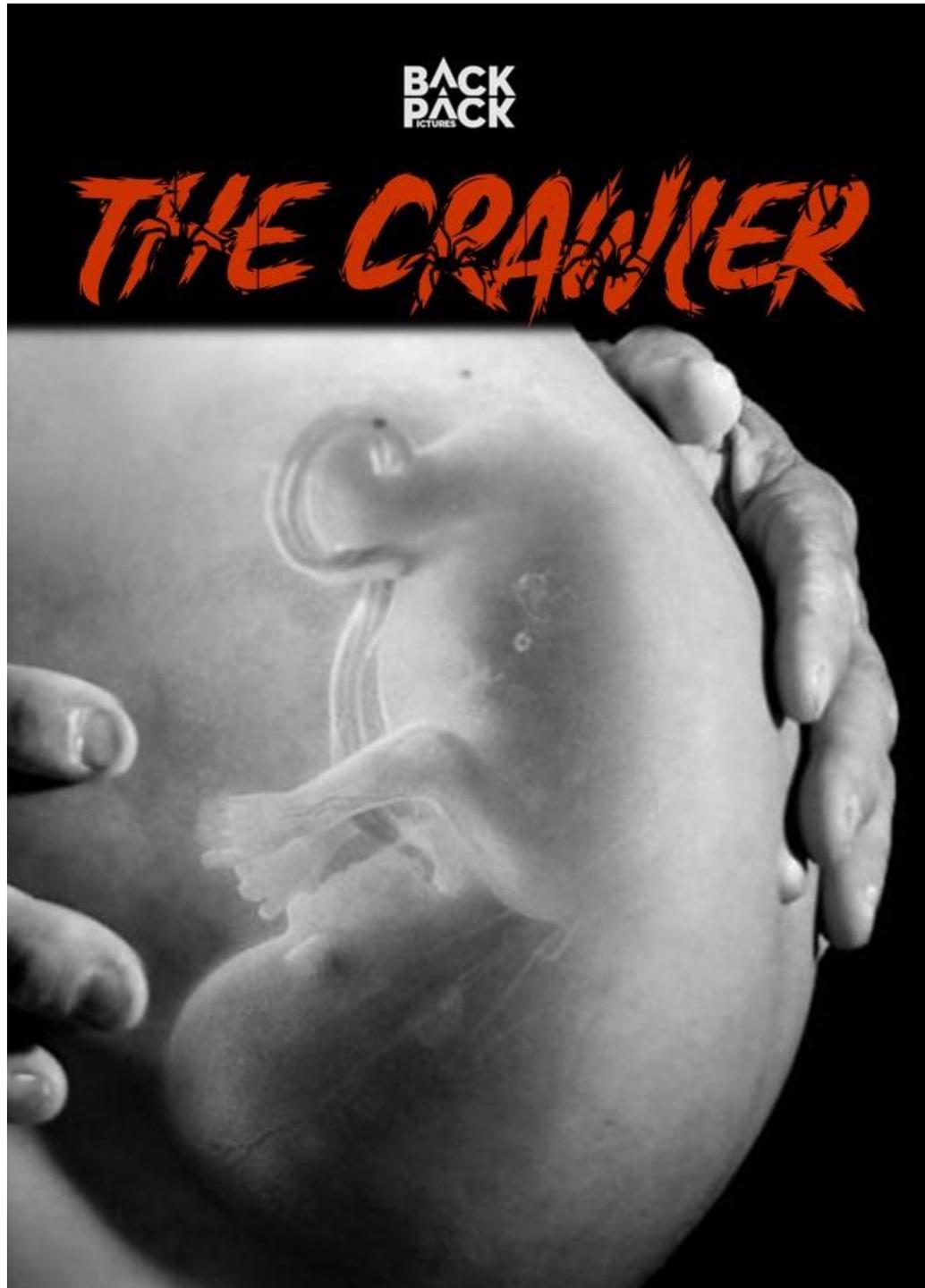


The Crawler

Scénario : Thomas Douglas Mann



Backpack Pictures

Synopsis

« A pregnant couple is tormented by a mysterious creature who haunts them with visions of their past and their future while seeking to hurt their unborn child. »

Synopsis long

In a dingy public toilet, a BEDRAGGLED WOMAN overdoses and dies. From her mouth, a haunting CREATURE crawls out. It has the body and legs of a spider, the tail of a rat and scorpion stings at the tip of each leg. It disappears into the shadows. Cut to –

CIARA and DERMOT COLLINS, both 28, are a happily married couple who are expecting their first child. She is a professional football (soccer) player who harbours desires to resume her playing career after the birth. He is an up-and-coming architect who is on the cusp of getting his first big project, a prominent multi-storey office building that he has nicknamed “Jessica.”

Ciara grew up not wanting children so is anxious about parenthood due to her own turbulent childhood. She recalls the things she would do to spite her Mum which included small things like placing kale leaves in her sofa cushions, so that the house smelt putrid, to more severe acts, such as burning down her mother’s beloved allotment shed. Dermot, who has always wanted kids, tries to ease Ciara’s mind telling her that she is a changed woman, but the feelings linger.

One night, the Creature crawls into the couple’s bedroom, and pricks Ciara on the back of the neck with one of its scorpion stings, while she sleeps, causing a painful insect sting to form.

With Dermot at work, Ciara is left alone at the house each day. As the sting on her neck worsens, she begins to hear crawling noises within the walls and have visions of the Bedraggled Woman.

Ciara also meets her newly moved in neighbour, KAREN, an angry 40 year old, who berates Ciara for not controlling “that girl”... yet a couple of days later, the doorbell rings, and Ciara is shocked to be greeted by a friendly Karen, in her mid-20s, who offers her some apple crumble as they meet for the first time since Karen and her family moved in opposite.

Unnerved, Ciara tells Dermot about the strange occurrences, but he puts it down to her body changing during the pregnancy and the stress this is inducing.

The next day, Ciara discovers a trail of rotten fruit in the garden. She follows the trail into their shed where she is attacked by the Bedraggled Woman who locks her inside and sets it alight!

Through the shed window, Ciara can make out the identity of the arsonist... it is her teenage self, as she was when she set her own Mum’s shed on fire years before. In the nick of time, Karen’s husband OLIVER saves Ciara before she passes out from the smoke.

Dermot arrives home and is horrified by what happened. Smelling something, Dermot finds rotten kale leaves in their sofa cushions. The fire? The kale leaves? Dermot accuses Ciara of recreating her childhood. Upset, Ciara claims that she is being haunted by her younger self who is trying to hurt the baby she never wanted when she was younger. Stressed-out, Dermot spends the night in the spare bedroom to prepare for his huge "Jessica" presentation the next day. 2 The next day, Ciara finds that the previously bare walls of the house are now crammed with family photos from the future. They show how after the birth of their child, Ciara and Dermot's marriage crumbles and Dermot marries a BEAUTIFUL WOMAN. They also reveal that the Bedraggled Woman from the open is their adult unborn daughter! As Ciara struggles to take this in, the Bedraggled Woman appears and startles Ciara, causing her to fall down the stairs and slam to the ground, hard.

Having won the project, Dermot returns home to celebrate, but discovers Ciara on the floor, unconscious. They rush to hospital where Ciara gives birth to their daughter – HAYLEY. Dermot is over the moon, but having seen a glimpse into the apparent future, Ciara is cold.

As they start their new lives as parents, Ciara digs deep and works hard to be a good parent... while Dermot struggles to adapt his previously outgoing lifestyle to the restraints of parenthood.

One night, the Creature stings Dermot on the neck, as it did with Ciara, which causes Dermot to begin to have visions. Every night when Hayley cries, Dermot volunteers to stay up with her. And every night he takes her down into the basement where he imagines a friendly bar, where he can relax and drink like he did before his daughter's birth.

As Dermot's mental state deteriorates, he finally admits to Ciara that he has also seen things. Emboldened by his support, Ciara talks to the Creature, who shows her proof that "Jessica" is not the name of Dermot's building but is instead the name of a colleague that he is having an affair with who Ciara recognises as the Beautiful Woman that Dermot gets married to in the future.

Horrified, Ciara takes Hayley and leaves.... but once again Ciara is confronted by an older Karen, who accuses Hayley of bullying her son. Ciara turns and sees 10-year-old Hayley beside her. Horrified, Ciara is led through a haunting series of visions that show Hayley's troubled life, leading to her death at 20 after overdosing on the floor of the public toilet, from the open.

Back at the house, Dermot is visited by 20-year-old Hayley, who he does not recognise. She flirts with him and reveals how a lot of her problems were due to her relationship with her father. Dermot feels sorry for her... until she transforms into the Creature, revealing her true identity.

Hayley had lived a painful life full of addiction. When she died, the Creature was spawned to go back and stop her from being born and cut off the pain at the source. Creature Hayley instructs Dermot to hand baby Hayley to her, so that the Creature can

make the baby disappear. This way Hayley gets what she wants (to not be born) and they get back their former happy lives.

When Ciara returns home with Hayley, Dermot attempts to hand his daughter to the Creature... but Ciara stops him. Dermot breaks down. They attempt to kill the Creature and manage to badly injure it... before the Creature gets its hands on Hayley and crawls down into their basement.

Entering the basement, Dermot and Ciara are shown visions of their younger, happier selves before Hayley was born. 20-year-old bedraggled Hayley appears and begs her parents to just let her die. Faced with this, Dermot refuses to kill the Creature, saying they made a mistake having a child. Horrified, Ciara kills the Creature and tells Dermot that she will raise their daughter alone.

Five years later. Dermot is a successful architect, married to Jessica, who is now pregnant. Across the street, a worn-out looking Ciara watches, as 5-year-old Hayley calls for her Mum from o.s.

The End.

Note d'intention de l'auteur

THE CRAWLER is a supernatural horror feature that delves into the complex internal anxieties of impending parenthood as well as the skin-crawling external fear of home invasions and arachnophobia via our titular terrifying spider-like creature.

Ciara and Dermot are a young married couple who are expecting their first child. Brought up by a single mother, Ciara has always been unsure about whether she wants to have children. When she got pregnant, she was forced to put her career as a professional footballer on hold, potentially forever. Dermot is an architect who is on the verge of landing his breakthrough project. Brought up in a large family by a pair of loving parents, he has always wanted children and is excited for this next step in their lives.

However, as the pregnancy progresses, they both experience increasingly more troubling visions of their pasts, their wretched futures as parents and of a mysterious bedraggled young woman while also being tormented by the spider-like creature who lurks within their house.

Ultimately, it is discovered that the spider-like creature was birthed from the corpse of their teenage daughter who is revealed to be the bedraggled young woman who has been haunting them.

In the future, after their daughter's birth, Ciara and Dermot's marriage crumbled due to infidelity and growing mutual distain, which lead to a troubled childhood for their daughter whose life was riddled with depression and addiction, until it tragically ended when she overdosed at 18-years old.

Harbouring all the pain that the daughter felt throughout her life, the creature returned to before she was born to try and prevent the child's birth, so that it can end the suffering before it begins.

Faced with the terrible truth of their family's future, Dermot and Ciara must make the hardest decision a parent could imagine. Should they stop the suffering before it starts or accept their fate?

Combining poignant psychological familial drama with a constant sense of dread and paranoia fuelled scares, THE CRAWLER meshes an extremely marketable central premise with incredibly common and powerful themes to create a story that has the potential to be a standout entry in the horror genre with a huge scope for further instalments.

As the writer, I believe that the universal appeal of the themes (fear of parenthood, fear of creepy crawlies) and the horrifying threat of the central creature make for a story that can succeed in terrifying an audience on a spine-tingling horror level and a psychologically dramatic level.