Synopsis:
In the warm embrace of sleep, the Dreamwalker will reap.

Cast:
EMMA: Graduate student. Recently struggling with nightmares. Masks her fear with a thin veil of confidence and positivity.

BRIAN: Wealthy accountant, coffee addict. Every time he sleeps he has the same nightmare. Brian no longer sleeps. Forced to attend a support group by his wife.

NORA: Struggling artist. While searching for inspiration, she found something else. Nora hasn't had a full night of sleep for weeks. Reality and dream have begun to blend together.

LUCAS: Leader of a support group for insomniacs.

EXTRA1 (Avery): Attends support group.

EXTRA2: Attends support group.

WIFE: Brian's concerned wife.

DREAMWALKER: One specific audience member. Can be identified by seat number (e.g. 4th from the left).

The Set:
All set items remain onstage for the duration of the play.

Bedrooms: Three distinct sections of the stage (platforms?)
- EMMA's Bedroom: Bed, Nightstand
- BRIAN's Kitchen: Large table, Clock
- NORA's Studio: Desk, Canvas

Support Group: Seven chairs arranged in a semicircle. Center stage. Number of chairs is important because one person should be missing from the support group's first meeting. As the show progresses, more and more will go missing from the semicircle.

Note:
[DREAMWALKER description] is a description of the DREAMWALKER that is agreed upon by the cast prior to the start of the show. Identifiers could include: shirt/hair color, haircut and facial hair, glasses. Strive for spooky but unoffensive.
SCENE 1: BEDROOMS - NIGHT

Lights down. EMMA, BRIAN, and NORA are in their own homes, on separate parts of the stage. EMMA lies in her bed dreaming. BRIAN sits at his kitchen table with a pot of coffee. NORA has dozed off, head against a blank canvas.

EMMA Screams.

Lights up (only) on EMMA. She cowers in one corner of her bed staring at the DREAMWALKER. Gradually, she comes to her senses and attempts to sleep. Lights down.

Lights up on BRIAN. He looks at his watch.

BRIAN
(Drifting Off)
Two, no, three twenty-six. Only one hour and forty-four minutes until sunrise.

BRIAN Takes a gulp of coffee and puts his head in his hands. Lights down.

Lights up on NORA. Suddenly, she awakens in a jolt, grabs a piece of paper and begins to scrawl a rough sketch of DREAMWALKER. Lights down.
SCENE 2: SUPPORT GROUP - EVENING

Lights up. All but LUCAS are sitting in a semicircle of seven chairs. One is empty and LUCAS is standing in front of his chair.

LUCAS
Thank you for the update Avery, I am glad you are seeing improvement with the Ambien and light therapy.

LUCAS checks his watch.

Well it looks like we have time for one more person. EMMA, would you like to tell us what you’ve been going through?

LUCAS sits as EMMA stands.

EMMA
Well, first off, I would just like to say how thankful I am for this group. Without hearing about your successes, I don't know if I would have the courage to turn the lights off.

I guess my troubles began around two or three weeks ago. Every night, I wake up to a feeling of pressure on my chest. I struggle but can't move a single muscle. That's when I see it. A dark figure sitting in the corner of my room... watching me, smiling.

Recently, my "shadow" has grown more ambitious. Every night, it lurches forward. Closer and closer every time I close my eyes. I, I know it's not real but I just can't bear to think what will happen when it reaches me.

EMMA shudders as she returns to her seat. Lights down.
SCENE 3: BEDROOMS - NIGHT

EMMA, BRIAN, and NORA are in their own homes. EMMA is awake in her bed with her covers strewn about. BRIAN sits at his kitchen table holding a clock, with a near-empty pot of coffee and many mugs. NORA sits before a canvas on which she has sketched a figure. Small piles of sketches are scattered on her desk.

Lights up on EMMA. She hyperventilates as she scrambles to hide beneath her covers. Lights down.

Lights up on BRIAN. He traces the second hand on his clock as it moves. WIFE watches him from the corner, concerned. Lights down.

Lights up on NORA. With a pencil in hand, she stares into the eyes of the figure she has drawn on her canvas. Her grip tightens until the pencil snaps. Lights down.
SCENE 4: SUPPORT GROUP - EVENING

Lights up. All but LUCAS are awkwardly sitting in the support semicircle (SEVEN chairs total). Lucas is missing, two chairs are empty. BRIAN is growing increasingly impatient.

EMMA
(Making Small-talk)
Do you have any plans for the holid-

BRIAN
(Interrupting Her)
Alright, if this guy isn't going to show up, I am outta here.

BRIAN stands up and begins to head offstage.

EMMA
(Desperately)
I'm sure he just got stuck in traffic, why don't you stay just a bit longer?

BRIAN
I'll tell you what I told my wife. This whole masturbatory "feelings" circle thing isn't doing it for me.

BRIAN continues walking.

EMMA
I know you haven't really engaged with the group but I don't think you have ever given us a shot. You can't expect us to solve your problems if we don't even know what they are!

BRIAN
Oh what? You want me to share my shitty little story?

EMMA nods.

BRIAN (cont'd)
OK fuck it. (mockingly) My name is BRIAN and I have Insomnia.

BRIAN returns to his seat.

BRIAN (cont'd)
Every time I nod off, I have the same nightmare.

(MORE)
BRIAN (cont'd)
Consequently, I haven't slept in two weeks. My wife is sick of me and now I'm here. We good?

NORA
(Quietly)
What do you see when you sleep?

Brian gulps as he begins to recall his nightmare.

BRIAN
Well it starts differently every time. I usually don't even realize that I'm in it. I always end up in a crowd of people. I am surrounded on all sides and yet I feel alone. Everything is unbearably cold. I try to call out but my words freeze in my throat. As I look around, I notice that everyone has their backs turned to me. Everyone except for (him/her). Before I can get a good look, the (man/woman) runs at me. I weave in and out through the faceless masses but am never fast enough. I fall onto the icy ground and feel an agonizing pain, as if my skin is being peeled from my body. Then... Then I wake up.

Happy?

The group is stunned.

Brian storms offstage. Lights down.
SCENE 5: BEDROOMS - NIGHT

EMMA, BRIAN, and NORA are in their own homes. EMMA sits next to her bed, which has been stripped of its covers. She fiddles with what appears to be all of the lights she owns (night lights, Christmas lights, etc.) BRIAN is curled up under his kitchen table with a knife. NORA is face down on her desk among large (more than previous) piles of sketches.

Lights up on EMMA. She murmurs [DREAMWALKER description] as she connects cables, then flicks on her array of lights. She continues murmuring even as (spot) lights go down.

Lights up on BRIAN. He murmurs [DREAMWALKER description] in unison with EMMA. He looks at his clock (which has just struck 3 AM) and uses his knife to etch a tally mark into an already riddled table leg (one for each hour of darkness). He continues murmuring even as lights go down.

Lights up on NORA. She murmurs [DREAMWALKER description] in unison with the other two in her sleep. Lights down. All stop murmuring.
SCENE 6: SUPPORT GROUP - EVENING

Lights up. ONLY EMMA, BRIAN, and NORA are sitting in support semicircle. Four chairs are empty. The trio is wide-eyed and shaken. BRIAN is pacing.

NORA pinches herself over and over again. She stares at the DREAMWALKER.

EMMA
I lit up my whole fucking room and it was still there, salivating.

BRIAN
(Shivering)
I really should have brought a sweater or something...

NORA
(Repeating Quietly)
This isn't real, this is NOT real...

EMMA
This time, I actually got a good look at it, at (him/her).

BRIAN
(Interrupting her)
What did you bring NORA?

BRIAN snatches NORA's sketchbook and looks through its contents.

EMMA
(He/she) was [DREAMWALKER description]

BRIAN
Oh shit shit shit!

BRIAN drops the sketchbook, (realizing that the drawings match the description) and staggers backward into the audience. He tries to speak but his words "freeze in his throat."

EMMA cocks her head to look at the sketchbook, then recoils in shock, frozen with fear.

NORA's muttering grows louder.

BRIAN finally manages to emit a whimper.
BRIAN (cont'd)
(To The Audience)
wh, who are you?

BRIAN sprints away and stumbles in front of the DREAMWALKER. As he raises his head to face DREAMWALKER, NORA's muttering turns to a shout and she lifts her hand to point at the DREAMWALKER, EMMA follows suit, then BRIAN. Lights out.

SCENE 7: FINAL - MIDNIGHT

Lights up and down on each of the empty "rooms." They are as they were left.

Lights up on the support group circle. All seven chairs are empty.

Lights down.