

Numbers

By

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FADE IN:

INT. TRENDY BAR - NIGHT

Sensual neon. Pumping music. Drunk patrons sit on fancy leather lounges, laughing, cheering, toasting, saying stupid things they'll regret the next morning.

Everyone seems to be having lots of fun except...

STAN (25) ambles along. Thin spectacles. Black coat. A rare blend between "geek" and "cool".

His calculating gaze scans the place, focused on something that he, and he alone can see:

Numbers. Floating over everyone's heads.

A "7" hovers over a DRINKER's head. He downs a shot, making his number climb up to "8".

A PATRON's number drops a hundred points as he pays for a drink with a hundred dollar bill.

His number regains ninety points when the CASHIER hands him his change.

Numbers reflect off Stan's glasses as he strolls along. Not a hint of surprise in his stare, he's used to seeing them.

He stops. Turns. Something caught his attention:

MILA (30's), a cold businesswoman in a suit, sits alone at a loveseat, drinking tequila like water.

The number "30" hovers over her head.

She looks up.

For a brief moment, she makes eye contact with him. Then goes back to killing brain cells.

He approaches her.

Takes a seat by her side.

She punches keys at her cellphone, doesn't even look up.

MILA

Yes, that seat is taken. Thanks for asking.

STAN

You see the numbers, don't you?

Her fingers stop texting.

STAN

You didn't look me in the eye. You were staring just above my head.

She leaves her cell on the table.

Then looks up. She sees the number "1,377" floating above Stan's head.

MILA

What's your pattern?

STAN

Pattern?

MILA

The Pattern is what limits your vision. What do you see?

STAN

There's no pattern at all.

He points at other patrons.

STAN

I see how many drinks that guy had, how much money he's got...

He points at her number.

STAN

How old people are... You look younger than thirty.

She coldly ignores the compliment.

MILA

You're a Drifter then. We all start as Drifters. Then a pattern emerges.

STAN

Why am I seeing the numbers? Where do they come from?

MILA

I met others like us but... nobody has a clue. Sorry.

STAN

So what's your pattern?

MILA

I'm a Polyg.
(off his look)
Short for "Polygraph".

She glances at the five-digit numbers she sees floating over everyone's head.

MILA
I can see how many lies people told
in their lives.

STAN
Sounds cool...

MILA
Rookies only see the good side.

STAN
Meaning?

MILA
It's not "cool" to know every time
people lie to your face.

STAN
How do I choose my pattern?

MILA
You don't. The pattern chooses you.

STAN
Any pattern I should be worried
about?

MILA
All of them.

STAN
What's the best I can hope for?

MILA
I'd rather be a Cupid. When a Cupid
sees two people with matching or
similar numbers, that's a sign of a
potentially good couple. Lets you
save your friends from nasty
divorces.

STAN
Or "ruin" their weddings.

MILA
Which I did, when I was a drifter.
Thought I was doing them a favor.

STAN
"Rookies only see the good side".

MILA
You're learning fast.

STAN

You're a good teacher. Next round
is on me.

He takes her empty glass and raises it, signalling a WAITRESS
to get them two more shots.

MILA

Wanna get me drunk, rookie?

STAN

No, it's just a courtesy.

She notices how his number goes up one unit.

MILA

Not a good idea to hit on me.

STAN

I'm not.

His number goes up again.

She can't help but smile.

MILA

You're the first adult I met with a
four-digit number. Lowest I've ever
seen. I'm impressed.

STAN

Let's drink to that.

The Waitress sets two tequila shots on the table. They waste
no time and down them.

STAN

What's the worst I can hope for?

MILA

Reapers can see how many days
you've got left before you die.
They see everyone's number drop at
midnight. It's pretty sad.

STAN

Can't they warn or help those who
are about to...

MILA

Destiny corrects itself if you try
to cheat it.

STAN

Says who?

MILA

A Reaper I met once.

Her eyes stare far away, her mood getting darker.

MILA
Let me teach you a little trick...
to turn off the numbers.

STAN
You can do that? How?

She closes her eyes, takes a deep breath.

MILA
I close my eyes... clear my mind.

He closes his eyes, trying to follow suit.

MILA
And I remember how I saw the world
before the numbers appeared.

She opens up her eyes. Looks around. No numbers in sight.

MILA
And then they're gone... at least
for a while.

He opens his eyes. Numbers are still there.

STAN
Didn't work.

MILA
Because you're missing the secret
ingredient. Pain.

For some reason, her eyes well up with tears.

MILA
But you'll have it soon enough.
Numbers always lead to pain.

He has no clue what she's talking about.

Her cellphone on the table BEEPS.

His eyes dart to the phone's digital clock - it's midnight.

When he looks up, he notices her number dropped to "29"!

She fights tears back.

MILA
Still wanna hit on me, rookie?

He just watches. Slack-jawed. No clue what to say next. And then, a sudden impulse, he kisses her.

She's taken aback, but gives in, and kisses back. The music now seems so far away. Seconds seem to stretch into minutes.

He pulls back. Eyes still closed. Breathing deeply. He opens up his eyes. Looks around:

The numbers are gone... at least for a while.

They kiss again.

FADE OUT.