

STASIS

V0.3

by

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FADE IN:

1

EXT. A RURAL, REMOTE LOCATION - DUSK

1

A rural, remote land. A small road forming a "river" as it goes--no cars, no sign of life. Gradually radio MUSIC is heard in the background getting LOUDER. A car emerges into frame.

Inside the car there's ELENA, late 20s, rich, dark hair, expressive, eyes. JEFF the driver in his early 30s, short brownish hair, relatively slim. In the back seat there is MARK, in his late 20s, longish, light hair, light eyes, well-built. They are all well-dressed, Mark being slightly more casual. Elena finds a rock station on the radio, looks tipsy.

MARK

Just leave it there, it's perfect!
Too much of this hideous wedding
music I almost threw up in there!

JEFF

You sure it was the music?

MARK

Love you too brother...

JEFF

Hey, guys, do you mind?! Not sure
if we took the right turn back
there.

MARK

Relax bro, it's still early anyway.

JEFF

We need to be at home by tomorrow
evening people. (To Elena) Can you
turn this down a notch?

Mark "massages" Jeff's neck from behind something that irritates Jeff.

ELENA

We should had stayed. Fiona told me
we can stay, we could leave in the
morning and fly back in the
afternoon.

JEFF

What?! You kidding? I shouldn't
even be here! The whole thing was..

ELENA

What Jeff?

Jeff gives Elena the look.

MARK (O.S.)
So that's the nagging after the
wedding everyone's talking about?!

Elena chuckles, Jeff looks at Mark through the mirror.

JEFF
Fuck you guys, seriously..

ELENA
Maybe you shouldn't be here then! I
just thought you could use a break.

MARK
Yeah bro, why *did* you come, anyway?

Mark exchanges a quick look with Elena through the side mirror.

2 INT. IN THE CAR, AFTER A WHILE - NIGHT

2

Some time has passed. They all seem thoughtful, a weird silence in the car. Mark is gazing outside the window as the car cruises through the dark fields while Elena puts her hand over Jeff's on the gear stick, realising he's tense.

JEFF
(in lower tone)
You better start looking for a
sign, I think we're lost, I have no
idea where we are, we should had
reached the motorway by now.

MARK
Seriously bro?

JEFF
(to Mark)
I think we took the wrong turn back
there, with all your nonsense!

MARK
You're the one who's driving
though! I offered... but you like
to lead, don't you brother?

JEFF
Are you kidding me? Look at you!
The best thing you can do is relax
back there, alright?

MARK
 (ironically, as a joke)
 Did our father ever told you you're
 a jerk?

Elena wants to chuckle but she "swallows" it. Jeff gets angry, he turns around..

JEFF
 Seriously?! Look who's talking, you
 can barely--

SUDDENLY Elena starts SCREAMING as she's looking ahead, grabs Jeff by his right arm as he speaks to Mark--a car's coming fast the other way. Jeff instantly turns his head around, tries to steer the car so they don't hit head-on.

They all SCREAM as the car slides and twirls, hitting on the hard shoulder until it comes to a halt facing the other way.

3

EXT/INT. IN THE CAR AND AROUND - NIGHT

3

A few moments later. Everyone's still, a few seconds pass by as they slowly try to come to their senses. Elena and Mark have hit their heads against the windows, there's blood, one window has cracked. Jeff still dizzy opens the compartment, takes out some tissues and attends to Elena.

JEFF
 Babe, you OK?

Elena nods to him, looking unsure of what's going on.

JEFF (CONT'D)
 You ok bro?

MARK
 What the hell happened, for a
 second I thought we hit!

When Mark says that Elena instantly turns her eyes to the left towards Mark's direction. Jeff tries and eventually manages to get out of the car, takes a look around at the dark road and pitch black fields but no one's there. Inspects the car before getting back in. The car has scratches and a bump on the side that hit the hard shoulder.

ELENA
 (speaking out of her
 window)
 Did we hit?

JEFF
 (inspecting the car)
 Yeah on the side. Can you believe
 this fucker just drove off?! (He
 quickly looks around again) You
 guys are sure you're OK?

Elena checks the tissue, sees there's some blood, looks at
 herself in the mirror, drops some water over her face. *For a
 split second* she thinks she sees a figure in the middle of
 the street, rubs her eyes but there's nothing there.

JEFF (CONT'D)
 Guys what shall we do? Talk to me!

MARK
 (trying to put some
 water on his head where
 he hit)
 Can you drive?

JEFF
 Yeah, I think.

ELENA
 Let's go then. I don't like it
 here. Let's find a gas station or
 something.

Jeff gets back in and tries the engine. It struggles but
 eventually turns on. They all look at each other to make sure
 they're good to go. Elena drinks some more water.

They slowly get going until the car disappears in the dark.

4

INT/EXT. IN THE CAR, FURTHER DOWN - NIGHT

4

Some time has passed, they have moved on. Suddenly strange
 NOISE comes from the engine. It's struggling.

JEFF
 Right, that's all we need.

ELENA
 What's wrong?

JEFF
 Wish I knew!

MARK
 This doesn't sound good!

At that moment the engine starts struggling even more and the
 car slowly comes to a halt.

MARK (CONT'D)
Yep, not good at all!

A GENERAL SHOT: the car seems to be in the middle of nowhere.

5 INT. IN THE CAR - NIGHT

5

Elena and Mark seem worried. Jeff doesn't speak for a couple of seconds, 'taps' the petrol indicator.

ELENA
Now what?

JEFF
No clue! Anyone's phone still on?

Jeff checks his mobile, seems completely 'dead'. Mark also looks at his, it's on but no signal, he nods negatively.

ELENA
I'm out of battery since the party.

JEFF
Don't you have the charger? How would we stay there overnight with no phones?

MARK
Minus two points for thinking like that!

Jeff looks angry but lets go this time.

6 EXT. OUTSIDE THE CAR, IN THE FIELDS - NIGHT

6

They get out of the car, Jeff bangs the door shutting it, Elena looks at him somewhat disturbed. We stay with Jeff and Elena as Mark walks a bit down the road.

MARK
(shouting back at them)
Hey guys, check this out!

Jeff and Elena walk up to Mark. The car's headlights lighten up a road sign further down.

ELENA
What's that?

JEFF
No idea! A motel maybe? Gas station?

MARK

One way to find out! Come on guys
let's go, just leave the car here.

Jeff walks back, turns off the lights and locks the car, then joins Elena and Mark. Elena seems wary, notices the dead silence and the absence of wind.

MARK (CONT'D)

Everything ok?

ELENA

Besides than we're in the middle of
nowhere with a broken car?

MARK

You know what I mean.

ELENA

(getting frustrated)

No Mark, I don't!

Mark says nothing. Jeff joins them, they get going.

7

EXT. BY THE MOTEL - NIGHT

7

They slowly arrive at the motel. Nothing is visible beyond a few meters, not even the car. Pitch black all around. Elena finds the entrance of the motel and the rest follow.

ELENA

(KNOCKS on the door)

Hello?! Anyone here?

They wait for a few seconds but no response, she tries to look inside the tempered door windows but it's all dark.

JEFF

(banging on the door)

Anybody here?! HELLO!!

Nothing happens. Jeff BANGS again on the door and this time a CRACK is heard and the door cracks open. They look at each other, then Elena pushes the door wide open.

8

INT. JACKTAR, ENTRANCE/RECEPTION - NIGHT

8

They walk in, Jeff closes the door behind him.

MARK

Guys you sure about this?

JEFF

Hello?! Anyone here?!

We notice some paintings on the wall, depicting brides and grooms from various time periods posing up straight with a bar in their background only they don't look happy, in fact they almost look frightened. Elena and Mark notice them.

9 INT. JACKTAR, MAIN BAR - NIGHT

9

They slowly emerge into the lobby with an old style bar at the back, almost unfitting with the rest of the place. It looks abandoned with half-empty glasses, bottles around and some MUSIC coming from inside (*Tiptoe through the tulips*).

MARK

Anyone here?

Mark starts HITTING THE BELL at the small reception desk. At first no one shows up until suddenly heavy FOOTSTEPS are heard coming from inside the room. The music SLOWLY STOPS.

10 INT. INSIDE THE BAR - NIGHT

10

A man emerges from the inside. Average height, blonde, light features, uncertain age. He's dressed in classic bartender clothes, in fact quite old-style. He walks slowly as he wipes two glasses in his hands. He places the glasses under the bar and slowly raises his head to see them.

BARTENDER

(with a smiling face)

Right, that's all done there!

The bartender looks at all three of them for a few seconds, half-smiling. Jeff comes forward, Mark and Elena stay behind.

JEFF

Thank god, we thought you're closed! Listen, we had an accident, the engine's dead and we need help.

The bartender keeps looking at them, Elena in particular.

MARK

(after a couple of seconds)

Hello! You deaf dude?

BARTENDER

It's just that we usually get couples in here. Anyway, happy to see such a happy bunch of people!

Jeff and Mark look at each other. Jeff leans over the bar.

JEFF

Can we use your phone, please?

BARTENDER

(imitating his tone)

Phone's broken, I'm afraid. No
signal around these parts too.

ELENA

And how do you communicate?

BARTENDER

They usually reach the top of the
hill and *shout* their lungs out!

The bartender loughs in a weird way.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)

Seriously though, you're far off.

MARK

From?

BARTENDER

Everywhere! (...) Oh, I'm so sorry,
where are my manners?! I'm Jack,
the keeper of this place. Wipin'
and smilin'!

He breaks a weird smile to them all.

ELENA

Glad we cleared that up!

JEFF

I'm Jeff, this is my brother Mark
and that's Elena, my fiancée.

Jack stares at Elena smiling, making her uncomfortable.

JACK

Delighted to meet you *Elena*. So,
lady, fellas what's it gonna be?

JEFF

Alright, maybe you don't get this.
We need assistance right now, not
exactly up for drinking, yeah?

JACK

(he gets three glasses
from under the bar)

I wouldn't say so, no sir!

(MORE)

JACK (CONT'D)
It's bad to be lost, I know. Trust
me, a drink can always help.

Jack starts making the drinks. Jeff and Elena sit on the stools by the bar. Mark is standing behind them.

JACK (CONT'D)
Come on then, you need it! It will
all be much clearer after that.

He winks at them as he's serving them the drinks.

Elena's the first to try, Mark smells the drink-drinks almost half of it at once. Jeff watches them closely as they do, he's thinking about having the drink or not.

JACK (CONT'D)
Marky boy, thirsty are we?! You
young man, have a future! An artist
of some sort, right?

JEFF
..yeah, of some sort!

Mark looks at Jeff as he says that.

JACK
(To Jeff) And you, you look too
tight, mate! (Leaning to Elena)
He's too tight isn't he?
Come on, you can tell me.

Elena is more aloof than the rest. He looks at Jack closely but at the same time she's off, in deep thoughts.

JEFF
How about loosing the attitude and
helping us out, Jack?!

JACK
That's exactly why I'm here Jeffy.
Relax, have a sip, or two... And
start paying more attention like
your fiancé here!

Jeff gets angry ready to retort. Elena looks like she's "back", she stands up and takes Jeff away from the bar.

ELENA
(low voice)
What are you doing Jeff? This place
is our only hope.

JACK
 (looks at them, winks)
 You got that right!

Jeff turns back to Jack.

JEFF
 Who are you, what is this place?

JACK
 I'm so glad you asked that sir. You see I can't *make you do it*. In fact all I can make is.. drinks!

JEFF
 Make me do what?

JACK
 Realise what's going on. I can't really tell you Jeffy, it doesn't work like that.

MARK
 What doesn't? You're not making too much sense dude, you know!?

JACK
Rules Marky boy, rules! I don't make them, I'm, so to speak, the executive power!

BEAT

To be honest with you I don't even know who makes them! Besides, you are the lost ones, aren't you?

11 INT. SAME PLACE, DIFFERENT POV

11

Jack 'invites' Elena closer with his finger. She approaches.

JACK
 My dearest Elena.. What a woman *you* are! Beautiful, passionate, indecisive, a true human being! Glad to be of service!

Jack kisses her hand, looks into her eyes meaningfully. Elena reacts as if she saw something in him.

JACK (CONT'D)
 (as he keeps looking
 straight in her eyes)
 March 17th. Rainy day, right Mark?

MARK
 What? What are you talking about?

JACK
 What were you up to that day Marky?

MARK
 How the hell should I remember?!
 And can you drop that "Marky" shit?

JACK
 Or what?!

Elena looks at Mark, takes a step away from the bar.

JACK (CONT'D)
 Well, Marky? Still nothing?

MARK
 No idea what are you talking about.

JACK
 Oh, but I think you have now, don't
 you? (Turns to Jeff) And you Jeffy?

JEFF
 I don't rememb... travelling maybe.
 What this has to do with anything?
 Are you going to help us or what?

JACK
 First of all, it has to do with
 everything! Second, *you are not*
paying any attention. As in strike
 two. I *am* trying to help you!

Silence for a while.

JACK (CONT'D)
 So? Business, pleasure, both?

JEFF
 What?

JACK
 Business or pleasure Jeff?

Jeff isn't sure what to reply.

ELENA
(eyes getting welled up)
You were in Chicago Jeff. The trip
I didn't want you to go, remember?

Elena starts sobbing, trying to keep it in. Jeff goes to her.

JEFF
Babe, what's wrong? What is he-

JACK
Oh, Jeffy, Jeffy! You're indeed in
the dark, aren't you my friend?!

Mark goes to the door, tries to open it but it wont.

MARK
(To himself) We gotta get outta
here. (To the rest) GUYS! Let's get
the hell out of here, right now!

JEFF
(to Jack)
No idea what are you talking about.

JACK
Well, Jeff, that's how it goes. You
had a horrible accident now, right?

MARK
(keeps trying to open
the door)
Guys why don't we just leave!
C'mon, the guy's full of shit!

JEFF
(looking aloof)
It was very close.

JACK
Too close Jeff. An accident by any
standards, I should know!

They all look at each other, Elena's looking most unsettled.
Jack looks at them one by one. Elena feels uncomfortable.

ELENA
(to Jeff)
There's something I must tell you.

Mark rejoins them at the bar, looks wary, getting sweaty.

JEFF
What is it, what's going on?

Jack in the background getting excited, breaking a smile.

Jeff walks to the bar, tries to grab Jack by his arm but Jack gets his wrist, twists it making Jeff hurt. He leans looking at him straight in his eyes.

CUT TO:

12 INT. A DIFFERENT, UNDEFINED PLACE, A LARGE DARK ROOM - NIGHT

AS IN A NIGHTMARE Jeff looks around him and suddenly he's in a different place, an empty large bedroom. In there, there is no one but Jack dressed in a black suit. His VOICE is different, devilish and rough. We notice Jeff has no mouth on his face, he moans trying to scream but he can't. Jack is walking around him slowly as he speaks.

JACK

When was the last time you fought
with your demons Jeff?
Are they teasing you enough?
Do they tell you secrets?
Spreading doubts?
DO THEY WANT YOUR SOUL?!

Jeff tries to scream in that dimension but he can't. He closes his eyes and when he opens them again...

CUT TO:

13 INT. THE BAR (CONT. FROM SCENE 11) - NIGHT

13

He finds himself with the others back at the bar. Jeff looks around. Mark and Elena just stare at him like no second has passed by before the vision. He turns to Elena.

MARK

Elena, not now, please!

Jeff looks like he starts realising something disturbing. Elena approaches him.

ELENA

I wont try to excuse myself. Not
any more, I can't bare this demon.

Jeff looks like he's remembering something.

JEFF

We had a fight before I leave.

QUICK FLASHBACK: JEFF AND ELENA ARGUING, NO SOUND. ELENA LOOKS LIKE YELLING TO HIM, JEFF LEAVES THE HOUSE HOLDING A BRIEFCASE READY TO TRAVEL. **END OF FLASHBACK.**

ELENA
Yes we did, it was about-

JEFF
It was about having children.

ELENA
I didn't expect you to remember.

Jeff takes a step back looking at both Elena and Mark.

ELENA (CONT'D)
I was desperate, I thought it was
over, that we were over.

JEFF
What are you talking about?

ELENA
When you left it was the moment I
realised all was dead! I even
thought you knew about it somehow.

Jeff keeps looking at both of them, Mark's looking at Elena.

JEFF
Know what Elena? *What?!*

Elena starts sobbing again.

ELENA
Oh, Jeff..

MARK
I'm sorry brother.

Before anyone can answer Jeff flips and grabs Mark by his neck pushing him to the wall. Mark doesn't do anything, just tries to defend himself.

JEFF
You fuck, you looser! (Punches him)
Why?! (Punches him again) *Why?!*

ELENA
Please... STOP! Now!

Jeff pushes Elena away, she falls on the floor. He wipes the blood off his hand taking a few steps back.

MARK
What the fuck bro?!

Mark helps Elena stand up again.

JEFF
(chuckling ironically)
What the fuck indeed..
Shit!

Jeff kicks a chair in the bar.

JACK (O.S.)
Shit happens Jeffy.

Elena pushes Mark off her.

ELENA
I'd take it back if I could but
it's too late Jeff.

JACK
She got you there Jeffy boy!

JEFF
And why you're here then? Why are
you still with me?

ELENA
Because I love you. And I've never
regretted that day at the café. But
I have no excuse and no will to
explain any more.

Jeff leans his back against the bar. Elena goes to him, he
pushes her away, gently this time.

JACK
You guys took this rather well, I
must say!

MARK
(walking to the bar in a
threatening way)
Who the fuck are you, anyway?
What's all this about?

JACK
I'm afraid you haven't been paying
attention too Mark and time here
has, let's just say... a value.

MARK
Whoever you are, let us out. It's
over, your job is done you sick
fuck just *let us out now!*

JACK

Sorry matey, it doesn't work like this. I'm just a jacktar, the crew. I cross people and one of you is gonna come with me this evening.

Jack signals with his arms so they all get together in the centre of the bar. He speaks quietly.

JACK (CONT'D)

Now it's time for one of you to say goodbye, I know but if you need to trust me on one thing is that this isn't my fault. Like they say, if you think life's a bitch wait until you meet death!

He winks at them.

ELENA

What do you mean? What's going on?

JACK

(changes posture)

Awful accident, I must say! Bad news one of you's dead.. Good news two of you have a chance! I'm actually impressed with that shitty car you got so in a way that's.. how to say, rather uplifting!

Elena at that moment turns around and throws up. Jack chuckles hysterically.

ELENA

How can this be.. What do you even mean, we're all here!

JACK

There's no *here*, sweetie. Jacktar's just a chance to clear things up. Reveal the truth. No way out or back, not for all of you, anyway!

JEFF

So what are we supposed to do?

JACK

Decision time, your time!

14

INT. SAME PLACE, DIFFERENT POV

14

SUDDENLY Jack's now BESIDES JEFF, puts his arm around him, almost whispering to his ear.

JACK
(looks at Elena and Mark
as he speaks)
Who's gonna be? Both of them are
hanging in there. Hanging, hanging
waitin' for you.. One needs to go,
you sir, need to choose! Oh, that
includes yourself by the way!

Jeff looks confused and frightened. He looks at Jack, then at Elena who's crying as Mark tries to comfort her. The clock is suddenly ticking on the wall. Some seconds pass.

15 INT. SAME PLACE, DIFFERENT POV

15

Jack SUDDENLY is behind the bar again.

JACK
(to Jeff)
C'mon you decision maker, make a
decision! Girl, brother, girl,
brother. Oh, it rarely gets so fun
in here I must tell ya!

Elena stands up, walks up to Jack.

ELENA
Please let us out of here, I know
you can. End this nightmare.

JACK
(...) Oh, don't be so sad, these
things happen. Besides, I thought
of something that will satisfy all
and this is as much as my powers
can extend.

JEFF
I don't wanna do this.. This is
nonsense, it's just..

JACK
I don't do what I want Jeff, this
isn't about me, it's about you!
What kind of person are you?

Jeff, sweating, looks at Elena, then at Mark then again at Elena. He takes a step closer to her, holds her hand. Elena's crying. He then looks at Jack without saying anything.

JACK (CONT'D)
That's an *excellent* decision Jeff!

Jeff looks at Mark who seems to be in terror.

BLACK SCREEN

FADE IN:

16 INT. CITY CAFE - DAY

16

Elena is having a coffee at an espresso bar looking at her mobile phone when a handsome guy enters and catches her attention. We soon realise it's Mark only slightly different.

The guy walks to the bar, ready to order. He stands next to Elena quickly checking her out, smiling at her while waiting. Elena smiles back dropping her phone as she tries to put it back in her purse. Mark immediately bends and picks it up.

ELENA
(as she takes it from
his hand, smiling)
Classic me! Thanks!

MARK
(smiling back)
Is it OK?

ELENA
No worries, happens all the time!

Silence for a few seconds as they're smiling at each other.

ELENA (CONT'D)
I'm Elena by the way.

MARK
Nice to meet you Elena, I'm Jeff.

They shake hands, but after a couple of seconds Elena's smile freezes looking at Mark/Jeff with her eyes wide open.

CUT TO:

17 EXT. THE JACKTAR - DARK

17

We are in the Jacktar. The place now looks completely abandoned. Just a deem light enters though the window. We reach the hallway where the pictures of grooms and brides are hanging. We FLOAT over the wall, seeing again the pictures until we reach a picture with JEFF dressed as a groom. Like everyone else he has an expression of terror on his face.

FADE OUT.

THE END