

The Madness Of Time

by

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FADE IN:

EXT.LAKE - DAY

The water of the huge lake sparkles in the sunshine. A campground sits right on the shore.

Further around, a marina plays home to various size boats, and tourist facilities.

SUPER - LAKE CAHULAWASSEE WESTERN GEORGIA U.S.A.

JOE,(40) and his wife CHERYL,(also 40), paddle a canoe towards the lake's centre.

JOE(V.O.)

Back in nineteen seventy-two, Dad and three buddies went on a weekend camping trip. This was a valley back then, with the Cahulawassee river running through it. Well, to cut it all short, they ran into some unfriendly locals, hillbillies if you like. They...sexually assaulted Bobby. Lewis then killed one of the mountain men, the other escaped. Later, while canoeing down the river, Drew was shot, the canoes were smashed up. Dad had to climb up the side of the gorge and kill the hillbilly waiting to finish them off...

EXT. CANOE - DAY

Cheryl and Joe sit in the canoe, in the middle of the lake.

It's deadly quiet. Behind the mountains, massing clouds hint at a stormfront.

Joe is pale as he holds up a small sealed urn.

CHERYL

Jesus, honey...your dad went through this, this nightmare experience...and never told you until he was on his deathbed?

JOE

I...we knew there had been a boating accident during the trip. I was only two years old, remember.

CHERYL

But...I...he never told your
mother the truth? Not even
before she died?

Joe slowly rips the seal from the urn.

JOE

No. I remember him having bad
dreams when I was a kid.
Hearing him scream in the
middle of the night.

(beat)

And he wouldn't go near any
bodies of water. Swimming pools,
rivers, or...lakes.

He stands, removes the lid of the urn. The canoe rocks
slightly.

CHERYL

So why would he want his ashes
scattered here? In this place
that had such bad memories for
him?

JOE

(shrugs)

Closure, I guess. I've had time
to think about that. Maybe he
needed to...come back here,
even in death, to cleanse
himself of his guilt.

(beat)

He killed a man down there...

CHERYL

Self defense. Any court of law
would have shown that.

JOE

Not out here. Well, not back
then. That's why they buried
the first guy. I guess they
panicked...but Dad said Drew
was against it.

He looks at his wife.

JOE

But he was out-voted.

(beat)

Then he was shot and his body
gone forever in the water.

CHERYL

Your dad and the others did
what they thought best.

JOE

Yeah

(beat)

He had to go and see Drew's wife. Tell her that her husband wasn't coming home from a routine camping trip.

CHERYL

(whispers)

Oh, jesus, I...

Joe looks down into the urn. A breeze stirs some of the ashes.

JOE

They had a son. He was sort of...deformed, had a growth coming from his forehead.

(beat)

Goddamnit, my father was a good man. He didn't deserve to have this haunting him all his life.

Cheryl stands up by him. Joe extends his arm out over the water, upends the urn. The small pile of ash trickles into the water.

JOE

(whispers)

Rest in peace now, Dad.

They stand for a moment, watching the ash disperse. Some larger clumps sink down.

Joe SIGHS.

JOE

Its done. And I feel better for it.

CHERYL

And staying a night here in the tent? That was part of it?

JOE

Yeah.

INT. BENEATH THE LAKE - DAY

The sunlight penetrates to a depth of about thirty feet, before the gloom starts.

Remnants of ash sink slowly, vanish into the blackness.

On the very edge of the gloom, something moves...

EXT. LAKE - DAY

Joe and Cheryl slowly paddle back towards the shore.

JOE(V.O.)
I hear the restaurant here is
good.

CHERYL(V.O.)
Ok, we can have an early dinner
too.

JOE(V.O.)
Really roughing it, aren't we?

Bubbles rise to the surface where the ashes were released...

Overhead, the dark clouds loom...

LATER

Joe and Cheryl walk along the edge of the lake, from the marina. It's very gloomy now, with RUMBLES of thunder from the mountains.

Joe flicks on a small penlight on his keyring. Cheryl GIGGLES as she holds his arm.

CHERYL
That was a lovely meal. And a
lovely lot of drinks.

JOE
Yeah. I'm sure Dad would be
happy to see us enjoying it
here.
(beat)
Wow, this storm blew up quick.
Maybe we should skip the camp-
out, head back to Atlanta?

Suddenly, a jagged flash of lightning splits the sky. At the same time, thunder CRACKS right over their heads.

Cheryl jumps, hugs Joe tighter.

CHERYL
Whoa! You know, perhaps...they
do have cabins we could stay
in. This lightning...

Joe nods, then halts abruptly. His light hovers to the left of the path, near the water.

A FIGURE stands there, a man. Dressed in jeans, hunters shirt. He has a sad look on his face.

JOE
Jesus, mister...

CHERYL
Oh...

JOE
You scared us, man.
(beat)
Are you alright? Need
directions?
(whispers)
I think he's drunk, honey?

CHERYL
Yes. But...he frightens me, Joe.
Let's keep moving.

Joe nods but takes a step closer to see the figure. He frowns.

JOE
He...looks familiar somehow.

Cheryl casts a glance at the man, who hasn't moved. Just stands watching them.

CHERYL
Oh...oh, yeah. I saw him at the
marina. He was outside the
window. Looking in at us.
(beat)
Joe, come on, let's hurry, please?

Joe shines the light ahead then back to the man. He's gone...

Another loud BURST of thunder sends them scurrying on.

EXT. CAMPGROUND - NIGHT

Cheryl starts to take the tent down. The wind has picked up, and the fabric flaps and billows.

Joe is searching through his backpack near their Jeep Wrangler.

CHERYL
Honey? Can you help me? What
are you doing?

Joe finds something. A photograph in an envelope. He examines it...

JOE
Jesus...

CHERYL

Joe, for fuck's sake, help me!

Her voice is rising, filled with fear. The wind intensifies and a light rain falls.

JOE

Leave the tent for now. Look at this!

Cheryl stops folding the tent. Hurries over to him.

CHERYL

What? We have to pack up and get to a cabin.

JOE

Dad left this picture...with his will. It's of the four of them, before the trip.

He hands her the photo, shines the light on it. She squints, holds it close. Drops of rain fall on the photo, she brushes them off.

CHERYL

What am I...oh, sweet jesus...that guy with the cap on...

JOE

Drew. Drew Ballinger. The poor guy who was murdered on the river.

He looks towards the water. Cheryl is shaking. The photo drops from her hand.

CHERYL

That...that was him in the woods.

JOE

I...

Suddenly, the figure is there! Right next to them. Drew...

Cheryl sinks to her knees on the wet grass, starts SCREAMING, long and loud. It tapers to a whimper.

Joe trembles but stays put. Drew gazes at him. His clothes are damp. A furrow creases his hair, above one ear.

Joe hears a voice in his head...it soothes and calms him.

DREW(V.O.)

You are in grave danger. You must leave now.

JOE

I...the storm, we're moving to a cabin.

DREW(V.O.)

No, you must leave. Drive home.

JOE

Are you really Drew? My dad's friend?

DREW(V.O.)

Yes. I mean you no harm. Your father's ashes awoke me from the abyss. But they released the others who rest below with me...

Cheryl stands up, quiet now, thoughtful. No longer scared.

CHERYL

Yes. The ones who killed you. The one who Joe's father killed.

(beat)

And they want their revenge on his descendant.

Suddenly, a lightning bolt hits a tree nearby! The top branches burst into flame, casting an eerie glow.

SPLASHING sounds from the lake. Someone or something is heading to shore...

DREW(V.O.)

It's them. You must go.

The calming 'spell' is broken. Joe and Cheryl stagger, their minds filled with fear again.

The rain intensifies, making the burning tree smoke and splutter.

Drew reaches the water. Two HILLBILLIES, clad in mouldy, poisonous looking overalls, wade into knee deep water. Arrows pierce each figure - one through the neck, the other's chest.

Drew reaches out. A rusted shotgun lifts slowly to his face.

Joe carries - drags - Cheryl to the Jeep, looking back over his shoulder.

The hillbilly with the gun grins hideously. Drew can't reach him...

Then, another figure rises from the water. Launches at the hillbillies. The shotgun points up, goes off with a grating BANG...

JOE

I...Dad?

DREW(V.O.)

RUN!

He crashes into the hillbillies, as ED does from the other side; it is indeed Joe's father.

Joe hauls the incoherent Cheryl into the Jeep, gets in and starts it up.

INT.JEEP - NIGHT

Joe watches in the side mirror, as Drew and Ed push the hillbillies back into deeper water.

A final swirl and they are gone.

He floors it, sobbing. Cheryl has passed out next to him.

The voice again in his head, but different...

ED(V.O.)

Thank you, son.

(beat)

My friend and I can rest easily
now.

FADE OUT.

THE END