

Horror holiday
by
mia

EXT. HIGHWAY 77 - DAY

A beat-up but beloved Ford Bronco cruises down a sun-drenched Texas highway. SARAH 30s, vibrant, adventurous sings along to a classic rock song on the radio, her head bobbing. MARK 30s, handsome, easygoing grins, his eyes on the road. They're both brimming with holiday cheer.

SARAH

This is the life! Sun, good music, and my favorite person.

She playfully punches Mark's arm.

MARK

And you, my love, make it perfect.

He reaches over and takes her hand, their fingers interlacing. The scenery is stunning endless blue sky, rolling hills dotted with hardy mesquite trees. A sense of peace hangs in the air.

SARAH

I can't believe we're finally doing this. A real getaway. No work, no worries, just us.

MARK

Exactly. All that's left is finding the perfect secluded cabin, a fire to keep us warm and a lot of uninterrupted togetherness.

Mark glances at a map spread across the passenger seat. Sarah hums happily, still singing along to the radio. The camera lingers on their joyful expressions, highlighting their carefree mood. The idyllic scene is stark against what's to come.

SARAH

And maybe some stargazing? I heard the skies are amazing out here.

MARK

The darkest you've ever seen. Perfect for wishing on a few shooting stars.

They share a tender smile. The Bronco continues down the highway, the sun reflecting off its dusty paintwork. Their laughter echoes briefly, then fades as the radio's music swells. A subtle shift in the camera angle suggests something is watching them from the distance.

FADE OUT.

EXT. RURAL TEXAS ROAD - DUSK

The Bronco sputters, then dies, leaving Mark and Sarah stranded on a deserted stretch of road. The sun dips below

the horizon, casting long shadows across the parched landscape. Mesquite trees claw at the twilight sky.

MARK

Great. Just great.

Mark tries the ignition again. Nothing. Sarah sighs, her earlier cheer replaced with apprehension.

SARAH

Looks like our romantic getaway just took an unexpected detour.

She forces a laugh, but her eyes dart nervously around the desolate surroundings. No houses, no other cars, just endless scrubland.

MARK

Let's check the hood.

Mark gets out, Sarah following cautiously. He pops the hood, examining the engine with a frustrated frown. In the distance, a figure emerges from behind a mesquite tree. Tall, gaunt, his face obscured by shadow.

SARAH

(whispering)

Mark... look.

Mark glances up, his brow furrowing. The figure remains motionless, watching them. He doesn't move closer, but his presence is menacing, palpable. A sense of dread fills the air.

MARK

Just a local, probably. Maybe he can help.

He tries to sound confident, but his voice trembles slightly. The figure turns and slowly melts back into the shadows. The only sound is the distant howl of a coyote.

SARAH

(shakily)

I don't like this. Let's get back in the car.

Sarah hurries back to the Bronco, her eyes wide with fear. Mark follows, a knot forming in his stomach. He slams the hood shut, his movements jerky and tense. They both stare at the darkening landscape, the idyllic sunset now a sinister omen.

MARK

Yeah, let's go.

He fumbles with the keys, his hands shaking. They climb into the Bronco, the silence thick with unease. The distant coyote howls again, closer this time. The camera focuses on Sarah's terrified face, her eyes reflecting the growing darkness.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. RURAL TEXAS ROAD - NIGHT

Mark frantically tries to restart the Bronco. Sarah clutches the dashboard, her knuckles white. Headlights appear in the distance, approaching fast. Relief washes over their faces, quickly replaced by terror as the vehicle swerves violently, aiming directly for them.

SARAH

Look out!

Mark yanks the wheel, narrowly avoiding a collision. The other vehicle screeches past, sending gravel flying. They both stare in disbelief as it disappears around a bend, leaving only the dust it kicked up.

MARK

What the hell was that?

He checks the Bronco for damage. A deep scratch mars the driver's side door. Sarah is trembling, her eyes wide with fear.

SARAH

He... he tried to kill us.

Mark slams his fist on the steering wheel.

MARK

It wasn't an accident.

He glances around, his eyes scanning the dark landscape. The silence is heavy, broken only by the rustling of leaves and the distant, unsettling sound of crickets.

SARAH

We need to get out of here.

She points towards a faint light in the distance, barely visible through the trees. A small, isolated farmhouse.

MARK

Maybe... maybe we can get help there.

He starts the Bronco, the engine coughing and sputtering back to life. As they slowly drive towards the farmhouse, the distant sound of tires on gravel grows louder, closer. The headlights reappear behind them, growing rapidly brighter.

SARAH

(panicked)
He's coming back!

Mark floors the gas pedal, the Bronco struggling to gain speed. The headlights are directly behind them now, bearing down. The killer is gaining.

MARK
Hold on!

The scene ends with a close-up on Sarah's terrified face, her eyes reflecting the approaching headlights. The sound of a high-pitched scream is cut short.

CUT TO BLACK.

INT. ABANDONED BARN - NIGHT

The barn is dark, dusty, and filled with decaying farm equipment. Moonlight filters through cracks in the wooden walls. MARK 30s, rugged, resourceful and SARAH 30s, terrified, determined huddle together, breathless, listening.

SARAH

(whispering)
He's gone?

MARK
I hope so.

Mark checks the Bronco's mangled front end. It's undriveable.

SARAH
What do we do now?

MARK
We walk.

He pulls a tattered map from his pocket, its edges frayed and worn. He shines his phone's flashlight on it, the beam weak and wavering.

MARK
There's a highway about five miles that way.
We can flag down a car.

Sarah nods, her eyes darting nervously towards the barn door.

SARAH
But what if he comes back?

MARK
He won't.

He tries to sound confident, but his voice trembles slightly. He helps Sarah to her feet, supporting her as she stumbles.

SARAH

(fearfully)

I heard him... back there. I heard him.

Mark grips a rusty pipe found near the wall. He looks determined.

MARK

It's just the wind. Come on.

He leads her towards a gap in the barn's dilapidated wall, the moonlight painting the scene in shades of gray and black. They step out into the night, the vast darkness swallowing them whole.

SARAH

I don't want to leave you.

MARK

We stick together. That's how we survive this.

He squeezes her hand tightly. They begin their trek, each footstep a silent prayer in the oppressive darkness.

The faint sound of a distant engine can be heard.

FADE OUT.

INT. DERELICT FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

The farmhouse is a ruin. Broken windows gape like empty eyesockets, letting in the cold night air. Dust motes dance in the weak beam of Mark's phone flashlight. The air smells of decay and damp earth. Sarah shivers, pulling her thin jacket tighter around her. Mark examines a cracked windowpane.

MARK

Better than nothing.

He carefully pries open a rotting wooden door, revealing a dark, cluttered interior. Cobwebs hang like macabre decorations. Sarah hesitates at the threshold.

SARAH

(whispering)

Are you sure?

MARK

It's shelter. We need to rest.

He steps inside, his flashlight beam sweeping across decaying furniture - a warped armchair, a splintered table. A broken rocking horse lies in one corner, its painted eyes staring blankly ahead. A chilling feeling settles in the air. He

finds a relatively dry area in the centre of the room.

SARAH

(trembling)
I don't like this place.

MARK

I know. But we'll be safe for now.

He gestures to a broken section of wall, where a small pile of dried hay lies untouched.

MARK

We can huddle here.

Sarah slowly moves toward the hay, her eyes constantly darting around the room, scanning for any sign of movement. She sits, hugging her knees to her chest.

SARAH

I heard something... back there.

MARK

It's just the wind, Sarah.

He sits beside her, his arm instinctively moving to protect her. He switches off the flashlight, plunging them into absolute darkness. The only sounds are the wind whistling through the broken windows and the frantic beating of Sarah's heart.

SARAH

Mark... I'm scared.

MARK

I know. But we'll get through this. Together.

He pulls her closer, offering a small comfort in the overwhelming darkness and decay.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. DERELICT FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

Total darkness. Only the sound of Sarah's ragged breathing and the wind howling through the gaps in the walls. Then, a floorboard creaks. A low growl, close.

SARAH

(whispering)
Mark?

Silence. Then, a scraping sound, like something dragging across the floor. Sarah whimpers, clutching Mark's arm.

MARK

(whispering)
Shhh.

A shadow detaches itself from the darkness, growing larger. A figure emerges, silhouetted against the faint moonlight filtering through a broken window. A glint of metal - a knife.

SARAH

(terrified)
Oh God.

Mark pushes Sarah behind him, shielding her with his body. He scrambles for anything to use as a weapon. He grabs a broken piece of chair leg.

MARK

Get back!

The killer lunges, its knife flashing. Mark swings the chair leg, connecting with a sickening thud. A scream, choked and brief, cuts through the night.

Mark struggles, fighting for his life. The killer is strong, relentless. Sarah screams again, a sharp cry of pain.

Mark pushes the killer back, but not before the killer slashes at Sarah's arm. Blood gushes.

SARAH

(screaming)
Mark!

Mark, seeing Sarah's wound, roars with rage. He fights with a primal fury, fueled by adrenaline and fear. He manages to knock the killer back, sending it sprawling.

The killer disappears back into the darkness. Silence descends, broken only by Sarah's sobs and Mark's harsh breathing.

Mark crawls to Sarah, his arms wrapping around her. He tries to stem the bleeding from her arm with his jacket.

MARK

(desperate)
It's okay, Sarah. It's okay.

He presses his hand to her wound, desperately trying to stop the flow of blood. Sarah's breathing is shallow and ragged. The farmhouse feels colder, the silence heavier now that the immediate threat is gone, but something else looms; something

worse.

CONTINUE

EXT. TEXAS COUNTRYSIDE - NIGHT

Mark drags Sarah, her arm bleeding profusely, across the rough terrain. The moon casts long, skeletal shadows. They stumble, panting, their escape a desperate scramble through the desolate landscape.

SARAH

(weakly)

We have to...keep...moving.

Mark nods, his face grim. He glances back, his eyes wide with fear.

MARK

He's still...out there.

A distant sound - the crunch of leaves underfoot, too deliberate to be an animal.

SARAH

(gasping)

Faster!

They run, their movements clumsy and painful. Sarah stumbles, and Mark helps her to her feet. He tries to support her weight, his own breathing ragged.

MARK

Almost...to the road.

The sound behind them gets closer, a heavy, rhythmic thudding that sends a fresh wave of terror through them.

SARAH

(panicked)

I can't...I can't...

Mark pulls her along, his strength failing. They reach a dirt road, the headlights of a distant car a tiny beacon of hope.

MARK

Just a little further.

He looks back again. A figure emerges from the darkness, its shape indistinct but menacing, pursuing them relentlessly. The sound of heavy breathing, ragged and cruel, echoes across the desolate landscape. The figure is gaining on them.

SARAH

(screaming)
He's catching us!

Mark pulls Sarah towards the road, desperation etched on his face. He sees the distant headlights growing larger, closer. He sprints the remaining distance, dragging Sarah with him. But the figure is closing the gap, its movements swift and deadly.

A scream, a desperate cry lost in the night.

TO BE CONTINUED

EXT. ABANDONED WELL - NIGHT

Mark and Sarah, both injured and exhausted, collapse near an old, crumbling well. The well's rusty bucket hangs precariously. The moon illuminates their faces, etched with terror. A single, flickering lantern sits beside them, casting long, dancing shadows.

SARAH

(wheezing)
I...I can't go on.

MARK
We have to. He's still out there.

A twig snaps behind them. They whirl around, eyes darting into the darkness. Silence descends, heavy and oppressive.

SARAH
What if he finds us here?

A figure emerges from the shadows, tall and gaunt, its face obscured by the darkness. A rusty butcher knife gleams in their hand. It's the KILLER.

KILLER
Running won't save you.

Mark tries to rise, but collapses in pain. Sarah clutches her bleeding arm.

MARK
Who are you? What do you want?

KILLER
I'm not the monster you think I am. You just... reminded me of someone.

The Killer approaches slowly, circling them like a predator. The lantern light catches the glint of a faded, almost unrecognizable tattoo on their wrist—a coiled snake.

KILLER

This well... it holds memories. Painful ones.

The Killer kicks the rusty bucket, sending it clanking to the bottom of the well. A low, guttural chuckle escapes their lips.

KILLER

You see, some things are best left buried.

The Killer raises the knife, the moonlight reflecting off the blade. Mark and Sarah's eyes widen with fear.

MARK

(desperate)

Please...

KILLER

Silence.

The Killer lunges.

CUT TO BLACK

INT. ABANDONED CABIN - NIGHT

The cabin is dark, lit only by a sputtering fireplace. Mark, still wounded, leans heavily against a rotting wall. Sarah, her arm bandaged crudely, stares at him, her face pale and drawn. The Killer, surprisingly, sits across from them, nursing a chipped mug. The coiled snake tattoo is now visible under the weak firelight.

SARAH

You... you were going to kill us.

KILLER

I was.

The Killer takes a long sip from the mug. A moment of tense silence hangs in the air.

MARK

(weakly)

Why are you here? Why this place?

KILLER

This cabin... this well... it's where it all began. Where my pain started.

The Killer gestures towards a darkened corner. Sarah notices a half-hidden photograph on a dusty shelf. It shows the Killer as a young boy, his face happy, smiling next to a woman who looks strikingly like Sarah.

SARAH

(gasps)
That's...

KILLER
My mother. She was murdered here.

Mark watches Sarah, his eyes narrowing with suspicion. He sees a flicker of recognition in her eyes, a subtle shift in her demeanor.

MARK
Sarah... who are you?

Sarah doesn't respond. She looks away, her face frozen in a mask of fear and guilt. The Killer stands abruptly, their eyes filled with a cold fury.

KILLER
She knows more than she lets on.

The Killer lunges towards Sarah, the knife flashing in their hand. Mark struggles to his feet, but he's too weak, too slow. Sarah screams as the knife descends.

MARK

(shouting)
No!

A sudden and violent struggle ensues. The scene ends with the sound of a strangled gasp and a sickening thud.

FADE OUT

EXT. WOODED AREA NEAR THE CABIN - NIGHT

Sarah runs blindly through the dark woods, branches whipping at her face. She stumbles, her breath ragged. The sound of snapping twigs behind her is chillingly close.

SARAH
Mark!

She glances back, seeing a fleeting glimpse of the Killer's silhouette through the trees.

SARAH
No!

She pushes on, desperate, her ankle twisting painfully under her. She falls, the knife glinting in the moonlight, inches from her face. The Killer towers over her.

KILLER
Where is he?

The Killer grabs Sarah by the hair, yanking her head back. Her eyes widen in terror.

SARAH

(pleading)
Please... don't...

KILLER

You know what I want. Tell me.

The Killer's grip tightens. Sarah's cries are muffled by the darkness of the woods. She struggles uselessly against the superior strength of her captor.

SARAH

I... I don't know...

KILLER

Liar.

The Killer drags Sarah towards the darkness of the trees, her screams growing fainter as they disappear into the undergrowth.

SARAH

Help!

The sound of her pleas is swallowed by the night, leaving only the unsettling silence of the forest.

Mark's labored breathing is heard from the distant darkness. He is hiding among the trees, wounded and watching Sarah's capture in horror.

CUT TO BLACK

INT. ABANDONED CABIN - NIGHT

Mark, bleeding from a deep gash on his arm, bandages it crudely with a torn piece of his shirt. His eyes are filled with a desperate fury. He clutches a rusty pipe, his knuckles white.

MARK

I'm not letting you win.

He moves cautiously, his movements sharp and precise, towards the back door of the cabin. He listens intently, the only sound the creaking of the old wood.

MARK

Sarah.

He peers through a crack in the wood, his breath catching in his throat. Sarah is tied to a chair, gagged, her face bruised and pale.

MARK

(whispering)
I'm here.

The Killer enters the room, whistling a jaunty tune. He's tall and imposing, his face obscured by shadow. He carries a bloody knife.

KILLER
Ah, the boyfriend. Thought you'd run off like a scared little rabbit.

Mark bursts through the door, swinging the pipe with all his might.

MARK
Let her go!

The Killer dodges the blow, the pipe clattering on the floor. They grapple, a brutal, desperate fight. The Killer's strength is immense, but Mark's rage fuels him.

KILLER
You can't save her.

Mark manages to land a punch, sending the Killer stumbling. He lunges for the knife, knocking it away. The two continue to wrestle, each blow hard and vicious. Furniture crashes to the floor. Sarah watches, her eyes wide with terror and hope.

MARK
Yes, I can.

Mark grabs a heavy wooden leg from a broken chair and slams it into the Killer's head. The Killer falls to the ground, unconscious.

Mark rushes to Sarah, cutting the ropes binding her. Tears stream down her face.

SARAH
(sobbing)
Mark!

He embraces her tightly, both trembling.

FADE OUT

INT. ABANDONED CABIN - NIGHT

Mark cradles Sarah, her body shaking. Blood stains the floor, a grim testament to their struggle. The Killer lies still, a pool of crimson spreading beneath his head. The cabin is wrecked; furniture overturned, walls scarred.

SARAH

He... he almost got me.

Sarah clutches Mark's shirt, her fingers digging into the fabric.

MARK

It's over, Sarah. It's really over.

Mark's voice trembles, his own injuries throbbing. He kisses her forehead, his touch gentle.

SARAH

I thought... I thought I was going to die.

A shudder runs through her. She looks around the devastated cabin, the fear still etched on her face.

MARK

I won't let anything happen to you.

He pulls her closer, holding her tightly. A low moan emanates from the Killer's form on the floor. Mark and Sarah exchange a look of shared apprehension.

MARK

We need to get out of here.

Mark cautiously approaches the Killer, his hand reaching for the rusty pipe. He hesitates, then checks for a pulse. None.

SARAH

(whispering)

He's dead.

Mark nods, relief washing over his face, but the relief is tempered with exhaustion and fear. He helps Sarah to her feet. They move towards the door, their steps slow and cautious.

MARK

We'll get help. We're going home.

He opens the door, revealing the moonlit night. A police siren wails faintly in the distance.

SARAH

Home.

She leans against him, her body trembling but her eyes, for the first time, show a glimmer of hope.

FADE OUT

INT. POLICE STATION INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT

SARAH sits across from DETECTIVE MILLER, a weary-looking man in his late 40s. A single bare bulb hangs overhead, casting harsh shadows. Sarah's face is pale, but resolute.

DETECTIVE MILLER

So, you say he was after... the necklace?

Miller leans forward, his eyes narrowed.

SARAH

Yes. He said it belonged to his family. Said it was stolen generations ago.

Sarah touches the small, almost insignificant scar on her wrist, a reminder of the struggle.

DETECTIVE MILLER

And you... you never saw this necklace before?

SARAH

No. It was... an heirloom, he said. A family curse. He was obsessed.

A flashback A blurry image of an antique necklace, ornate and sinister, gleaming under the moonlight. The killer's face is partially obscured by shadow.

DETECTIVE MILLER

This curse... he actually believed that?

SARAH

He was... unraveling. He talked about revenge, about righting a wrong that had haunted his family for centuries.

Sarah shivers, recalling the terrifying intensity in the killer's eyes.

DETECTIVE MILLER

And now, it's over.

SARAH

(quietly)

It's over, but...

Sarah rises, her movements slow and deliberate. She walks towards the one-way mirror, staring at her own reflection - a ghost.

SARAH

I will never forget what he did.

She clenches her fists, her eyes burning with a cold fire.

SARAH

But... neither will I forget what he took.

She turns, a steely glint in her eyes. The necklace is now visible around her neck, a small, dark object against her pale skin. A single tear traces a path down her cheek.

FADE TO BLACK

EXT. WOODED AREA - DAWN

Sarah stumbles through the dense undergrowth, her breath ragged, her clothes torn. Thorns snag at her skin, but she ignores the pain, pushing onward. The first rays of dawn paint the sky a bruised purple and orange.

SARAH

Almost... almost there...

She emerges from the trees into a small clearing. A dirt road winds off into the distance. She collapses onto the ground, gasping for air.

SARAH

It's over.

She clutches the antique necklace, its dark metal cold against her skin. A slow, shuddering sob wracks her body. The trauma is evident in her shaking hands and wide, haunted eyes.

SARAH

(whispering)

It's really over.

She looks up at the sky, a mixture of relief and profound sadness etched on her face. The sun rises higher, casting long shadows.

SARAH

But at what cost?

She sees a distant figure, a lone silhouette in the distance, moving along the dirt road. She is too weak, too traumatized to run.

SARAH

(to herself)

Help...

Her voice is barely a whisper, lost in the vastness of the morning. She closes her eyes, letting the sun warm her face, a fragile hope beginning to bloom amidst the devastation.

SARAH

I need to get home.

She slowly rises, her legs unsteady, and begins walking towards the road, leaving behind the scene of her ordeal. The necklace remains around her neck - a chilling memento of her survival.

FADE OUT

EXT. DUSTY ROAD - DAY

Sarah walks slowly along the dusty road, her gait unsteady. The sun beats down, harsh and unforgiving. Dust motes dance in the shimmering heat. Her face, pale and drawn, is etched with the horrors she has endured. The antique necklace, dark and heavy, hangs around her neck.

SARAH

It's over.

She reaches out a trembling hand, touching the rough bark of a nearby tree. The movement is slow, almost deliberate, as if she's testing the reality of her escape.

SARAH

I'm free.

A lone raven lands on a branch above her, its black feathers ruffled by the breeze. It stares at her with intelligent, obsidian eyes.

SARAH

(a shaky breath)

I made it.

She looks down at her hands, still stained with dirt and dried blood. The necklace catches the sunlight, glinting briefly before the shadow of the raven falls across it. The camera focuses on the necklace.

SARAH

But...

A single, black feather drifts down from the raven and lands on the dusty road, settling gently beside her feet. Sarah looks up at the raven, her eyes wide with a newfound fear. The bird caws, a harsh, unsettling sound that cuts through the quiet.

SARAH

(whispering)

It's not over.

The camera slowly zooms in on the feather, highlighting the intricate detail of its barbs, then slowly pulls back to reveal Sarah standing alone on the road, small and vulnerable against the vastness of the landscape. The sun beats down on

her, the dust swirling around her feet. The raven takes flight.

SARAH
It's never really over.

FADE TO BLACK.