

INSTINCT

By

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FADE IN.

INT. STASIS CHAMBER - DAY

DEREK BOOTHE, 45 lies perfectly still in a small, metal stasis chamber. A large oxygen mask sits just below his eye, covering his nose, mouth and encasing his chin and neck. His eyes closed, his breaths slow.

Tubes and wires lead from the mask and extend to the edge of the chamber. A thick blue tube sits prominently from his arm to the roof of the chamber. A feeding tube.

INT. DARK ROOM

The stasis chamber sits in a small room between five others. The other four chambers are empty. A small window allows us to view his face. A digital clock sits below the window. It counts down a timer in hours, minutes and seconds. As the seconds remain at five...four...three...two...one.

A jolt inside the chamber and Derek's eyes open wide. He struggles to move as his eyes search the space. He takes frantic breaths as he fights the mask.

He throws his entire weight against the door and forces it open. As he falls through it, the feeding tube tears free from his arm and springs back into the chamber. Fluid trickles from the bottom of it onto the floor.

Arms free, Derek tugs at the mask. He frees the top of it from his face and the bottom part splits in two and releases his neck. He throws it to the floor and takes panic breaths.

His eyes dart the room as his breaths slow. The room is dark, the only intermittent blinks of light come from the chamber. He checks his arms and legs to ensure they are free of tubes. He runs his finger over his arm. The tube has left a flesh wound.

As he calms he listens. With his breaths under control he slows them to take in the silence. A clang. He follows the sound. It's from beyond the door. He rises to his feet.

He opens the door and exits.

## INT. CORRIDOR

Derek cautiously walks along the corridor. The lights in the ceiling flick on and off.

He continues to the end of the corridor and reaches a set of concrete steps. He halts. The walls that line the steps are brick which replace the plaster from the corridor.

A faint light seeps from the top and cascades down the steps. He inches forward to catch a glimpse of the light source emitting from the top.

He takes a glance back along the dark corridor before he takes his first step.

## CONCRETE STEPS

He reaches the top of the steps and is met by a ladder. Light pours down the ladder. Derek looks up at the light source - an open hatch.

He climbs the ladders.

## EXT. FIELD - DAY

Derek pulls himself up and out of the hatch. He emerges into glistening sunlight in the middle of a field. A few metres in front of him is a large wired fence. A part of the fence at the bottom has been prised open at the corner.

He looks around - silence. No bird song. No mechanical noise. Nothing. He walks toward the fence and edges himself through the gap.

## EXT. TOWN STREET - DAY

Derek walks along a desolate town street. The shops are empty, broken glass and damaged items litter the floor and indicate looting. Dust, debris and dirt cover the street. Some buildings appear damaged and cars are upturned. Dry mud dirties the intact windows to a half way mark.

He catches sight of a shadow in a doorway a few metres ahead. A Barbers shop.

DEREK

Hey?

He studies the spot and sees movement as a door slams shut. He quickens his pace to a jog.

(CONTINUED)

DEREK

Hey, hold up. I just want to know  
what the hell is going on here.

Derek reaches the door and opens it.

INT. BARBERS SHOP

Derek searches the room. The chairs have been torn and  
upturned. The large mirrors smashed and draws have been  
emptied.

Muddy and torn pages of various magazines and newspapers  
litter the floor. He kneels down to look at one of the  
cleaner pieces with the headline : SCIENTISTS CONFIRM SUPER  
STORM THREAT A REALITY AS WORLD PREPARES FOR DOOMSDAY

Fear washes over him as he reads. Unable to read past the  
first paragraph due to torn and damp edges he rises to his  
feet and looks ahead at a closed door.

He cautiously approaches it. He opens the door and looks  
inside. It's an empty closet. He turns back and is struck  
with a wooden stick. It's a sharp pain in his face. He pulls  
his hands to his nose. Blood pours down his mouth and chin.

LOU MANFORD, 28 stands in front of him, wooden stick firmly  
grasped in his dirty, bloodied hands. His face and clothes  
covered in mud. His eyes wide, almost maniacal as he gently  
hops from one foot to another. He skin is taugth, ravaged.

DEREK

Wait ---

Lou strikes him again in the face then swiftly in the  
stomach. Derek drops to his knees and holds up his hands.

DEREK

Stop, stop, stop. What the hell is  
going on?

Lou stops, intrigued.

DEREK

Please...look, I woke up in a base,  
I walked here. What's happened to  
this place? Where is every body?

LOU

Do you have food?

(CONTINUED)

DEREK

No. I don't think so--- I...

Lou pats him down and tugs at his pockets, Derek bats him away. Lou studies him up and down.

LOU

You came from the base?

DEREK

Yes.

LOU

You one of them?

DEREK

Who?

LOU

Military?

Derek thinks for a moment.

DEREK

No...I don't think so.

LOU

What do you remember?

FLASHBACK BEGINS.

INT. DARK ROOM

A jolt inside the chamber and Derek's eyes open wide. He struggles to move as his eyes search the space. He takes frantic breaths as he fights the mask.

DEREK (V.O.)

I opened my eyes and I couldn't see. I couldn't breath. I could barely move. I was...scared.

FLASHBACK ENDS.

INT. BARBERS SHOP

Lou continues to study him. Derek searches his mind for more recollection but struggles.

LOU  
You don't remember anything before  
that?

Derek shakes his head.

LOU (CONT'D)  
How long ago did you wake up?

DEREK  
Not long.

Lou breaks into a fit of laughter.

LOU  
Then you really don't know? Boy,  
you're gonna wish you'd never  
opened those two eyes of yours.  
There's only one thing left in this  
world.

DEREK  
What?

Lou gently leans in, face inches from his and hisses.

LOU  
Death.

Lou sniffs his arms and body, disturbed Derek pulls back as far as he can. Lou grabs his hand and examines his nails.

LOU  
I see that the famine has yet to  
take effect. You have been  
sustained by the stasis. You have  
that healthy glow I've not seen in  
so long. I can see the nutrition in  
your veins.

Lou surges forward and sinks his teeth deep into Derek's arm. Derek cries in pain and kicks him away. He scrambles to his feet. Lou swings the stick above his head.

DEREK  
What the hell are you doing?

(CONTINUED)

LOU  
Hunger is the devil on your  
shoulder. He screams at you. EAT!

Lou lunges at Derek. He screams in his face and swings the stick in his face. Derek falls back, his head hits the floor and he is momentarily dazed.

Lou leaps onto his chest and pulls a set of plastic handcuffs from his pocket.

He chuckles to himself as he un-clips them. A clunk. He falls sideways from his chest onto the floor.

CALLUM CAFFREY, 69 stands behind him, crow bar in hand.

CALLUM  
Howdy.

EXT. CAMP FIRE - WOODS - EVENING

Derek sits, arms huddling his legs tight to his chest, eyes wide. He watches Callum, teary eyed, disturbed.

Callum tears a piece of cooked meat from a bone and shovels it into his mouth as if he hasn't tasted it in a while.

Callum tears every available piece of meat from the bone and when finished tosses the bone onto a lit fire.

Callum looks at Derek.

CALLUM  
You can't tell me that you're not  
hungry. Everybody's hungry.

Derek remains silent and looks away, focusing his attentions on the fire.

Callum chuckles.

CALLUM  
So you're just plain old creeped  
out then? Give it another few weeks  
and that'll soon stop bothering  
you.

DEREK  
You're eating cooked human flesh.

(CONTINUED)

CALLUM

If you're feeling sorry for the  
guy, I wouldn't. It'd be you he'd  
be tucking into given the chance.

Derek continues to stare into the fire. Callum sighs and  
wipes his mouth.

CALLUM

Look, it's how things are now. I  
didn't show you how to skin and  
cook our little buddy boy here this  
time but next time I will.

DEREK

I don't want --

CALLUM

Don't waste your breath. It's not  
about whether you want to or not.  
It's about necessity. If you're not  
prepared for what life is like out  
there, you'll be dust before dawn.

DEREK

Where is everybody?

CALLUM

They're still around. Some of them  
are anyway. A few, like you were,  
still sleeping. Most are hiding.  
Scavenging.

DEREK

It's like a ghost town around here.  
Where could so many people be  
hiding?

Callum looks away, momentarily saddened.

CALLUM

That's because it is. The ones that  
are hiding are the ones that are  
left. The survivors.

Derek looks away. Tears well in his eyes.

DEREK

Why don't I remember what happened?

CALLUM

Don't fret now, you will. In time.  
The memory loss is a byproduct of

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CALLUM (cont'd)  
the stasis chamber. As more time passes, more of your memory will return. Before it all happened they advised us not to do anything to trigger a memory too early ---

DEREK  
I want to know what happened.  
Please.

Derek looks at him, desperation in his teary eyes. Callum takes a sharp intake of breath and allows it to seep out as he considers.

CALLUM  
We knew it was coming. We knew it for a while. The Governments did. They'd be working in secret for years when they finally unveiled their plans for salvation to the world. A worldwide network of stasis chambers, underground. Their sole purpose to sustain the population long enough to escape the carnage. A great idea, no? Great in theory. Practical application however was not so great. Limited places meant a world wide lottery. Martial law come into effect and civil war broke out. By the time the first tsunami struck, a number of the facilities had already been either hijacked or were cut off.

DEREK  
So anyone who wasn't in stasis is dead?

CALLUM  
Not necessarily. Some of us had been secretly preparing for a while. I knew something was up when the bees started disappearing. The pollution from the damn cell phones had set in motion a dominoes effect.

DEREK  
The bees? What have they got to do with it?

Callum scoffs.

(CONTINUED)

CALLUM

Ignorance. If there's no bees to pollinate, there's fewer crops. Diminishing crops ultimately lead to no crops. No crops - famine. Rationing. Even I didn't quite know what were in for. I led a small group of survivors to a safe zone but I had to come back out.

DEREK

Why?

CALLUM

To find someone.

DEREK

Who?

CALLUM

It's not important.

DEREK

Well they must be if you left a safe zone to find them. I'm not exactly up to speed here but I'm presuming from the name that a safe zone is fairly...safe.

CALLUM

You're new around here and we got a lot to talk about. Not that.

Callum rises to his feet.

CALLUM (CONT'D)

We need to get back to my place. You need water.

Derek looks around.

DEREK

It's getting dark. Isn't that a bad time to navigate?

CALLUM

If you don't know where you're going then yeah. Fortunately, I do. Besides, we're less likely to run into any resistance.

(CONTINUED)

DEREK

Resistance? I thought we were looking for survivors?

CALLUM

Not now. Pay attention, this is important. Very few people that you meet from here on in are gonna benefit you. They will either rob you or eat you. Neither is good.

DEREK

Then why are you helping me?

CALLUM

I'm not starving. If I were, it'd be a different story arc entirely.

EXT. WOODLAND - NIGHT

Callum strides confidently through the woods, negotiating brambles and uneven ground comfortably.

Derek trails behind him. He is struck in the face by stray branches and stumbles on the ground at every opportunity.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR

Callum peers around the corner of the corridor. Derek step out to walk around him but Callum halts him with his arm.

DEREK

You put a trap at the door?

CALLUM

Yes, I did but that's not the only door.

Callum cautiously moves out into the corridor, Derek follows, behind him.

INT. WARD

Callum and Derek walk through a ward. Callum doesn't bat an eyelid to the contents but Derek takes in each and every frame. Dried blood splatters the walls and floor. Unmade and dirty bed sheets remain with dried blood pools. The emergency lights flicker on and off. Favoring off.

The stench seeps up Derek's nostrils and he covers his mouth and nose, retching at every other step.