

Perception
By
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FADE IN.

INT. HOSPITAL, STAFF LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

DR MARK CARTER, 43 dressed in surgical scrubs, stares into his open locker.

Heavy bags sit beneath his eyes and three day old stubble rests on his face.

He is snapped out of his stare by the entrance of a colleague, MARTIN LEVERTS, 39.

MARTIN
You alright?

MARK
I'm fine.

MARTIN
Are you sure?

MARK
Why wouldn't I be?

MARTIN
With everything that you've been through I'm just...concerned that you're back at work already.

MARK
Why? What's happened?

Martin looks momentarily taken aback.

MARTIN
Are you sure you're ok? You're worrying me a little now.

MARK
How long have I been here?

MARTIN
Mark, you just---you just closed up Mr Friedman.

MARK
Yeah. Right.

He squints his eyes as he struggles to recollect. He closes his locker and exits into the--

INT. CORRIDOR

As he walks down the corridor, he is stopped by a younger, slender, attractive doctor, JENNY COLLINS, 32.

JENNY

I thought you weren't coming back for a couple of weeks?

MARK

Back from where?

Jenny seems surprised.

JENNY

Look, I want to help you. If there's anything you need I can come round.

MARK

You know where I live?

JENNY

Er...yeah. Mark, what's got into you?

MARK

Nothing.

JENNY

Do you want me to come over?

MARK

I'd prefer if you didn't.

JENNY

It's never been a problem before.

Mark again seems confused.

MARK

Am I missing something?

JENNY

Mark?

MARK

And why are you calling me by my first name?

JENNY

I know it's going to take a while to adjust but---

(CONTINUED)

MARK

Excuse me, I have to go and make a call.

Mark quickly exits.

Jenny watches after him, hurt.

INT. HOSPITAL, WAITING ROOM

Mark walks through the room, over to the ---

MAIN DESK

The clock on the wall has stopped on 23:44.

He picks up the telephone on the desk and dials a number.

He allows it to ring for a BEAT but is met with an automated recording which states that the number is no longer in use.

This should not be - he redials the number. The same message.

MARTIN (O.S.)

You got a sec Mark?

Martin is stood behind him. He puts the phone down.

MARK

What is it?

MARTIN

I have you down for working a double tomorrow---

Mark's attention returns to the phone - confused.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

But I was wondering...if...Is something wrong?

MARK

No. I just--I dialed Kelly's number, must've put the wrong number in. Twice.

MARTIN

Why were you dialing Kelly?

(CONTINUED)

MARK

I don't know. I feel like I've not seen her in so long. Pathetic right?

Martin looks at him with a pained expression.

MARTIN

Kelly's number doesn't work anymore because she's....dead.

MARK

What?

Mark stares at him in disbelief.

MARTIN

She died, Mark.

MARK

How? When?

MARTIN

You know when she died.

MARK

I don't, I don't understand....when I left her she was alive. She was alive. I don't understand this. Are you sure?

Martin steps closer to him.

MARTIN

We both went to the funeral.

Mark looks into his teary eyes. He is confused, upset, angry. He picks up the phone to dial a number.

MARK

You're wrong, she can't be. I left her and she was fine---

He inputs three digits before Martin puts his hand on the receiver.

MARTIN

I knew it was too soon for you to be back.

Martin tries to take the phone from Mark but he slams it into the desk.

(CONTINUED)

Once the phone has broken, he throws it to the floor and smacks his hands on the perspex which covers the main desk.

MARK

I haven't been away, I don't understand!

Martin tries to restrain him but Mark is too much for him as he wriggles free of his grip and drops to his knees. He sobs.

Martin kneels beside him, he puts his hand on his shoulder but Mark moves away.

MARTIN

It's gonna be ok.

Mark moves back to the desk and grips a tray which contains paperwork. He throws it to the ground.

MARK

How is it ok?

He continues to throw paperwork into the air and push anyone who approaches away as he sobs.

A NURSE rushes over to Martin with a needle.

NURSE

Doctor?

Martin nods his head, the Nurse rushes over to Mark. A few security staff and doctors have managed to wrestle Mark to the ground but struggle to hold him as the Nurse administers the needle into his arm.

Martin approaches him as the contents take effect. Mark's eyes roll in and out of the back of his head and his body becomes limp.

MARTIN

I'm going to get you some help. I promise I'll get you through this.

MARK

You're wrong....I don't remember....

Though he fights the effects valiantly, Mark finally succumbs and closes his eyes.

INT. ST GLEN'S PSYCHIATRIC FACILITY, SIDE ROOM - NIGHT

Mark wakes up in a dark room. He is groggy and his vision is blurred. He takes a few moments to blink himself awake.

He moves to sit upright. But he can't. He tries again. Still he is unsuccessful.

He looks down. Eyes widened as he sees that his arms and legs are strapped down. He tries to wriggle free one arm at a time. The straps are tight. He can't break free.

He SCREAMS as loud as he can into the darkness.

As he throws himself violently back and forth, desperate to loosen the restraints, he searches the room.

He is met with only silence.

JENNY (V.O)

What's the last thing you remember?

A bright light shines in his eyes, he is forced to close them.

The light disappears and back to darkness. He opens his eyes.

The light returns.

INT. HOSPITAL, SIDE WARD - DAY

Mark lays on a bed, monitors and various equipment surrounds him.

Jenny flashes a light in his eye to check his pupil dilation.

MARK

A woman. She's talking to me but I can't hear what she's saying. I close my eyes and.... I'm standing at my locker.

JENNY

Who was the woman?

MARK

Your guess is as good as mine.

She pulls up a chair and sits down. Mark studies her.

(CONTINUED)

MARK (CONT'D)

There's something bothering you
isn't there?

JENNY

Me? No. No, why would there be?

MARK

I don't know. I can tell from the
way you're looking at me that
there's something I should be
remembering that I'm not. It's
upsetting you.

JENNY

I just, I was with you after she
died. I saw you. I can't believe
you don't remember that.

MARK

Look, as far as I'm concerned I was
driving her to work. I don't
remember the journey exactly but I
know she was alive.

He takes a sip of water.

JENNY

I'm waiting for your results. As
soon as I have anything I'll get
back to you but for now I want you
to get some rest.

MARK

How can I get rest, I wanna know
what's happening?

JENNY

I suggest you find a way because
it's not negotiable.

She exits. Mark settles himself back into the bed, he shifts
from side to side to get comfortable. He rolls over to one
side and closes his eyes.

As he slowly drifts to sleep his arm slips down off the bed,
he stirs.

Gradually he opens his eyes. He is now --

INT. ST GLEN'S PSYCHIATRIC FACILITY, ROOM

Mark opens his eyes and sits up right on the bed. He rubs his eyes and reaches out for the plastic cup of water which now sits on the bedside table.

He takes a few sips and replaces it.

As he leans over the bed side, he reaches underneath the bed and pulls out a scruffy note pad.

He turns to a plain page, smooths it down and frantically starts to write.

MARK (V.O.)

I had that dream again.

INT. ST GLEN'S PSYCHIATRIC FACILITY, OFFICE - MORNING

Mark sits at a table. Sat across from him is DR MICHEAL JENKINS, 37, glasses, an open file and a friendly smile.

MICHEAL

Was it the same as before?

MARK

No.

MICHEAL

How was it different?

MARK

It was like I was there living it.

MICHEAL

Ok. What happened?

Micheal sits back in his chair.

MARK

I was at my locker. I was looking for my wife.

MICHEAL

Did you find her?

MARK

They told me she was dead.

MICHEAL

Who did?

(CONTINUED)

MARK

My friends, I guess.

MICHEAL

Do you recognise anybody?

MARK

No, not really. Some of their faces look familiar to me but I can't place how well I know them. If I know them well at all.

MICHEAL

Ok, good. Well, you have a paintbrush and easel waiting for you in the art room and we are going to pick this up tomorrow, ok?

He jots a note in the file.

MARK

Yeah.

INT. ART ROOM

Mark sits at an easel. Several other patients intently paint in their own spaces.

Mark stares out of the window. His paper is blank.

MAGGIE GRAHAM 46, in charge of the class stands between him and the window. She blocks his view, he looks away.

MAGGIE

The longer you stare out the window, the longer the paper remains empty. Thus, the longer you stay sat here.

MARK

Sorry.

MAGGIE

You know if you don't know what to draw, why not just let the brush guide you.

She takes his hand in which he holds the brush and dabs it in paint before transferring it to the paper.

(CONTINUED)

MARK

Let the brush guide me?

MAGGIE

It doesn't have to make sense.

She releases her hand. The brush remains in his grip, hovering just above the paper.

She moves away. He puts the brush to paper and moves it in a large sweep.

MARK

Let the brush guide me.

INT. HOSPITAL, SIDE WARD

Mark now brandishes a pen instead of the brush and sits on the edge of the bed, reviewing a form.

Momentarily confused, he glances over the form.

He signs the bottom of it and passes it to Jenny.

JENNY

Are you sure about this?

MARK

I need to figure out what's going on. Can't do that here.

JENNY

Maybe you could talk to someone?

MARK

No.

JENNY

It might help.

MARK

It might not.

He puts his jacket on.

MARK

What day is it?

JENNY

It's Thursday, why?